The Role of Corporate Culture Branding In Image Enhancement: A Study of Innovation Strategies in Institutions

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Abstract
Research on organisational image building point consistently to cultural branding as a factor of sustained corporate success, a large part of organisational identity is derived from internal definition of the corporation’s essential character, their observable means of leading, functioning and communicating, degree of change acceptance, day-to-day task execution, shared practices, besides forming the basis of innovation adoption. This paper focuses on the use of corporate culture branding within two corporatized public institutions, and the influence of cultural factors in Malaysia’s vibrant branding climate as a whole. Theoretical application of cultural branding literature will be reviewed and discussed. With industries, media and organisational research stakeholders giving consistent visibility to corporations that strongly emphasise on branding, several dynamic, local institutions have emerged in Malaysia that have successfully tapped the cultural dimension of corporate culture brand management. These institutions, adroitly sensing socioeconomic shifts driven by changes in national policies, along with regional and global demands for financial transparency, governance and corporate responsibility, employ a diverse and innovative range of branding strategies that bears on long term corporate sustainability. Case studies of two Malaysian institutions which have conducted rebranding exercises will be discussed. The research methodology uses critical analysis of institutional brand communication approaches to define, describe and interpret the corporate culture of each corporation and give coherence to specific cultural rituals, practices and artefacts with symbolic meanings for respective organisational members. An evaluation of the organisation’s effectiveness in corporate culture branding communication follows, and these will be mapped against respective corporate branding objectives using relevant cultural models, with the aim of finding how corporate culture branding transforms and influences consumer attitudes and perceptions of institutional brand image, besides contributing to shaping the national context of innovation development.

Key Words: Branding, Institutional Brand Image, Organisational Culture, Innovation.

Introduction
To establish successful brands, understanding consumer needs and wants is critical, but equally so, organisations should spend time investing in surveying, researching, defining and building their brand identity, while acknowledging its positioning against market rivals. Branding unleashes the power of a corporation’s image and connotes performance, factors which have increasingly been noted in consumer purchase decisions, complementing the product or service (or in spite of it). Research has often sought to improve insights on brand value. Notwithstanding paid-for commercials, marketing campaigns and advertising, a growing body of brand practitioners such as David Aaker believe that the strength of organisational image is often measurable when embedded in corporate branding advertisements, as visibility provides distinguishing features that consumers consider credible, admirable or trustworthy (Aaker, 1996, p.113). Other researchers’ associate customers’ relationships or encounters with their perceptions of the organisation’s brand salience, since they reflect the way buyers remember and repeatedly seek certain goods over another (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2004; Palumbo & Herbig, 2000). These images and impressions influence attitudinal formation and emotional connections with the brand, and define
organisational traits that are remembered - no matter how brand communication requirements and practices evolve, or how often trends may shift corporate branding tactics. In the context of public relations, image building for institutions and organisations - as David Finn noted in metaphor - is more than the act of putting on a ‘fictitious wardrobe for the (naked, parading) Emperor; the image is tenacious, not because it dresses up the organisation but because it answers a basic need for finding a convincing purpose for the corporate enterprise’ (Daniels & Spiker, 1994, p.266).

Background of the Study

The complex challenges faced by Malaysian institutions which were corporatized since the government’s privatisation policy rollout of the 1990’s under Malaysia’s Privatisation Master Plan (EPU, n.d.), have mounted over the last two decades. Once-government regulated, industrial and services sectors began opening up to competitive forces, with consumer markets determining the choices and price ranges for goods and services (MIEER, 1996). The resulting outcomes is a greater chance for technological innovation and fair trade practices to flourish, as well as the adoption and implementation of regulatory frameworks and policies that promote economic development without losing sight of human capital development, social welfare, workplace equality and empowerment. While the government’s role in fostering and monitoring competition is important, entrepreneurial and corporate sector participation in competition is core to the development of organisational culture that bespeaks a balanced emphasis on growth, innovation and human capital development, as Prof of Leadership and Organisational Psychology Ronald Riggio explains: ‘The technology used in the organisation, the markets it sells its products and/or services to, and the organisation’s competition, all influence organisational culture’ (Riggio, 2003, p.421). Besides the central role of leadership, national cultural characteristics affect organisational performance to a degree (Javidan & House, 2002) – the same attributes may also trigger resistance to change and innovation (Riggio, 2003, p.421). Cultural studies improve researchers’ understanding of organisational behaviour, through exploration of business dynamics in the context of language, communication and racial barriers (Ashcraft & Allen, 2003), shared experiences and perceptions, and these are both useful and meaningful for stakeholders of competitive organisations and industries. As Nohria et al (2003) found, a corporate culture that inspires everyone ‘to do their best’ and to contribute forms the basis of continuous innovation, performance-orientation and leadership competency. When innovation and performance aligns with core values and leadership philosophy, the brand image created determines how the corporation attracts, utilises, develops and retains talent (den Hartog & Verburg, 2004).

