

# **A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNAL BRANDING PROCESS AT KAGISO MEDIA**

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by

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# **A CASE STUDY OF THE INTERNAL BRANDING PROCESS AT KAGISO MEDIA**

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**DEGREE: MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

***DECLARATION***

I, Bonisiwe P. Mchunu, declare that the Dissertation/Thesis entitled, ‘A case study of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media’, which I hereby submit for the degree Master of Business Administration at Rhodes University, is my own work.

I declare that this thesis/dissertation has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Bonisiwe P. Mchunu

30/11/24

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Date

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research took the form of a case study of a media company, Kagiso Media (KM), that had been through a process of change. The company adopted a branding approach and used internal branding activities to implement a change intervention, which was unconventional and a unique approach, making it worthy of investigation. The primary aim of the study was, therefore, to analyse how a change in brand ideology (i.e. encompassing the business mission, vision, goals and shared values) shaped the senior leadership behaviour at KM and also led to the development of an improved performance management system.

A case study research method was used. Data was collected through face-to-face and online interviews with the leadership team and combined with relevant company documents. A deductive thematic approach was used to analyse the data.

The study revealed that brand ideology can impact leadership behaviour and performance if implemented deliberately. When the new CEO was appointed, his starting point was to change the KM brand ideology. The study revealed that, because of greater clarity in brand ideology, leadership behaviour improved. There were shifts in the manner in which leadership behaved and how they handled performance as a result of entrenching the new brand ideology. The study also revealed that the development of brand ideology necessitated changes in the performance management system. Brand-centred performance management systems contributed towards building a performance culture. In essence, developing a clear brand ideology was central to changing leadership behaviour and the revision of the performance management performance system.

While limitations of the study are acknowledged, it has contributed by offering a unique perspective of an internal branding driven change and demonstrates how a change in brand ideology can impact leadership behaviour and performance management. Furthermore, the study recommended that further research could be done to include the perspectives of staff beyond the leadership team.

### **Keywords:**

Brand ideology; internal branding; Kagiso Media; Performance management system

## ***Table of Contents***

<i>List of Figures</i> .....	<i>X</i>
<i>List of Tables</i> .....	<i>XI</i>
<i>Glossary of Terms</i> .....	<i>XII</i>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<i>Introduction and purpose</i> .....	<i>1</i>
<b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Context of the research and the research problem</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.4 Key concepts</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1.5 Research Design</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1.6 Outline of the thesis</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<i>Review of Literature</i> .....	<i>6</i>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.2 Resource-Based Theory (RBT)</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2.3 The concept of a brand</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.3.1 Branding.....	8
<b>2.5 Internal branding</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>2.6 Critiques of brand and internal branding</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>2.7 The components of internal branding</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.7.1 Brand ideology.....	13
2.7.2 Brand leadership.....	14
2.7.3 Brand-centred Human Resource Management (HRM).....	15
2.7.3.1 Performance Management as a brand-centred HRM activity.....	16
2.7.4 Internal brand communication.....	18
2.7.5 Internal brand communities.....	18
<b>2.8 Conceptual Framework</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>2.9 Chapter Summary</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<i>Research Methodology</i> .....	<i>21</i>
<b>3.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>21</b>

<b>3.2</b>	<b>Research aim and objectives</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Research paradigm</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>A case study as the research method</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Data collection techniques</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>The interviews</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3.7</b>	<b>Data analysis</b>	<b>25</b>
3.7.1	Conceptual Framework.....	26
3.7.2	Propositions .....	26
3.7.3	Coding Memo .....	26
3.7.4	Question Matrix .....	27
3.7.5	Data Collection.....	27
3.7.6	Analysis.....	28
3.7.7	Reporting.....	28
<b>3.8</b>	<b>Quality considerations</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.9</b>	<b>Ethical considerations</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.10</b>	<b>Chapter summary</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>Research Findings.....</b>		<b>31</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1.1	Defining brand ideology, brand leadership and performance management.....	31
<b>4.2</b>	<b>The background to change</b>	<b>31</b>
4.2.1	The change management programme at KM.....	32
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Brand equity improvement</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>4.4</b>	<b>The changes brand ideology (mission, vision, values, and goals)</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Senior leadership behaviour</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>4.6</b>	<b>Components of the performance management system</b>	<b>40</b>
4.6.1	Performance management implementation.....	40
<b>4.7</b>	<b>Modification of the performance management system</b>	<b>43</b>
4.7.1	Get leadership buy-in.....	44
4.7.2	Develop clear performance expectations .....	44
4.7.3	Select appropriate performance appraisal methods.....	45
4.7.4	Coach and train the leadership team .....	45

4.7.5	Get employees involved and formulate development plans.....	46
4.7.6	Implement performance management, reward, and recognition .....	46
4.7.7	Monitor and evaluate .....	46
4.7.8	Communicate.....	47
<b>4.8</b>	<b>Analysis of how brand ideology shaped the senior leadership behaviour _____</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>4.9</b>	<b>The influence of the change in brand ideology on leadership behaviour and performance management _____</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>4.10</b>	<b>Chapter summary _____</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>		<b>56</b>
<b>Discussion.....</b>		<b>56</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction _____</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Justification of the study _____</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Change management programme _____</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>The improvement of brand equity _____</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Change in brand ideology (mission, vision, values and goals) _____</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Senior leadership behaviour _____</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.7</b>	<b>Change of performance management system _____</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>5.8</b>	<b>Implementation of change in performance management system _____</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.9</b>	<b>Change in brand ideology shaped the senior leadership behaviour _____</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>5.10</b>	<b>Modification of performance management system improved performance _____</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>5.11</b>	<b>The study theoretical link to Research Based Theory _____</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>5.12</b>	<b>Summary _____</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>		<b>64</b>
<b>Conclusion and recommendations.....</b>		<b>64</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>Introduction _____</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>Statement of main findings _____</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>Recommendations for management practice _____</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>Contributions, limitations, and recommendations for further research _____</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>6.6</b>	<b>Conclusion _____</b>	<b>69</b>

<i>Appendices</i> .....	81
<b>Appendix A: Interview schedule</b> _____	<b>81</b>
<b>Appendix B: Ethical Clearance</b> _____	<b>82</b>
<b>Appendix C: Letter requesting permission from Kagiso Media</b> _____	<b>83</b>
<b>Appendix D: Approval letter from Kagiso Media</b> _____	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix E: Participant consent form</b> _____	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendix F: Coding memo</b> _____	<b>89</b>
<b>Appendix G</b> _____	<b>92</b>
<b>Appendix G 1 - Research question matrix</b> _____	<b>92</b>
<b>Appendix: G 2 - Research question matrix</b> _____	<b>94</b>
<b>Appendix G 3 - Research question matrix</b> _____	<b>95</b>

# List of Figures

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Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework: Brand ideology through brand leadership and Performance Management System shapes brand equity.....	19
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# List of Tables

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Table 2.1: Internal brand/branding definition .....	10
Table 3.1: Respondents who participated .....	24
Table 3.2: Codes used in the research.....	27
Table 4.1: The revision of the mission and vision .....	36
Table 4.2: The old and revised values .....	37
Table 4.3: The old performance management goals at organisational level.....	41
Table 4.4: The revised performance excellence plan (PEP) at organisational level.....	42
Table 4.5: The revised PEP at departmental and individual performance level.....	47
Table 4.6: The leadership characteristics .....	50
Table 4.7: The leadership training programme.....	52

# Glossary of Terms

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<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definition</b>
BHRMA	Brand Human Resource management activities
BHRM	Brand Human Resource Management
BHRM PMSI	Brand Human Resource Management - performance management system implantation
BLA	Brand leadership activities
BLI	Brand Leadership Involvement
CSI	Creating shared ideology
KPAs	Key Performance Activities
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
PMSI	Performance Management System implementation
RBT	Research base theory
SEM	Socio Economic Measure

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction and purpose

---

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the context of the research and the nature of the research problem, before presenting the aim and objectives and key concepts. Finally, the research design of the study is briefly described before ending with an outline of the chapters.

### **1.2 Context of the research and the research problem**

This research was conducted in a media company, Kagiso Media (KM), which operates different radio assets in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Gauteng, South Africa. KM implemented a change project, which was the focus of this study. The team responsible for the formulation and implementation of brand ideology and all the internal branding activities was led by the newly appointed CEO.

The case study of KM was selected because it represents a successful change initiative. The success of the study was demonstrated by an increase in brand equity and improvements in performance at KM. Furthermore, revenue performance improved, talent was retained, and leadership became more performance oriented in their behaviour. The change programme emphasised three main components, namely brand ideology, a change in leadership behaviour, and the development of performance management systems of KM.

The change in brand ideology required coherent internal branding activities to drive communication and buy-in across the business and was led by the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) working alongside the leadership team. Importantly the modification of the performance management system drove effectiveness and created an alignment within the leadership team in their pursuit of the company goals, which were cascaded down throughout the organisation. This strategic approach in performance management system and brand ideology gave rise to leadership renewal and provided cohesion across the leadership team which improved the KM brand equity.

The change programme that brought about these positive results, was conceptualised and implemented from a branding perspective. KM's adopting of a branding approach to an

organisational change intervention was unique and interesting, since there has not been much research on this approach, and certainly not in the media industry. Even though a few research studies have been done in other industries, there is nothing in the South African context. Some studies have been conducted in countries like China, Spain, and Australia (Merrilees, Miller and Yakimova, 2021; Zhang and Xu, 2021). However, those studies never focused on leadership behaviour in implementing change using a brand-focused approach.

The study therefore aimed to analyse how a change in brand ideology and its associated internal branding activities shaped the senior leadership behaviour at KM and required modifying and improving the performance management system. The study focused on the internal branding activities which incorporated developing the brand ideology, brand leadership and performance management system.

The study describes the following:

- The internal branding activities that were implemented, which proved to be the cornerstone for driving effective internal communication.
- The change in brand ideology which was the catalyst for the change and brought the leadership team together to drive a common goal and improve performance at KM.
- The improvement in leadership behaviour as a result of coaching and other interventions.
- The modification of the performance management system was implemented and improved performance.

The significance of this study is that it illustrates how a branding approach could be used by companies in media or any other industries to implement change.

### **1.3 Aims and objectives**

The aim of this study was to analyse how brand ideology at Kagiso Media was used to shape and influence brand leadership and performance through revised the performance management system to enhance brand equity.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- Objective 1: To describe the internal branding change management programme at KM.
- Objective 2: To describe the improvement in brand equity that was associated with the implementation of the programme.

- Objective 3: To describe the change in brand ideology (i.e. vision, mission, values, and strategic goals).
- Objective 4: To describe the change in senior leadership behaviour.
- Objective 5: To describe the change in the components of the performance management system at the organisational, departmental, and individual levels, including what was measured.
- Objective 6: To describe how the change in the performance management system was implemented.
- Objective 7: To describe how the change in brand ideology required modification in the performance management system that was implemented.
- Objective 8: To analyse how the change in brand ideology (vision, mission, values, and goals) shaped the senior leadership behaviour at KM. As part of reviewing and improving performance, the leadership team needed to take time to discuss, review, and outline the KM brand ideology.
- Objective 9: To analyse how modification of the performance management system at KM improved performance.

#### **1.4 Key concepts**

The key concepts that the study utilised are as follows:

*Branding:* is defined as the set of activities that distinguishes a brand and develops the brand's identity or shapes some components of the brand (Hodges and Martin, 2012). The study looked at how branding activities were used to shape the KM brand and leadership behaviour.

*Brand ideology:* Brand ideology incorporates the business mission, vision, goals and shared values of a brand, and is regarded as the most central component of internal branding for any organisation (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).. Saleem and Iglesias (2016) recognise that a consistent and clear brand ideology provides focus for employees, which in turn improves performance.

*Brand leadership:* Brand leadership is defined as techniques and strategies that organisations use to market a product or service (Chang and Ko, 2014). A strong brand leadership leads to increased identification with brand values by employees, which in turn has the strongest impact on employee commitment (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

*Performance management:* Is defined as an ongoing, continuous process of communicating and clarifying job responsibilities, priorities, performance expectations, and development planning that optimize an individual's performance and aligns with organisational strategic goals (Bourne et al., 2013).

*Performance management system:* Is defined as a coordinated and collaborative method to create, measure, track and achieve organisational goals. It creates a performance-driven organisation because all members of the organisational team are on the same page in terms of direction, priorities, progress and accountability (Hodges and Martin, 2013).

*Brand equity:* Is defined as the set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand (Budac and Baltador, 2013). Also, brand equity is the name of the brand and symbol that add something to the value that is provided by the brand (Budac and Baltador, 2013)

## **1.5 Research Design**

For this study, the researcher adopted the post-positivist paradigm. According to Pearse (2021), this paradigm provides the necessary conditions for utilising qualitative data to verify research propositions. Furthermore, the post-positivist paradigm does not assume multiple realities and aims to produce objective and generalisable knowledge about social patterns, seeking to affirm the presence of universal laws in relationships amongst pre-defined variables (Pearse, 2021). According to Pearse (2021), both quantitative and qualitative research approaches and methods can be utilised in post-positivist research, as the research topic dictates what is appropriate.

In terms of data gathering, an explanation-building approach was used (Pearse, 2021). This was mainly done through semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews which were ideal since the sample size was moderate. The researcher gathered data from individually interviewing all members of the KM leadership team, a total of eight people, who comprised middle and senior management. An analysis of relevant internal documents related to the internal branding activities, complemented the interviews.

A deductive thematic approach to the case study was used for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes.

The research was explanatory rather than exploratory in nature (Pearse, 2021). Explanatory case studies address questions or offer explanations for the generative mechanisms underlying events or processes (Pearse, 2021). For this study, these approaches entailed the analysis of how the change in vision, mission, values, and strategic goals at KM has brought about a

change in senior leadership behaviour and led to the development and implementation of a new performance management system.

The data collected was summarised, analysed thematically, and interpreted to reflect the management team's general view of the impact of the brand ideology, the implemented performance management system and internal branding activities that shaped the KM brand equity. In addition, the researcher used the recorder, code book and coding memo where all interview responses were coded to make the analysis more straightforward to administer. Pearce (2019) identifies seven steps to be followed in carrying out deductive thematic analysis, and these were adopted. According to Pearce (2019), these steps are: (1) conceptual framework, (2) propositions, (3) code book, (4) question matrix, (5) data collection, (6) analysis, and (7) reporting.

## **1.6 Outline of the thesis**

**Chapter 1** has provided an introduction to the study. This chapter presented key concepts, the research methodology, the importance of the study, the research objectives and an outline of the chapters contained in this study.

**Chapter 2** provides the literature review on brand ideology as part of internal branding activities and how brand ideology shaped the leadership behaviour through modifying the performance management system.

**Chapter 3** focuses on how the research was conducted in terms of the research methodology. It provides the research goals and describes the research paradigm and research method that were adopted for the study. It also provides details on the data gathering techniques, research participants, methods of analysis and ethical considerations.

**Chapter 4** presents the key findings gathered during the interviews and presents the findings in relation to the proposition of the study.

**Chapter 5** discusses the findings of the study.

**Chapter 6** provides a conclusion of the study, which serves to restate the key contribution of this study and make recommendations to management practitioners and for further research.

# CHAPTER 2

## Review of Literature

---

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce Resource-Based Theory (RBT) and review the internal branding literature, which informed this study. RBT formed the basis of this study and was the underlying theory of this research. RBT describes how an organisation's internal resources are used to create an internal core competence, which provides it with a competitive advantage (Barney, 2001).

RBT recognises several different internal resources, one of which is the organisation's brand. This chapter focuses on analysing the brand as a resource and how brand equity can be created through changes in brand ideology. Also, branding activities will be viewed as a mechanism to develop and mobilise the internal resources of an organisation.

### 2.2 Resource-Based Theory (RBT)

According to Barney (2001), RBT is defined and viewed as one of the foremost theories for illustrating and elaborating on resources relating to organisations. RBT maintains that the firm's internal resources can be a source of core competence and sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 2001). According to Barney (2001), RBT explains the significance of resources and capabilities in optimising organisational performance. RBT also suggests that firms should identify rare and costly-to-imitate resources and capabilities they possess and then use those resources and capabilities to choose and implement strategies that will satisfy customer preferences (Barney and Mackey, 2018).

Furthermore, RBT recognises the brand as an organisation's internal resource (Barney, 2001), and that to succeed and compete meaningfully, organisations need to develop a brand as the key competitive resource (Prashar & Maity, 2024). RBT also views branding as a cross-functional process that involves both marketing and human resource departments (Prashar and Maity, 2024).

From the perspective of RBT, this study recognises that focusing on managing the brand internally - through developing the brand ideology, and engaging in brand-centred human resource management, internal branding, and brand leadership - has the potential to create a

competitive advantage (Khairy et al., 2023) and build brand equity (Joseph et al., 2021). According to Iswan and Kihara (2022), firms must plan and budget for brand building as one of the organisational resources which develop a core competence and drive a positive business climate. RBT also focuses on the role of leaders' actions in structuring and leveraging firms' resources proactively to gain competitiveness and this is referred to as resource orchestration (Schmidt, Ind and Iglesias, 2021). Resource orchestration explicitly addresses the leaders' role in structuring, bundling and leveraging all of an organisation's resources (Schmidt et al., 2021).