Literature Review

Theories of Organisational Culture

Organisational culture, according to Ott (1989), is the shared values, norms, assumptions, beliefs and patterns of behaviour within an organisation. Schein improved this definition (Schein, 1992), by explaining why aspects of culture – whether conscious (artefacts, charismatics leaders, symbols) or unconscious (ritualistic slogans, behaviours) – determine who they are, how things are done, and the effect it creates among the employees themselves. These are interspersed with factors such as job requirements, departmental goals and geographical location of the workplace (Schein, 1992).

For over three decades, researchers conducting reviews and exploratory studies of culture make reference to the framework mapped by Prof Geert Hofstede, who had conducted comprehensive field studies since the 1960’s and produced data spanning more than 70 countries. Within organisations around the world, workplace culture manifests in specific dimensions, as categorically described by Hofstede (as cited in Hofstede, 1980, 1997, 2001), and Hofstede and Hofstede (2005):

- **Power Distance**: The expectations and acceptance of power distribution and degree of inequality;
• **Individualism vs. Collectivism:** The extent of motivation and interest in achieving goals whether individually or socially (in larger group or within organisational context);

• **Masculinity vs. Femininity:** The stereotypical attributes and behaviours that mark members’ outlook and regular practices, e.g. assertiveness, competitiveness, cooperativeness, altruism, pride;

• **Uncertainty Avoidance:** The degree of predictability or ambiguity avoidance through a distinct set of rules, regulations, ethics or social norms which bind members to the collective;

• **Long term vs. Short term Orientation:** The degree of emphasis on future-oriented behaviours such as delayed gratification, planning and investment in the future, against meeting of immediate needs.

The relative dominance of these cultural dimensions is expressed in the Cultural Onion comprising a core and three other layers. The core are members’ central values and principles resistant to change, being heavily influenced by the history of the members, organisation or socio-cultural factors such as religious beliefs that influence interactions in the socioeconomic environment. **Rituals and traditions** (layer one) represent customary, habitual practices at individual/group levels, and are culturally determined. **Heroes** (layer two) may be real or fictitious, e.g. national heroes, celebrities, models or leaders - anyone regarded as exemplars for ideas, behavioural and have made positive contribution in society. **Symbols** (layer three) may appear as textual narratives – words, jargon gestures, images, objects, brands, etc. which are meaningful. Symbols evolve in social significance as trends change. Diagram 1 provides an illustration of the Hofstede’s **Cultural Onion**.

Further, the significance of organisational culture is seen in studies that attempt to search for and interpret the shared meanings behind specific elements and their replication – rituals, symbolic habits and acts, repeated use of signs, metaphors, accounts, phrases and mottos that are understood, verbalised, fostered and communicated to stakeholders both internally and externally (Daniels & Spiker, 1994, pp.117-126), to find out precisely what the organisation “stands for” in the eyes of various publics (Daniels & Spiker, 1994, p.119; Riggio, 2003, p.421). An example is the degree of dialogues between management and executives. Without explicit openness to discuss changes, or to urge shifts from out-dated beliefs among employees, a culture deficit (Nohria et al, 2003) is created, which may impede or slacken internal motivation to positively contribute to the improvement of current or future organisational performance.

The Wharton School of Business’ Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness (GLOBE) research programme commenced in 1991 out of the need to address the question, **How is culture related to societal, organisational and leader effectiveness?** Extending Hofstede (as cited in Hofstede,
1980, 1997, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) and other cultural research findings (Hofstede et al, 2010), the cultural practices of over 17,000 managers representing sectors from manufacturing to financial and telecommunication services, were recorded; the participants’ shared understanding about culture were captured via qualitative interviews and focus groups, along with media analysis of leadership behaviours, both in terms of similarity and differences. Data about cultural orientations within organisations such as the degree of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, egalitarianism and future orientation proved insightful about the values orientation of managers, against Hofstede’s classic framework of cultural influence in working relations (The GLOBE Study, 2010)

**Branding Challenges for Malaysian Corporate Culture in Facing Competitiveness**

Daniels and Spiker (1994) found much evidence to believe there is mutual influence between the practices of organisational culture and the development of its brand image and corporate identity. This triggers a question for this research: What sort of outcomes can be expected when institutions serving crucial public needs such as banks and housing developers take steps to improve their brand image, and dare to publicise their challenges in attaining their mission?

To begin this investigation, literature provides some penetrative insights. Witt and Redding (2009) for instance, in a cross-cultural study examining business systems in Asia, measured constraints set by religious beliefs within Asian cultures, and found Malaysia and Pakistan score highest for “tightness”, according to Redding et al (2012). Malaysian workers traditionally belong to a culture that regards affiliation, family belonging and communal unity as elements which contribute to and perpetuates stability (Redding et al, 2012, p.7). In organisational context, this psychological makeup would keep the employee or manager focused on short term goals rather than plan with a view to future development. For instance, whistleblowing is frowned upon as an uncommon, Westernised practice, and most employees would avoid being singled out for attempts to enhance corporate integrity systems of independent reporting through whistleblowing. This makes it hard to uncover the stories of ethical leadership or to develop the potential of individuals who desire to find supporters for culture change and transformative programmes.

While culture anchors an organisational identity and shapes their attitudes towards quality, risk taking and status (Riggio, 2003, p.423), field studies found that across the Asian region, corporations express a fresh emphasis on brand building strategies based on a deep sense of pride and loyalty in marketing specific local or regional brands (Cayla & Eckhardt, 2007). These can form the strong cultural touchstones which imbue credibility and emotional connections in the organisation’s dealings with customers and stakeholders. Additionally, it has been well documented in literature that culture is embedded implicitly in business models in overt guises and forms. Mooij and Hofstede (2010) describe this in the context of consumption behaviour: for instance, “personal steadiness, stability and respect for tradition” (short term orientation), which contrasts with “perseverance, hierarchical relations and a sense of shame” (long term orientation), leading companies to improve market acceptance for its products and services based on pragmatic innovations. For Malaysians, this maybe expressed in the range of attractively-priced properties and diversity of financial services which consumers are willing to invest in or subscribe to.

Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010) findings for Malaysia affirm that the local organisational cultural model revolves implicitly around the treatment of the corporate entity as a family unit, where power distance and collectivism are expressed in paternalistic fashion. Terming this cultural perspective as “software of the mind” (Hofstede, 1997, pp.17-18), these findings correlate with earlier postulations that the human, emotional aspect of running organisations often clash with structural or functional (task-based) aspects (Hofstede, 1980, p.16). For Malaysia, entrenched business systems such as supplier contract tendering for large projects may run against acceptance by senior management, even though a more transparent and impartial new system would result in improved profitability, quality assurance and consumer confidence.
Researchers inevitably conclude that various influences of a societal nature affect organisational culture, and assume that an individual’s values, religion, heritage and beliefs may be so deeply entrenched in customary habits they link and affect the organisational members’ outlook, responses and socialising behaviours (Riggio, 2003, p.422).

In the context of competition, Malaysian companies was found in 2013 by the World Economic Forum in its annual Global Competitiveness Report to have “business-friendly institutional frameworks, beside enjoying a remarkably supportive financial sector and the pursuit of transparency in developing its knowledge-based economy” (Schwab, 2012, pp.28-29). Businesses may pursue economic aspirations and social development as long as they operate and compete while staying mindful of codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for business transactions across industrial and consumer market sectors, such as stringent adherence to Islamic principles of halal and borrowing – both which are key competitive elements taken into account by corporations and enterprises alike, given the demographical majority of Muslims within the Malay population (Dhillon, 2012). Albeit strong or weak, masculine or feminine in orientation, employees within a broad sector of Malaysian institutions fit most comfortably within the framework of a collectivist outlook, wherein group performance is a mission and end in itself, and aligns with the core values of the corporate. As such, understanding the impact of change processes is important for Asian institutional image branding because institutions deliver critical public services amidst making plans for longer term growth, innovation and expansion, and in facing direct competition from private sectors (Cayla & Eckhardt, 2007, pp.3-5).