From the literature reviewed above, it can be deduced that RBT is about the strategic use of the firm's resources to build brand equity, in this case the brand and internal branding resources. When analysing RBT in the context of organisational internal resources Davis and DeWitt (2021) noted that RBT is one of the most successful theoretical approaches in the field of strategic leadership. In addition, RBT can improve organisational performance by improving the wellbeing of its stakeholders at the same time create organisational value or equity (El Nemar et al., 2022).

These key internal resources were considered in the context of how a media company has utilised organisational brand ideology to create brand equity through internal branding activities.

### **2.3 The concept of a brand**

A brand is defined as an intangible marketing or business attribute that helps consumers to identify a company, a product, or an individual (Grundey, 2009). According to Lee and Suh (2023), a brand is an intangible asset that is used as a differentiator in the competitive marketplace. Organisations' brand management capability drives customer knowledge and expectations into appropriate positioning of the brand both internally and externally (Iyer et al., 2021). A brand is an important company asset, as it can potentially increase the company earnings (Grundey, 2009).

A brand is developed through a set of branding activities (Grundey, 2009). A brand is more than simply a useful tool for managers, it is a strategic necessity that enables firms to increase consumer value and preserve sustainable competitive advantage (Khairy et al., 2023). The brand of every company is its most precious resource, which, with proper management, can help it gain a significant market share, competitiveness and increase revenues (Knop, 2022). Brands with a good reputation benefit both consumers and all stakeholders and leave

consumers satisfied with the quality of the products and services, associating them with good value for money (Rubio, Oubiña, and Villaseñor, 2014).

Raj (2020) argues that strong brands can establish credibility and trust amongst current and prospective employees, customers, and consumers through branding activities. According to Kay (2006), this leadership approach on branding brands affect employees and consumer experiences and preferences powerfully. From these definitions, it can be deduced that successful branding activities can optimise and deliver critical equity for any organisation.

### **2.3.1 Branding**

There is a distinct difference between branding and a brand. Branding is defined as the set of activities that distinguishes a brand and develops the brand's identity (Hodges and Martin, 2012), or shapes some components of the brand. Branding plays a vital role in positioning corporates, their products, and services to clients, or attracting possible talent to be a part of the workforce resources (Hodges and Martin, 2012). Employer branding has two objectives. Firstly, it is a source of attraction for new employees and secondly, is a source of motivation for incumbents to stay with the employer for longer (Azam, 2022). Companies with strong brand reputations are likely to attract the best talent (Grundey, 2009). According to Azam (2022), both prospective candidates and current employees are important stakeholders in employer branding.

It is argued that a brand with supporting branding activities gives brand value (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016), and in this study brand value will be referred to as brand equity. Top management has learned through experience that branding activities play an important role in retaining talented workers and developing a competitive advantage (Azam, 2022). According to Buil, Martinez and Matute (2016), internal branding raises positive workplace emotions. A positive internal branding results in a good relationship between the brand identity and brand loyalty of employees (Buil et al., 2016) and facilitates the internalisation of organisational values by its employees (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Research on internal branding in the media industry has been neglected. Most of the studies on internal branding adopted a qualitative approach and have been done in the hospitality industry; mainly in hotels (Buil et al., 2016), hospitals and business-to business-industries (Huang & Lai, 2021), cities and destinations (Smith, Jacobson and Rudkowski, 2021). Studies have been conducted in China (Zhang & Xu, 2021), and Spain and Australia (Merrilees et al., 2021), but

no South African study was identified. No research was identified that was conducted within the media industry, where KM operates.

According to Latifah and Muafi (2021), a brand needs to develop brand equity in order to be competitive. Brand equity could be achieved by developing consistent and supporting branding activities that are brand specific (Schmidt et al., 2021). It is argued that branding activities are designed to manage and increase brand equity of any organisation (Budac and Baltador, 2013). This research examines a change intervention at KM, which was implemented by focusing on internal branding activities, and which resulted in increased brand equity.

## **2.4 Brand equity**

Brand equity is defined as the set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand (Budac and Baltador, 2013). Brand equity is the name of the brand and symbol that add something to the value that is provided by the brand (Budac and Baltador, 2013). Brand commitment, brand loyalty, and brand citizenship behaviours can build brand equity in front of external stakeholders (Barros-Arrieta et al., 2024). RBT confirms that certain internal resources like internal branding produce a competitive advantage and equity of an organisation (Regany and Longo, 2023). Brand equity is the brand's worth, or value, and it is developed through a set of branding activities (Budac and Baltador, 2013).

From these definitions, it can be deduced that internal resources, in particular branding play an important role in creating organisational equity (Latifah and Muafi, 2021). Brand equity brings higher profit margins or profitability, by enabling the brand to charge premium pricing for its product or services (Budac and Baltador, 2013). Brand equity also offers business growth through brand extensions, and product-oriented brands with a strong brand equity get privileged positions on the shelf and enjoy various marketing and promotions for the organisation (Budac and Baltador, 2013).

It is argued that leadership can improve the brand equity of an organisation through branding activities (Budac and Baltador, 2013). Internal branding plays a critical role in establishing and sustaining effective communication between employers and employees which in return build the brand equity (Santos et al., 2023). Consequently internal branding serves as an essential foundation for achieving various goals within organisations, one of which is brand equity (Santos et al., 2023). Brand equity is achieved because of consistent branding activities (Budac and Baltador, 2013). It is argued that branding activities can be internal or external, and both sets of brandings activities ultimately drive brand equity (Shulga, 2021). For this study, the

research focused on internal branding activities that were implemented at KM to shape the brand equity of the organisation.

## 2.5 Internal branding

Internal branding is a set of branding activities that drives the development of the company brand, which in turn builds the brand equity (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Internal branding is important in terms of supporting the brand and building its brand equity (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Internal branding is crucial in ensuring employees are aware and informed about the organisation’s brand ideology (Santos et al., 2023).

Internal branding has been defined and conceptualised in a variety of ways. The table below represents the many different definitions and descriptions of internal branding.

**Table 2.1: Internal brand/branding definition**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Definition or description</b>
Ulrich and Smallwood (2008)	Internal branding begins from outside, not inside, as leadership brand translates customer expectations into leadership competencies.
Kucherov, Tsybova, Livoskaia and Alkanova (2022)	Internal branding is composed of brand-centred HRM practices, internal branding communications and brand leadership.
Saini, Lievens and Srivastava (2022)	Internal branding is conceptualised as brand-centred HR activities, brand communications and brand leadership that drive a strong employer brand.
Raj (2020:3 22)	Internal branding helps in shaping employees’ behaviour which supports their individual outcomes in the organisation.
Saleem and Iglesias (2016:50)	Internal branding is the process through which organisations make a company-wide effort within a supportive culture to integrate brand ideologies, leadership, HRM, internal brand communications and internal brand communities as a strategy to enable employees to consistently co-create brand value with multiple stakeholders.

Source: Author’s construction

Although there are many different definitions of internal branding, there is certain agreement that it is a process through which brands aim to facilitate the internalisation of brand values by employees (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). The internal branding literature indicates that the

building of brand understanding is the first step when internally building a brand (Knop, 2022). Consequently internal branding helps employees to align with the company brand, mission, vision and culture as it involves brand-related communication in all business directions, internally and externally (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Modifying the definition of Saleem and Iglesias (2016:50), internal branding was defined in this study as the process through which an organisation makes “a company-wide effort within a supportive culture to integrate brand ideologies, leadership, HRM, internal brand communications and internal branding communities as a strategy to enable employees to consistently co-create brand equity with multiple stakeholders”. The use of the term brand equity is to avoid confusion between the organisation values that are part of the brand ideology and the value or equity arising from building a brand.

## **2.6 Critiques of brand and internal branding**

It is argued that there are advantages and challenges attributed to internal branding. These challenges occur both in the public and in the private business sectors (Leijerholt, Biedenbach and Hultén, 2022). Nevertheless, internal branding is an essential marketing tool for organisations to compete in today’s dynamic markets and to stay ahead of competition (Wei, 2022). It is therefore vital that organisations realise the importance of developing and implementing branding activities to align employees to brand ideology, improve employees’ performance and brand equity (Wei, 2022). Internal communication, employee training and development, employee meetings, and employee communication briefings are some of the important components of internal branding (Wei, 2022).

According to Saleem and Iglesias, (2016), internal branding improves employee performance, job satisfaction and employees’ intention to remain at their jobs. It is argued that internal branding positively and continuously affects employees and brand performance (Schmidt et al., 2021). Internal communication strengthens the psychological contracts between employees and organisations (Shulga, 2021). The psychological contract is defined as the unwritten, intangible agreement between the employee and the employer (Wei, 2022). The psychological contract defines the commitment, expectations and understanding between the employees and the employer (Wei, 2022). According to Wei (2022), it is argued that a safe psychological contract and brand-oriented leadership play a role towards the positive performance of employees.

However, despite the increasing relevance of internal branding, there are challenges associated with it. According to Leijerholt et al. (2022), there have been some unsuccessful internal branding initiatives. It is argued that if internal branding does not align with the external brand perception, it can create a dissonance for the organisation's talent, which erodes credibility (Hogan and Coote, 2014).

In addition, internal branding might fail to empower employees (Leijerholt et al., 2022). It is noted that in most instances, internal branding initiatives are designed and communicated mainly by senior leadership, often without involving employees at lower levels in the process (Zhendorfer, 2021). According to Zhendorfer (2021), internal branding can sometimes feel like a forced or superficial exercise, where the brand ideology or culture are communicated in a way that feels disconnected from employees' actual experiences. A top-down managerial approach may also not be optimal in a socioeconomic business environment that is rapidly changing (Schmidt et al., 2021). Also, internal branding may favour the organisation or the brand over employees or distort boundaries between employees' work and private lives (Leijerholt et al., 2022).

Furthermore, internal branding fails when diversity and inclusion is not incorporated (Apeksha and Nirmali, 2017). According to Apeksha and Nirmali (2017), internal branding efforts risk alienating employees who do not see themselves reflected in the brand's values and messages. This exclusion can result into under performance, higher turnover, and disengagement, especially among leadership groups.

While internal branding efforts might have some challenges, it is argued that internal branding remains an important part of building strong organisational brands which result in a strong brand equity (Leijerholt et al., 2022). If internal branding activities, are implemented strategically, there is a potential to address issues on performance and build organisational equity (Hogan and Coote, 2014). The research seeks to explain how KM utilised the internal branding with the KM leadership team to drive performance and deliver brand equity for the organisation.

## **2.7 The components of internal branding**

Internal branding is proposed to be one of the most comprehensive ways to improve employee performance (Thokoa, Naidoo and Herbst, 2022). Internal branding refers to the systematically planned effort of an organization to build a positive reputation with internal and external

stakeholders (Kaur, Malhotra and Sharma, 2020). It is argued that internal branding helps the organization to make sure that expressed brand values are delivered by employees (Kaur et al., 2020). Internal branding has been widely recognized as having the capability of achieving a sustainable performance and competitive advantage through building strong teams and brands whose positioning would be impossible for competitors to copy (Taku, Saini and Abratt, 2022).

According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016), internal branding includes five components, namely (1) brand leadership, (2) brand-centred human resource management (HRM), (3) brand ideology, (4) internal brand communication, and (5) internal brand communities. For this study the focus was on how the changes in brand ideologies brought about change in brand leadership (i.e. senior leadership behaviour), and how changes in brand ideology required a modification in performance management (which is part of brand-centred HRM) to deliver the KM brand equity. The branding perspective was adopted in this study because it was a unique way that KM used to change the leadership behaviour.

### **2.7.1 Brand ideology**

Saleem and Iglesias (2016) recognise brand ideology as the most central component of internal branding for any organisation. When an organisation has employee buy-in of its brand ideology and its values are deeply rooted in the hearts and mind of its employees, a sustainable competitive performance advantage will be achieved (Taku et al., 2022). According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016), brand ideology incorporates the business mission, vision, goals, and shared values of a brand.

It is argued that employees who are satisfied with the brand ideology are most likely to provide customers with great service (Sung and Hu, 2021). Saleem and Iglesias (2016) recognise that a consistent and clear brand ideology provides focus for the employees, which in turn improves performance. Brand ideology provides focus for employees when making decisions congruent with the brand values (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Strong shared values and brand knowledge only emerge and become consolidated when the positioning of the brand and the role of employees are inspired by a common brand ideology (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Brand ideology is evident when there is synergy between brand leadership, employees, performance and organisational culture (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Consequently appropriate brand ideology appeals to individuals' emotional awareness, thus emphasizing performance success of the organisation (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). From these definitions it can be deduced that brand ideology of an organisation can bring about change in the behaviour of the

leadership team (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Developing brand ideology (through the mission, vision, values, and strategic goals) combined with brand leadership activities and effective performance management can increase brand equity (Budac and Baltador, 2013).

For this study, the research analysed the brand ideology activities and types of internal brand communication that were utilised in shaping the leadership behaviour and performance to deliver strong brand equity for KM.

### **2.7.2 Brand leadership**

According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016), brand leadership is evident when transformational leaders work alongside staff to disseminate a clear brand ideology and facilitate a positive shared understanding of the brand.

A strong leadership team promotes employee identification with brand values, which, in turn, impacts on employee commitment (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). The internalisation of brand ideologies by employees because of organisational leaders' improved brand leadership, reduces turnover, in addition to increasing the presence of brand related behaviour and performance (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

A brand leadership mindset increases the responsibility of leaders and employees, and therefore enables extra-role responsibility towards brand building behaviour (Chhibber, Chabal and Kaurav., 2024). Although there is sufficient evidence to prove brand leadership is critical to all organisation, this awareness is not rendered to practice (Suomi et al., 2021). It is argued that true brand leadership is derived when leaders work alongside employees to make the employees' contribution felt (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). By doing so, leaders translate the brand ideology and facilitate the brand promise delivery by employees (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Leaders are responsible for the dissemination of a clear brand ideology to prevent any possible misunderstanding that could potentially confuse employees or hinder superior performance and brand leadership (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). For this study, the research seeks to explain how a media company utilised the brand ideology to drive performance and ultimately deliver brand equity for KM.

### **2.7.3 Brand-centred Human Resource Management (HRM)**

Brand-centred HRM is a strategic approach where human resource activities are specifically designed and aligned to support and reinforce the organization's brand identity, values, and positioning (Knop, 2022). Human resource management is responsible for driving all brand centred activities (Barros-Arrieta et al., 2024). Human resource management are responsible for incorporating reward systems to motivate employees to exhibit positive brand behaviours (Barros-Arrieta et al., 2024). As part of brand-centred HRM, the Human Resource Management function is responsible for socializing employees into the brand and brand ideology, and for maintaining the psychological contract (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

The HRM team reward employees who score high on customer satisfaction, demonstrate performance according to brand objectives, and exhibit attitudes consistent with the brand ideology (Goldring, Gong and Girona, 2022). The HRM function is responsible for training employees in line with the brand ideology, which in turn promotes the brand values (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). In a brand-centred organisation, HRM emphasizes the role of employees in embodying the brand, ensuring that the talent management strategy supports the organization's overall brand promise (Barros-Arrieta et al., 2024).

In summary, Human resource management is responsible for key activities, and these include recruiting, selecting, attracting and retaining talent possessing values that are congruent with the brand ideologies (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). In a brand-centred organisation, HRM plays an important partnership role in helping leadership drive a positive brand ideology through mobilising HR activities as internal branding activities (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). HRM can be a formidable partner in implementing all key organisational activities to drive positive performance in partnership with leadership (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

According to Knop (2022), brand-centred HRM takes responsibility for including performance indicators showing how employees contribute to building brand equity of the organisation. Saleem and Iglesias (2016) do not explicitly mention performance management as part of brand-centred HRM, yet it is argued that when employees are recruited, their performance needs to be shaped (Knop, 2022). Therefore, a performance management system should be treated as a brand-centred HRM activity (Bourne et al., 2013). It is argued that brand-centred human resource management activities and performance management systems contribute towards the building and upholding of the brand ideology of the organisation (Bourne et al., 2013).

### **2.7.3.1 Performance Management as a brand-centred HRM activity**

Performance management is a systematic process through which an organization involves its employees in improving organizational effectiveness in the accomplishment of the organization's mission and goals (Kadak and Laitinen, 2021). Performance management involves the management of potential for future successful implementation of actions in order to reach the company's objectives and targets (Bourne et al., 2013). Two levels of performance management are highlighted in this research.

Firstly, performance management can be observed from the perspective of an organisation's overall strategic performance (Bourne et al., 2013). That is, the strategic management of performance is critical in driving positive organisational performance (Bourne et al., 2013). A Performance Management System supports the performance management process by tracking, and organizing performance data (Christopher, 2020). Performance management systems play an important role in supporting management to improve and maintain performance in business (Kadak and Laitinen, 2021). It is argued that different organisations use different performance management systems to measure what is important for their company, as this differs from one company to the next (Bourne et al., 2013).