Research Methodology

To review the progress of Malaysian corporate brand-building efforts, this paper will discuss the functions and roles of organisational culture in branding two established institutions. The researcher sets out to demonstrate the importance of projecting innovative organisational culture as a tool to enhance organisational brand image and public reputation. In view of foregoing assumptions, the objective behind this research is to examine the relationships between corporate culture branding for public-service institutions that have undergone image rebranding exercises, and how the use of certain policies have helped sustain Malaysian corporations’ competitive edge through strategic culture branding communication. The institutions were selected by virtue of their established names in the property development and banking sectors respectively. Their symbolic roles as drivers of economic development and social progress since Malaysia’s independence five decades ago provide a broad range of organisational management discourses to inform image marketing, branding practitioners and corporate culture researchers alike. Two levels of interpretive analysis will be provided in the form of a brand audit and analysis of corporate brand identity communication with respective key target segments.

Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

Brand Audit Case Study I: PKNS

The bold crimson font of the corporation’s acronym (PKNS) forms the logo design, with the corporate identity placed to the left. The brand identity (Figure 1) depicts a commercial high-rise building and yellow rooftops of houses, encircled by Arabic letters for “State Development Corporation of Selangor”. This element of PKNS’s role is a purposeful reflection of the Islamic basis of management principles which it adheres to. The use of red in the logo as a communicative symbol represents strength and vibrancy, and fits the vision of PKNS in achieving its vision of “Building Communities, Enriching Lives, Realising Dreams” (PKNS Vision). The brand personality – stability, integrity, resilience and firmness - is symbolised by black outlines (PKNS Corporate Identity).
Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor (PKNS) or Selangor State Development Corporation branded its former institutional image offering affordable, below-market priced housing schemes, but that has masterfully shifted today, with an emphasis on integrity in its corporate culture and dealings (Othman, 2012). Celebrating fifty years since its establishment in 1964, PKNS’ mission to create a “vibrant and sustainable living environment” through continuous innovation, exceptional service delivery and a commitment to developing competent human capital is much lauded among Malaysian state housing developers, many which saw slowdowns in property demands during the 2008-09 global economic recession, along with land scarcity issues affecting urban development (Property Insight, 2013).

With collaborative ventures in joint property privatisation ventures that span the strategic planning, research and development of commercial, lifestyle, residential brands and other urban regenerative investments (e.g., Datuk Jelatek, a former factory area turned integrated township), PKNS has been able to strategically move forward with a range of innovative development projects, from lower-scaled industrial townships, to mixed commercial-education-leisure and manufacturing hubs, as well as higher-end urban property projects that integrate highway interchanges facilities and world-class infrastructures e.g. green living components and gated and guarded communities (The Star Online, 2012). Aside from developing cities, townships and environment management services, PKNS has attained branding eminence since 1999 in the form of awards recognising its transformational leadership in value engineering, financial sustainability, corporate transparency, governance practices and service delivery.

Business opportunities aside, the stress on corporate integrity culture has enabled its management to draw key insights from various stakeholders on programmes necessary to improve the governance culture (The Flip Board, 2012). It behoves the institution with such a crucial socioeconomic role to pursue image rebranding measures, after a 2011 independent branding audit saw a series of interviews among 26 departmental heads, which provided management with constructive input to fix corruption perceptions. In the audit report, employees noted: ‘We are doing OK’ … ‘Too much red tape’ … ‘Too many procedures slow down our decision-making’ … ‘We are clean and free from corruption’. A perception survey among 15 home buyers that same year uncovered comments such as: ‘PKNS is a low-cost developer’ … ‘Slow to respond, not customer-centric’ … ‘Low quality design’ … ‘Corrupted and politically driven’ … ‘Have to pay under counter for bookings’ (Othman, 2012).

As a result, a transformation programme was structured into its management, operations and work culture, modelled on improving product design, quality, delivery system, and most of all, “to develop corporate integrity DNA among its subsidiaries” (PKNS Advertorial, 2014). Working with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), PKNS management took oath in the form of the Corporate Integrity Pledge (CIP) - a pact involving staff, committees, suppliers and bidders (The Star Online, 2013). Pushing this agenda was the cornerstone of change. Collaborating with Transparency International (government agency) to establish and implement a Risk Culture programme, PKNS took up the challenges to confront corruption, curb bribery and fraud by introducing the whistleblowing programme, electronic open tendering (e-Sebutharga) system and rating tender bidders’ submission based on anonymity. In 2010 and 2011, value engineering for open tenders, as well as an improved delivery system such as e-procurement helped PKNS save a total of RM215.25 million (PKNS Brochure, n.d.; Othman, 2012; The Star Online, 2013).
A key measure of corporate brand health is by analysing its engagement with target publics. Unfortunately, with barely 1500 “likes” on its Facebook page as of August 2014, its social media presence has not gained as much visibility as it could. Evidently, consistent updates are found wanting in spite of garnering industry recognition at the Asia Pacific Property Awards 2013-2014 (Facebook, 2014). Yet innovation and transformation had certainly been infused into the corporation’s “DNA”, with business diversification opportunities, entrepreneurship programmes and a suite of international and national awards that lauded its effort to promote integrity in its corporate work culture (PKNS Advertorial, n.d.; PKNS Brochure, n.d.; PKNS Entrepreneurship Programme, n.d.; Othman, 2012). Hofstede’s hero symbolism is an obvious reference for Othman Omar’s thought leadership branding style – PKNS declared its highest ever pre-tax profit in 2011 during Othman’s five-year tenure as General Manager (The Malaysian Reserve, 2013). As Nicholas Ind (2007) notes, leadership stewardship and participation in the brand transformation period matters, in establishing “brand champions” from within the organisation:

*Brand champions are committed individuals who are willing to proselytise on behalf of the brand; people who have the respect of colleagues and believe in the power of branding ... to communicate, encourage [others’ involvement], make recommendations and set and measure targets.*

Mooij and Hofstede (2010), reviewing cross-cultural advertising methods using content analysis, state that consumer values that are congruent with advertised brands enables the company brand to be more positively associated in their minds and hearts (Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p.99). PKNS’ rebranding news garnered the attention of local media and audiences via television reports, full-page advertorials and via corporate videos on social networking sites (YouTube, 2011).

**Brand Audit Case Study II: MAYBANK**

Metaphors provide a tool to study the appeal of organisational branding identities. Mooij and Hofstede (2010) drew attention to the importance of advertising and branding in creating high visibility for organisational brand identity. This factor underscores the Maybank brand attributes, as the design featuring the head and image of a roaring tiger bears an enduring, symbolic meaning and social construct for Malaysians that is both unique and universal (Figure 2). The personality of the brand is a mix of courage, collaboration, creativity, empathy and authenticity (YouTube, 2011).

![Maybank Logo](image)

Figure 2: Maybank Logo

Malayan Banking Berhad (Maybank) is the single largest entity on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange by market capitalisation (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013). Maybank began business in 1960, and has today managed to become a one-stop financial institution offering an array of services ranging from personal banking to investment brokering. With over RM560 billion in total assets, offices in over 20 countries (including 10 in Southeast Asia), and 47,000 employees serving 22 million customers (Maybank Annual Report, 2013, p.17) Maybank is rated 13th in Bloomberg’s Top 20 ranks of strongest global banks (Bloomberg, 2013), a singular achievement that equals in significance as being ranked the top Islamic commercial bank in Asia Pacific, and third in the world (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.4).

Its mission statement, “Humanising financial services across Asia” is a global bridge-building manifesto, helping the corporation carry out its vision to unite people from all walks of life, “across the ups, the downs and the unexpected” (Maybank Brand Manifesto, 2014). Access to financial services “at fair terms and
pricing” and being “at the heart of the community” are the keys to engender sustainable corporate reputation (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p. 4). To achieve its goal as a catalyst for economic and social development, Maybank’s business strategy sticks to the philosophy of serving customers’ needs as it aspires to be the “undisputed No. 1 retail financial services provider in Malaysia”, a leading ASEAN bank, and emerging regional player for Islamic Finance, while setting its sights on expanding markets - Middle East, India and China (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.14).

Besides conducting local and international training and apprenticeship programmes spanning six Asian countries, its commitment to develop leadership through building strong teams is demonstrated in the way the bank internalises and reinforces the core TIGER values of Teamwork, Integrity, Growth, Excellence and Efficiency, and Relationship Building which bespeaks the “humanising” mission of its brand manifesto and aims to create a “common high performance culture where staff can excel, deliver on our promises and achieve our desired outcomes” (Maybank Annual Report, 2013, p.111). Winning thrice consecutively in Malaysia’s Top 100 Leading Graduate Employer Awards, initiating ambassadorship programmes with high-achieving tertiary students, offering Syariah scholarships up to postgraduate level helps Maybank fulfil its role an “industry reference point” for subscribing to leadership development and proactive talent engagement (advertising & marketing, 2013, pp.107-110; AIESEC, 2013).