Strategic performance management can be seen as setting "the rules of the game" towards organisational goals (Bourne et al., 2013). It is argued that strategic management of performance requires strategic leadership planning (Kadak & Laitinen, 2021). That is, leaders plan and set strategic performance goals to track organisational performance (Christopher, 2020).

Furthermore, brand ideology positively impacts leadership behaviour (Christopher, 2020). A clear mission and vision for employees leads to a better understanding of the brand values (Aslam et al., 2023). Clear brand ideology leads to a strong prospect of leadership psychological and intellectual engagement towards the organisational goals (Aslam et al., 2023).

According to Bourne et al. (2013), there are benefits and advantages of performance management systems that include but are not limited to the following:

- Understanding where the organisation has been (more about the past and how the organisation got to where it is).

- Understanding where the organisation is now (more about the current status and potential of what more could be achieved).
- Understanding how the organisation is going to get there (more about understanding budget, planning and continuous improvement).
- Understanding how the organisation will know once it gets there (this measures the understanding of feedback about whether objectives and targets are achieved).

The second level of performance management is related to individual performance management (Mmutle, 2022). The strategic leadership of an organisation, supported by line managers, play a critical role in aligning organisational and individual performance goals (Mmutle, 2022). According to Bourne et al. (2013), an employee performance management system is critical for consistently improving strategic alignment between employees and leadership.

Performance management is explored as part of the brand-centred HRM component and as one of the activities which HRM drives to build a brand and shape the talent, especially for internal stakeholders (Bourne et al., 2013). It is argued that clear brand ideology motivates employees to put an extra effort to achieve the organisational goals (Qureshi et al., 2022). There is a lot of work that has been done on the relationship between brand ideology and performance management (Kadak and Laitinen, 2021). According to Kadak and Laitinen (2021), performance is never objective, it is only a way of defining where an organisation wants to go in terms of performance. Companies retain their talent by using several strategies, for example, by developing a clear performance management plan fostering employee engagement to drive performance (Vieira, Gomes Da Costa and Santos, 2024). It is argued that a clear brand ideology positively influences individual performance (Qureshi et al., 2022), and so coherent and consistent communication about the brand ideology improves performance throughout the organisation (Santos et al., 2023). It is argued that brand ideology is critical from recruitment to hiring employees and to communicating performance expectations (Santos et al., 2023). Consequently, the competitive edge arising from the performance of employees depends on how successfully and effectively the brand ideology is articulated (Aslam et al., 2023). From these definitions, it can be deduced that clear communication of brand ideology is critical in aligning both organisational and individual goals (Mmutle, 2022).

The literature indicates that HRM is responsible for most of the performance and branding related activities aimed at delivering a strong brand equity (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Consequently, HRM activities are essential for the dissemination of a clear brand ideology, performance expectations (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). The performance management system ensures consistency, quality, employee engagement, brand ambassadorship, continuous improvement, and the delivery of the brand promise (Hodges and Martin, 2012).

By aligning employee performance with the brand ideology and organisational objectives, organisations can reinforce their brand identity, reputation, and customer loyalty (Hodges and Martin, 2012). The purpose of this study was to analyse how KM leadership with the support of HRM revised the performance management system to shape internal branding and brand equity of KM.

#### **2.7.4 Internal brand communication**

Internal communication is defined as consistent and effective communication by leadership, treating employees like customers (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Coherence internal brand communication helps to improve employee performance, as communication is conveyed logically, congruently, and appropriately. (Santos et al., 2023). Internal brand communication is any brand-related communication in all directions internally and externally (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Internal brand communications should strive to capture the attention and engage employees by incorporating enjoyment, surprise, and curiosity (Garavan et al., 2022). By infusing these exciting elements into communication efforts, companies can ensure that their employees are aware of the organisation's brand ideology and foster a sense of excitement and enthusiasm among employees (Santos et al., 2023).

Internal brand communication can be divided into the formal internal communication, informal internal communication, formal external communication, and informal external communication (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). For this study, the research investigated the KM brand ideology and types of internal brand activities that were utilised in shaping the leadership behaviour and performance to deliver a strong brand equity for KM.

#### **2.7.5 Internal brand communities**

According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016), internal brand communities are referred to as the virtual and physical communities that foster employee identification with the brand. Internal communities are specialized communities bound by social relations among followers of a

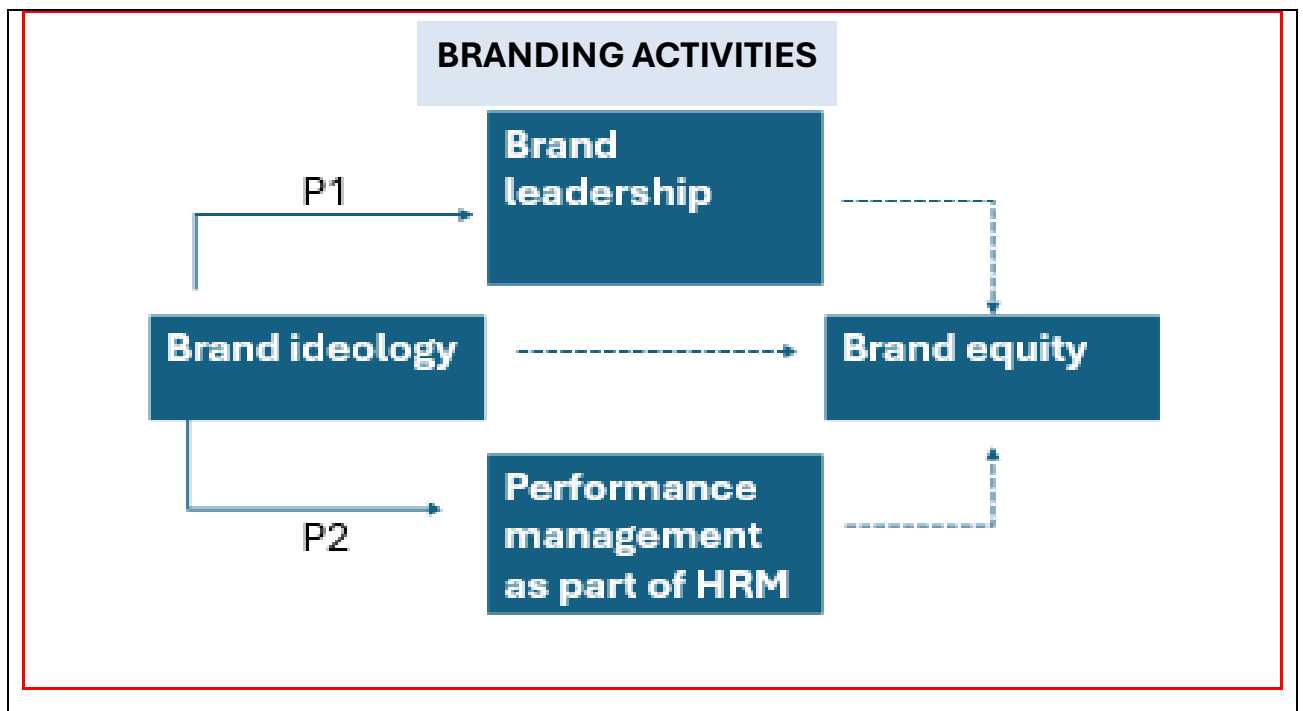
particular brand. It is argued that brand communities, are constantly gaining a strong influence on the internal branding process (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

The internal branding communities are regarded as viable components that could assist in aligning employee behaviour with brand values and brand ideology (Khairy et al., 2023).

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

Based upon the literature reviewed in this chapter, following is the conceptual framework of this study. This research has two research propositions to be tested, and these are: Firstly, that a change in brand ideology will shape brand leadership behaviour. The second proposition is that when an organisation changes its brand ideology this will require changes to be made to the performance management system to support the revised mission, vision, and values.

The research only examines these two of the five possible propositions illustrated in Figure 2.1. The research will not be looking at brand equity, nor the link between brand ideology and brand equity.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework: Brand ideology through brand leadership and Performance Management System shapes brand equity**

Source: Author's construction

## **2.9 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has discussed various topics surrounding brand ideology and internal branding. The chapter outlined how brand ideology through brand leadership activities and performance management can shape the brand equity of the organisation to position it competitively. The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 illustrates how brand ideology through brand leadership and performance management reinforces the brand equity of an organisation. This research on internal branding as a change initiative focuses only on the influence of brand ideology on the key components of (1) brand leadership, and (2) performance management as part of brand centred HRM approach.

The next chapter will outline the research methodology employed, and detail the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategies, and analytical techniques used.

# CHAPTER 3

## Research Methodology

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### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives details on the methodology that was used to conduct research for this study. Details on data collection and data analyses are given. Furthermore, the chapter describes the data analysis process, the research quality criteria and how they were met, and how ethical compliance was achieved.

### 3.2 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this study was to analyse how brand ideology at KM was used to shape and influence brand leadership and performance through revised the performance management system to enhance brand equity.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- Objective 1: To describe the internal branding change management programme at KM.
- Objective 2: To describe the improvement in brand equity that was associated with the implementation of the programme.
- Objective 3: To describe the change in brand ideology (i.e. vision, mission, values, and strategic goals).
- Objective 4: To describe the change in senior leadership behaviour.
- Objective 5: To describe the change in the components of the performance management system at the organisational, departmental, and individual levels, including what was measured.
- Objective 6: To describe how the change in the performance management system was implemented.
- Objective 7: To describe how the change in brand ideology required modification in the performance management system that was implemented.
- Objective 8: To analyse how the change in brand ideology (vision, mission, values, and goals) shaped the senior leadership behaviour at KM. As part of reviewing and improving performance, the leadership team needed to take time to discuss, review, and outline the KM brand ideology.

- Objective 9: To analyse how modification of the performance management system at KM improved performance.

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

The study adopted the post-positivist paradigm. According to Pearse (2021), this paradigm provides the necessary conditions for utilising qualitative data to verify research propositions.

It does not assume multiple realities and aims to produce objective and generalisable knowledge about social patterns, seeking to affirm the presence of universal laws in relationships amongst pre-defined variables (Pearse, 2021). According to Pearse (2021), both quantitative and qualitative research approaches and methods can be utilised in post-positivist research.

This approach was considered relevant to probe leaders' knowledge, experience, and background on the implantation of change management program and internal branding activities at KM.

### **3.4 A case study as the research method**

The research method encompasses the strategies, processes or techniques utilised in the collection of data or evidence for analysis in order to uncover new information or create a better understanding of a topic. For this study, the case study method was adopted which is qualitative (Creswell, 2009). The reason for considering a qualitative case study research method was because it enables responding to "why" and "how" questions (Baxter and Jack, 2015). Furthermore, the case study method provides a deeper understanding of the research question through in-depth scrutiny (Creswell, 2009).

The research study adopted a deductive approach to the case study, and the research was explanatory rather than exploratory in nature (Pearse, 2021). Explanatory case studies address questions or offer explanations for the generative mechanisms underlying events or processes (Pearse, 2021). For this study, these approaches entailed the analysis of the role played by the leadership team and HRM in implementing the performance management system and their facilitation of all associated activities.

In the case of KM, the researcher analysed why brand ideology changes and certain internal branding activities were done and how they were done, including revising the performance management system. The study was conducted at the KM head office in Johannesburg.

### **3.5 Data collection techniques**

Data was collected through interviews and documents. Interviews are an essential source of case study research information, as they allow the researcher to focus on the case study topic (Rashid et al., 2019). An interview helps to gather valid and reliable data for research questions and objectives (Rashid et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is argued that the interviews should be consistent with the research question and objectives and the purpose of the research (Rashid et al., 2019). The interviews were semi structured in format.

Data was collected through face-to-face and online interviews with the senior and middle management teams of Kagiso Media (KM), as well as the HRM manager. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of eight (8) leadership team members. These were knowledgeable individuals who were part of the leadership team that reviewed and implemented the change management programme and performance management system. During the interview process, the researcher asked about the role played by the leadership team in revising the brand ideology through internal branding and performance management to shape the brand equity at Kagiso Media. According to Golden (2017), semi-structured interviews are beneficial because they can provide information on the lived experience of the participants.

Interview questions were prepared for three different sets of interviewees (HRM, middle management, and senior management), as explained in Table 3.1 below. The first section of all the interviews collected demographic information. The second section was designed with the specific set of respondents in mind and sought to understand their level of participation in improving performance management at KM. The third section sought to understand their specific role, degree of participation and involvement in implementing the brand ideology to change leadership behaviour and driving performance to build brand equity at KM.

In addition to the interviews, documentation of the organisation was analysed. Relevant documents included the KM brand ideology, performance management, performance management system documents and internal branding activities, were discussed.

### **3.6 The interviews**

Eight participants were purposefully selected, they were part of the KM leadership team. They all had varied levels of experience (refer to Table 3.1 below), most of them had been with KM for more than five years. Most of them are between the ages of 35 and 50 years. It was, therefore, important to note similarities and differences in the perceptions of these participants

who represented the entire KM management team. The interviews took place from 21 April 2023 to 29 May 2023 (Appendix A).

### 3.6.1 Interview Procedure

Before meeting with the interviewees, a meeting request, cover letter and informed consent forms were sent to the interviewees by the researcher to introduce the research objectives and purpose to ensure that the respondents understood the study context.

The researcher requested consent for interviews from the participants. The participants signed consent forms (Appendix E). One respondent indicated that they were only available online and requested an online interview. The interview sessions lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Interviews were kept interactive throughout the session. A coding memo was used (Appendix F). The coding memo assisted in maintaining transparency, track the evolution of ideas, and ensure consistency of the terminologies used and consistency in the data analysis.

The three interview guides (Appendix G) were used by the researcher to structure and facilitate data collection throughout the interviews. The difference between the guides were that *what* questions were predominantly directed at senior management as they were responsible for defining strategy, while *how* and *when* questions were directed mainly to middle management and HR manager who were responsible for day-to-day on-the-ground implementation. The below table indicate how the interview guides were utilised:

**Table 3.1: Respondents who participated**

The Interview Guides	Who was interviewed and the role they played in the change initiative
<p><b>Interview Guide One</b> – This interview guide was used for Human Resources. There was one HR manager.</p> <p>See Appendix G1</p>	<p>Respondent 1: HR Manager</p> <p>The HR Manager was a vital link between middle and senior management teams. She was responsible for briefing, following through on communication from senior management to middle management and ensuring that all the on ground internal brand activities were implemented as expected by the senior leadership team at KM.</p>

<p><b>Interview Guide Two</b> – Interview guide was used for middle management. There were four managers who participated.</p> <p>See Appendix G2</p>	<p>Respondent 2: Marketing Manager</p> <p>Respondent 3: Finance Manager</p> <p>Respondent 4 : Commercial Manager</p> <p>Respondent 5: Tech and broadcasting manager</p> <p>Middle managers were responsible to work with both HRM and senior management in ensuring that their teams were briefed regarding all change management activities, internal branding activities and performance expectations from the senior leadership team. They were the “implementing soldiers” on the ground on a day-to-day basis assisted mainly by the senior management team to provide direction.</p>
<p><b>Interview Guide Three</b> – This interview guide was used for senior management. There were three managers that formed part of the senior management team who participated:</p> <p>See Appendix G3</p>	<p>Respondent 6: Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Respondent 7: HR Director</p> <p>Respondent 8: Content Programming Manager</p> <p>Senior management was responsible for defining strategy. Led by the CEO they attended workshops where change management strategy was discussed, challenges were outlined by this team in consultation with middle managers and HR manager. Where necessary they were responsible for inviting external resources to train and assist the team to drive the renewed brand ideology and improve performance within KM.</p>

### 3.7 Data analysis

According to Taherdoost (2017), data analysis is defined as the process of making sense out of the data. The data gathered was summarised, analysed thematically, and interpreted to reflect the management team's general view of the impact of the brand ideology, the implemented performance management system and internal branding activities that shaped the KM brand equity.

A deductive thematic analysis approach was used. Deductive thematic analysis was considered appropriate for this study to uncover participants' shared perceptions of the KM internal branding phenomenon. Pearce (2019) identifies seven steps to be followed in carrying out deductive thematic analysis, and these were adopted for this study.

According to Pearce (2019), these steps are: (1) conceptual Framework, (2) Propositions, (3) Code Book, (4) Question Matrix, (5) Data Collection, (6) Analysis, and (7) Reporting. The application of these steps is described below.

### **3.7.1 Conceptual Framework**

The research problem that was researched in this paper was “how leaders used brand ideology through changes in brand leadership activities and modification of performance management system shaped the leadership behaviour of the organisation, Kagiso Media?”. The conceptual framework generated through the literature review chapter 2 (See Figure 2.1) illustrated and explained how brand ideology through change in brand leadership and revised performance management system reinforced the brand equity at KM.

### **3.7.2 Propositions**

In qualitative research, a proposition is a statement of the qualitative nature of the relationship between various concepts contained in the literature (Pearce, 2021). For this study, the propositions were developed in support of the research problem, namely:

**Proposition 1:** Changes in the brand ideology (i.e. its vision, mission, values and strategic goals) of an organisation will bring about a change in leadership behaviour.

**Proposition 2:** Changes in the brand ideology of an organisation will require modifications to be made to its performance management system.

### **3.7.3 Coding Memo**

For this study, a coding memo was developed and used to code the raw data collected through interviews and documents during interviews. Basically, each of the key concepts were given an appropriate abbreviation to facilitate the labelling of the data. The researcher used data from the transcription of the interviews and coded next to each question relevant text from the interview using different colours for different codes to get data themes and patterns.

For this study, the codes below were used.

**Table 3.2: Codes used in the research**

Code No.	Code label	Definition
1	Brand leadership activities (BLA)	Activities that are deliberately done by the leadership team to disseminate the KM brand ideology
2	Creating shared ideology (CSI)	Inspiration given by leaders to guide the choices, activities and reasons behind the revision of KM ideology
3	Brand Human Resource Management activities (BHRMA)	Internal and external KM brand activities done by HRM to communicate the KM internal brand and brand ideology
4	Brand Human Resource Management performance system implementation (BHR - PMSI)	What provisions and forums were made by HRM to inform staff about the improved PMS and internal branding activities
5	Performance Management System implementation (PMSI)	How was the PMS improvement communicated, who were the role players and what was measured
6	Brand Leadership involvement (BLI)	How involved were the leaders in the implementation of the improved PMS and how were the performance expectations communicated to staff

### 3.7.4 Question Matrix

For this study, while the interviews were semi-structured in nature, it was important that the researcher prepared the interview questions pertaining to all the research propositions of the study and to ensure that all the questions were asked during the interview.

The question matrix (see Appendix G) was developed to ensure that the questions that needed to be asked during the interviews were comprehensive in their coverage of the proposition.

### 3.7.5 Data Collection

The researcher scheduled interviews, prepared semi structured questions and during the interviews the data was collected. The interviews and collecting of all the data enabled the

researcher to consolidate the data that was analysed to determine whether the changes in the KM brand ideology did bring about change in brand leadership (i.e. leadership behaviour) and that changes in brand ideology requires modification of the performance management system to shape the brand equity.

### **3.7.6 Analysis**

Deductive thematic analysis was used in this study. Thematic analysis is a widely used and valuable method to analyse qualitative data, it allows researchers to make sense of shared meanings and experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2012).

According to Pearse (2021), deductive thematic analysis of data consists of three stages. Firstly, the code book and coding memorandum was applied to the data that were collected for this study, which involved reviewing, revising, and confirming that the codes did appear in the data by finding examples. Secondly, themes were identified, and herein themes represented some level of patterned responses within the dataset. Thirdly the themes arise from connecting codes to one another and thereby identifying patterns (Pearse, 2021).

### **3.7.7 Reporting**

All findings were written down, and the researcher ensured that each theme was given focus with the intention of showing how the data confirmed or refuted each proposition. The researcher ensured that the report captured both supporting and contracting evidence. Furthermore, each theme was presented, whereby the researcher referred to various respondents' feedback, incidents and events illustrating how the theme played out during data collection, narratives and summaries of all respondents supporting and contradicting evidence.

## **3.8 Quality considerations**

The researcher ensured quality that all processes, including research method and data collection techniques for this study, met all the appropriate and ethical considerations. The researcher used the audio recorder during interviews, data were transcribed into text using Otter.ai, thereby ensuring that respondents' direct words were captured accurately. This was necessary to minimize the chances of bias in the research findings.

The interview documents about the study were sent before the interviews once all respondents accepted the invitation for the interview meeting. This process enabled respondents to engage with the information to discuss the significant aspects surrounding this research aim and

objectives before the meeting. Furthermore, the researcher used a notebook to record key information from the relevant documentation. Multiple sources of evidence strengthen an investigation's validity (Belcher et al., 2016).

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

This study was guided by the research ethics requirements of Rhodes University and formal ethical approval was requested after a rigorous review process. The researcher obtained ethics approval in March 2023, as the study involves human subjects. The Ethics Application was approved by the Rhodes University Ethics Committee, the application reference code was **7083** and ethics approval letter (approval number 2023-7083-8249) is appended (Appendix B)

Also, the researcher ensured that permission was obtained to interview management teams at KM. The letter requesting gatekeeper permission to conduct research was sent to the group HR Director by the researcher before the interviews took place. The HR Director together with the group Chief Executive Officer had a meeting with the researcher to gain an overall understanding regarding the research study. Thereafter a research approval letter was issued by HR Director to the researcher (Appendix C).

Since the researcher is an employee at KM, the researcher may be considered an insider. An insider is defined as someone whose biography or profile gives them a lived familiarity with the group being researched (Bell and Bryman, 2007). The researcher ensured that the informed consent letters were signed to ensure that participants were fully informed in terms of privacy assurance, confidentiality of research data given by participants, anonymity, and that the researcher would ensure the protection and anonymity of all participants. The researcher needed to ensure that the participants were not misled by behaviour or information given. The researcher encouraged participants to give information that is honest and transparent.

Each participant's name was coded as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc., to maintain privacy. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their identity (by labelling them as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, etc.), which would not be shared with any other person without their consent. The researcher ensured that there was a high level of respect and dignity for all participants and avoided causing discomfort or anxiety during the interviews.

### **3.10 Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined the research methods employed to address the study's objectives and research questions. This chapter included research aim, research method, data collection techniques and sampling and research approach.

The following chapter 4 delved into presenting and discussing the findings of the study based on the data gathered through a qualitative method.

# CHAPTER 4

## Research Findings

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### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the study based on the data gathered through a qualitative method, which involved face-to-face and online interviews with the Kagiso Media (KM) leadership team. The leadership comprised the middle and senior management team across the divisions at KM. The findings are presented in line with the propositions and objectives of the study.

The focus of the study was on how the changes in the KM brand ideology brought about change in brand leadership (i.e. leadership behaviour) and how changes in brand ideology required some modification of the performance management system to shape the brand equity.

#### 4.1.1 Defining brand ideology, brand leadership and performance management

Respondents explained how they redefined the brand ideology, which associated brand ideology with the organisation's mission, vision, and values, and its performance management. For example, Respondents 6 and 7 said, "... *clear communication and brand leadership activities have provided clarity on what the mission and vision of KM is about*" and "... *that I would say the drivers behind the recent KM performance is as a result of intentional leadership activities*". Respondent 5 said, "... *due to internal branding activities, the staff turnover has decreased and there is more positive KM brand association with staff*".

Respondent 1 from the HRM department was very vocal about performance management where they emphasized that, "*clear communication regarding performance expectations and what was measured from one division to the next has allowed leaders to work alongside with employees to facilitate a shared understanding of KM desired performance*".

All respondents explained the importance of brand ideology, performance management and brand leadership as being essential in driving the brand equity of KM.

### 4.2 The background to change

The case study was conducted in a media company, KM, to describe the change management programme that was implemented, which included changes in the brand ideology, brand

leadership and performance management system. The study also outlined the improvement in brand equity as a result of reviewing the brand ideology, brand leadership and some components of the performance management system.

Upon arriving at KM, as part of managing performance, the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and leadership team reviewed the brand ideology, which included the business mission, vision, goals, and company values. Furthermore, the CEO reviewed the performance management system and brand leadership activities. The reviews took place after several one-on-one meetings and workshops with the leadership team before introducing changes. The leadership team agreed that these business components needed to be reviewed to drive performance and meet shareholder expectations.

Furthermore, reviewing these business components highlighted what needed to be measured to monitor and improve KM's business performance. Additionally, the study outlined how the organisational performance goals and expectations were cascaded from the leadership team to the rest of the business. The study also described how the leadership team utilised the brand ideology to drive high performance and positive team culture within KM.

#### **4.2.1 The change management programme at KM**

The first research objective was to describe the internal branding change management programme that was implemented and associated with improving the brand equity at KM. Respondents indicated that KM has been around for over 27 years and in the recent past (about five years), the business had been struggling to deliver results and meet shareholder expectations. Respondent 3 said, "*...we have been around for a long time, and we need to evolve*". The brand association amongst staff was not positive. Therefore, the board, together with HRM, agreed that a new leader was required to take the business to the desired performance levels. This led to the appointment of a new CEO.

The respondents indicated that the leadership team was prepared to embark on a leadership renewal journey together to improve the KM business performance. Respondent 7 said "*...we need a committed team to take the business forward*". The new CEO was hired to lead the team. One of the first tasks of the CEO was to review the KM brand ideology. At this time, the need for coaching, training and development for KM leaders was identified as key to improving their performance. They agreed on introducing deliberate brand leadership activities to communicate the reviewed KM brand ideology and to impact performance. The need for

reviewing these business components and change came firstly as a result of the change in leadership, with the appointment of the new CEO.

The respondents indicated that the previous CEO left the business due to performance challenges that the business was facing. Respondent 3 said,...*“Our revenues have been declining for the past five years”*. Therefore, a new CEO was hired with a clear mandate to improve business performance. The respondent indicated that the shareholders were very clear in terms of the candidate they required. Respondent 7 said, *“... the shareholders wanted someone who had a track record of building a performance culture and who will deliver business results”*.

Secondly, the media landscape was changing due to digital growth. The new CEO was expected to work with the leadership team to allocate resources to drive digital revenue growth. Respondent 1 said *“... We need right people in right places”*. The respondents indicated that multinational companies were minimising their traditional media spend to make provision for digital media. Respondent 2 said *“... The KM leadership team needed to ensure that there was a resource allocation provided to tap into the growing digital market”*.

Thirdly, KM was not performing optimally as it was experiencing limited revenue growth. The respondents indicated that for the past five years, KM failed to achieve its set revenue targets. Respondents 6 said, *“Our revenues have been declining for the past five years”*. Furthermore, they indicated that such performance minimised the internal and external brand leadership activities that would have driven positive staff morale. In addition, the general KM brand association was negative and therefore lacked an industry reputation. Respondent 7 from HRM said, *“it was hard to find and hire lucrative talent as the business was not seen as the influential media company or trend setters”*.

Fourthly, staff lacked morale and drive to deliver on shareholder expectations. The respondents indicated that staff lacked morale. Respondent 4 emphasized this point and said, *“... the company goals and performance expectations amongst staff and leaders were not clear, and staff lacked inspiration”*. Therefore, the team was overwhelmed and lacked drive, as their purpose and what was expected from them was unclear.

Lastly, the staff did not have a common set of values and goals, and therefore lacked team cohesion. The respondents indicated that the lack of performance and business growth created pressure for the entire team. Respondent 8 said, *“... Board meetings are stressful because of the amount of pressure we get from the board”*. Therefore, the new CEO and the leadership

team needed to spearhead the review of brand ideology and important business components to improve business performance.

These business elements needed to be taken into consideration when outlining the way forward for KM. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that over the past five years, KM had delivered negative revenue growth, which impacted on staff increases, incentives and training budget provisions. Respondent 4 said, “... *We need to evolve and deliver results so that we can earn some incentives*”. Therefore, the new CEO needed to work with the leadership team to outline the KM brand ideology, leadership behaviour and characteristics that were required to improve business performance.

The change programme was led by the new CEO and HRM, working together with the leadership team in reviewing the following key business performance imperatives:

- Revising KM brand ideology, e.g. how the mission, vision, goals and company values were shared with employees to ensure top of mind and awareness of the KM brand ideology.
- Setting clear performance expectations, e.g. setting clear goals at an organisational and departmental level to improve performance and accountability.
- Defining performance goals, e.g. outlining business performance expectations, notably highlighting how and what performance will be measured.
- Establishing key performance indicators (KPIs), e.g. HRM and the departmental leaders were intentional about clarifying company goals and KPIs, including departmental KPIs.
- Ongoing performance measurement. e.g. introduction of PEP and three times performance evaluation instead of once a year.
- Feedback review, coaching, and development of the leadership team, e.g. hiring coaches to assist the leadership team to be able to have tough conversation with staff when necessary.
- Training programmes for the leadership team, e.g. leadership executive programmes enrolment with coaches for the leadership team was done to ensure that the heightened performance standard across the business.

This process involved the entire KM leadership team working together to create and outline the KM brand ideology.

### **4.3 Brand equity improvement**

The second research objective was to describe the improvement in brand equity associated with implementing the change programme at KM. The respondents indicated that the staff morale improved after the changes in the brand ideology. Respondent 7 said, “... *employees will refer to themselves as proudly KM when talking about the KM*”. The respondents attributed the improved staff morale to brand leadership activities, i.e. staff induction for both new and existing staff, team building activities which were introduced to staff and took place annually where staff was reminded of the KM brand ideology.

The organisation's mission statement was mounted on the reception wall. The brand values were discussed at every staff meeting, and staff was questioned on the meaning and application of each value. Respondent 2 said, “For *the first time in my history at KM, we are living the brand values*”. The company strategy was cascaded throughout the organisation; therefore, all KM employees knew what was expected from them. Communication was not limited to the leadership team, especially regarding the strategy and key projects. The team took charge of their performance, which added value to the business because everyone was clear about what leadership expected. Importantly, the branding activities, such as client and staff engagements, brand activation events held internally and externally, and customer relations management, were well received by both staff and clients. As a result of these brand leadership activities, the revenue improved, and staff morale improved. Therefore, the KM brand performance was in line with expectations, which impacted positively on brand equity. The improvement was evident in profitable revenue growth, improvements in margins, a positive culture, and increased staff accountability across all business levels.

### **4.4 The changes brand ideology (mission, vision, values, and goals)**

The third research objective was to describe the change in brand ideology, which consists of the vision, mission, values, and strategic goals. From the senior management workshops and one-on-one meetings, the respondents indicated that reviewing the mission, vision, goals, and values assisted in setting the tone and providing clarity on what was expected. The respondents indicated that during the brand ideology review, the new CEO and HRM, together with the leadership team, were assisted by the leadership coaches to facilitate the leadership conversations.

Respondent 7 said, “... *some older leadership team who had been with KM for longer, were a little stuck in the past*”. The respondents indicated that the coaching debates amongst the leadership team were instrumental in aligning the team mindset. Such debates provided clarity for the leadership team and enabled them to understand business objectives and communicate the KM brand ideology back to their teams with clarity.

Respondent 6 indicated that, for example, “*the inclusion of the values, specifically - the KM comes first - was emphasised a lot during departmental meetings*”. Due to the debates held during the management meetings, the leadership team was equipped to clearly explain the meaning of the additional value to their teams. The respondents indicated that the *KM comes first* value drove the tone and a particular behaviour of how the teams needed to work together to deliver on common goals and shareholder expectations.

It was clear to the leadership team that the KM ideology was the most central part of internal branding activities as it was meant to drive and give direction to where the team needed to focus. Table 4.1 compares the mission and vision as stated before and after the leadership workshops. The revised mission was adopted going forward.

**Table 4.1: The revision of the mission and vision**

<b>Vision</b>	<b>Mission</b>
<p><b>Old Vision</b> Kagiso Media to have the most affluent audience in South Africa.</p>	<p><b>Revised Mission</b> Kagiso Media builds communities for good.</p>
<p><b>Revised Vision</b> Kagiso Media to have 60% share of the most affluent audience (SEM 7-10) in South Africa by 2030.</p>	<p><b>Revised Mission</b> Kagiso Media Entertains, Connects and Empowers Communities sustainably and connects them to the world for good.</p>

Source: HRM documentation

The new ideology was regarded as being more descriptive and outcome-focused in terms of what was expected. The leadership team indicated that business ambitions were clear regarding what leadership behaviour was expected to deliver the revised vision and mission. The leadership team indicated that the revised ideology was formally communicated in various ways, including: (1) on the intranet where all employees could access organisational

information, (2) during staff and departmental meetings, and (3) in annual reports and broader KM gatherings.

The respondents indicated that the new KM ideology helped to create synergy between leadership and employees. Respondent 2 said, “... *the revised KM ideologies bind us together to work for common goals*”. The leadership team needed to focus on raising awareness of all the components of the brand ideology through their behaviour to reshape the organisational culture. For example, the leadership team indicated that revising the mission and vision shaped how the leadership team and staff did their work, given the focus and clarity it provided.

After the mission and vision review, the goals and values of KM were also reviewed to address performance. Table 4.2 presents the old and new values.

**Table 4.2: The old and revised values**

<b>Old Values</b>	<b>New Values</b>
Respect We respect one another regardless of rank or corporate hierarchy	Respect We appreciate and value each other including our stakeholders and communities where we operate
Integrity We work ethically and honestly	Integrity We will conduct our business ethically and transparently in all our dealings, whether people are looking or not
Excellence We will provide best customer centricity, service, and solutions	Excellence We will provide best customer centricity, service, and solutions
Responsibility We will take full responsibility of our actions	Responsibility We will be answerable and take full responsibility of our actions
	Kagiso Media comes first When a decision is made, we will all support and deliver according to expectations and do it with pride

Source: HRM documentation

When comparing the old and new values in the above table, the number of values increased from four to five. The additional one was about KM coming first. Other values remained but were revised and rephrased to be more descriptive.

The leadership team, particularly HRM, ensured that the meaning of these values was explained to employees and that there was focus in raising awareness. These were included as part of performance management discussions so that everyone in the organisation could have the same meaning, understanding and interpretation of the revised values.

#### **4.5 Senior leadership behaviour**

The fourth research objective was to describe the change in senior leadership behaviour. All respondents indicated that HRM and the new CEO were collectively instrumental in holding the leadership team accountable, aligning brand leadership activities, leadership behaviour and brand ideology. Respondent 4 said, “... *HRM proactively sets leadership catch-up meetings and workshops to discuss and assess where the leadership team was*”. The discussion points were circulated upfront to ensure that all leaders came to the meeting prepared.

HRM also facilitated leadership and staff round-table discussions where performance and KM culture were openly discussed. The open discussion of performance and constructive feedback were new at KM. These round-table discussions took place once a month and the impact of these leadership discussions on both leadership and staff was positive. Respondent 1 said, “... *Intentional and structured discussions have been very instrumental in holding the leadership team accountable and driving performance culture*”.

The leadership team ensured that all internal branding activities that were implemented at KM, were discussed at their departmental meetings with staff to inform every one of the revised KM ideology. The activities included structured team meetings, which took place once a month, and performance discussions which were across all levels of employment. The culture and company goals were also discussed to ensure coherent effort and alignment. These activities were purposely led by the leadership team across the business. Respondent 7 said, *Performance discussions ensured that any underperformance was dealt with immediately*”.

The respondents indicated that for 12 months, two coaches worked with the leadership team, training and developing them as part of brand leadership activities. The coaches were responsible for coaching the leadership team on how to lead positively and hold the team accountable to ensure that the performance was simple, measurable, achievable, reliable and

time-bound. The respondents indicated that the coaches assisted the team by providing them with performance appraisal tools to measure performance.

The coaches assisted the leadership team in developing the performance appraisal forms, and reviewing performance plans which the leadership team used to measure and review performance of all strategic goals set for KM to deliver on shareholder expectations. The performance plan was also reviewed to ensure measurability and was renamed to truly reflect expectations. The revised performance plan was renamed the performance excellence plan (PEP) which was linked to all strategic and performance goals. The PEP outlined the key KPIs and KPAs.

Coaches guided the process. To enable coaches to gain an understanding and business insights of KM, the coaches were invited to attend the leadership workshops and one-on-one meetings that took place at KM. Being part of that allowed the coaches to understand the challenges and pressure points that affected the business. The coaches were given time to work with the leadership team to assist them to develop and align performance appraisal, KPIs, KPAs and PEP with key strategic goals.

The process of developing performance appraisals was a robust process between coaches and the leadership team and was based on the KM strategic goals. The process involved leadership and coaches meeting where elements of how best to measure performance through performance appraisal were discussed, which were (1) company goals were discussed and agreed, (2) measurable targets were outlined, (3) delivery timelines were agreed, and (4) ability to performance tasks.

The coaches and HRM clearly understood where the organisation was, and where it was going. The benefits of involving coaches included open dialogues amongst the leadership team, assertiveness which enabled the leadership team to give constructive feedback. The respondents indicated that this kind of leadership behaviour was new to KM because previously there was no formal or structured performance process on how leadership should manage performance.

Furthermore, the leadership team intentionally created a supportive culture by creating staff communities which served as communication platforms where open dialogues between leadership and staff kept staff engaged. These platforms enabled the entire team to engage and discuss the business components to impact performance.

HRM and the coaches led the round-table discussions between leadership and staff by setting them up and ensuring meaningful contributions from all leaders. These round-tables took place monthly and key discussion points were (1) leadership behaviour, (2) performance management in line with the set performance goals, and (3) KM brand ideology. Respondent 6 said, "Revising *brand ideology has provided so much clarity which increased accountability across the business*".

#### **4.6 Components of the performance management system**

The fifth objective was to describe the change in the components of the performance management system at the organisational, departmental, and individual levels, including what was measured. HRM and the leadership team reviewed the brand ideology and performance management system and redefined them during the strategic workshop and one-on-one deliberations to drive positive KM performance.

The change was communicated to staff, shareholders, and stakeholders on different platforms to get buy-in. For staff, the changes were communicated during (1) staff meetings, (2) departmental meetings, (3) staff socials and during induction for new employees, and (4) during strategic planning. Respondent 3 said, "*The staff felt involved and accountable for KM performance*".

For the board, the changes were included on the (1) annual board reports and (2) in quarterly board reports and meetings. Outlining the business performance management components from the organisation, departmental and individual levels, assisted in driving performance towards a clear strategic direction that shaped the KM brand equity. The CEO developed a presentation for the board to maintain consistency and ensure that there was alignment from a shareholder expectation to what the leadership team was implementing at KM to drive performance and deliver on shareholder expectations.

##### **4.6.1 Performance management implementation**

The sixth research objective was to describe how the change in the performance management system was implemented. Responses from the leadership team indicated that reviewing the performance management system covered the following components: (1) software to implement the performance appraisals and PEP feedback, (2) performance excellence plan (PEP), (3) coaching, training, and development of the leadership, and (4) reward and recognition.

The team also indicated that as part of reviewing the performance management system, it was important to ensure that the performance appraisal, PEP, KPAs and KPIs were clear and measurable, which was not the case with the previous performance management system. The respondents indicated that the old performance management plan was challenging to review and lacked measurability.

The respondents indicated that the new KM goals were very specific and particularly industry-related. The HRM team ensured that the goals were part of the performance management system and were included as part of the performance management of all staff. The HRM team ensured that the goals were clearly outlined as part of organisational, departmental, and individual performance target setting.

The old performance management included (1) financial, (2) brand and marketing, (3) people, and (4) customer-related goals. However, the performance management indicators for these goals were not clearly articulated, which was challenging and led to unsatisfactory performance.

Table 4.3 depicts the old strategic organisational performance management goals, indicating key performance areas and the weighting for each KPI. Unfortunately, these previous KPIs were unclear, which made it harder to measure what was important from a business performance point of view.

**Table 4.3: The old performance management goals at organisational level**

<b>Key Performance Area</b>	<b>Key Performance Area Weight</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>
Profitable Revenue Growth	<b>40</b>	Ensure optimum market coverage and sales efficiencies
		Achieve budgeted half and full year profit targets
		Reduce Bad Debt Ratio
		Improve Cash Generation
Build the Media brand in the Market	<b>20</b>	Grow Kagiso Media’s reputation as a thought leader in the market
		Ensure Kagiso Media markets itself in accordance with best practice and governance requirements

Energise and develop our people	20	Effectively performance-manage all staff
		Maintain Level 1 B-BBEE
Improve Customer Satisfaction	20	Manage Customer Satisfaction Survey

Source : HR performance management documentation

The table below indicates the revised organisational performance management goals, which were later renamed and called the performance excellence plan (PEP), which integrated the company goals, indicating key performance areas and the weighting for each KPI. The table reflects the revised organisational PEP that was launched and used to drive performance and deliver shareholder expectations.

**Table 4.4: The revised performance excellence plan (PEP) at organisational level**

Key Performance Area		KPI Weight
<b>Financial performance and Team motivation</b>	Leadership to create team engagement forums to discuss and drive 15% growth of radio and digital audience	20%
	Exceed media revenue ratings growth by 3% above industry	
<b>Customer centricity and drive</b>	Create a high performing organisation by measuring customer service at all customer touch points	30%
	Understand customer requirements, deliver at least 4 x customer engagement platforms annually	
	Deliver on solutions-oriented products for clients and review them monthly	
	Relentless service to customers via sales team and senior team to conduct client service calls monthly and reports quarterly	
	Build Trade reputation and value by strategically planning trade engagement and media platforms monthly	
	Foster a high-performing and conducive culture for the best talent by managing performance three times a year	20%

<b>High performance organisation</b>	Enhance communication and learning/development opportunities for all staff, especially staff earmarked as part of succession plan, and report quarterly	
	Build future leadership base for the best talent by creating succession planning forums for annual discussion	
<b>Profitability and Business Excellence, governance compliance and decisiveness</b>	Deliver Profitable Revenue Growth of 8% and protect 40% margins for Kagiso Media assets	<b>30%</b>
	Maintain Level 1 (B-BBEE)	
	Uphold the Kagiso Media ideologies in all dealings	
	Implement project cycle meetings for key business projects for leadership approval on decisions weekly	

Source: HR performance management documentation

The respondents indicated that the revised PEP was easy to measure and manage. The PEP key performance areas were very descriptive and clearly outlined.

The respondents indicated that at an organisational level, HRM led the brand leadership activities related to the performance. The HRM team ensured that the required performance indicators were discussed with the leadership team to ensure alignment when these were cascaded to a departmental level and ultimately to individual teams.

HRM ensured that there was clarity regarding how the leadership team communicated with each other and the staff about performance management. The leadership team had several coaching and training discussions on what needed to be measured to deliver on shareholder expectations, especially to deliver business performance, results and team cohesion.

#### **4.7 Modification of the performance management system**

The seventh research objective was to describe how the change in brand ideology required modification in the performance management system that was implemented. Upon joining the business, the CEO agreed with the leadership team to embark on a performance review plan over 100 days. On the 100th day or about three months later, the leadership team, together with the new CEO, met to finalise the key findings from all their strategic workshops and meetings

in terms of what change was to be implemented to improve performance and how the change was going to be implemented.

Furthermore, all respondents indicated that the purpose of reviewing the performance management system was clearly articulated by the new CEO. The KPIs and criteria were aligned with organisational performance goals on which the team was to be measured. The respondents indicated that the leadership team was very deliberate about defining the company goals, which were instrumental in improving performance and driving a specific leadership behaviour. Respondent 7 said “... *leaders were very intentional about defining goals and involving broader teams*”. The HRM team, together with the entire leadership team, implemented the following steps to modify and implement the KM performance management system: (1) get leadership buy-in, (2) develop clear performance expectations, (3) select appropriate performance appraisal methods, (4) coach and train of the leadership team, (5) get employees’ involvement and formulate development plans, (6) implement performance management, reward, and recognition, (7) monitor and evaluate, and (8) communicate.

#### **4.7.1 Get leadership buy-in**

The new CEO ensured that the benefits of reviewing the performance management system were clearly articulated during the workshops and one-on-one meetings with the leadership team, which were to ensure that the team delivers on shareholder expectations. The respondents indicated that before implementation, the CEO had received support from the top management to ensure commitment and endorsement throughout the organisation.

The respondents considered the revised KM ideology, clarity on the performance expectations, leadership behaviour and performance evaluation process as the catalyst for the positive business performance. The clarity on what was measured and why those were measured provided direction and team cohesion. The team indicated that after reviewing the performance management system, the team communicated well together, they were intentional about collaborating and there was cohesion across the organisation.

#### **4.7.2 Develop clear performance expectations**

The respondents highlighted that the benefits of clarity that were provided by the leadership team regarding performance expectations, as per the revised performance appraisal and PEP, were the cornerstone for the improved performance. The leadership team, together with the employees, were aligned to organisational goals and objectives. The respondents also indicated

that the introduction of the revised brand ideology by the leadership team gave meaning to what was expected. They all could articulate the KM brand ideology effortlessly, which they collectively regarded as the best thing done by the leadership team to shape leadership and individual performance behaviour, which in turn shaped the attainment of KM's performance goals.

#### **4.7.3 Select appropriate performance appraisal methods**

The respondents indicated that the leadership team was very intentional about creating a supportive culture that would enable the entire team to understand the need for improved performance management and why it was important for the business to improve performance and deliver on shareholder expectations. This was done through a process of having a clear performance appraisal method. To manage performance as part of the new performance management system, the team was encouraged to get three types of reviews as part of performance management appraisal, namely (1) self-assessment, (2) peer reviews, and (3) manager assessment, and that this was done in a supportive manner. In addition, as part of implementing the performance management system, the team was trained on how to go about conducting performance appraisals. Where performance was not in line with the expectations, training and development were introduced. During the appraisal discussions, where performance was above expectations, staff was recognised.

#### **4.7.4 Coach and train the leadership team**

All respondents indicated that HRM and the new CEO were intentional about coaching and training the leadership team to ensure clarity. Subsequently, HRM was responsible for holding the leadership team accountable in terms of ensuring that the leadership behaviour was aligned to performance, leadership activities and brand ideology. As part of the performance management system, clear PEP agreements were discussed and agreed upfront to ensure that the leadership team was provided with clarity in terms of expectations. Subsequently, the leadership team was responsible for ensuring that they bring along the rest of the staff. The respondents indicated that HRM provided training and development on how to manage performance for both managers and employees so that during performance reviews, everyone could have a common understanding of the system, their roles, and the importance of regular feedback. Ongoing communication about performance was encouraged across the organisation.

#### **4.7.5 Get employees involved and formulate development plans**

As indicated above, once the organisational goals were agreed, these were cascaded to departmental and individual level and performance expectations were discussed and clearly outlined. The respondents indicated that, where developmental opportunities were identified, HRM ensured that training and coaching were created to improve skills and capability. The respondents indicated that the involvement of both staff and leadership in developing the PEP and KPIs for all levels was intentional and yielded positive performance results.

#### **4.7.6 Implement performance management, reward, and recognition**

As a result of all engagements between the different levels of the leadership team and staff, it was clear that establishing a system to recognise and reward outstanding performance was appropriate in shaping the KM performance culture. The behaviour of recognising and rewarding results by the leadership team influenced staff behaviour positively. This was done through linking performance outcome to appropriate rewards, such as salary increases, bonuses or promotion. HRM indicated that management was coached to look for opportunities to acknowledge staff when they were performing well and to do so in front of other staff, as that had a positive influence on the rest of the staff. However, where performance was lacking, feedback was given privately and appropriately to staff.

#### **4.7.7 Monitor and evaluate**

The respondents indicated that continuous monitoring of the PEP delivered effectiveness of the system as feedback on areas of improvement was collected and implemented on time. As part of executing the revised performance management system, the leadership team agreed to change the intervals of when the PEP was evaluated to improve and keep track of performance at organisational and individual level. The leadership team indicated that this was done to manage performance tightly, as the performance was previously evaluated only once a year. HRM ensured that, as part of brand leadership activities, performance management was evaluated three times a year to gauge where the team was in terms of performance, team morale and general engagement through peer assessment, personal and line manager assessments. The respondents indicated that the improved performance management system contributed to the realisation of KM brand ideology, in turn building the brand equity of KM.

#### 4.7.8 Communicate

The leadership team ensured that the process of all internal branding activities that were to be done within KM was discussed by the leadership team at their departmental meetings, staff meetings, and internal newsletters with all staff to intentionally bring everyone along in terms of the revised ideology and performance management expectations. The leadership team also ensured that the employees were kept informed about the performance management system, changes, and expectations to provide clarity. The respondents indicated that the leadership behaviour and heightened levels of communication fostered the culture of open communication and transparency. The respondents indicated that regular communication, regular performance reviews and refining the performance management system contributed to the long-term success of KM.

Table 4.5 indicates how the leadership ensured that components of performance were assigned to each department and individuals and what were they responsible for from a performance point of view. Leadership ensured that the KM performance management was cascaded across the business as part of the agreed brand ideology.

**Table 4.5: The revised PEP at departmental and individual performance level**

<b>Departments</b>	<b>Department Performance responsibility</b>	<b>Individual Performance responsibility</b>
Finance	Deliver Profitable Revenue Growth of 8% and protect 40% margins for Kagiso Media assets	As part of leadership responsibility, budget was phased by each month and individual performance tracked for each account manager monthly.  Cash conversion for the accounts team was tracked and reported monthly.
Human Resources Management	Foster a high-performing and conducive culture for the best talent by managing performance three times a year.  Enhance communication and learning/development opportunities for all staff,	Departmental goals were cascaded to individuals. To drive a high performing departments, all managers encouraged their respective

	<p>especially staff earmarked as part of succession plan, and report quarterly.</p> <p>Build future Leadership base for the best talent by creating succession planning forums for annual discussion.</p>	<p>teams to understand the PEP deliverables and how performance scoring was done.</p> <p>Developmental training was put in place to ensure that every staff member had a clear understanding of the set goals and their individual roles.</p>
<p>Commercial management</p>	<p>Create a high performing organisation by measuring customer service at all customer touch points.</p> <p>Understand customer requirements, deliver at least 4 x customer engagement platforms annually.</p> <p>Deliver on solutions-oriented products for clients and review them monthly.</p> <p>Relentless service to customers, via sales team and senior team to conduct client service calls monthly and reports quarterly.</p> <p>Build Trade reputation and value by strategically planning trade engagements and media platforms monthly.</p>	<p>All account managers were given monthly targets to call, service clients, and engage with customers. These were reviewed monthly, quarterly, and annually.</p> <p>The respondents also indicated that team collaboration was a significant part of improving performance as commercial and marketing teams were measured on delivering promotional material and being of service to client, i.e. some of the specific things the individual teams were responsible for were 24-hour turn-around deadlines for customer solutions. This helped in driving</p>

		customer centricity and performance.
Marketing management	Leadership to create team engagement forums to discuss and drive 15% growth of radio and digital audience. Exceed media revenue ratings growth by 3% above industry.	Each brand manager in marketing was given a specific performance target for all brand activities and media platforms indicating targets and were tracked regularly.
Technical, HR, Finance, Marketing, Commercial (All departments)	Maintain Level 1 (B-BBEE) Uphold the Kagiso Media ideologies in all dealings. Implement project cycle meetings for key business projects for leadership approval on decisions weekly.	Each team member was given targets of how compliance should be achieved. Monthly, the teams were acknowledged for using BEE compliant service providers. Each team member was assigned specific projects, and these were tracked monthly to indicate how individual performance contributed to the overall business

Source: HRM internal branding and performance management documents

The table above shows how leaders behaved to ensure that performance management components and implementation were cascaded from the organisation, departments, and individuals' teams. The respondents were very optimistic about the revised performance management goals and how well leadership had cascaded the organisational goals to departmental and individual levels. Respondent 2 said, *“As the head of marketing, our performance goals have been clearly articulated and teams do not clash as everyone is clear of expected performance”*.

#### 4.8 Analysis of how brand ideology shaped the senior leadership behaviour

The eighth research objective was to analyse how the change in brand ideology (vision, mission, values, and goals) shaped the senior leadership behaviour (i.e. brand leadership) at KM. As part of reviewing and improving performance, the leadership team needed to take time to discuss, review, and outline the KM brand ideology. The leadership behaviour needed to align with the KM brand ideology. The leadership team needed to agree on expected leadership behaviour and characteristics to shape the brand equity, performance culture that is in line with the brand ideology of KM.

All respondents indicated that the leadership behaviour included improvement and frequency of performance reviews, coaching, and training, which enabled the leadership team to focus on important performance outcomes.

The table below represents the characteristics and behaviour of the leadership team that worked together to shape the leadership behaviour and improve performance because of the revised KM brand ideology. The table represents the different KM leadership characteristics which have shaped and influenced the performance of the business across all departments.

**Table 4.6: The leadership characteristics**

<b>The brand leadership characteristics</b>		
<b>Brand leadership's original state</b>	<b>Brand leadership's current state</b>	<b>Brand leadership's desired state</b>
<b>Motivate and engage the team:</b> The respondents indicated that previously, the leadership team at KM lacked morale and effective team communication.	<b>Motivate and engage the team:</b> The respondents indicated that there are structured leadership forums where key business projects and challenges are communicated amongst management and staff.	<b>Motivate and engage the team:</b> A brand leadership team that is responsive, engaged and inspired, a leadership team that is motivated to take charge, motivate, and deliver business results.
<b>Drive high performing culture:</b> Leadership indicated that the lack of	<b>Drive high performing culture:</b> The revised performance management	<b>Drive high performing culture:</b> Brand leadership team is expected to drive

performance was due to them being disengaged.	pillars and evaluation cycles (moving from once a year) to three times a year have ensured that the leadership team is fully engaged and driving performance.	optimal performance, collaboration, and team engagement to ensure staff and shareholder satisfaction.
<b>Drive:</b> The team lacked drive as there were no clear and measurable goals, which resulted in the teams not meeting targets and understanding the purpose of their work.	<b>Drive:</b> The respondents indicated that the revised key performance indicators are in line with strategy and the leadership team understands the purpose and now takes charge of the overall contribution to the organisation.	<b>Drive:</b> Senior management indicated that the current staff and leadership engagements are aligned with the desired leadership state and KM ideology This means that with the revised way of managing performance, the team was more driven because they all understood expectations, goals and their results were measured accurately.
<b>Decisiveness:</b> Team expressed that previously there was poor time management, which led to poor and late execution of key projects.	<b>Decisiveness:</b> The respondents indicated that the current brand leadership introduced project management tools and forums which assisted in time management and executing projects efficiently.	<b>Decisiveness:</b> The leadership team indicated that time and project execution has improved in line with business expectations. This means that time was well managed, from briefing or projects to execution, and most projects were executed effectively.

Table 4.6 presents the different state of the leadership behaviour and characteristics. The respondents indicated that it was encouraging to note that most of the leadership behaviour and characteristics had evolved, and that the evolution was primarily influenced by the KM brand

ideology and positively impacted on business performance. Respondent 5 said “... *the decisiveness of the leadership team was instrumental in decision making and positive results*”.

The respondents indicated that leadership coaching and development was key in terms of improving the leadership behaviour. The leadership went through a structured training where KM brand ideology, performance evaluation and giving constructive feedback to yield positive business results were discussed. The training took place over six months and the following leadership topics were covered as part of coaching:

**Table 4.7: The leadership training programme**

<b>Training</b>	<b>Impact on business</b>
Clarity and conciseness	This training helped the leadership team to articulate KM goals, values, expectations clearly and concisely,
Assertive and decisiveness	With the change that was happening at KM, the training assisted the leadership team to be assertive and decisive, which allowed them to express their thoughts,
Feedback and criticism	The training allowed the KM leadership team to be able to give constructive feedback. The training involved providing specific actionable feedback.
Empathy and emotional intelligence	This training allowed the leadership team to recognise emotional cues where it matters to respond with sensitivity, especially during round-table discussions.

The respondents indicated that changes in leadership behaviour were visible during performance appraisal, staff socials and staff meetings because of training. Respondent 4 said, “*The team is very transparent about performance, especially during round tables and one-on-one performance conversations with all staff*”. This kind of leadership behaviour influenced the staff behaviour positively and this was attributed to deliberate leadership behaviour training.

#### **4.9 The influence of the change in brand ideology on leadership behaviour and performance management**

The ninth research objective was to analyse how modification of the performance management system at KM improved performance. The change in KM brand ideology brought positive performance, team accountability, and customer centricity by means of leadership working together to achieve the common KM goals. The change in brand ideology gave the KM leadership team a sense of purpose. Respondent 2 said, “... *the new brand ideology gave us the sense of purpose, importantly we took ownership, as the mission, vision and values were developed by us*”. The leadership team was more accountable, and the accountability was reflected in the manner in which they led their teams.

The leadership commitment and accountability were cascaded to their teams. Their teams were very clear in terms of what was required and expected from them. The leadership team was intentional about engaging their teams to familiarise themselves with the new brand ideology and expected performance. They had a shared sense of purpose, alignment with brand ideology and company goals, which enhanced motivation across the teams. Respondent 1 said, “*The commitment and alignment was visible during performance reviews, the entire team was motivated*”. Furthermore, Respondent 7 added, “... *coaches assisted the leadership team with capabilities during training*”. The training was aligned to the KM brand ideology and this was evident in the way employees were client centric. Respondent 4 said, “*Previously we received many customer complaints; however, lately there are months where there are no customer issues*”.

The respondents indicated that since there was constant engagement and communication of the revised brand ideology, employees had a clear understanding of company goals and expectations. Respondent 5 said, “... *the ownership of KM values is evident in the manner in which meeting project deadlines are met by all teams. which was not the case before*”. The respondents indicated that employees embodied these values in their work, which contributed to a consistent KM brand image. Respondent 6 said, “*The team was aligned in terms of putting customers first*”. Furthermore, changing the brand ideology required constant leadership training and coaching aimed at cultivating a leadership culture that embodied the KM brand values. The training included workshops and seminars, discussing of successful case studies and inviting key speakers to motivate the leadership team.

Furthermore, the respondents indicated that there was a heightened level of understanding and discussions around KM brand ideology, which encouraged brand appreciation by employees because they felt valued and connected to the KM brand and could associate with the brand values. Respondent 1 said, “*Employees become KM brand ambassadors, they embodied the KM brand values internally and externally*”. Consequently, revising the KM brand ideology improved the leadership behaviour as all KM leaders were taken through training on how best to embody the KM brand ideology. This included decision making, planned communication, client interaction and interaction with employees.

In addition, the brand ideology informed the components of the performance management in terms of what was to be measured, why it was important and how performance should be measured. HRM ensured that there was alignment between KM goals and the brand ideology. Respondent 6 said, “... *quarterly performance evaluation targets outlined key performance priorities which were integrated to performance management*”.

Respondents also indicated that the implementation of the performance management system improved innovation and adaptability. Respondent 3 said, “... *every team had clear innovation targets, as part of strategy and performance plans upfront, also the CEO provided funding and cash incentives for all innovation projects with clear accountability and expectations*”. Therefore, the revised performance management system fostered a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, which helped in building the KM positive brand reputation in the market and subsequently improved the KM brand equity.

#### **4.10 Chapter summary**

The chapter presented and discussed the findings of the study. These findings were presented in line with the objectives of the study, as well as the propositions that were tested. The chapter discussed the significance of how brand ideology was used by the leadership team to bring about change in leadership behaviour, and how brand ideology at KM required modifications to be made on the performance management system to shape the KM brand equity.

The chapter also discussed how leadership went about getting buy-in from the leadership team before and after reviewing the brand ideology and other key business components, including the performance management system. The findings indicated how the revised brand ideology was implemented to impact leadership behaviour and the performance management system. The study also indicated what was measured and how often performance management was

evaluated at KM, with clear KPIs being reviewed to drive performance through KM brand ideology, which shaped positive performance and the overall brand equity

# CHAPTER 5

## Discussion

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### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings on the internal branding framework that was adopted by Kagiso Media (KM) to guide a change process in the organisation. The findings were derived from the data of the interviews with the KM management team. The findings gave insight into the internal branding change management activities that were implemented, which included a new brand ideology, change in leadership behaviour and revised performance management system components.

The chapter first considers the justification of the study and the nature of the change programme. Thereafter, it discusses the improvement of brand equity and the internal branding activities that were implemented, namely changes in brand ideology, brand leadership and performance management, followed by a discussion of the two research propositions. Finally, the contribution of the study to Resource Based Theory is discussed.

### 5.2 Justification of the study

According to Buil et al. (2016), internal brand communication raises positive workplace emotions. A positive internal brand results in a good relationship between the brand identity and brand loyalty of employees (Buil et al., 2016) and facilitates the internalisation of organisational values by its employees (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). The findings of this study supported this understanding as some respondents referred to themselves as brand ambassadors of KM and that was attributed to the change implemented through internal branding activities.

Furthermore, studies have been conducted in China (Zhang and Xu, 2021), Spain and Australia (Merrilees et al., 2021). However, no such study in South Africa was identified. Therefore, the findings of this study will fill the literature gap and contribute towards both academic and practical applications in media and businesses. From this study, it is hoped that meaningful insights are provided in terms of how a change in the brand ideology (i.e. mission, vision and values) of an organisation, changes leadership behaviour and performance through internal branding activities.

Most of the studies on internal branding adopted a qualitative approach and have been done in the hospitality industry; mainly in hotels (Buil et al., 2016), hospitals and business-to business-industries (Huang and Lai, 2021), cities and destinations (Smith et al., 2021). No research was identified that was conducted within the media industry, where KM operates. However, one study was identified that investigated the role of social media in branding (Smith et al., 2021). The study focused on the role of employees as brand influencers by using their Instagram accounts (Smith et al., 2021). The studies targeted frontline staff (Smith et al., 2021) and focused on their daily operations. These studies have paid little or no attention to the role of leadership in building an internal brand, and no studies were identified that researched the role of performance management, internal branding activities and the role of leadership in organisations. The researcher of this study aimed at paying attention at how brand ideology influenced the leadership behaviour and performance management system as part of HRM.

### **5.3 Change management programme**

Participants were unanimous on the importance of change management to improve performance at KM. They indicated that most of the respondents had been with the organisation for a long time, so leadership renewal was required as the business was experiencing declining revenues, which led to underperformance. These responses were in line with the general understanding that change management is necessary to take a business forward (Qureshi et al., 2022). The KM findings align with this literature, that change management is critical for any business, especially if the organisation is facing underperformance. The findings from the KM case study also indicated that business performance improved as a result of the change management (or internal branding activities) that were implemented.

Furthermore, the respondents indicated that poor performance made it harder to find and keep talent as the goals and expectations between staff and the leadership team were not clear, which led to poor performance and a poor reputation of the organisation. As an example, the respondents indicated that in media, the on-air employees are remunerated based on audience and revenue growth performance. For KM, because of the clear articulation of goals and expectations, on-air talent achieved set audience and revenue targets and were able to earn incentives, which in return served as a retention mechanism. The respondents indicated that KM was able to retain its talented media employees, which delivered revenue growth and brand consistency. According to Raj (2020), internal branding, employee well-being and health initiatives influence talent positively. Also, clarity of objectives can have a significant impact

on employees and on the financial health of the organisation (Raj, 2020) The respondents indicated that cascading the business objectives to departments and individuals provided clarity and employee well-being, which had a positive impact on KM's staff morale and financial results.

#### **5.4 The improvement of brand equity**

All responses from the KM leadership team indicated that when the change management was implemented, there was a sense of pride across the management team as the respondents referred to themselves as brand ambassadors of the organisation. According to Raj (2020), engaged employees provide healthy relationships between employers and employees. There is evidence that suggests that committed employees are engaged and have a clear understanding of expectations, their roles and responsibilities (Raj, 2020). At KM, the respondents indicated that the leadership team was committed to the change management process, they took charge of all aspects of performance, and underperformance was dealt with immediately, which enhanced the overall KM brand equity.

The respondents indicated that the KM values were aligned with theirs, which was treasured and in return improved the company performance. These responses were in line with the general understanding of brand equity focusing less on individuals and more on internal branding that creates more shared values (Saini et al., 2022). Furthermore, the respondents indicated that there were some resentment and negative opinions related to the change management that was implemented, especially coming from the leadership team with long service, which could have impacted negatively on the change. However, as the change engagement processes unfolded, and internal branding activities continued there was overall support and commitment from the entire leadership team which delivered positive performance.

#### **5.5 Change in brand ideology (mission, vision, values and goals)**

Every response given by participants indicated that change in brand ideology gave rise to leadership renewal, especially to those who had been in the business for a long time. The leaders who had been at KM for over ten years, had some resentment for most of the change that was introduced, and the new CEO had to do extra convincing with them to get their buy-in. These were in line with the understanding that creating a vision, mission and values sets the direction and communication provides clarity and renewed commitment (Lievens and

Slaughter, 2016). This theory concurred with the renewed leadership team's behaviour at KM, the branding activities encouraged the leadership team to be more proactive and engaged which resulted in positive performance.

The respondents also indicated that the new brand ideology helped in terms of creating synergy between leadership and employees. The respondents indicated that change was hard at the beginning, but the leadership consistency in driving brand communication ensured buy in across the business and this was evident in the manner in which the business performed.

The role of leadership and the importance of crafting clear brand ideology to drive performance cannot be disputed. Saleem and Iglesias (2016) recognise that a consistent and clear brand ideology provides focus for employees, which in turn improves performance. Detailed brand ideology discussions on how the mission, vision, values, and goals shaped and influenced the performance of the business is outlined in section 4.4 of this document, with a sub-section Tables 4.1 and 4.2 where the revised brand ideology components were discussed.

These sections outlined the revision of brand ideology and brand values from old to new ones, which underpinned the enhanced performance and synergy across KM. The respondents indicated that the revision of the values was well received by the leadership team; however, there were limitations at first for adding the value, *Kagiso Media comes first*, as some leaders did not understand the intended outcome of this value, especially those who had been in the business for long and who selfish. The respondents indicated that this value was meant to drive teamwork. However, the new CEO took time to explain the intended outcome, which was to drive team cohesion, and subsequently it was positively received.

## **5.6 Senior leadership behaviour**

The leadership responses indicated that brand HRM was proactive in driving the process and holding the leadership team accountable. They also indicated that HRM was instrumental in ensuring that all employees were socialised and familiarised with the new KM brand ideology. It is important to note that there were other factors that helped in influencing the leadership behaviour, including intentional coaching. The coaching of KM leaders was put in place as part of change management and due to underperformance. Coaching was deliberate in driving leadership behaviour and check-in meetings were put in place to keep track of leadership performance. These additional factors, combined with the new brand ideology, aided in terms

of improving leadership behaviour and ensuring the leadership buy-in towards the adaptation of new brand ideology.

The respondents indicated that HRM also ensured that the leadership team was responsible for cascading the new brand ideology to the rest of the organisation. According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016), brand HRM is responsible for familiarizing employees into the brand ideology and maintaining a psychological contract. In this case they were responsible for the leadership team. These were also in line with the understanding that brand HRM plays an important role in shaping employees' behaviour (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016).

Based on the KM findings, this was in line with the findings that the leadership behaviour and performance improved because of change and new brand ideology. Also, the responses indicated that open performance discussions ensured that underperformance was dealt with immediately, which had an overall positive impact on KM. This was in line with the understanding that strong and positive leadership behaviour boosts the economic value of any organisation (McLaughlin and Mott, 2010).

The responses (KM leadership team) further indicated that the new brand ideology gave them a renewed sense of purpose, they took ownership of the new brand ideology, and their behaviour was aligned to the goals of the business. The responses also indicated that they were more accountable in the way they led their teams across the business. This was in line with the understanding that clear strategic discussions with leaders about company values were one of the clearest examples of the connection between directing and engaging employees (Bourne et al., 2013). The responses also indicated that change in new brand values made commitment and alignment visible.

This was in line with the understanding that clear brand ideology impacts on leadership behaviour (Morhart, Herzog and Tomczak, 2009). A detailed discussion on leadership characteristics and on how leadership behaviour shaped and influenced the performance of the business is outlined in section 4.6 of this document.

## **5.7 Change of performance management system**

The responses indicated that the changes in the performance management system were communicated upfront and that the process made them feel involved and accountable for the KM performance. They also indicated that outlining the components of what was to be changed

was instrumental in aligning the entire leadership team to the company goals. They indicated that for the first time, the goals were aligned at a business level and across all departments.

The performance management system components included performance appraisal software, a performance plan, coaching, training, and reward and recognition. This was in line with the understanding that intentional change of the performance management system boosts positive performance (McLaughlin and Mott, 2010). At KM the respondents indicated that it was observed that as a result of aligning company goals with departmental goals and clearly communicating that to employees delivered positive performance results. Leadership behaviour also encouraged positive overall performance, which had a positive impact on KM results.

### **5.8 Implementation of change in performance management system**

The responses indicated that the leadership team needed to invest time and money on the following performance elements as part of change implementation: (1) software to implement the performance appraisals and PEP feedback, (2) performance excellence plan (PEP), (3) coaching, training, and development of the leadership, and (4) reward and recognition. The changes allowed the leadership team to align and put clear measurements in place as part of appraisal for PEP, KPAs and KPIs which was not the case with the previous performance management system. The respondents indicated that the old performance management plan was challenging to review and lacked measurability.

The evidence that the change in performance management system was influenced by the change in brand ideology was mentioned consistently across the respondents of this study. Brand ideology was applied in a consistent manner at KM which helped in outlining and designing the revised PEP and expectations. The respondents indicated that when the new brand ideology was implemented, it was clear that performance management needed to be modified to ensure coherent performance across KM.

### **5.9 Change in brand ideology shaped the senior leadership behaviour**

Having discussed the internal branding changes implemented in the organisation, the research propositions can now be discussed. The first proposition was, the change in brand ideology has an influence on senior leadership behaviour. The responses indicated that certainly the change in brand ideology had a positive impact on the KM leadership behaviour and performance. The

new performance management excellence plan (PEP) was easy to measure as the key performance areas and goals were clearly outlined and descriptive. This was in line with the understanding that setting clear performance goals was very important for the success of any organisation (Budac and Baltador, 2013).

Detailed PEP discussions on the benefits of clear performance management were outlined in section 4.6.1 of this document and is given in sub-section 4.4. The respondents indicated that the PEP had specific measurement methodologies, including increasing the amount of performance assessment to measure and track performance. The PEP also had a specific performance measurement design which followed the SMART principles (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound). HRM, together with the leadership team, ensured that this methodology was communicated as part of internal branding activities and was adopted across the business

### **5.10 Modification of performance management system improved performance**

The second proposition was, the change in brand ideology led to a need to change the performance management system. The performance change was both at an organisational and individual level. The respondents indicated that the leadership team implemented specific steps to modify the KM performance management system to drive positive results for the company and individuals. Being intentional was important in getting leadership buy-in. Developing clear performance expectations, selecting appropriate performance appraisal methods, monitoring and evaluating performance on an ongoing basis were key internal branding and HRM activities to performance effectiveness. This was an exceptional and remarkable change, whereby KM observed positive business performance as a result of change of internal branding activities. This was in line with understanding that employees represent the link between a brand's internal and external environment, therefore clear branding activities regarding business expectations is important (Terjav, Konečnik Ruzzier. and Kaše, 2016).

### **5.11 The study theoretical link to Research Based Theory**

The research aimed to analyse how a change in brand ideology shaped brand leadership behaviour, and the performance management arrangements of an organisation. The case study of Kagiso Media was selected because improved branding had led to improved brand equity. Based on the findings from the respondents of this study and the literature, it was shown how internal branding activities could develop the brand as an important internal resource of an

organisation. Based on the findings, intangible assets, such as brand identity and reputation, should be recognised as critical resources for any company, which can be developed through internal branding activities to contribute to the development of a core competence and to provide a competitive advantage, leading to organisational success.

## **5.12 Summary**

This chapter presented and discussed the research findings in relation to the literature. There was evidence to support the two research propositions, namely changes in the brand ideology of an organisation will bring about a change in the leadership behaviour. Furthermore, there was evidence that changes in brand ideology will require modifications to be made to the performance management system to bring about positive performance results.

The insights gained from the study have several implications for business practice in terms of change in brand ideology, leadership behaviour and internal branding strategies as part of brand HRM. These form part of the recommendations in Chapter 6.

# CHAPTER 6

## Conclusion and recommendations

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### **6.1 Introduction**

This is the final chapter of the study. It provides a brief summary of the findings on brand ideology, brand leadership activities and internal brand communication change management process that were implemented at KM to shape the leadership behaviour. The chapter considers the implications for leaders in organisations and makes recommendations which could be practised by leaders at KM or any media company and in any other organisations.

The study also acknowledges the limitations, and contributions of the research, as well as making recommendations for further research.

### **6.2 Statement of main findings**

A positive internal brand results in a good relationship between the brand identity and brand loyalty of employees (Buil et al., 2016) and facilitates the internalisation of organisational values by its employees (Saleem and Iglesias, 2016). Therefore, the research aimed to analyse how change in brand ideology and internal branding activities shaped the senior leadership behaviour at KM and led to the overhaul of the performance management system.

The KM approach was unique compared to other research studies since no research of this nature was identified that was conducted within the media industry. This research provides insight into how internal branding could be of assistance when implementing change or managing a corporate brand. This study intended to contribute to the body of knowledge about how change in brand ideology and strategic goals brought about a change in senior leadership behaviour and required modification of performance management system to impact performance.

When the change was implemented, KM leadership was very intentional in terms of framing the change from a branding perspective. These branding activities were applied in a consistent manner, and all the change programme interventions were framed within internal branding activities. This included changing the KM brand ideology which in turn informed brand leadership development activities, and led to leadership behaviour change and increased cohesion amongst the KM leadership team. The expectation of future leadership behaviour and

performance expectations were clearly outlined as part of the change. The leadership team was part of the changes that were implemented, and clear performance expectations were outlined for the entire team. The team was coached to ensure that the desired state was achieved. Influenced by the changes made to brand ideology, modifications of the performance management system were implemented to drive performance.

From the literature search conducted, there was little evidence of research studies done from a perspective of implementing brand ideology through internal branding activities to impact leadership behaviour, and certainly not in the media industry. Therefore, this approach was quite unique. The KM leadership team was deliberate about the kind of activities that were implemented, and they ensured that the leadership team was brought up to speed with all the change management programmes. In doing so there was a significant buy-in from the management team.

The findings also revealed that KM was consistent about framing the change from a branding perspective, this was done through the branding activities that were implemented. This strategic approach gave rise to leadership renewal and created the same language and cohesion across the leadership team and their respective teams. Leaders took ownership in crafting clear brand messages emanating from their workshops in implementing the new KM brand ideology (i.e. vision, mission and organisational values).

The findings indicated that because of implementing the new brand ideology, the leadership behaviour improved, such as in holding each other and their teams accountable, especially when dealing with underperformance. This was evident particularly in terms of how leaders dealt with giving feedback, especially negative feedback, and handling such conversations, something that has never happened before. Previously the norm was to glaze over pertinent issues or negative feedback or not deal with it, which led to underperformance. Coaching the leadership team on how to handle performance management conversations was commended.

Even though there were resentment, sometimes from the leaders who had been with the business longer, overall, the internal branding activities that were implemented affected change positively. The human resources management team was instrumental in ensuring that that leadership was aligned, and that staff was familiarised with the new brand ideology which gave them a renewed sense of purpose. According to Saleem and Iglesias (2016), brand HRM is responsible for familiarising employees with the brand ideology and maintaining a psychological contract.

The respondents indicated that, as a result of the new brand ideology and internal branding activities that were implemented, KM was able to enhance the psychological contract with employees and retain talent. This was due to positive performance and alignment between organisational values and those of talent. The respondents also indicated that talent performance was in line with KM business goals, and this was attributed to clear performance expectations being articulated by the leadership team. Therefore, this led to psychological contract between leaders and the employees at KM.

Regarding the performance management system, the findings revealed that goal setting, communication and setting clear measurable targets were important, especially when addressing performance. At KM it was revealed that a clear performance appraisal methodology and clear performance plan took away subjectivity and enabled leadership to align performance to goals and eliminate any possible confusion. The respondents indicated that clear articulation of goals resulted in employees meeting targets and leadership expectations. They also indicated that as part of performance management, setting measurable targets took away subjectivity and employees were aware of performance expectations to be measured during PEP performance discussions. This was in line with the understanding that intentional change of the performance management system boosts positive performance (McLaughlin and Mott, 2010).

As part of the new KM brand ideology and internal branding activities, the leadership team clearly implemented specific steps to drive performance. However, there were some challenges and resistance that were experienced, especially with the leadership team that had long service. These leaders required time and convincing with some of the changes, especially the implementation of reviews of performance management three times a year. However, when the process was further explained, the change yielded positive results and alignment across the leadership team.

### **6.3 Recommendations for management practice**

This study explored the case of Kagiso Media (KM), a media organisation that leveraged brand ideology, performance management, and leadership initiatives through an internal change management processes to drive performance. Based on the different benefits highlighted by respondents, the following recommendations are proposed for KM and other organisations to enhance management practices.

### **6.3.1 Recommendations for Kagiso Media**

Three main recommendations are made for KM. Firstly, in relation to evolving leadership behaviours, it is recommended that KM should introduce structured interventions that encourage experienced leaders to adapt to changing organisational demands. Leadership development programmes are recommended to focus on agility, innovation, and collaborative brand leadership are essential to foster a unified leadership behaviour and vision across teams.

Secondly, to strengthen leadership impact where leadership influence is limited, it is recommended that KM must consistently implement deliberate brand leadership activities. Fostering shared goals and values around performance is critical, and so KM should build a culture of accountability and inspire alignment within teams.

Thirdly, increasing talent attractiveness for the organisation should be prioritised. As the media landscape is rapidly evolving with the rise of digital platforms, it is recommended that KM should prioritise allocating resources to innovation, digital transformation, and talent acquisition. Also, it is recommended that KM be deliberate about building an external reputation as a forward-thinking organisation which will attract top talent and enhance its market position.

### **6.3.2 Recommendations for Other Organisations**

Based on this study, five recommendations are made for other organisations to consider. Firstly, organisations should craft and sustain a brand ideology. The study recommends that a well-defined brand ideology not only sharpens organisational focus but also strengthens leadership influence and enhances performance. Furthermore, the study recommends that leaders should embody and advocate for the brand's core values, inspiring cohesion and shared purpose among leadership and their teams.

Secondly, get clarity in leadership communication. It is important that leaders provide concise and clear communication about company goals and expectations to eliminate ambiguity. The study further recommends that internal branding activities should consistently be implemented to reinforce the organisation's performance ambitions, articulate the brand ideology, and ensure alignment across all levels of the business.

Thirdly, organisations should align Performance Management with the organisation's goals. As highlighted by McLaughlin and Mott (2010), the study recommends that a well-aligned performance management system is key to driving positive outcomes. The study further

recommended that organisations should ensure that performance appraisals and performance metrics display strategic objectives for both organisation and individual performance levels. Furthermore, the study recommends that change programmes must be communicated effectively to maintain moral and momentum across the organisation.

Fourthly, organisations should address resistance to change. Change initiatives often encounter resistance, particularly from long-service team members. The study recommends that leaders must invest time in explaining the rationale behind change, fostering a culture of transparency and collaboration to mitigate resentment and build trust between leaders and employees.

Finally, referring to Resource Based Theory, it is recommended that organisation should start to recognise the potential value of branding activities to build strong brands as the basis of a core competence and competitive advantage and thereby build brand equity.

#### **6.4 Contributions, limitations, and recommendations for further research**

The study looked at the case of a particular organisation, KM, that went through a change management process based on internal branding ideas to affect an improvement in performance at KM. The study looked specifically at how the leadership team crafted and implemented the brand ideology of the organisation, how the leadership behaved in response to the new brand ideology and how the performance management system was modified to drive performance. This study was undertaken to analyse how internal branding activities brought about a change in brand ideology and brand leadership. These changes were implemented by the leadership team at KM who began to influence performance positively. Finding literature on internal branding specifically in the media industry was challenging. It was clear that there was not much done, certainly not in the media industry. Therefore, this study addresses the literature gap that is currently existing.

The study revealed that implementing change using brand ideology and internal branding activities is unique and effective in terms of changing the leadership behaviour. The change management process requires committed leadership to craft a brand ideology that will assist in changing leadership behaviour to deliver positive business results. This was evident in the way respondents indicated that after the new brand ideology was implemented, they regarded themselves as brand ambassadors and took charge of the company performance. The change impacted positively across the leadership team, especially amongst the leadership team

members who had been in the organisation for longer. The respondents collectively indicated that the leadership renewal was a necessity for KM to move the organisation forward.

The study focused on the leadership team and not on the rest of the employees. This delimitation means that the findings reported here are based on the leadership respondents and not staff in general, who may hold other views about the change, and the study does not address how the staff behaviour have adjusted to the new brand ideology. Only soliciting the views of leaders could also bias the findings about the role of brand ideology in change processes, as generally, the leadership team is responsible for developing and implementing change. Further or future research can focus on extending the study beyond the leadership team to include employees. Specifically, the study could incorporate employees' views on what kind of internal branding activities would be effective for general employees.

Finally, KM is a medium-sized organisation in the media industry, where the concept of branding is very prominent and well known. It could be that, in bigger or smaller organisations, and in other industries the outcome of internal-branding driven change could be different. Therefore, future studies could focus on different organisation sizes or industries. In addition, in larger organisations, a quantitative study design could be adopted to investigate sentiments towards aspects of internal branding activities and brand ideology, and how widespread these views are across the organisation.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

Although limitations and delimitations of this study have been acknowledged, the study has contributed to understanding the role of brand ideology, internal branding activities and brand communication in shaping leadership behaviour and performance to deliver strong brand equity for KM. The study has added some depth in terms of understanding the unique impact that brand ideology through internal branding activities can achieve in changing the leadership behaviour and improving organisational performance. Implementing change from a branding perspective was quite unique and achieved the desired change results that KM expected.

The findings indicated clearly that there is merit or evidence in focusing and recognising the influence and potential value of the company brand as the basis for building competence, competitive advantage and building brand equity. Furthermore, the findings indicated a clear evidence that by clearly defining the brand ideology of an organisation, leaders can positively impact leadership behaviour and performance. Furthermore, the findings clearly highlighted

the importance of modifying the performance management system to align performance to company goals. It was evident that clarity in communicating brand ideology drives coherence and delivers results. Therefore, leaders could benefit from applying these insights to drive change and improve performance and leadership behaviour (Mmutle, 2022).

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# Appendices

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## Appendix A: Interview schedule

Interview schedule to conduct research of a case of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media:

<b>Interview date</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Interaction type</b>
21.04.2023	Senior Manager - CEO Mr N Grubb	Face-to-face
21.04.2023	Senior Manager HR Director- [REDACTED]	Face-to-face
02.05.2023	Senior Manager: Finance Manager [REDACTED]	Face-to-face
02.05.2023	Senior Manager: Marketing Manager [REDACTED]	Online
03.05.2023	Middle Manager: Commercial [REDACTED]	Face-to-face
04.05.2023	Middle Manager: HR specialist [REDACTED]	Face-to-face
05.05.2023	Middle Manager – Sales Manager – [REDACTED]	Face-to-face
29.05.2023	Middle Manager – Programming [REDACTED]	Face-to-face

## Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance letter from Rhodes University to conduct research of a case of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media:



Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee  
Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Makhanda, 6139, South Africa  
PO Box 94, Makhanda, 6140, South Africa  
t: +27 (0) 46 803 7314  
e: [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)  
<https://www.ru.ac.za/researchgateway/ethics/>  
NHREC Registration number: RC-241114-045

15 November 2024

Mrs Bonisiwe PMchumi

Email: [g21m7853@campus.ru.ac.za](mailto:g21m7853@campus.ru.ac.za)

Review Reference: 2023-7083-8249

Dear Mrs Mchumi,

**Re:** An analysis on how the performance management system shaped the internal brand of a media organization to deliver a shared brand leadership.

Researcher: Mrs Bonisiwe PMchumi

Supervisor(s): Prof Noel Pearse

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC). Your Approval number is: 2023-7083-8249

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying you when the annual report is due.

Please apply for a protocol amendment should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Email your request to [ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za).

Please submit a brief report to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of.

If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloguing number allocated.


Sincerely,

**Dr Janet Hayward**

**Chair: Rhodes University Human Research Ethics Committee (RU-HREC)**

## Appendix C: Letter requesting permission from Kagiso Media

Letter requesting permission to conduct research of a case of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media – sent to KM HR director:



RHODES UNIVERSITY  
*Where leaders learn*

**ACCESS LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Rhodes University  
Drostdy Road,  
Grahamstown,  
6139

The HR Director  
Kagiso Media  
14<sup>th</sup> Road, Erands Garden  
Midrand

Date 1 April 2023

Dear Ms/ Mr

**Invitation to participate in the research study.**

You are invited to participate in a research study titled: **An Analysis Of How The performance Management System Shaped The Internal Brand Of A Media Organisation To Deliver A shared Brand Leadership**

The study aims to analyse the impact of the performance management system that was improved and implemented at Kagiso Media. This will be done through analysing the performance management system components that were utilised by management to shape the internal brand of Kagiso Media.

The aim for the study is to also highlight what processes were followed to introduce the improved performance management system, what was measured, how and why it was important for the brand leadership team to behave in a certain way to deliver a shared internal brand. This will done to also analyse the Kagiso Media brand leadership in terms of the brand ideology outlined to demonstrate how brand leadership managed at Kagiso Media, especially when disseminating organisational plans to the rest of the organisation.

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics  
Ethics Coordinator: [ethics-commitee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-commitee@ru.ac.za)  
t: +27 (0) 46 603 7727 f: +27 (0) 86 616 7707  
Room 220, Main Admin Building, Drostdy Road, Grahamstown, 6139

## Appendix D: Approval letter from Kagiso Media



As part of the leadership brand at Kagiso Media management, your participation and cooperation are important in ensuring that the results of the research are accurately captured and presented.

The research will be undertaken through semi-structured interviews with the Kagiso Media senior, middle, and HR managements. The HR performance management documents, branding activities and all relevant documents will also be analysed.

Your identity will be treated with complete confidentiality and please refer to the attached consent form for further details. The interview session will require about one hour of your time to complete, where necessary a follow up meeting will be planned accordingly.

Furthermore, it is important that you are aware that this study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Rhodes University.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and this letter of invitation does not obligate you to take part in this research study. To participate, you will be required to provide a written consent that will include your signature, date, and initials to verify that you understand and agree to the conditions. Please note that you have the right to withdraw at any given time during the study without penalty.

Thank you for your time and I hope my request will meet your favorable condition.

Yours sincerely,



Bonisiwe P Mchunu

Rhodes University, Research Office, Ethics  
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**Private & Confidential**  
**25 August 2023**

Boni Mchunu  
By email

Dear Boni

**CONFIRMATION RE- REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I refer to your formal request dated 21 August 2023 and recent conversation between you, Nick Grubb (KMR CEO) Wendell Smith (HR Head) in respect to your request to conduct research within KMR including East Coast Radio. I am writing to inform you that after careful consideration of your research study proposal titled: "A case study of internal branding process at Kagiso Media" and the objectives of the study outlined in your letter, we are pleased to accept your study for conduct within Kagiso Media.

We were particularly impressed by the clarity of your research objectives, the relevance of your study to our field of interest, and your methodology. Your dedication to addressing important questions aligns well with our organisation to advance knowledge and contribute to the betterment of our leadership. Our institution places a high priority on maintaining rigorous ethical standards and ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants involved in research endeavors. Therefore, we request that you promptly provide us with the necessary ethics approvals, consent forms, and any other documentation required to commence the study.

Furthermore, please let us know if there are any specific requirements or resources you may need from our end to ensure the smooth execution of your study. We are committed to providing you with the necessary support to facilitate your research objectives.

Once again, congratulations on your acceptance into our research program. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact your study will have on the field and eagerly anticipate the insights and findings you will contribute.

Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or require assistance at any stage of your research journey. We are here to collaborate and support your endeavors. Thank you, we believe that your work will make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge in your respective field and Kagiso Media.

Warm regards,



Group Head of HR  
Kagiso Media Radio and Kagiso Tiso Holdings

**Kagiso Media Proprietary Limited**, Registration Number 2013/005452/07  
100 West Street, Wanda Valley, Sandton, 2196  
T +27 (0) 562-2500 E info@kagisomedia.co.za W www.kagisomedia.co.za  
PO Box 33275 | Northlands | 2116

**Directors:** F Dikane (Chairperson); P1 Makuthulu (Group Chief Executive Officer); TS Sathodi (Group Chief Financial Officer);  
S Oruser; K Mkhohliso; AP Moraledo; TS Mashape; ZC Nanyhulu; B Ngoniyama; P1 Uye;  
NP Nyanjane (alternate director)

Company Secretary: MH Governance (Pty) Ltd Reg. 2019/805227/07

## Appendix E: Participant consent form

Participant consent form sample to conduct research of a case of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media



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### PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(To be signed by research participant/s)

**Project Title:** An analysis on how the performance management system shaped the internal brand of a media organisation to deliver a shared brand leadership.

Boni Mchunu from the Department of Business School, Rhodes University has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to analyse the impact of the performance management system that was improved and implemented at Kagiso Media, the components that were utilised by management and processes followed to enhance the brand equity at Kagiso Media
2. Rhodes University has given ethical clearance to this research project (7083) and I have seen/may request to see the clearance certificate by contacting the Ethics Coordinator ([ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za))
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards improving the body of knowledge in understanding how leadership (specifically at Kagiso Media) could use internal resources to build an internal brand to benefit the organisation.
4. I will participate in the project by accepting the invitation to be interviewed by the researcher, allowing time to be interviewed and by providing honest feedback to all the questions as articulated in the questionnaire.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research as all interviews will take place at the offices, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. The following risks are associated with my participation: The researcher is a colleague to all participants, but this is a very low risk.
8. The Researcher intends to publish the research results in the form of setting up meetings with management where research results will be shared. Also, the researcher will request time with board members to share the research findings. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained, and my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conducting of the

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*WMS*

## Continues



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research, **unless I indicate to the contrary/recognize that as a public figure my identity will inevitably be/become known, in which case I agree to accept the loss of anonymity.**

9. In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013) it remains my right to request the Researcher to provide me with a detailed explanation of exactly how confidentiality and anonymity of the data I provide will be achieved. I may also request to know exactly how my personal information will be stored securely, for how long it will be stored.
10. If any data collected from me for this research project is to be used by the Researcher for any further study, I am to be informed in writing and my written consent requested again. I need not give consent for the new research if it is incompatible with the initial purpose of the present study (POPIA, s15(3)). Equally, I can simply reject the request. In such cases, a formal request needs to be made to me by the researcher via the Ethics Coordinator ([ethics-committee@ru.ac.za](mailto:ethics-committee@ru.ac.za)).
11. In terms of the POPI Act, I possess the right to receive feedback about this research. This will take the form of a presentation by the researcher. The researcher will ensure that the language used is plain and simple for participants to understand, unless **I elect not to receive this feedback.**
12. Any further questions that I might have regarding the nature of the research and/or my participation in it will be answered by Boni Mchunu, her email address is [boni@ecr.co.za](mailto:boni@ecr.co.za) or [g21m7853@campus.ru.ac.za](mailto:g21m7853@campus.ru.ac.za)
13. By signing this informed consent declaration, I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record by the Researcher.
14. I **agree** to the Researcher's request to take photographs, or videoing me as part of this research project, recognizing that agreement here is likely to raise the risk of compromising my anonymity and that steps will be taken to ensure this will not happen if my consent is given.
15. I **agree** to the Researcher's use of voice recording of my comments and opinions during interviews, the purpose of which is to ensure the accurate recording of my views/responses. Furthermore, I have the right to request a copy of the interview transcriptions to confirm that my opinions are accurately recorded.

*WMS*

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## Continues



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I, [REDACTED], have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

[REDACTED]

Participants signature

Witness

.....  
Date

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## Appendix F: Coding memo

Coding memo to conduct research of a case of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media

**AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM  
SHAPED THE INTERNAL BRAND OF A MEDIA ORGANISATION TO  
DELIVER A SHARED BRAND LEADERSHIP**

Research proposition/ objectives

**Proposition 1:** To describe the brand leadership (i.e. Kagiso Media's brand ideology), to demonstrate how Brand leadership occurs at Kagiso Media when leaders work alongside employees to disseminate clear brand ideologies and facilitate a positive shared understanding of the Kagiso Media brand.

**Proposition 2:** To describe what components of the performance management system including what was measured on regular basis, how was it measured, what was formally and informally communicated between Kagiso Media leadership and employees.

**Proposition 3:** To describe the performance management system implementation plan and process, describing what was done, by who and what steps were followed.

**Proposition 4:** To evaluate the current state of the brand leadership at Kagiso Media both middle and senior management compared to the aspirations set out in the brand ideologies.

**Proposition 5:** To analyse how the performance management system implementation shaped the internal brand at Kagiso Media.

## CODING MANUAL

Code No.	Code label	Definition	Description of occurrence	Evidence
1	Brand leadership activities  (BLA)	Activities that are deliberately done by the leadership team to disseminate the KM brand ideologies	What platforms were created by the KM leaders to express and share the KM brand ideologies with staff	Evidence will include documents outlining the platforms that were arranged and created by leaders to share the KM ideologies with employees (staff meetings, team building, culture Fridays, document with the ideologies)
2	Creating shared ideologies  (CSI)	Inspiration given by leaders to guide the choice and reasons behind the KM ideologies and	How were these carried out within teams and throughout the organisation	How were the ideologies included as part of strategy? During induction of new staff how are the ideologies communicated employees Evidence of how these are kept alive everyday
3	Brand Human Resource Management activities  (BHRMA)	Internal and external KM brand activities done by Brand HRM to communicate the KM internal brand and brand ideologies	What interaction or environments were created by Brand HRM to engage with staff regarding KM ideologies	Leaders calendar from HR outlining what activities will be done to communicate the internal brand. Forums created by HRM to strategies on KM internal brand through activities for staff
4	Brand Human Resource Management performance management	What provisions and forums were made by Brand HRM to inform staff about the improved PMS,	How was the performance management measured, what was measured and how often?	Performance management system forums and meeting to brief management, why it was improved. PMS ratings and scoring documentation

	system implementation (BHR - PMSI)			
5	Performance Management System implementation (PMSI)	How was the PMS improvement communicated, who were the role players and what was measured	Intervals of how often the leaders sat with staff to discuss the improvement of PMS	Documents outlining the difference between the old and the improved performance system
6	Brand Leadership involvement (BLI)	How involved are the leaders in the implementation of the improved PMS and how was the expectations communicated to staff	What was the individual and collective responsibility pertaining to the implementation of the improved PMS? How was that communicated to staff? How were the KM ideologies communicated? What role did HRM plan, what role did management play, what role did senior management play	Strategy documents highlighting performance management areas to be assessed by management. Performance management documentation outlining what was expected from employees. Performance management scoring sheets of how staff improved performance and understanding of KM ideologies to drive the KM internal brand

## Appendix G

### Appendix G 1 - Research question matrix

Research questions of a case of the internal branding process at Kagiso Media

#### **AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SHAPED THE INTERNAL BRAND OF A MEDIA ORGANISATION TO DELIVER A SHARED BRAND LEADERSHIP**

Research questions:

##### **PART ONE:**

##### **QUESTIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT RESPONDENTS**

##### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

My name is Boni Mchunu, I am an MBA student at Rhodes Business School. I am doing research on the subject as indicated above.

Before we start, please can I have the following generic information:

##### **Performance management system:**

Performance management is part of the brand-centred Human Resource Management (HRM) component and is one of the activities which HRM can drive to build a brand, especially for internal stakeholders. A performance management system helps set organisational life rules (Bourne et al., 2013).

##### **Generic information**

1. Date of the interview
2. Please state your date of employment at Kagiso Media.
3. Your position at Kagiso Media
4. Number of years and management experience at Kagiso Media

##### **Study specific information**

5. Your involvement and role in managing staff performance.
6. Number of staff reporting to your position
7. How were you involved in the implementation of the improved PMS at Kagiso Media?
8. Take me through the process of the old and improved PMS process?
9. Take me through the process of the old and improved PMS performance elements that were measured?
10. What steps were taken to introduce the improved PMS?
11. How did you feel about taking on the role of management in implementing the improved PMS?
12. How would you describe your leadership during the transition period from old to improved PMS?
13. What activities were implemented by HRM in preparation for the implementation of the improved PMS?
14. What forums were identified or created to communicate the need for the improved PMS to staff?

15. Did you identify any challenges or were there any challenges you faced when you were implementing the improved PMS?
16. What changes or new improvements did you introduce as part of the improved PMS introduction?
17. How were those improvements or changes communicated to management?
18. How were the improvements received by management and employees?
19. What platforms were created by HRM to gather that information on, for example the staff feelings about the improved PMS?
20. How different is the current performance management system from the previous PMS?

## Appendix: G 2 - Research question matrix

### QUESTIONS FOR MIDDLE MANAGEMENT RESPONDENTS: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My name is Boni Mchunu, I am an MBA student at Rhodes Business School. I am doing research on the subject as indicated above.

Before we start, please can I have the following information:

**Internal branding** refers to the role which is played by both leaders and employees in creating a favourable customer experience through the brand ideologies, the way the employees embody the brand, and how customers experience the brand (Bates, 2012)

Generic information

1. Date of the interview
2. Please state your date of employment at Kagiso Media.
3. Your position at Kagiso Media
4. Number of years and management experience at Kagiso Media

Study specific information

5. Your involvement and role in managing staff performance.
6. Number of staff reporting to your position
7. What strategy and policies were put in place to focus on leadership branding activities
8. What strategy or standard operating procedures were introduced to implement the improved PMS
9. How did these branding activities affect you and staff?
10. How were these events or branding activities introduced to the organisation?
11. What messages did leadership communicate to employees about the organisation and ideologies?
12. What messages did leadership communicate to employees about the improved PMS?
13. How often do leaders interact with employees to discuss the KM branding activities?
14. What platforms were created to interact with employees to display the KM ideologies?
15. How often did management meet employees to discuss their performance to assess alignment with company goals?
16. What branding activities were implemented that highlighted the brand ideologies of KM?
17. What was leadership hoping to achieve when the KM ideologies were introduced? And was that achieved, if yes, how?
18. What are the core ideologies of the organisation?
19. How are the current ideologies different to the previous ones?
20. What branding activities would you attribute to the KM current brand equity?

### Appendix G 3 - Research question matrix

#### QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESPONDENTS: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My name is Boni Mchunu, I am an MBA student at Rhodes Business School. I am doing research on the subject as indicated above.

Before we start, please can I have the following information:

**Brand leadership** is defined as the ability to inspire and influence staff and customers and to differentiate the brand from competitors (Buil, Catalán and Martínez, 2016). Brand leadership occurs when transformational leaders work alongside employees to disseminate a clear brand ideology and facilitate a positive shared understanding of the brand.

Generic information

1. Date of the interview
2. Please state your date of employment at Kagiso Media.
3. Your position at Kagiso Media
4. Number of years and management experience at Kagiso Media

Study specific information

5. Number of staff reporting to your position
6. Your involvement and role in managing staff performance.
7. What strategies were introduced by leadership to share the KM brand ideologies.
  - a. Talk to me about the specific activities that are done by the brand leadership team to disseminate the brand ideologies.
8. How were these policies and procedures communicated to employees?
  - a. Was there specific platforms that were created to express the brand ideologies
  - b. How were these carried out within and through the organisation
  - c. In your view how has the brand ideologies influence the performance of KM
- 9
10. How often was performance done and why was it done like that
  - a. What were the performance management system pillars
  - b. How were the new performance pillars changed and introduced?
  - c. How was the performance measured to improve employee performance at KM?
11. What steps were taken to measure the effectiveness of performance for KM brand activities?
12. Who were the implementation role players of the new PMS and why?
13. The current state of leadership
  - a. Is the existing leadership behaviour the desired state of leadership at KM?
  - b. If yes, why also if not why, please elaborate.
14. What would you say are the core competences of the leadership team at KM in driving performance management system?
  - b. How is performance management managed at KM to improve staff performance
  - c. Describe the plan and the process of what was done by who and what steps were taken to introduce the revised PMS
15. Talk to me about training & development of management
  - a. At KM how do you as part of the senior management team nurture the leadership competencies?
16. How often do you communicate with your employees regarding performance and what medium of communication do you use?
17. How often do you communicate with your employees regarding the branding activities and what medium of communication do you use?

18. Think of situation in the past where you had to performance manage your employee to deliver company goals. How did you go about that? How is that different now with the improved PMS?
19. What contribution did you make in the design and structure of the KM improved performance management system?
20. What contribution did you make in the design and structure of the KM brand ideologies and how are these communicated to employees?
21. What would you regard as missing in terms of internal brand, brand ideologies and performance management at Kagiso Media?