The rapid adaptation of online technologies symbolises the institution’s capacity to invest in pioneering innovation in exerting its digital footprint. Award-winning Internet banking platform Maybank2u.com (and subsequently-launched mobile banking application Maybank2u Mobile) gives access to financial services such as electronic bill payment, shopping and auction to 29 million active users (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.95; Marketing Magazine, 2014). Along with receiving 1.18 million Facebook “likes” (Facebook, 2014) and being ranked Malaysia’s No 1 Socially-Devoted Facebook Brand, Maybank leverages on digital platforms and via Maybank2u.com to target e-commerce users and the urban lifestyle segment (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.127). Success in market penetration resulted in over 100 million transactions worth RM675 million in 2012 (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.95), while positive media engagement earned the bank top rank in Malaysian Digital Association “Top 30 Local Websites” (advertising & marketing, 2013), indicating strong corporate brand management and market visibility.

Building a strong risk culture drives Maybank’s risk management principles. Prioritising due diligence assessment and mitigation of impact from environmental, social and financial issues (Maybank Annual Report, 2013, p.160), Maybank claims that sustainability reporting is not merely a description of its investment soundness, assets and procedural controls, but also reporting customer service delivery and employee engagement issues, as these impact long term profitability (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.32). Brand salience (Romaniuk & Sharp, 2004) being a critical measure of a corporation’s ability to deliver its brand promise, the public dimensions of corporate culture branding - trust, openness, integrity – is expressed within Maybank’s core TIGER values among employees, and visibly demonstrated via accountability mechanisms such as the Corporate Integrity Pledge (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.30) and Integrity Hotline, a whistle-blowing mechanism ensuring anonymity of fraud complainants (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.30). Concurring with Haigh and Dardis (2012), who stated that customer satisfaction towards organisational brand image posits on its ability to manage and communicate concern for others during crisis and in handling apologies, the corporate brand image and reputation of Maybank will be protected from such practices as unfair treatment, victimisation and harassment in its dealings with external and internal stakeholders.

Innovation and transformation are key features of Maybank’s corporate brand philosophy. Since 2010, the institution has also improved access for the disabled, having bank branches nationwide equipped with disabled-friendly ATM’s and wheelchair access (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.87). With financial products such as lifestyle insurance and family security plans underwritten by its insurance brand Etiqa, and Takaful insurance, Maybank extends its financial services to target at affluent individuals (Maybank Annual Report, 2013, p.30). Anecdotal evidence for balancing corporate profitability with...
integrity practices is found in its Sustainability Report (Maybank Sustainability Report, 2013, p.86): We often go the extra mile. (Every policy) sold is claimable, even if the beneficiary was unaware. Our claims manager reads the newspaper (obituaries) every day and would track whether the deceased were Etiqa customers. If so, they would (…) initiate contact with the family to make payment.

Performance of the business is a concern, but the human excellence factor is consistently reflected in Maybank Group’s Corporate Responsibility programmes. Its core values of teamwork and excellence is built through initiatives to involve employees in CSR initiatives and community work (Maybank Annual Report, 2013, p.114). These take various forms of social welfare, philanthropy and voluntary services locally and regionally in humanitarian funds; organising financial literacy programmes; micro-financing for small enterprises; volunteering for disaster relief missions, National Day marches, cheerleading, singing of corporate songs, and etc. (YouTube, 2012). Ind (2007) believes while corporate branding events per se do not ramp up internal commitment or brand loyalty, they could heighten conversations, interactions and inspire future leadership ranks. It is for corporations to ensure that the image connections from corporate branding campaigns do not merely produce “halo effects” which serves little more than to augment and burnish the corporate brand (DeSantis Breindel, n.d.). Maybank staff participation in branding events and community programmes must instead communicate the organisation’s genuine wish for emotional commitment, helping create employee readiness to deliver change (Maybank Annual Report, 2013, p.30).

Conclusion

Eminent researcher has produced landmark studies and perspectives on the workings of culture in corporations and institutions, while on-going studies point to the co-orientation between organisational cultures to larger, shared societal practices. More than window dressing, organisational culture plays a decisive role in corporate brand image communication. Examining unique aspect of corporate and institutional culture is “tenacious”, as it is arguable whether shared cultures enable or impede organisational performance, growth and innovation, but as is shown in this paper, corporations can compete successfully without losing their collective conscience for corporate responsibility, while ensuring integrity of management practices. Corporations should frequently assess the authenticity of social responsibility programmes and keep in step with governance and regulatory compliance policies, and not attempt to leverage these efforts for end reputational gains. The brand image of success, in sum, derives from how the corporate culture fabric is cut, shaped and stitched, from the collective policies, acts, beliefs, communication, recognition, values and behaviours which establishes the trust, loyalty and motivation of employees, while engaging customers and other stakeholders in decades to come.

References


Visual

Diagram 1: