Building reputation through organisational values: A case study of a private hospital in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Theories within organisation and management studies have offered several concepts and models which indicate that organisational values are important factor for organisational success, including reputation building. Nevertheless, existing theory is still inadequate to explain the link between organisational values and organisation's reputation because it does not account for the enabling factors that underlies the two concepts. This study argues that the implementation of organisational values is an important organisational action for acquiring positives perceptions of organisational values which influences employee behaviour and shapes organisational reputation. It specifically shows and elucidates the enabling mechanisms that reinforce organisational values to impact on employee perceptions and behaviour. This is important because when employees share and exemplify the values in their work, they are likely to behave in ways that support the organisation's strategy which impacts on external perceptions and build reputation.

This study employed a qualitative approach through a single in-depth case study. It reflects that the understanding of 'what is going on' within organisation is most appropriately achieved by building concepts and constructs from empirical studies. By using semi-structured interviews, focus groups and non-participant observations, the data develops and evolves through the responses and behaviours of participants. Employees were selected through purposive sampling and the snow-balling technique was used to reach customers. The data were structured and coded using thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that the process of aligning organisational values and employee values is significant for understanding how organisational values influence employee behaviours, which in turn enable the organisation to build its reputation. The data suggest that four remediation phases: aware, articulate, accept and act, are important for explaining how a gap between organisational values and employee values can be reduced. This remediation process enabled the senior management team and employees to understand how their perceptions and reactions towards the implementation of organisational values impact upon attitudes and behaviours.

The findings suggest that organisational values can be reinforced through various social influences. Social interactions can occur in different forms including the involvement of leaders of the management team in creating, exampling and communicating values as well as through expanding the employee's role in enacting values through empowerment and trust building. However, the findings emphasise that the process of cascading and instilling values through a top-down or hierarchical is no feasible. Instead, it is a hybrid approach that requires employee buy-in and involvement especially in communicating and enacting organisational values. This is an important insight because employees regularly interact with each other which provide a valuable platform to persuade and influence other colleagues to embrace organisational values.

Additionally, the findings also build on the reputation literature by demonstrating the role of reciprocity and mimicking in behaviour as the consequences of social interactions within the organisation. The opportunity to regularly interact with colleagues enables employees to want to reciprocate in return for what they

have received in the workplace. This tacit understanding of reciprocity for mutual benefit and the tendency to imitate other's behaviour improves employee perceptions of organisations which in turn contribute towards reputation building.

The study advances current understandings in the organisational reputation literature by providing a unique theoretical and empirical insight into how organisational values can impact on reputation building. It also highlights the important role of internal mechanisms for shaping both internal perceptions and behaviour as well as external perceptions of organisations.

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ABBREVATIONS

CEO   Chief Executive Officer

COO   Chief Operating Officer

DEMC   Darul Ehsan Medical Centre Specialist

MHTC   Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council

NEM   New Economic Model

NTP   National Transformation Program

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the organisation's reputation building in a service industry, which has been understudied particularly in the developing country. The opening chapter of this thesis provides a general overview of the background issues that provides the contextual backdrop for the rest of the thesis. It also serves as a base for identifying the research problem and developing research questions. The intended contributions are also discussed in this chapter and an outline of the thesis structure is presented at the end.

1.1 Research background

Reputation is a major concern for global organisations today because it is a strategic intangible asset (Patrick & Adeosun, 2013) that impacts upon business performance (Iwu-Egwuonwu, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2005). Organisational reputation is increasingly managed strategically with greater concern towards core stakeholders such as customers and shareholders rather than 'softer' areas of reputation management, such as employee relations (Lines, 2004).

A favourable reputation requires more than just an effective communication effort but also a positive identity that can be moulded through consistent performance (Abdullah & Aziz, 2013). Hence, reputation is arguably shaped more by operational practice such as standard operating procedures and a work culture than by communication activities, although the latter is important for creating awareness of good operational practices and for enhancing the organisation's relationships with salient stakeholders (Abdullah & Aziz, 2013).

Building and maintaining a positive reputation requires an on-going commitment, understanding and support of the entire organisation to ensure the tenants of positive reputation are present throughout the organisation rather than in pockets (Olmedo-Cifuentes et al., 2014). Hence, many organisations engage in various strategies to build and maintain organisational reputation (da Camara, 2011), although surprisingly the impact of reputation internally to the organisation has tended to be ignored. This is a major oversight because reputation building has been centred on communication activities and corporate social responsibilities to enhance external public perceptions (Abdullah et al., 2013; Alessandri, Yang & Kinsey, 2006; Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Lam Chew & Nasruddin, 2015; Maden, Arıkan, Telci & Kantur, 2012; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2014).

1.1.1 Employees and reputation building

Dowling and Moran (2012) suggest that stakeholder judgements are primarily affected by an organisation's actions which are a critical process for building organisational reputation. Consequently, many organisations are increasingly aware of the need to understand and manage the impact of internal behaviour and how this may impact on the perceptions held by external stakeholders. Moreover Aperia et al. (2004) reported that reputation building is most successful when it starts from within the organisation because this enables organisations to embark on initiatives that guide and control the behaviour of employees.

As most studies have measured perceived organisational reputation through external stakeholders (Kowalczyk & Pawlish 2002), limited attention has been paid to incorporate the potential role of employees, ignoring the fact that they

are one of the most important stakeholder groups for building reputation (Gotsi and Wilson 2001; Alsop 2004; Olmedo-Cifuentes et al. 2014; Davies et al., 2010), not least because they can be strong advocates for the organisation in their interactions with other stakeholders such as customers, clients and investors (Helm, 2011). Furthermore, reputation as perceived particularly by customers will be heavily influenced by the experiences they have with employees (Davies et al., 2010). In other words, managing internal behaviour through an organisation's actions can potentially impact on organisational reputation because it affects how employees perceive the organisation (Holtzhausen & Fourie, 2011). To date, there has been little effort to define internal organisational influences on such capacities (Johnston & Everett, 2012; Olmedo-Cifuentes et al., 2014). Over the years only a handful of empirical studies have been conducted which explore internal stakeholders and reputation (e.g. Davies et al., 2001, 2003, 2010; Bjorgvinsson, 2005; ; Davies et al., 2004; Chun & Davies, 2006, 2010; Davies, 2008; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008). In this regard, the impact of employee on organisational reputation has largely been ignored.

Despite employees being the face of organisations, particularly in the context of service firms, there has been limited attention paid to understanding their perceptions and the potential role of employees may help to explain how organisations build and sustain their reputations.

1.1.2 Malaysia context in general

Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy, located in Southeast Asia (see map of Malaysia in Figure 1). It consists of thirteen states and three federal territories including Peninsula Malaysia and the states of Sabah, Sarawak and Federal Territory of Labuan which is separated by the South China Sea. Kuala

Lumpur is the capital city of Malaysia. As of June 2016, the total population exceeded 30 million people. Malays make up 50.4% of the population, while Chinese 23.7%, indigenous 11%, Indian 7.1% and other ethnicities 7.8%. The main religion is Islam, although members of other religions are free to practise their religious belief such as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism and many others.

Figure 1: Map of Malaysia

Malaysia, a middle-income country, has transformed itself from an economy dominated by the production of raw natural resources such as rubber and tin into an emerging multi-sector economy. After the Global Financial Crisis in 2009, Malaysia posted annual growth rates averaging 5.7 per cent since 2010 through the New Economic Model (NEM) which includes a number of reform programs to achieve economic growth that is primarily driven by the private sector (Malaysian Economic Monitor, 2016). By intensifying efforts to shift towards higher value-added activities in both manufacturing and services, the NEM also aims to drive Malaysia to reach high income (target US$ 15,000 gross national income per capita) and developed nation status by 2020, alongside inclusiveness and sustainability (Pemandu, 2015).

The main components contributing to the Malaysian economy are services (54%), manufacturing (23.5%), construction (4.4%), mining and quarrying (9%) and agriculture (7.8%). The largest contributor to real GDP is the services sector with its year-on-year average growth rate of 5.1% (The World Bank, 2016). Even though Wholesale & Retail Trade (6.6%) and Information & Communication (8.8%) are the key drivers of the service sector, private health services, which include hospital services, medical and dental services, and other human health services, provide a substantial contribution, with RM53.5 billion (£9.7 billion) of revenue and a growth rate of 4.7% (Department of Statistics, 2016).

Under the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020), the attention is on promoting the healthcare travel services industry (The 11th Malaysia Plan) which is deemed as a high-potential wealth creator. As medical tourism is one of the fastest growing sub-sectors in the world, Malaysia aspires to become an attractive destination for medical tourism in Asia.

1.1.3 Health Care Industry in Malaysia

The healthcare industry in Malaysia is in a vibrant growth phase which generated revenue of more than RM500 million yearly (Pemandu, 2015). The concept of medical tourism was introduced by the Malaysian government in 1998 (Altes, 2005) in response to the financial crisis and the need for economic diversification (Connell, 2006). The term 'medical tourism' is used to describe health-seeking behaviour by consumers into another country (Salmon, 2008). In other words, consumers travel to other countries with the aim of improving their health. In Asia, the main players in medical tourism include Malaysia, Thailand, India and Singapore, with these countries expected to capture at least

80% of the Asian market (Mun, Peramarajan, Arshad, & Nuraina, 2015). Malaysia's medical tourism industry has witnessed astounding growth in the recent past. According to the National Transformation Programme (NTP) Annual Report 2015, Malaysia generated RM588.6 million in healthcare travel revenue between January and September 2015, with the target for the full year set at RM854 million. It was also reported that medical patients visit Malaysia for advanced treatments such as dental treatment, aesthetics and optometry, cardiovascular, cancer, fertility, orthopaedic and general health screenings (Mun et al., 2015). Most of the patients are middle-aged people who visit Malaysia to save money on treatment. Malaysia healthcare's main market is Indonesia constituting 62% of total healthcare revenue and numbers, followed by the Middle East (7.4%), India (3%), China (2.6%), Japan (2.6%) and Australia, New Zealand and United Kingdom (2.5%) (Pemandu, 2015).

According to Connell (2006), the rapid growth of health tourism is due to reasons such as excessive medical costs in developed countries, long waiting lists, relative affordability of international air travel, favourable economic exchange rates and the ageing of the affluent baby-boomer generation. In this respect, Malaysia has taken advantage of the right infrastructure in the healthcare delivery system as well as tight control over quality assurance of its medical services to attract international patients. In addition, the reputation of Malaysia's medical services in medical achievements has also made Malaysia a strong contender in the industry (Mun et al., 2015). For instance, the world's first arm and hand transplant was performed in Selayang Hospital in 2000 (Najib, 2009). This has built up the reputation of the country as a credible healthcare provider (Mun et al., 2015).

In order to develop the medical tourism industry, the government has created administrative structures to coordinate and spearhead various initiatives, for example the establishment of Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) within the Ministry of Health since 2009 to expedite health and medical tourism (Dahlui & Aziz, 2012). As a result, Malaysia has gained much popularity as a medical tourism destination in recent years. To be listed under MHTC's promotion program, quality has become an integral part of all private hospitals. Two major components of service quality in the healthcare industry are first, technical quality, including technical equipment and medical diagnoses systems. The second is functional quality, measured by the service offered by employees (Sarwar, 2013). It has been found from different healthcare research that customers mostly give priority to functional quality even though the technical quality may not be satisfactory (Bower, Swan & Koehler, 1994; Sarwar, 2013). Thus, having a positive reputation for providing a high quality service to customers is a priority for many of these private healthcare providers in order to attract customers (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). To date, with over 250 private hospitals in Malaysia, only 22 were selected to be a participating medical tourism provider. In other words, the competition to be a top serving private healthcare provider that can cater to the needs of both local and international patients is intense. This raises the question of what these private hospitals do to make them the preferred choice and able to be on the list as the most reputable healthcare providers of such a lucrative market.

1.1.4 Reputation building in private healthcare

The healthcare industry is becoming increasingly competitive and subject to a number of critical influences including service quality, accreditation and medical facilities. This is because with the availability of health insurance schemes, the

possibilities for customers to seek health care from a private hospital has widened and hence reputation has become a central indicator for customers in choosing a health care provider. Consequently, a growing number of private hospitals are seeking to build a positive reputation to attract these lucrative paying customers (Razak, 2009). Without a sound reputation, it is difficult for healthcare providers to attract and retain customers, which in turn will reduce their competitiveness in a highly saturated market. One potential avenue for managing reputation is to explore ways in which healthcare providers are managing their identity in the eyes of employees. In other words, managing organisational identity may act as a means to build and maintain organisational reputation.

Many consumer goods companies use individual product lines to build and manage the reputation of individual product brands. However, health care providers tend to present themselves under a single name and tend to place less emphasis on advertising (Satir, 2006). Davies et al.'s (2010) study provides a comprehensive review of how an organisation's reputation stems from the quality of interaction with employees. They argue that customers develop opinion about a service organisation based on emotion displayed by employees. They coined the term 'transfer of effect' in which employee perceptions of activities inside the organisation either positively or negatively influence customers purchasing behaviour outside of the organisation outside of the organisation. As employees have been described as 'the face of the organisation' (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006), they potentially build or damage an organisation's reputation because they represent the organisation through their behaviour to external stakeholders who form particular views of the organisation. However, the concept of employees as agents of reputation

building by focusing on improving their perceptions of the organisation remains under-researched, particularly in the healthcare sector. Since organisational reputation can potentially be realised through the behaviour of current employees, further research is needed to understand what organisational actions might influence employees to behave in particular ways, which in turn impact on perceptions among internal and external stakeholders. This is the focus of the thesis and will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Two.

1.2 Research aim and research questions

Given the importance of an organisation's reputation in the healthcare industry, it is important to investigate the concept further to build on existing understandings of reputation. The overall research aim of this study is to construct a new theoretical perspective that adds to previous research in the context of organisational values and organisational reputation, particularly in a developing world context. This research aims to demonstrate how the implementation of organisational values can influence employee behaviour and shape organisational reputation. It specifically provides evidence that theoretical development has neglected to account for the importance of the enabling mechanism that has reinforced the connection between organisational values and organisational reputation.

One of the potential organisational actions that might influence employees to behave in particular ways is the enactment of organisational values. Arguably organisations need to create organisational values that influence internal perceptions and shape behaviour. However throughout the internalisation process of values, the main challenge is that organisational values do not resonate with the values of employees (Graham, Harvey & Popadak, 2015).

Thus, it is arguably critical for organisations to be responsive to any discrepancy if values are not uniformly shared. Given their importance, it is important to understand how organisational values are practised in organisations which in turn help them to build their reputation. Hence, this study asks the following research question:

i. How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?

An obvious reality of organisational life is that many employees have regular social contact, often on a day-to-day basis, among themselves and with other stakeholder groups. This inevitably means that their perceptions and behaviours are communicated in different ways to external stakeholders, which impact on their perceptions of the organisation (reputation). Hence, organisational values need to be clearly communicated and require operational and social support for them to be internalised and believed by employees (Abdullah, Aziz & Abdul Aziz, 2013; Lines, 2004). As most employees become familiar with and are influenced by organisational values directly and indirectly through the people around them, employees arguably form particular norms that shape organisational reputation. To date, research has not adequately explored the circumstances through which social interactions can influence an employee's work behaviour. This leads to the second research question:

ii. How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?

The empirical context of the thesis is service organisations generally, recognising the impact of organisational actions (e.g. organisational values) on employees and reputation building. The specific context is that of a private

health care provider, in a business to consumer (B2C) market in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

1.3 Expected research contribution

This research is expected to make several contributions.

First, the findings will advance current knowledge in the bodies of literature of both organisational values and organisational reputation in the form of providing a theoretical insight into how organisational values impact on reputation building. Although previous research has positively linked organisational values and organisational reputation but by collecting and analysing empirical evident, this study will shed light on informing how these two concepts are connected. Indeed, the findings suggest that an organisation can take advantage of internal forces by understanding the pattern of connections among the key enabling factors. The findings provide a detailed analysis of the perceptions of employees on the implementation of organisational values as an organisational action. More specifically, it shows that organisational values impact upon employee perceptions and behaviours.

Second, this thesis provides an important methodological contribution to existing data collection techniques as well as the context, which particularly in the organisational reputation literature have been quantitative, largely based on surveys, and focused on western contexts. This research explores the context of a private hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia because empirically little is known about how hospitals seek to build their reputations. To date, much of the work on reputation building has been conducted in developed countries and has focused on North American and European contexts. This case study is located in a developing economy. The major motivation for medical tourism (as

mentioned in Section 1.1.3) such as lower cost, avoidance of long wait times, or services not available in one's local hospital and own country suggest that the Malaysian context as a medical tourism destination and developing country is an important empirical site for this study. Given Malaysia's reputation for graceful and attentive service, it is not hard to see why major cities such as Penang and Kuala Lumpur have quickly become the medical tourism hubs of Asia (Hockton, 2014). The natural culture that is embraced by Malaysian people who appreciate close knit relationships (Hockton, 2014) including in business engagements increases the need for service providers to uphold values that project Malaysian culture because there is a strong expectation in this regard. These impacts on the way services are rendered to customers as well as the expectations from the customers who expect to receive the best of service. This phenomenon is applicable in the private hospital environment in Malaysia where customers generally not only use the hospital for treatment but they also concerned about how they are attended by the hospital's employee. In additional to the cultural perspectives, as a developing nation, the level of education and the literacy rates are relatively lower than developed countries, hence the needs for human interaction particularly in relation to health is essential. Patients are expecting to receive a personalised service and personalised attention besides the facilities especially from private hospital as compared to develop economies where the public focus is more on the facilities (Kok, 2009). This provides a different interpretation on how reputation may be built.

The incorporation of face-to-face interviews, focus groups and non-participant observations allows in-depth and rich understanding which enables a detailed insight into the perceptions of individual employees. To my knowledge, this

study is the first qualitative enquiry to address the issue of internal reputation building in a developing country such as Malaysia, particularly within a private hospital environment. As such, this research provides a unique empirical setting for exploring the building of organisational reputation.

Third, the results of this study provide helpful practical insights for managers around strategic initiatives and activities for internalising appropriate values for their organisations. This study shows the potential opportunity for aligning organisational and employee values and the impact this can have on employee behaviour, which can positively influence an organisation's reputation because if they exemplify the values in their work then this will impact on external perceptions of the organisation. It also has the potential to encourage managers to reflect on how to foster an environment that supports social interactions because enacting organisational values can be reinforced through different levels of involvement from various internal stakeholders such as senior managers, line managers and employees.

1.4 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters as outlined in brief below, excluding **Chapter 1**, which presents an overall introduction to the thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews the main literature and theoretical debates relevant to the study and proposes a conceptual framework. At the outset, the importance of reputation, its concepts and definitions, measurement and other related key concepts including image and identity are discussed. Subsequently, the way in which the reputation of an organisation is formed, the determinants and antecedents of reputation are discussed and analysed from various theoretical and methodological perspectives. The chapter then moves on to the concept of

organisational values, reviews previous work on the roles of organisational values and indicates how organisational values impact on employee behaviour. Finally, the conceptual framework and the related research questions for this study are proposed.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodological framework adopted in this research. It entails three main stages. The first stage details the research design including the discussion on the research philosophy and paradigm guiding the research process as well as an explanation for the use of a case study approach. The case study approach is used to seek applicability of such a framework in a Malaysian setting. The case study explanation highlights the procedures taken in conducting case study research from the beginning stage until the final stage. The chapter also discusses the sampling strategy after clarifying the choice of the subject organisation.

The second stage of this chapter explains the data collection procedure and activities undertaken, and the ethical considerations during the fieldwork at the hospital including describing the setting of the interviews and the protocol of observation sessions. It also elaborates on the techniques and methods adopted in this study including justifying why the method is best employed to answer the questions as well as discussing the pilot study. The chapter also presents the characteristics of the data collected and the data transcription process.

The final stage presents and synthesises the analysis of the primary data through the case study approach. It elaborates on the steps involved in the overall analysis under manual procedures/techniques. Finally, the chapter concludes with some discussion around trustworthiness issues.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the key findings that have been generated from this inquiry. The rich description of the data is organised and divided into two separate chapters based on the two main research questions that guide the present study. **Chapter 4** revealed that the process of aligning organisational values and employee values is fundamental in understanding how organisational values influence employee behaviour. It demonstrates how the gap between organisational values and employee values can be reduced through four remediation phases. It also shows the implication of the process on the organisation's reputation.

Chapter 5 explains the role of social influence in connecting organisational values and reputation building. It shows the different forms of social influence among various internal stakeholders in creating, communicating and enacting the salience of organisational values for reputation building. The chapter concludes that reputation is the outcome of influencing employees to behave in accordance with the organisation's values.

Chapter 6 is divided into two sections based on the two research questions. Each section interprets and argues the main findings in relation to arguments from the extant literature discussed in chapter two. It also highlights the different contributions of this wider study in terms of what can be theorised from this research.

Finally, **Chapter 7** concludes the thesis. It draws the key research findings of this research and demonstrates how the study has answered the research questions, how it has achieved the research aim and fulfilled the research objectives. The main theoretical, methodological and practical contributions are also highlighted. Finally, it acknowledges the limitations of the study together with some avenues for future research.

1.5 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has introduced the study by presenting the background to the research together with the research problem and research gaps. The research focus has been identified and a brief description of the research context, the methodology to be employed, the novelty of the study focus and the contribution have been explained. To conclude the chapter, an indication of how the thesis is organised is presented.

The next chapter will move on to review the main literature and debate of the important concepts and state the propositions of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is growing evidence that many organisations are concerned with their reputation (Goldsmith et.al, 2000; Dolphin, 2004; Helm, 2007; Graham & Bansal, 2007; Hutton et. al, 2001) because of its effect on organisational performance (Dowling, 2006; Sabate & Puente, 2003) and a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013; Dolphin, 2004; Hall, 1992; Roberts & Dowling, 2002; Satir, 2006; Pellegrini-Masini & Leishman, 2011). As many businesses today operate in a highly competitive environment, those who have developed a favourable reputation are likely to sustain their existence (Firestein, 2006) and be in a stronger state during times of crisis (Thevissen, 2002; Grundwald & Hempelmann, 2011) because it endures a long term relationship with multiple stakeholder groups (Boyd et al., 2010). On the contrary, organisations with unfavourable reputation can lead to costly consequences which is likely to disengage stakeholders from the organisation, require extensive time to recover (Robert & Dowling, 1997) and in some cases lead to the demise of organisations (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2008; Sisson, 2007). According to Davies, Chun, Vinhas, & Roper (2004) and Aqueveque (2005), the growing importance of organisational reputation and reputation management is related to stakeholders relying on reputations when making routine decisions in substitute for deficiency of information or information overload. This means organisational reputation plays a substantial role in attracting or impeding stakeholders.

While realising the importance of organisational reputation for the survival of an organisation, it is necessary to understand the nature of organisational

reputation. This chapter discusses key concepts and definitions of organisational reputation and the theories which underpin the construct. Subsequently, the chapter addresses the main debates in the existing literature before outlining the key research questions of the study.

2.1 Organisational reputation

2.1.1 Defining organisational reputation

Organisational reputation has been defined in several different ways (see (Highhouse, Brooks, & Gregarus, 2009; Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011; Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever, 2005; Walker, 2010; Brown et al., 2006). Although the term is increasingly used in the business world and in academic research, a single precise definition does not exist (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; Smaiziene & Jucevicius, 2009). The ambiguity in defining the construct may be due to the cross-disciplinary perspectives that have emerged, for instance in the field of marketing, communications, accounting, economics, organisational studies, and finance (Fombrun, 2012). The key point is that, as a multi-disciplinary field of study, scholars and practitioners have not been aware of the diverse perspectives (Barnett et al., 2006) which has resulted in broad differences in meaning (Shamma, 2012).

The generally cited definitions of corporate reputation summarised in Table 1, reflect two main attributes, which are outlined below. For the purpose of this study, the definition drawn from the stream of organisational studies, communication and marketing will be considered to further define organisational reputation.

Table 1: Summary of definitions of organisational reputation

Definition	Key attributes	References
An estimation of the consistency over time of an attribute of an entity	Evaluation	Herbig and Milewicz (1993, page18)
A corporate reputation is a collective representation of a firm's past actions and results that describes the firm's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders. It gauges a firm's relative standing both internally with employees and externally with its stakeholders, in both its competitive and institutional environment.	Evaluation	Fombrun & Riel (1997, page 10)
A corporate reputation is a stakeholder's overall evaluation of a company over time. This evaluation is based on the stakeholder's direct experiences with the company, any other form of communication and symbolism that provides information about the firm's actions and/or a comparison with the actions of other leading rivals.	Evaluation	Gotsi and Wilson (2001, page 29)
Socially transmissible company's (its characteristics', practice's, behaviour's and results', etc.) evaluation settled over a period of time among stakeholders, that represents expectations for the company's actions, and level of trustworthiness, favourability and acknowledgment comparing to rivals.	Evaluation and expectations	Smaiziene and Jucevicius (2009, page 96)
A global temporally stable, evaluative judgement about a firm that is shared by multiple constituencies.	Evaluation and judgement	Highhouse et.al., (2009, page 783)
Observer' collective judgements of a	Judgement	Barnett et al. (2006,

corporation based on assessments of the financial, social, and environmental impacts attributed to the corporation overtime.	and assessments	page 34)
The aggregation of a single stakeholder's perceptions of how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders.	Perceptions	Wartick (1992, page 34)
A relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects compared against some standard. Perception can be positive or negative.	Perceptions	Walker (2010, page 370)
A perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describe the firm's overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals. It is based on a set of collectively held beliefs about a company's ability and willingness to satisfy the interest of various stakeholders.	Perception and beliefs	Fombrun (1996, page 72)

Source: Researcher's survey

As can be seen from Table 1, the definitions of organisational reputation vary according to two main attributes namely evaluation and perception. Firstly, the most common attribute is to consider organisational reputation as an *assessment of a status* of an organisation. This includes references to assessment in the definition as an "estimation", a "gauge", an "evaluation" or a "judgement". Hence, corporate reputation is an estimation of an organisation's attributes (Herbiq & Milewicz, 1993), gauged in relation to the standing of other

organisations (Fombrun & Riel, 1997), or a judgement of corporate based financial, social, and environment impacts (Barnett et al., 2006). This assessment which is shared by multiple constituencies, both internal and external, may extend over time (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001) as perceived by stakeholders and be expressed through their thoughts and words (Miles, Covin, Miles, & Cov, 2000; Saxton, 1998). Even though the assessment is made from a different perspective of the organisation, individuals assess organisations based on their own set of criteria (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). As pointed by Helm (2007), there is a consensus concerning the criteria in assessing reputation among members of different stakeholder groups. (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990) observed that company stakeholders assess firms based on, for instance, several marketing and accounting signals indicating performance, institutional signals conformity to social norms and strategy. Similarly, observers who have insufficient knowledge about some reputational characteristics might judge them according to the characteristics familiar to them. As an example, shareholders may wish to observe profits, growth and transparency of the organisation financial performance as the criteria in making an assessment, as compared to customer rating feedback which would not be a concern to them but would be an important criterion for potential customers. A positive growth in profit would be important to shareholders and a high rated customer service feedback would entice potential customers, thus the two favourable perspectives are viewed from different criteria, and yet both will endow an organisation as trustworthy and lead to reputation outcomes. This draws attention to the fact that the overall evaluation takes into consideration that any or all of these criteria can impact on how people feel about an organisation (Caudron, 1997).

Secondly, organisational reputation is considered as an aggregation of perceptions held by different groups of stakeholders. As part of their assessment of an organisation, stakeholders also develop expectations about how an organisation acts in a given situation (Mahon, 2002), from its past actions and performance (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), offering both benefits and challenges to the organisation (Mahon & Wartick, 2003). As an aggregate perception of various stakeholders, organisational reputation is unlikely to be factual (Walker, 2010) or accurate (Fombrun, 1996) because perception is ingrained from different individual observers. In essence, the two main attributes discussed above underscore that stakeholders consider every aspect of the organisation that they have seen, heard, thought about or experienced in the past, which create expectations about the organisation in the future.

In addition to the definitions summarised in Table 1, there are two other common attributes in describing organisational reputation. First, organisational reputation is inherently comparative and second, it is considered stable and enduring. Drawing on its comparative nature, Fombrun's (1996) definition specifies an organisation's reputation is compared in relation to 'other leading rivals' or other industry players. What is lacking in Fombrun's (1996) definition is that comparison need not be significant only to rivals but as observed by Wartick (2002) may also be comparable to others firms within an industry or based on a firm's own past performance.

Finally, organisational reputation is relatively stable and enduring (Rhee & Haunschild, 2006; Cravens & Oliver, 2006; Rindova, 1997) and is the result of established patterns or behaviour that stakeholders can observe and respond (Gray & Balmer, 1998; Bromley, 1993). This line of argument suggests that

reputation is based on historical actions and perceptions of stakeholders in a given situation. The accumulation of perceptions among stakeholders based on an organisation's different actions and decisions can stimulate reputation building or destruction. It is acknowledged that reputation develops over time (Rhee & Haunschild, 2003; Roberts & Dowling, 2002) and may not be shaped fast and easily, because of the underlying attributes of organisations. On the one hand, reputation is considered fragile as it is built through its credible actions (Nguyen, 2011); therefore a negative action is likely to impact customer views of an organisation as compared to a good action. On the other hand, once reputation is built, it is considered relatively stable and enduring (Walker, 2010).

In essence, organisational reputation can be explained in terms of how individuals within different stakeholder groups make judgements over time, based on collective assessments, knowledge and beliefs of the organisation. A review of the literature points to a disparate body of work around the meaning of organisational reputation and for clarification, this raises the need for an operational definition here. Building on the different views and works from various scholars, this leads to a working definition of organisational reputation:

> ***Organisational reputation is the summation of assessment and perceptions, either positive or negative, that relevant stakeholders attribute to specific issues of an organisation, based on their experiences, future expectations and interpretations of that organisation, which is created through its consistent actions over time.***

The working definition points out five key attributes of organisational reputation: (1) summation of assessment and perception, (2) relevant stakeholders, (3) attribute to specific issues, (4) experience and expectation and (5) consistent actions.

First, reputation is a process that accumulates judgements and assesses an organisation's status among various stakeholder groups. It is a resource with perceived, relative value (Hunt, 2000) that draws attention to the fact that stakeholder opinions about an organisation are based on the sum of their beliefs or expectations about a certain organisational attribute (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). For example, an organisation can be reputed for providing great customer service, but any or all related activities taken by the organisation can impact on how people feel about the organisation as a whole.

Second, every organisation will have various stakeholder groups with different levels of interest in what the organisation does. An organisation's reputation can be defined differently among all groups and result in different reputational outcomes. A stakeholder is defined as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, pg. 46). Fombrun & Van Riel (2003) and Boyd et al. (2010) suggest that organisations with good reputations attract positive stakeholder engagement. Key stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, investors, current employees as well as potential employees combine interest and develop expectations as to how the organisation will act in a given situation (Mahon, 2002), therefore organisational reputation is a social collective concept (Fombrun, 1996) and also viewed as socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1996).

Third, issue specific assessment is referred with reference to the discussion by (Walker, 2010) where firms may have multiple reputations depending on which stakeholders and which issues are under scrutiny. This means that an organisation's reputation may not be common among all groups. As indicated by Gabbioneta, Ravasi, & Mazzola (2007), different groups of stakeholders may focus their evaluation on different sets of attributes and dimensions of an organisation's reputation. Sjovall & Talk (2005) argue that stakeholders tend to pay attention to actions that are perceived as salient to their specific interests and values thus, the firm can have multiple reputations according to each combination of attribute and stakeholder (Helm, 2007). There is some danger in assuming that an organisation's reputation in one group generalises to all groups of stakeholders. For instance, in terms of financial return, employees are unlikely to give the same level of importance as investors or shareholders. Investors and shareholders would expect to see a positive bottom line of a publically listed organisation, for example, while employees would arguably be more concerned about compensation and their career development with the organisation. Therefore, different stakeholders will have varying interests in a company and hence will differ in their evaluations of an organization (Saxton, 1998).

Fourth, organisational reputation represents what is actually known by both internal and external stakeholders. Some evaluation can be done based on past actions and according to specific interests; hence reputation is predicted by the past performance of an organisation (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), and its ability to meet the expectations of groups other than itself. This is highlighted by Gotsi and Wilson (2001) and Fombrun & Shanley (1990) who argue that stakeholders evaluate based on their direct and indirect experiences with the

organisation and any other forms of firm communication activities that provide information about the actions of firms.

Finally, an organisation's reputation is related to the consistency of its behaviour that allows organisations to have specific qualities and repeatedly perform in a certain way. As argued by Herbig and Milewicz (1995), consistency over time results in a clear reputation because consistent behaviour is observable and predictable. (Mahon, 2002) emphasises that consistency in actions differentiate organisations having a strong or a weak reputation. Consequently, the credibility of an organisation can be eroded as inconsistent signals affect the development of relationships over times that are necessary to form a reputation with specific stakeholders.

In discussing the concept of organisational reputation, Shamma (2012) suggests that organisational reputation is an integration of other organisation-related concepts. Fombrun and Riel (1997) highlight the concepts of organisation identity and organisation image as the basic components of organisational reputation, which are now discussed.

2.1.1.1 Organisational identity

Organisational identity is the perception of internal stakeholders such as employees and managers. Organisational identity includes:

> "(a) features that employees consider central to the company, (b) features that make the company distinctive from the other companies (in the eyes of employees) and (c) features that are enduring or continuing, linking the present and the past to the future" (Fombrun & Riel, 2004, page165).

Identity is also viewed as the 'core' or 'basic character' of the organisation (Barnett et al. 2006). The actual belief of identity from the perspective of employees can be positive or negative depending on the setting of the organisation (Balmer & Greyser, 2006). This shows that organisational identity is created and perceived by those individuals working within it and is based on shared meaning that is communicated to them within the organisation (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Gioia et al., 2000). Whetten (1997, page 27) describes organisational identity as: 'Who/what do we believe we are?'

At the same time, internal stakeholders are interested in their identity being valued by external constituents therefore, many organisations link organisational identity to visual identification such as logos, business cards, uniforms and the interior design of organisations (Brown et al., 2006). However, organisational identity is not only about visual cues and it also involves strategic cues such as the vision, mission, the philosophy of the organisation (Dowling, 1994) and organisational culture (Helm, 2011).

2.1.1.2 Organisation image

In contrast, organisation image holds visual representation of a company as the overall impression that an organisation makes on external constituents. It is often used to refer to an organisation's view about external stakeholders' perceptions with respect to an organisation (Davies et al, 2001). Bromley (2000, page 241) emphasises corporate image as "the way an organisation presents itself to the public". In other words, corporate image is "what an organisational member wants others to know about the organisation" (Brown et al. 2006, page 104). The intention is to impress particularly the external observers or stakeholders view and especially from the customers (Davies et

al., 2001; Jackson, 2004). As image can be shaped and created by an organisation through its communications channels and symbols, Walker (2010) suggests that organisation image is a desired image and cannot be negative because it emanates from within the organisation and not from outside. In this sense, organisation image is related to what an organisation believes external constituencies think about the organisation. Whetten (1997, page 27) summarises image as: 'What/who do we want others to think we are?'

With distinct understandings of the two organisational concepts, organisational reputation is the outcome of an aggregation of organisation image and organisation identity (Shamma, 2012). In other word, organisational reputation asks the question of "What do others think about us?" (Brown et al., 2006). Wartick (2002) proposes the following equation:

$$Reputation = f \ (Image + Identity)$$

Similarly, organisational reputation is the endpoint in a chain that derives from organisations signalling positive organisational image, with the image coming from the organisational identity; which in turn derives from the personality which is the reputation that the organisation is trying to create (Barnett, Jermier & Lafferty, 2006).

Drawing on this domino effect as shown in Diagram 1, reputation may be seen to arise as the output of different activities constructed either consciously or unconsciously by the internal and external stakeholders of organisations.

Diagram 1: Formation of organisational reputation

| Organisational Identity | → | Organisation Image | → | Organisational Reputation |

- Time bound - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ->
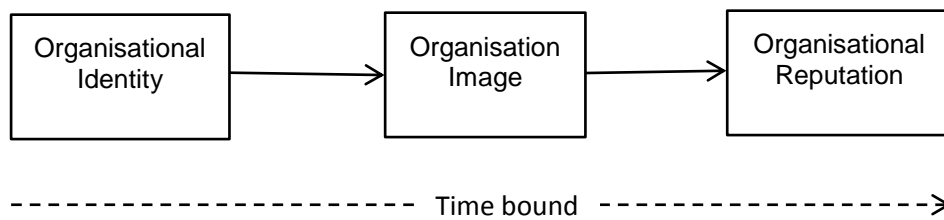
Organisational identity reflects the organisation's character, which is reflected in the internal culture and values of the firm. This leads to the formation of organisation image which is created through corporate visual and corporate communication. Organisational reputation is the reflection of impressions and judgements of internal and external observers of an organisation. This means that organisational values is not fragmented imagery captured at a certain point in time by a single individual but rather the collective perceptions and beliefs of the organisation in the minds of various stakeholders (Brown et al., 2006). In other words, reputation may not be shaped fast and easily but develops over time (Rhee & Haunschild, 2003; Roberts & Dowling, 2002) through the creation of organisational identity and image.

2.1.2   The theoretical perspective of reputation building

Within management and organisational studies (Rao, 1994; Fombrun & Riel, 1997), reputation has emerged from social processes that influence the formation of individual perceptions. Underlying much of the discussion in reputation research, social construction theory argues that an organisation's managers and stakeholders are intimately involved in a reciprocal process of meaning-making cues of almost anything within an organisation (Rao, 1994). The accumulation of multiple cues and images over time, construct a web of interpretations that can be rationalised in terms of its reputational implications (Berger & Luckman, 1966; Fombrum & Rindova, 1994). This means that reputation should be understood in its social context which is shaped by social

forces within a social structure (Edvardsson, Tronvoll, & Gruber, 2011). This social construction is also viewed as a phenomenon of networking and social embeddedness (Gluckler & Armbruster, 2003) indicating conformity of the organisation's social norms. In this respect, reputation is built from the repeated interactions between the organisation and stakeholders. Organisational reputation is the result of multiple evaluations of an organisation relative to existing expectations and social norms in the shared institutional environment (Fombrun & Riel, 1997). For example, Hochschild, 1983 as cited in Dobni, Ritchie, & Zerbe, 2000) recognised that "the emotions that employees express on the job are not always a reflection of their true feelings, but rather are often socially constructed to reflect existing organisational norms" (page 93). Following this line of argument, one person's evaluation of an organisation may not be considered organisational reputation, but is rather an opinion or attitude. It is socially transmissible belief in what an organisation is and what it does (Smaiziene & Jucevicius, 2009) when individuals depend on other colleagues for information to interpret (Dobni et al., 2000). While this theory increases the understanding of the mechanism that underlies the reputation building process, it is also essential to know how the different actions affect stakeholder interpretations on reputation.

Conversely, cognitive attribution theory argues that in order to develop an interpretation of the observers' impressions about an organisation, stakeholders tend to pay attention to actions that are perceived as salient to their interests and values (Sjovall & Talk, 2004). The authors emphasise that stakeholders tend to make inferences about organisational dispositions, either based on observation of behaviours that are interpreted or through communication of opinion from other members of a social network. The impressions acquired

through the attribution process initiate or contribute to an overall reputation. This implies that the behaviour of organisations can potentially constitute their own desired reputations (Dolphin, 2004), particularly managers who may more clearly understand possible effects of corporate actions and may be able to structure relevant strategies to encourage observers to attribute organisational disposition instead of external influences such as the media and social network coverage since both are generally applicable to the formation of organisational reputation. In this respect, organisations arguably need to work strategically with their key stakeholders, especially employees and customers. Nevertheless, organisations should be cautious in the nature of their actions as different stakeholders have varying interpretations and judgements of the same action (Gabbioneta et al., 2007; Helm, 2007).

Building on the two theories discussed above, Fombrun (2012) emphasises that organisational reputation develops from three principal sources: first, the personal experiences that stakeholders have with an organisation; second, the organisation based initiatives and strategic communications of managers to influence stakeholder perceptions; third, the specialised coverage that an organisation receives from influential intermediaries through social networks. These three principal factors affect organisational reputation in the sense that positive experiences generate stakeholder satisfaction, identification with the firm, and engagement, all of which contribute to reputation building. Therefore, reputation is the stakeholder's reaction to organisational activities that are strong or weak, good or bad (Erkmen & Esen, 2014). However, the consequence of each stakeholder group's experience is likely to result in different reputational outcomes. For instance, personal experiences of customers when dealing with the organisation would yield a favourable

experience if the "selling-buying" transactions meet their expectations. Employees, on the other hand, would expect attention from the organisation, for example welfare programs that possibly result in them associating their employer as a responsible employer.

Additionally, in relation to the three principal sources of reputation building by Fombrun (2012), organisational reputation can be built either through internal mechanisms or external forces. Research has shown that an organisation is capable of shaping its desired reputation (Dolphin, 2004) through direct experiences and actions as well as through communication messages (Hall, 1992). Organisations frequently focus on corporate communication activities, creating visual corporate identities and corporate social responsibility to positively enhance public perceptions and as a way to project professional behaviour (Abdullah et al., 2013; Alessandri, Yang, & Kinsey, 2006; Erkmen & Esen, 2014; Lam Chew & Nasruddin, 2015; Maden, Arıkan, Telci, & Kantur, 2012; Moura-Leite & Padgett, 2014). As cited by Shamma (2012, page 153), Van Riel (1995) defines corporate communication as "an instrument by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communications are harmonised as effectively and efficiently as possible to create a favourable basis for relationships with the groups upon which the company is dependent". Fombrun and Rindova (1998) note that "communications that make a firm transparent enable shareholders to appreciate the firm's operations better, and also facilitates ascribing better reputation." A good communication strategy is said to be effective in enhancing perceptions about the activities that are relevant to specific stakeholders and also for the overall evaluation of an organisation (Shamma, 2012; Foreman & Argenti, 2005), which sustain, foster and develop an organisation's reputation (Burke, 1998). This is because

corporate communication can be used to better understand the needs of various stakeholders, and provide information to stakeholders to reduce uncertainty about the organisation's actions (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990).

Conversely, as part of the organisational communication activities, organisations often spend large amounts of effort on creating modern and unique visual corporate identities in order to distinguish themselves from their competitors (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Holtzhausen & Fourie, 2011). Although such initiatives seem important, the approach may not necessarily support a favourable reputation. A study by Holtzhausen and Fourie (2009) found that although visual corporate identity is important for making the organisation recognisable and distinct from other organisations, it does not impact on employer-employee relationships. Instead, non-visual elements, especially organisational values, are considered more important in influencing the relationship, particularly for internal stakeholders (Holtzhausen & Fourie, 2011).

Similarly, when the effort to build organisational reputation is merely anchored around customer relationship management, although this may work for some organisations, the strategy is easy to replicate by competitors. Tesco is a good example of a customer focused approach. A substantial amount of investment has been laid in building a state-of-art, IT based customer database and analysis capability to manage their Clubcard customer loyalty scheme and to reward past purchase behaviour (Humby, Hunt & Phillips, 2007; Dowling, 2002). However, this strategy was short-lived as discounters such as Aldi and Lidl and high-end competitors such as Waitrose swiftly followed suit (Neville, 2013), which ultimately led to a new management restructure to deliver change across Tesco.

Recent studies suggest that stakeholder judgements are primarily affected by an organisation's action, which drives reputation-building (Martin, 2010; Dowling & Moran, 2012). However, research showing the role of such activities particularly empirical evidence suggests that organisational reputation are driven from the inside of an organisation is still scarce (Martin, 2010; Dowling & Moran, 2012; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2000). This raises the issue of what organisational action leads to reputation building. This thesis aims to build on current theory on internal reputation building by providing a framework to understand the important mechanism in linking organisation-level initiatives with organisational reputation.

2.1.3 Reputation building

There has been extensive work on the antecedents and consequences of reputation (Roberts & Dowling 2002; Carmeli & Tishler 2004) which identify the predictors of reputation and what factors shape reputation (Barney 1991; Rao 1994; Rindova et al. 2006; Rhee & Haunschild 2003). While research has broadly referred to economic factors such as financial performance as the key predictors that shape reputation (Roberts & Dowling 2002; Sabate & Puente 2003), recent research has expanded the predictors of reputation to include non-economic factors such as perceived quality and prominence (Rindova et al. 2006), management style (Olmedo-Cifuentes and Martínez-León, 2014), organisational 'personality" components such as competency and sympathy (Eberl & Schwaiger, 2005) as well as organisational culture (Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008; Carmeli & Tishler, 2004).

A study of Italian securities analyst empirically explores the drivers of reputation among specific categories of stakeholders and found that four dimensions affect their judgements, namely: financial performance, vision and leadership,

financial disclosure and corporate governance (Gabbioneta et al., 2007). The authors indicate that the dimension of corporate governance and financial disclosure appear to be stakeholder specific even though some of the dimensions tend to overlap across different groups of stakeholders. In this respect, the judgements of stakeholders are primarily affected by a company's financial performance while vision and leadership seem to inextricably associate with the perceived quality of the senior managers. The result appears to support the idea of seeing the actions of senior managerial teams as the dominant process and drivers for building reputation.

The CEO and senior managers are considered central for reinforcing the need to actively manage reputations and to encourage employee involvement in reputation building. Holden et al. (2001) reported that top companies considered their employees as the most important responsibility area, before that of shareholders and customers, and effectively used the employees to communicate with external parties and develop reputation. According to Holden et al. (2001), the majority of companies claimed to have dedicated human resource and financial resources to reputation management and most of these had lines reporting to the CEO. Yet, the major barriers to getting the reputation management in place were due to low awareness among employees about the reputational implications of their actions and difficulties with integrating practical action with the corporate plan (Holden et al., 2001). The motivation for encouraging reputation behaviour was viewed primarily as coming from top management and was reflected by the vision and mission statement of the organisation. In particular, supporting the employees in listening, reporting and incorporating reputation concerns into daily operations and decision making is a step which requires further academic attention.

The internal organisation's culture is also strongly influenced organisational actions (Johnston & Everett, 2012). Hence the culture that promotes the maintenance of organisational reputation may be necessary to influence employee perceptions of organisational image. "The culture must exist that make reputation a corporate priority" (Cravens & Oliver, 2006, page 297). The basic argument is that if employees do not value the reputation of the company, how can a positive reputation be communicated to the public? Again, this raises the importance of internal influence of corporate culture and organisational communication in creating the environment in which employees value an organisational reputation (Holtzhausen & Fourie, 2011).

An organisation's culture and identity shape an organisation's business practices as well as the kind of relationships that managers establish with key stakeholders. As Helm (2011, page 658) highlights, "in order to create satisfied customers, managers must first create satisfied employees because they represent the organisation in each interaction with the customers". Employees who safeguard organisational reputation and spread goodwill in support of the organisation need to adopt certain attitudes and behaviour (Helm, 2011).

2.3   Organisational culture and values

As discussed earlier, reputation building is often most successful when it starts from the within the organisation (Aperia et al., 2004). An important aspect of organisations that has emerged as an antecedent of reputation is organisational culture (Barney, 1986; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008), which also affects employee attitudes, outcomes and performance (Scott, Mannion, Marshall & Davies, 2003; Bezrukova, Thatcher, Jehn & Spell, 2012). According to Fombrun (1996), organisational culture is related to an organisation's identity, which in turn is

related to its reputation because culture provides the context for how an organisation's identity is formed and is articulated in relation to its cultural context (Hatch & Schultz, 2002, page 25). In this vein, organisations are capable of creating and managing organisational identity in order to influence their reputations (Whetten & Mackey, 2002). Culture is comprised of a set of values, assumptions, beliefs and norms (Kotter & Heskett, 1992, Schein, 1996) that are widely shared and internalised by members of an organisation. Early research by Weigelt & Camerer (1998) suggest that since culture influences strategy implementation, it is likely to support reputation building activities. They argue that culture as an 'unwritten rules' would be able to guide employees in various unpredictable instances.

Although organisational culture is said to be central to managing an organisation's functioning and social control systems (O'Reilly, 1989), it is often perceived as lacking operational relevance as marketing communication strategy predominates over strategic implementation when organisations seek to build reputation (Thevissen, 2002). Previous research has demonstrated the relationship between culture and reputation (Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Thevissen, 2002), however there is limited empirical work on how organisational culture influences reputation (Carmeli & Tishler, 2004; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008).

A common way in which organisational culture can be operationalised is through values (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Hofstede (2001) emphasises that values are an important element of organisational culture that help employees to make sense of their environment, guide decisions and behaviours as people conduct day-to-day work, and interact with one another, and with other stakeholders. Typically, the term 'organisational values' refers to the small number of values that together make up a set of value systems (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). This

concept rests on the premise that organisations govern a set of values that delineate how people should interact with one another and make decisions as they strive to work towards the same organisational vision (Taylor, Van Aken, & Smith-Jackson, 2006) that will possibly lead to enhanced long-term success. The concept of organisational values as defined by Kotter and Heskett (1992, page 4) is the "important concerns and goals that are shared by most of the people in a group, that tend to shape group behaviour, and that often persist over time even with changes in group memberships". As the mechanism to create a foundation of attitudes and practices, organisational values are also the reflection of the culture of the organisation (Osborne, 1991).

It is important to note that an organisation's values are distinct from organisational culture in the sense that values are the beliefs that guide peoples' actions, directing the process of organisational development and growth, while organisational culture is the outward representation of certain key underlying beliefs (Osborne, 1991; (Sullivan, Sullivan, & Buffton, 2001). In other words, organisational values fundamentally shape employee attitudes towards job, colleagues and the workplace which over time become part of the culture of the organisation.

Many organisations promulgate and communicate their organisational values publicly in annual reports, internal policy manuals, training sessions and visual displays (Dalton, 2006). As such, it is not surprising that the concept of organisational values has held a prominent level of managerial attention. According to a study by McDonald and Gandz (1992) on the significance of the concept of organisational values, they found that the management of many organisations expended significant time, effort and money on composing and discussing their shared values. They revealed that some organisations referred

to organisational values as their overall sense of definition while others acknowledged organisational values as a binder that held the elements of the organisation together. Organisational values also play an important role in how organisations respond to issues (Bansal, 2003).

Organisational values describe the characteristics of organisations (Chatman, 1991) and help employees to make sense of their environment (Cheyne & Loan-Clarke, 2009), providing direction in their choice or evaluation of behavior (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013), hence why they are often considered more operational and behavioural in nature (Lepak, Smith & Taylor, 2007). This suggests that the impact of organisational values is pervasive because they influence the most basic ways in which people perceive their environments (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). For instance, in the hotel industry, the level of service quality and customer satisfaction is influenced considerably by the values and actions of employees (Schultz, Khazian, & Zaleski, 2008). Hence, organisational values provide justification for appropriate employee behavior and facilitate internal behavioral consistency (Sørensen & Sorensen, 2002), which if effective, can potentially enhance an organisation's reputation (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006); yet the process through which this reputation building occurs remains unclear.

The implication is that values may play a prominent role in building reputation (Flatt & Kowalczyk 2008; Sørensen & Sorensen, 2002). However, there is little empirical evidence of whether organisations can influence employee perceptions and actions through organisational values and whether it is a viable approach to support its reputation building activities. This is an important gap in

the current understanding of how organisational reputation is built internally (Olmedo-Cifuentes & Martínez-León, 2014).

2.3.1 Connection between organisational values and organisational reputation

Numerous researchers argue that organisational values positively affect organisational performance (Chong, 2007; Martins & Coetzee, 2011; McDonald & Gandz, 1992). Studies show that successful companies place great emphasis on their values in which underpin their vision (McDonald & Gandz, 1992; Sørensen & Sorensen, 2002). In this vein, organisational values potentially impact on an organisation's reputation, however the power of values lies in how they are applied and espoused (Dalton, 2006). Blanchard and O'Conner (1997) point out that value-based organisational behaviour is no longer a philosophical choice but a requisite for survival. This suggests that an organisation must know what it stands for and on what principles it will operate in order to be successful in the industry. Similarly, Kotter and Heskett (1992) and few other authors show that organisations with strong adaptive cultures based on shared values outperform other organisations by a significant margin, but empirical studies on how values have been deployed and implemented is still limited.

Empirical research conducted by Dobni et al. (2000) show that organisational values promote higher performance in service firms. They contend that the value system is important as a marketing and management tools for managers to determine the behavioural response that define productivity and performance (Dobni et al., 2000). However, the capacity of organisational values to create desired organisational outcomes depends on the degree to which such beliefs

are shared by the employees, clearly articulated, effectively communicated, and integrated into the organisation's daily practice (Osborne, 1991). As reflected in the management and marketing literature, the process of aligning values to ensure organisational values are shared occurs especially in service industries where junior staff have most contact with external stakeholders and there is a requirement for employees to 'buy in' to the desired organisational identity (Van Riel & Balmer, 1997) which in this case involves living the organisational values. The understanding of this phenomenon stems from seeing that cultures arises from the articulation process of shared values and eventually impact on organisational reputation, but the assumption that the relationship is merely enforced through rules and regulations may not be the case.

2.3.2 Employee perceptions of organisational values

When employees are presented with a set of organisational values, it is arguably important to ensure that organisational values are consistent and support the organisational goals, otherwise they are simply rhetoric that employees will not subscribe to (Dalton, 2006), which has also been argued in the context of employees subscribing to a shared organisational identity (Harvey et al., 2017). A wide range of activities have been adopted to internalise organisational values, including training sessions, reward systems and internal corporate communication programs (McDonald & Gandz, 1992). The empirical evidence implies that valuable organisational action is underpinned by the creation and application of organisational values, as opposed to direct policies disseminated via internal documents or on websites (Dalton, 2006).

One of the main challenges of implementing organisational values is that although they should reflect collective values of all employees and align with

individual values (Peat, 2003), many organisational values are created by founders or senior leadership teams which often fail to consider whether these resonate with the values of employees (Graham, Harvey & Popadak, 2015). For example, if integrity is valued in the organisation, employees who believe in being honest, open, and truthful will thrive while others who want to play politics, hide mistakes, and lie, will not thrive (Healthfield, 2015). This may result in a disconnection between organisational and employee values which are likely to have a detrimental impact on the reputation building endeavours of organisations.

Recognising the importance of alignment between the values of the organisation and employees, the concept of value congruence explores its impact on the activities of the employees and the organisation (Vveinhardt & Gulbovaite, 2015). A number of conceptual and hypothetical models of value congruence have been presented by different authors reflecting different elements including: a model of person-organisation fit (Chatman, 1989), a framework for the effects of values (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998); a general path modelling relating to value congruence (Cable & Edwards, 2004); a model of congruence of personal and organisational values (Vveinhardt & Gulbovaite, 2012) and an integrated framework of different types and levels of value congruence (Bao, 2012). Nevertheless, none of the models can universally address value congruence. The most recent conceptual model by Vveinhardt and Gulbovaite (2015), the complex model of congruence of personal and organisational values supplements the previously developed models by incorporating new structural fragments. The model consists of a sequence of stages for which the critical inputs, the major outputs and the transformation processes characterise value congruence strength within organisation. As can

be seen in Diagram 2, the first stage is applicable during staffing when the organisation negotiates with potential employees to search for a consensus of values. However, this first stage (matching the needs) is used if the organisation is in the process of selecting employees. Otherwise, the second stage will be the starting point of the congruence process. The second stage (matching the value) is dealing with identifying the match between the values of the organisation and the employees including current or potential employees (applicants). At this point, the focus is to measure value congruence, including identifying personal and organisational values separately and finding their congruence using specific diagnostic instruments. The objective is to gauge how important certain values are to an employee and similarly evaluate how much the values are typical and fostered by the organisation. The third stage, the strength of congruence of personal and organisational values is determined. This measurement of values congruence is segregated into absolute congruence, partial congruence and no congruence. At the fourth stage, based on the measurement instrument, the measurement of the impact on the employee and the performance results of the organisation are evaluated either positively or negatively. It is assumed that the stronger value congruence is, the more positive the impact on the employee and the organisation. At the fifth stage, following the evaluation of impact, selection of measures for strengthening the congruence is designed to eliminate or reduce the gap between personal and organisational values. At this juncture, discrepancies may be addressed in accordance with the opportunities of the organisation because it can be caused by various factors such as education background, subculture and religion. The sixth stage is where the application of the designed measures is implemented. This brings to the seventh stage,

evaluation of the impact of the measures where the values congruence in the organisation is consistently observed, monitored and reviewed. Finally, the eighth stage, the decision to continue application of the measures is made to strengthen the value congruence. If the use of the measures has not positively impacted employees and their behaviour at work, organisations are likely to consider revising stages and evaluating the actions. On the other hand, if the impact is positive, actions are analysed and the programme is likely to be formalised.

Diagram 2: The complex model of congruence of personal and organisational values
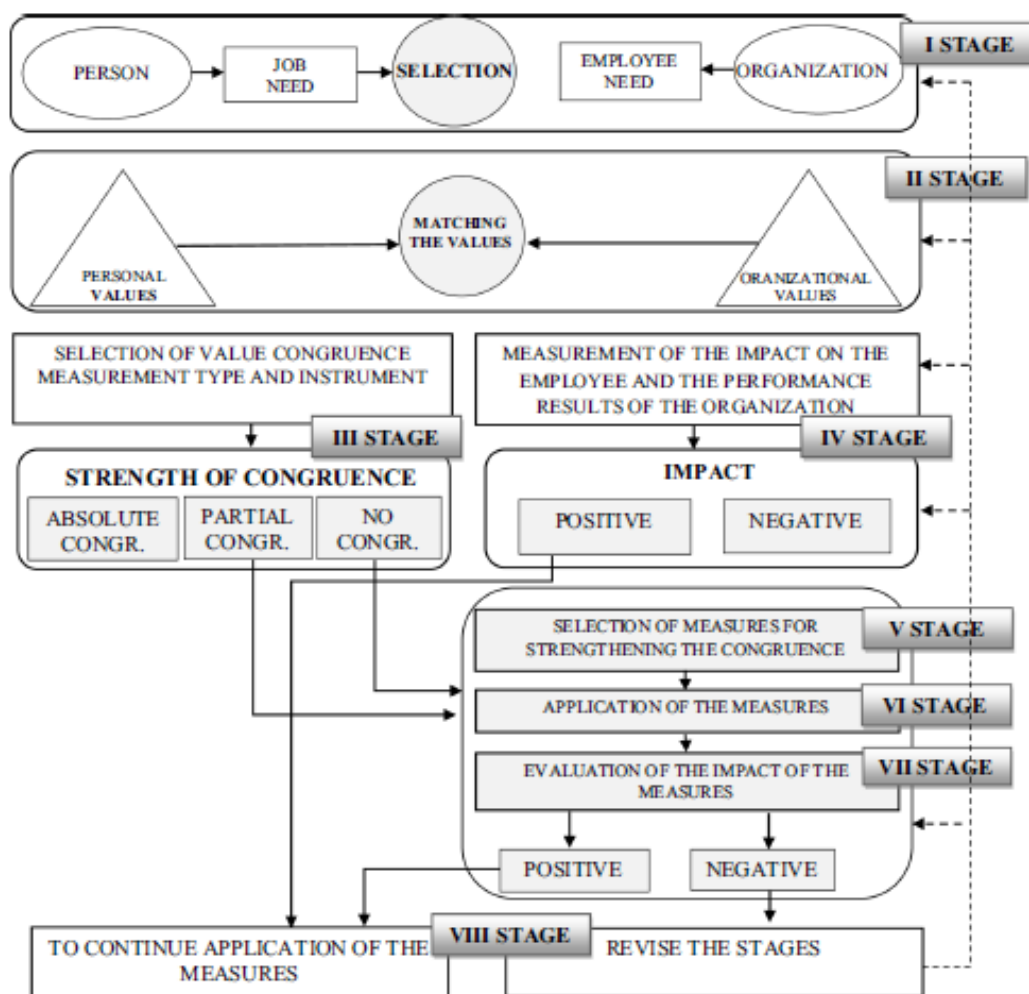
Source: Vveinhardt and Gulbovaite (2015, page 19)

Drawing from the above model, instilling effective organisational values is resource intensive because it requires time to co-create values between leaders and employees and time to enable the values of organisations and employees to align. However, the model has not substantiated specific measures or mechanisms for reducing value incongruence and/or strengthening value congruence (Vveinhardt and Gulbovaite, 2015). The model also gives little attention to the issue of how and why value congruence emerges.

Value congruence is often researched in the context of other concepts including leadership, organisational identification, person-organisation fit and relates to its positive impact on a person and an organisation in terms of burnout, performance, job satisfaction and ethical behaviour (Dylag et al., 2013; Vveinhardt & Gulbovaite, 2015; Bao, 2012; Cable & Edwards, 2004, Ostroff, Shin & Kinicki, 2005; Jung & Avolio, 2000). Thus, further research on understanding employee values and linking them to organisational values would provide valuable theoretical insight into how values and reputation are established within organisations. To date, there has been little empirical work which has explored the reputational consequences of the lack of alignment between organisational and employees values, although there is evidence that discrepancies between these two values will significantly influence employee behaviour and attitudes as well as organisational performance (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2010; Grossman, 2009; Bao, 2012; Edward and Cable, 2009, Meglino, Ravin & Adkins, 1989). By simultaneously identifying a set of organisational values, while aligning the expectations and existing perceptions of employees, the organisation may increase the likelihood of building a positive reputation (Whetten & Mackey, 2002; Bao, 2012). Hence, the following research question is developed to address the issue:

i. How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?

2.3.3 Social Influence

Most employees become familiar with and are influenced by organisational values directly and indirectly through the people around them. The pioneering work of social influence by Burnkrant and Cousineau (1975: 206) suggests that "one of the most pervasive determinants of an individual's behavior is the influence of those around him." Although their observation focused on social influence in a consumer decision context, it is arguably applicable to understanding how an employee reacts to the actions of other colleagues within the workplace. Employees are often not working in isolation and they interact and respond to each other's behaviour (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007). Social interaction is the process by which individuals act and react to those around them in ways which require a mutual orientation (Keysar et al., 2008). It is also referred to particular forms of externalities, in which the actions of a reference group typically family, community, friends, and peers affect an individual's preferences (Scheinkman, 2008). Social interaction includes those acts people perform towards each other and the responses they give in return. Social interactions can be verbal, for instance engaging in any conversation be it lengthy or a short impromptu exchange between colleagues around the office pantry, water cooler or in the café, and in nonverbal ways such as through eye contact and facial expressions. As such, witnessing the behaviour of others can lead to a change in behaviour among observers and eventually create unstated pressure to conform to norms (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007; Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). In short, social interactions are important in modifying one's action and reaction (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Hence the way employees engage in social

interaction is arguably important for influencing how they engage with organisational values in different contexts.

O'Reilly (1998) suggests four common mechanisms in enforcing appropriate attitude and behaviour. The first mechanism is to create a system that encourages employee participation in formal ways; for instance, quality circles or informal social gatherings. This is important because employees are encouraged to make incremental choices and develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. The second mechanism is the visible actions of the management team in support of the organisational values. In this sense, employees look for consistent behavioural pattern among the management team in words and action. This suggests that leaders and managers need to frequently engage with employees to provide interpretations of the organisation's expectation of values. The third mechanism is aimed to minimise contradictory interpretations of values. Especially during periods of crisis or when inadequate of information is available, employees require explanation from others. Hence, consistent and clear messages from co-workers are important. In this sense, some organisations foster equality of treatment of all employees for example punching a time clock when arriving or leaving work, wearing uniforms and having a common dining area. Finally, the fourth mechanism is the reward system either monetary rewards or recognition and approval. Rewarding employees for doing the right thing is likely to foster a sense of belonging to the organisation and can also be potent in shaping behaviour. However, the four mechanisms do not address the nature of the interaction, whether the mechanisms are directed by the top management or otherwise. The mechanisms are also lack of clarification on the level of involvement of each organisational actor.

Similarly, other literature emphasises a leader's traits and behaviour as the key determinant in linking organisational values and employee performance (Bititci et al., 2006; Jacobs et al., 2013; Olmedo-Cifuentes & Martínez-León, 2014). The management style of leaders within organisations is considered salient for understanding the culture of organisations (Schein, 1985) through shared decision-making processes with employees either in writing or face-to-face. Similarly, a few studies have examined the link between CEO values and organisational outcomes, characteristics, and orientations. Through their personal characteristics and values, leaders imprint what organisations will ultimately look like (Berson, Oreg & Dvir, 2008) and this is presumed to have consequential effects on organisational performance (O'Reilly et al., 2014) and the performance of its members. Thus, CEO values and personality are seen as having important implications for organisational processes and outcomes, including on an organisation's culture (Schein, 1985). In this sense, the recurring patterns of behaviour of senior leaders are a salient source of influence for employees. However, Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey (2013) noted that empirical studies linking the influence of the founder and senior managers in establishing an organisational values are limited. In a different perspective, promoting senior leaders, particularly the CEO, as the major attribute for organisational image and reputation may be seen as a high risk strategy (Dowling, 2001). This is because leaders such as CEOs attempt to personalise the operating philosophy of the organisation and can also leave the organisation indefinitely. When this happens, the organisation will either follow through what has been established or restructure its overall strategy. However, to avoid the risk of the CEO's style and values dominating the organisation, the enactment

of organisational values including the mission and vision which is independent of any individual can be an important strategic choice (Dowling, 2001).

Employees who trust their managers are found to behave positively towards customers, especially in service organisations (Erkmen & Esen, 2014). Such positive behaviour needs to be sustained and harnessed because it can provide an advantage for the organisation. As Paarlberg and Perry (2007) suggest, values management is a social process and the positive relationship between a management team and employees is likely to have favourable outcomes. They claim that the use of flexibility with the management system that fosters routine interactions of employees reported the highest level of performance compared to work units that were bound to standard management practices. Beyond leaders, research has also demonstrated the influence of co-workers on individual behaviour (Grant & Patil, 2012) but there are relatively few empirical studies which explore the process of how this social influence occurs (Bolino & Grant, 2016).

Additionally, in relation to Vveinhardt and Gulbovaite's (2015) values congruence model, discussed in Section 2.3.2, although the notion of socialisation in an organisation was not supported by empirical evidence in their study, on the basis of other contexts, they suggest that socialisation would possibly take place at the stage of matching the values for reducing the gap in values congruence. This highlights the opportunity to extend current knowledge for understanding how social influence connects organisational values and reputation.

A further important aspect of social influence found in the literature is the act of reciprocity as a result of social interaction and influence in the workplace

(Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Reciprocity is critical for understanding the building blocks of a social organisation because it enables cooperative exchanges and challenges antisocial behaviour (Alexander, 1987). This suggests that the norm of reciprocity should encourage positive behaviour and at the same time discourage negative behaviour. However, little known about how social interactions can influence the extent to which employees choose to reciprocate for another person's actions.

Guided by organisational values and through social influence, employees arguably form behavioural norms that shape organisational reputation. To date, research has not adequately explored the circumstances through which social interactions can influence an employee's work behaviour. Important conceptual and empirical work is needed to provide a clearer understanding of the linkages between organisational values, social influence, and organisational reputation. This leads to the development of the following research question:

ii. How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?

2.4   Desired reputational outcomes

Multiple benefits accrue to an organisation with sound reputations. As the result of internal consistency of organisational actions and communication activities, stakeholders have their own set of expectations, experiences and evaluations (Lewellyn, 2002) and eventually form their own perceptions.

Rindova et al. (2005) empirically examine the distinct dimensions forming stakeholders' perception which influence different economic outcomes of organisations. The authors argue that reputation can be conceptualised by two

dimensions: first, a perceived quality dimension and second, a prominence dimension where both dimensions are likely to have different antecedents. A perceived quality dimension is when stakeholders evaluate an organisation positively on specific attributes. The quality of resources used in its production or service delivery and the quality of productive assets such as knowledge assets are the antecedents determining the perceived quality dimension of an organisation. The resources organisations use to produce goods and services can signal quality because they affect the quality of product (Barney, 1991). Therefore, if the organisation can provide stakeholders with reliable signals that can convey information or reveal observable attributes, stakeholders can use these to make inferences about the organisation's ability to produce quality outputs. Particularly, when the products can only be evaluated with use and require specific expertise to evaluate, customers are likely to rely on strategic signals to form expectations about the quality (Rindova et al., 2005). However, Rindova et al. (2005) acknowledge that the quality of productive assets did not predict perceived quality. These suggest an opportunity for future research to examine in a different context how productive assets transfer their values. Productive assets can be related to the profile of the employees which questions whether employee attributes and behaviour affect organisational reputation.

The prominence dimension is to what extent an organisation receives recognition within its organisational field (Rindova et al., 2005). The public recognition is argued to emerge through the evaluation from third parties who have an attention to or an affiliation with an organisation. According to the authors, an organisation's prominence is influenced by institutional intermediaries such as the media, recognition from experts and certification

bodies, and also by its affiliation with high-status actors (Rindova et al., 2005). Prominence arguably reduces stakeholder uncertainty through "social proof" (Rao et. al., 2001) because it reflects the collective recognition of an organisation in its organisational field (Rindova et al., 2005). Therefore, stakeholders are likely to favour prominent organisations (Rindova and Fombrun, 1999). This suggests that prominence reflects the attention received among a broader group of stakeholders and more likely from an external situation. Despite the different antecedents of the two reputation dimensions, the authors conclude that positive evaluation of quality increases prominence and, therefore, may serve as inputs in the collective processes through which prominence develops (Rindova et al., 2005). Besides being reputable for quality and being prominent, (Dolphin, 2004) identifies different reputation dimensions an organisation may utilise such as a reputation for being friendly, for being more knowledgeable about customer needs, being hard-nosed, and for providing good customer service. Satir (2006) adds several reputation outcomes namely reputation for being trustworthy, reputation for service quality, reputation for being consistent in communication, and social responsible.

It is not clear how different inputs predict the dimensions of organisational reputation. As judgements of quality are based on specific, relatively detailed observations of organisational actions being signalled about the firm attributes (Rao et. al., 2000), different processes of attribute formation may shape different dimension of organisational reputation. This implies that organisational reputation is not within the control of a particular firm and as pointed out by Fombrun (1996, page 59), "… it is difficult to manipulate".

As discussed above, organisational reputation is the aggregation of perceptions among different groups of stakeholders. Walker (2010) argues that reputation can often be issue specific depending on the environment where firms operate or the nature of the business. In light of this view, reputation may be observed by a stakeholder group on a particular organisation, which may not be common among all the groups. As a result, organisations may have multiple reputations depending on which stakeholder and which issues are being assessed, yet each reputation represents the aggregate perceptions of all stakeholders for that specific issue (Walker, 2010). Herbiq and Milewicz (1999, page 18) define reputation as "an estimation of the consistency over time of an attribute of an entity", which highlights that an organisation can have numerous reputations, one for each attribute such as price, product quality, management quality, innovativeness or organization can also utilise a global reputation (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001).

Here, the interest is to understand the dimension of reputational outcome as the result of organisational practices and actions. With the implementation of organisational values, when comparing employees' perceptions and customers' perceptions of organisational reputation, the intention is to understand if organisations can achieve their desired reputation. This would provide important empirical evidence on whether desired organisational reputation can potentially be established by the organisation (Dolphin, 2004) and whether organisational values support reputation building.

2.5   The propositions and conceptual framework

While there is considerable support for the idea that organisations with better reputations outperform their rivals, there is uncertainty about how to create and

build such a reputation (Dowling & Moran, 2012). When this occurs, many organisations focus on communicating ideal and how the corporation wishes to be seen, for example through the extensive use of advertisement (Doorley & John, 2010). However, it is illogical to have an organisation that communicates a slick, efficient and environmentally concerned organisation if the operational realities as experienced by employees and the customers are very different. It is important to note that inconsistencies will arguably be quickly highlighted and damaged any aspired reputation. The idea here is for organisations to engage in actions that promote and support their desired reputation.

Previous research on reputation building has failed to consider the dynamic within which reputations are built and the role of internal activities as the driver for reputation building (Aula & Mantere, 2013; Mahon, 2002; Martin, 2010). A particular area of interest concerns the internal mechanism to support reputation building and the potential reputation performance achieved. To help resolve this dilemma, this thesis proposes that organisational reputation may emerge from organisational values impacting on employee behaviour. However, it is important to note that creating value based behaviour is not a straight forward process. Therefore this thesis particularly augments the role and influence of the important enabling mechanisms that may connect organisational values and organisational reputation.

In summary, the overall research aim of this study is to construct a new theoretical perspective that adds to previous research in the context of organisational values and organisational reputation. The propositions of this study are that first, organisational reputation emerges from employee behaviours as the result of the enactment and internalisation of organisational values and second, that value-based behaviour is shaped through the influence

of important enabling factors that connect organisational values and organisational reputation. The conceptual framework based on the research questions is illustrated in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3: Conceptual framework of the study
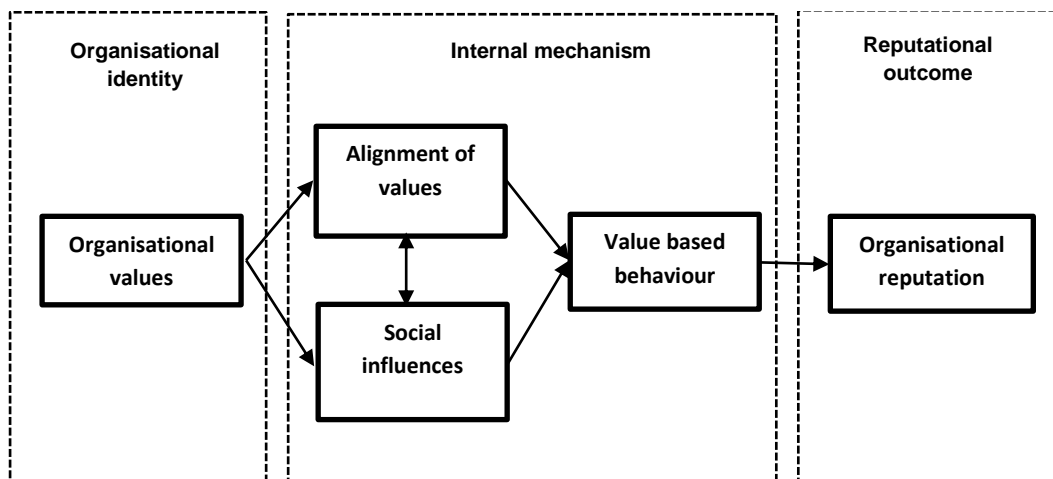
Source: Researcher's creation

The research aim is supported by two main research questions:

i. How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?

ii. How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?

Additionally, in building organisational reputation from the inside, a particular concern is about the personal experiences of the employees and the influence of organisation-based actions and communication on them. Among the stakeholders, employees are said to be the dominant group who are easily affected by organisational actions and an important group for building a strong reputation (Davies e. al 2010). Thus, the perspective of employees is the main source of data which contributes to understanding how corporate reputations

are driven from the inside of an organisation through the implementation of organisational values.

2.7   Chapter summary

The chapter has reviewed the main literature relevant to the study and has proposed a conceptual framework. It discussed the concept of organisational reputation and other related organisational concepts including image and identity which led to the formation of a working definition. Subsequently, the way in which the reputation of an organisation is formed through people perception processes was discussed from various theoretical perspectives namely social construction and cognitive attribution theory. The chapter also reviewed previous work on the roles of organisational values in an organisation and its relation to organisational reputation.

The chapter argued that the reputation literature has tended to focus on external forces and has overlooked the importance of internal drivers for reputation building. Previous research has established the link between organisational culture in which organisational values is the fundamental element of organisational reputation. However, the extent to which the relationship is established, particularly as the enabling factor is still scarce which paves the way for further understanding of the phenomenon in this thesis. In the study of organisational values, researchers have attempted to understand the issue of value congruence between employee personal values and organisational values. Conceptual and theoretical models have been developed to explain value congruence, however there is limited understanding of how organisations mitigate value congruence, which will be addressed in this study.

Another issue in understanding the link between organisational values and organisational reputation which has been discussed in this chapter is the role of social influence. Previous literature has emphasised leader's trait and senior management values for influencing employees to embrace organisational values. However, there is inadequate theoretical and empirical understanding to explain the extent to which social influence is an important enabler in connecting organisational values and organisational reputation.

This chapter also reviewed the literature on reputational outcomes before proposing the propositions and conceptual framework of this study.

Based on the conceptual framework and the research aim, the next chapter will elaborate on the research methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive analysis of the literature to expound the theoretical ground of the study. This study extends the previous work on organisational reputation and organisational values by providing both a theoretical and an empirical insight into how organisational values contribute to reputation building by understanding how they intersect. More specifically, it shows how organisational values impact on employee perceptions and behaviour that shapes external perceptions of the organisation. To recall, this study investigates the extent to which organisational reputation is built through the internalisation of organisational shared values. It is guided by two main research questions:

i.   How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?

ii. How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?

In order to obtain a rigorous explanation of the above research questions, this chapter provides a justification for the methodological framework adopted which underpins the research approach, data collection method and data analysis process. It is divided into three different stages of the research process.

The first stage is the design of the research where it shows the paradigm and philosophical positions of the current study after arguing for the use of a qualitative approach to address the research objectives. This is followed by an important argument to justify the adoption of a case study approach, including an explanation for the case study protocol. Additionally, there is a discussion

on DEMC Medical Specialist as the selected subject organisation for the study. Subsequently, the chapter emphasises the sampling strategy and reports the research design as well as the pilot study.

The second stage of the chapter focuses on the nature of the fieldwork and data collection which reflects on some of the strategies used in gaining access to the subject organisation before detailing the data collection procedures and activities undertaken as well as the circumstances during the fieldwork. This entails a description of the setting of the interviews, focus groups as well as the observation sessions and also presents the characteristics of the data collected.

The final stage is the empirical analysis explains how the results were organised, transcribed, coded and analysed. It elaborates on the steps involved in analysing the data using manual procedures. This chapter concludes with the discussion on some ethical consideration and trustworthiness issues.

3.1   Methodological design

3.1.1 The research paradigm and philosophical stance

This section demonstrates the positioning of this research within the philosophical paradigm and justifies the use of a case study approach including the sampling strategies and the choice of the case study. Trochim (2006) states that within the research process, the beliefs a researcher holds will reflect the way the research is designed, how data is collected and analysed, and how the results are presented.

Research on organisational values and organisational reputation has tended to be quantitative in nature (Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008). A study using a quantitative approach which stands under the positivist paradigm aims to discover patterns

of cause and effect that can be used as a basis for predicting and controlling natural phenomena (Creswell, 2009). "Positivism strives for objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability, patterning, the construction of laws and rules of behaviour and the ascription of causality" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013, page 31). Positivistic' research is also conclusive in its purpose as it attempts to quantify the problem and understand the results which are projectable to a larger population (Creswell, 2009).

At first glance, this paradigm seems appropriate for this research but it was not appropriate for the context of this study because the aim of this study is to provide empirical evidence to underpin theoretical conclusions about the connection between organisational values and reputation (Carmeli & Tishler, 2004; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008). This research explores and explains the enabling factors which influence employee behaviour and organisational reputation. With an approach of not being too theoretical and not isolated from real organisational practices, the findings of this research contribute to building theories based on realistic practices in context. In other words, a qualitative approach treats the context as important because knowledge is seen to be rooted from a specific context and by participants who come from and are located within the context (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Qualitative research typically involves in-depth investigation of knowledge and tends to work within an interpretivist philosophical position (Grix, 2010). According to Berger and Luckman (1966), meaning is integral to society and a qualitative study is flexible and sensitive to the social context in data generation. The knowledge is derived through interpretation of data usually a few in number

with emphasis on processes and meanings in their social and cultural context (Grix, 2010).

I adopted a qualitative approach to accomplish the overall aim of the study. Although this approach is in contrast to much of the extant literature in business and the environment, which comprises of quantitative studies that lack deeper theoretical analysis (Grix, 2010). Linking to the aim of this study, qualitative research is appropriate for providing a rich account of the actual conditions and for producing in-depth information of how the implementation of organisational values in the context of a private hospital impact upon organisational reputation. This research aims to identify the enabling factors to determine why they are important, how they interact and how they affect patterns of employee behaviour. I am interested in insight, discovery and interpretation of the organisation's everyday situations or "meaning-making" as coined by Crotty (1998). This discovery gained through the perceptions of the employees who are the main social actor in the organisation. The study emphasises tracing the process and sequence of events to generate and develop ideas. Therefore, the approach to this study is not to measure the social reality in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency that is normally associated with hypothesis testing (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, Crotty, 1998).

In considering the differences in research paradigm and philosophy in social sciences and management research, this study shares features of interpretivism research philosophy and is founded on the ontological position of constructionism. Interpretivism conceives reality as multiple and that an inquiry conducted in this paradigm is socially constructed in different ways and in different contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This means that in order to explain the phenomenon, it is essential for the researcher to understand the differences

between humans in terms of their roles as social actors by entering the social world of the research subjects and interpret their world from their point of view (Saunders, 2011). From the ontological view, this study discovers knowledge through a continual process of social interactions where social actors are engaging with and interpreting the world (Bryman, 2004; Crotty, 1998). Thus, the meaning can be interpreted and constructed in different ways by different people, even in relation to the same phenomenon that they are engaged in (Crotty, 1998).

The nature of this study is rooted in the notion of lived-world experience where reality is multiple and socially constructed in different ways and contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These multiple realities also depend on other systems of meaning which are more complicated to interpret in terms of fixed realities (Neuman, 2005). Understanding of motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound are pertinent in this kind of paradigm (Neuman, 2005). This means that in order to explain the phenomenon, it is essential to understand the differences between humans in term of their role as social actors by entering the social world of the research subjects and interpret their world from their point of view (Saunders, 2011). Because interpretation of the phenomenon relies on all participants involved including the researchers who bring their own unique context, the researcher needs to be open to the attitudes and values of the participants or, more actively suspend prior cultural assumptions (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Recognising the fact that behaviour is meaningful within a specific context, in this study, I attempt to understand shared meaning by exploring employees' different perceptions and perspectives of their socially constructed realities. Therefore, this study falls within the interpretive paradigm. With an interpretive

inquiry, I relied upon the input of the participants and me as the researcher and would be able to first determine the key factors enabling organisational values to influence reputation and to second explain the dynamic interactions of the enabling factors.

Using an interpretivist paradigm "… allows firms to be viewed in their entirety and permits researchers to get close to participants, penetrate their internal logic and interpret their perceptions" (Shaw, 1999: 60). I believe that the findings of an interpretivist study can deepen stakeholder understandings, feeding directly into practice or become the basis for recommendations for change in practice and policy, especially for the subject organisation. Figure 2 illustrates the positioning of research within the philosophical continuum for this study.

Figure 2: Positioning the research within the philosophical continuum

Research Philosophies

POSITIVISM
(Quantitative)

INTERPRETISM
(Qualitative)

Objective
measure

Epistemology
(how we come to know
what we know?)

Subjective
measure

Objectivism

Ontology
(what is the form of
the reality?)

Constructionism

**Research position
of this study**
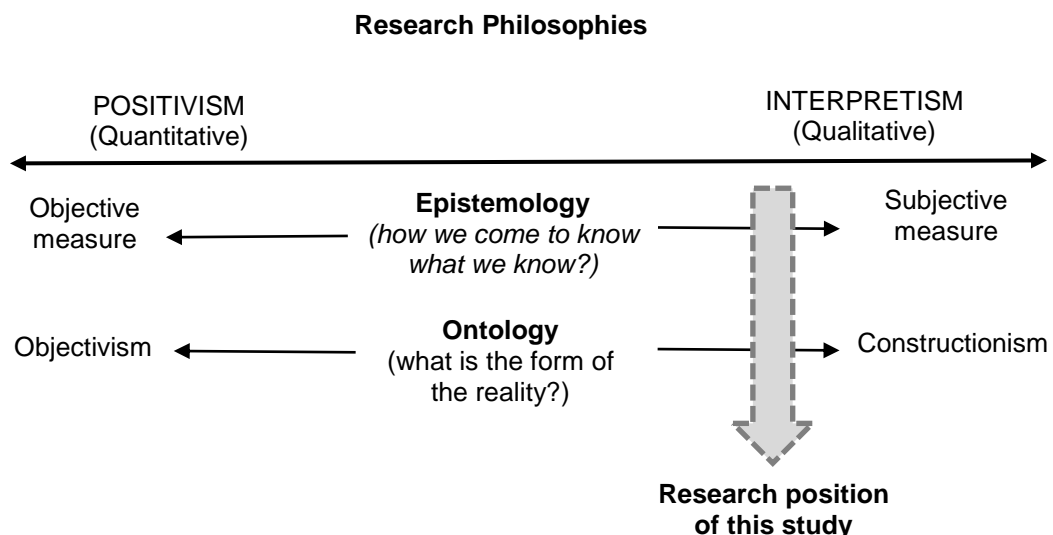
Source: Researcher's creation

The experience of conducting this research has taught me to balance my roles as a researcher and as a practitioner who was exposed to first-hand experience in similar but different context and organisational setting. With the aim to understand what is occurring in the research setting and being able to explore both positive and negative responses, I learnt to avoid giving the participants clues for the questions given so that the participants could answer all of my questions with their own frames of reference and without my influence.

The following section justifies the use of a case study as a primary research design and discusses the countermeasures undertaken to balance the drawbacks.

3.1.2 Case study research

Taking all possible types of enquiry into account, a case study design has been identified as an appropriate approach for this research. Robson (2002, page 178) defines a case study as 'a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence'. Adding to the definition, Yin (2009) highlights the importance of contextual conditions within a case study in which the real life phenomenon is in a sense of perplexity of what are the right questions to ask and of what problems should be addressed. This is in contrast with the experimental strategy where the research is undertaken within a controlled environment instead of a natural setting (Saunders, 2011).

This study is suitable for a case study approach for several reasons. First, it employs an empirical investigation of the actual behavioural events of a private hospital as opposed to historical phenomena or in a controlled environment. Second, the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly

evident in which perceptions, experiences and attitudes of employees are volatile and relatively incomprehensible and are also subjected to their regular ambiances. Third, the study adopts various methods of enquiry which is the unique strength of a case study approach because of the opportunity to triangulate different forms of evidence such as in this case face-to-face interviews, focus groups and observations.

Besides fulfilling the definition of a case study approach, this approach is also adopted for a number of other reasons. The first relates to the nature of the research questions. According to Yin (2009), a case study approach can be used when a study seeks to answer "how" questions classified as exploratory and "why" questions as seeking enumerated responses and explanation in contextual conditions. In this study, the central tendency is to illuminate a set of decisions: what were done, how they were implemented, and with what result, in the context of the implementation of organisational shared values on organisational reputation. As such the research questions of this study seek to appreciate the essence of the issues and to comprehend the vital elements which are influencing the occurrence. As a specific example, the first research question aims to determine and examine if alignment of organisational and employee values can be considered as an important mechanism in building organisational reputation, which is exploratory in nature. The use of question such as 'how' deals with the need to explore a plausible relationship of concepts namely, organisational values and organisational reputation. The connection may exist in many ways and can be traced from the source through specific methods such as interviews and observations.

The second research question is proposed to explain the role of social influence on internalisation processes of organisational values, particularly looking at how the different organisational actors play a role in the process and influence employee behaviour. The use of 'how' question shows the need to deliberate the unpredicted incident, which is unlikely to favour survey or archival methods. As such, this research focuses on an exploratory and explanatory case study approach.

Secondly, Yin (2003) affirms that case studies are often directed by theory in investigating contemporary sets of events as well as guiding data collection and analysis. A theoretical proposition is used as a template to compare the empirical results of the case study (Yin, 2003). In light of this, the current study seeks to understand the perceptions and experiences of employees regarding the implementation of organisational value and how it affects employee behaviour and perceptions of organisational reputation. Drawing on the proposition that reputations emerge from social processes that influence the formation of individual judgement (Fombrum & Rindova, 1994) as seen through the lens of Social Construction Theory, the perception of employees is the main focus because it engages with how employees interpret what they see and hear, and how it is translated into actions when they interact among themselves and with customers, who are expected to affect the reputations of the organisation. Hence, by having a set of organisational shared values, while aligning the expectation and existing perceptions of the employees, the organisation can maximise the likelihood of successfully creating the desired reputation.

Thirdly, this research considers multiple factors that may interact to address my research questions. As stated by Berg (2009, page 318), "the researcher is able to capture various nuances, patterns, and more latent elements that other research approaches might overlook".   Particularly in this study, in the process of identifying the dominant enabling mechanism, the emergence of possible variables from the data collected provides opportunities for me to maximise my findings and not be restricted to specific variables, which may ignore other possible contributing factors. For example, the researcher may predict a certain number of variables and conduct a survey to test the relationship of each variable. However, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the process and its interaction, with the use of survey, the possibility to reach in-depth and more explanatory knowledge is rather limited. Thus, to address the objective of this study, it is essential for me to capture all possible enabling factors and the emergence of variables from the empirical data.

There are criticisms of the case study approach on the basis that it provides little basis for generalisation or external validity because the inferences derived are heavily contextual rather than independent of context (Yin, 2003; Bell, 2005; Gibbert et al., 2008). This is in contrast with a positivist tradition that typically concludes about a population or statistical generalisation, whereas neither a single nor multiple case studies allow for such generalisation (Yin, 2003; Gibbert et. al., 2008). As Gillham (2000) contends, what is true in a certain scenario such as a private hospital in Malaysia may well not be true in another context. This study, however, is not designated to statistically generalise its findings as there are too many elements that are specific to this particular group or organisation. Nonetheless, it does aim to theorise more broadly beyond the case study so that the results and analysis is not limited to the case study

context. For instance, the unique set up and the administration procedures governing the private hospital characterise them in a specific manner. The set of shared values of the organisation is rather unique to support the organisation's direction which could be different to other institutions within the same industry and/or business environment. However, a case study approach would still be generalised in terms of replicability of the procedures and theory building (Eisenhardt & Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin (2003) argues that a case study creates an opportunity to generalise from empirical observation to theory instead of to populations. Particularly in this study, the aim is to expand and generalise theories which is known as 'analytic generalisation' (Yin, 2003). This is possible with the availability of a systematic documented case study protocol illustrating how the entire case study is conducted rigorously and the procedure would be replicated for the same phenomenon under different conditions or contexts. The case study protocol for this study is outlined in section 3.4.2. Additionally, to overcome the issue of generalisability, the selection of the case study is clearly defined and contextualised to allow other researchers to understand the sampling choices (Cook & Cambell, 1979).

A second common concern about a case study approach has been around the lack of methodological rigour (Bergh et al., 2006; Eisenhardt, 1989). To address the rigour issue, a clearly defined conceptual framework is formulated (this was discussed at length in Chapter 2) particularly to enhance the internal validity. A comparison of the pattern in the empirical data with the theoretical framework is the basis of the argument used to validate the findings and conclusions from the empirical data of this study. Additionally, to enhance construct validity in this case study, I adopted different data collection strategies such as face-to-face interviews, focus groups and non-participation

observations. This triangulation technique allows the researcher to look at the specific phenomenon from different angles (Yin, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) and overcome equivocal evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). In addition to triangulation, a pilot study is also performed to enhance construct validity. The pilot study is discussed in some detail in section 3.2.3 in this chapter.

This study employs a single case study approach as it is capable of contributing to the advancement of organisational values and organisational reputation research. However, the study must be embedded in and compared to a wider existing body of literature (Grix, 2010). Punch (2000 as cited in Grix 2010, page 52) summarises the positive reason for using single case study. He argues:

> *"the first is what we can learn from the study of a particular case, in its own right…the case being studied might be unusual, unique or not yet understood, so that building an in-depth understanding of the case is valuable […] Second, only the in-depth case study can provide understanding of the important aspects of a new or persistently problematic research area […] Discovering the important features, developing an understanding of them, and conceptualising them for further study, is often best achieved through the case study strategy".*

In light of the current study, a single case study is used, first, as the research defines the actual case, capturing the circumstances and conditions of everyday situations (Yin, 2009) which is to uncover the distinctive character or event of the social phenomenon being studied. For this study, the understanding of the dynamic processes that are presented within the setting or a particular event is central. Employee perceptions of the enactment of a set of organisational

shared values and possible implementation outcomes are the principal focus to be examined. Therefore, the context is unique to the subject organisation and would not be the same to other similar organisations even within the same industry.

Secondly, a single case study allows persuasive power (Siggelkow, 2007) in which rich qualitative data can explicate the complex social processes involved (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The opportunity to conduct individual interviews with employees allows one to probe deeply into individual thoughts and particular themes that emerge. The interviewees have the opportunity to elaborate on their ideas as much as possible to clarify certain problems. In this juncture, the analysis of rich empirical data allows rigorous critique of a theory's propositions which therefore may lead to theory building (Eisenhardt & Eisenhardt, 1989).

In conclusion, the single case study was not only chosen due to feasibility but more importantly for theoretical purposes.

3.1.2.1 Case study protocol and procedures

As mentioned earlier in section 3.1.2, the case study protocol can importantly address the issue of generalisability from empirical observation to theory. A case study protocol highlights the procedures taken when conducting case study research from the beginning stage until the final stage and it is significant for increasing the reliability of the case study (Yin, 2003). Following initial contacts with the subject organisation, the case study protocol for this research was prepared before the actual data collection was conducted.   Table 2 summarises the case study protocol for this study.

Table 2: Case study protocol and procedures of the current research

	Structure of case study protocol	Key research activities
1.	Introduction of case study 1. Case study design 2. Case study questions & proposition 3. Case study establishment	The case study questions are formulated based on the following issues: 1. How can the organisation build its reputation through its own employees? 2. How can organisational values influence the formation of its reputation? 3. What are the important factors to be addressed in internal organisational reputation building? 4. How far is this constructed in practice?
2.	Data collection procedure	Selection of case study: 1. Single case study of a service organisation within Klang Valley, Malaysia. Data collection plan: 1. Initial contact with the subject organisation 2. Draft and submit the official project proposal 3. Arrange the field visit and other required logistics. 4. Data collection – one-to-one semi structure interviews 5. Data collection – focus groups with the senior management team 6. Data collection – focus groups with employees

		7. Data collection – non-participation observations
		Instrument:
		1. Voice recorder
		2. Research field notes
3.	Case study interview guide.	*(Please refer to Appendix 1)*
4.	Observations protocol	1. Identification of observation sites
		2. Preparation of observation schedule
		3. Circulation of memo to inform the observation sessions.
		Instrument:
		1. Research field notes
5.	Outline for case study report	1. Verification of the proposition – discussion of the impact of the implementation of organisational values on reputation building.
		2. The model explaining the enabling mechanism for reputation building in terms of its roles and influence will be developed.
		3. The reputation outcome is discussed.
6.	Case study analysis	1. Thematic coding analysis
7.	Recommendations	1. The establishment of connections between organisational values and organisational reputation.
		2. The identification and explanation of the internal enabling mechanisms for reputation building.
		3. The outcome of internal reputation building.

3.1.2.2 Choosing a case study

The selection of a case is an important aspect because it clarifies the domain of the findings and controls for extraneous variation (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The underlying principle in selecting appropriate cases is the preference for cases that are information-rich with respect to the topics under investigation (Patton, 2002). Eisenhardt & Graebner (2007) further argue that a case is selected for its suitability to illuminate and extend relationships and logic among constructs. Hence, the subject organisation for this research is chosen for theoretical reasons and may offer elaboration of the emergent theory.

The choice of the Darul Ehsan Medical Centre (DEMC) as the site of the research resulted from a professional contact with the organisation. Leveraging on personal networks was vital to facilitate access and obtain commitment to participate from the subject organisation (Ponelis, 2015). The selected case study was also based on the criteria of having full access to the field in order to ensure feasibility with data collection. The contact was involved in conducting several workshops and teambuilding programs for DEMC's employees to help internalise DEMC's organisational values as envisioned by the senior management team.

According to one of the senior management team, a substantial amount of money had been allocated and spent in ensuring the success of the initiative. Since the introduction of the organisational values back in 2009, a variety of initiatives have been adopted including a series of workshops and talks to communicate and cascade them to all employees. The initiatives and programs are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. However, the main concern of the senior management is whether employees positively perceive and embrace the values

and then transpose the values in their working behaviours. This is important because the set of organisational values introduced in the organisation is representing its identity and is expected to shape a specific organisational reputation the senior management team wishes to achieve.

As a result of meetings and debriefing sessions after each workshop and program, the senior management team decided to assess the efficiency and strength of its values as well as to identify the outcome of the initiatives. These concerns were closely related to the goals of this project and thus the subject organisation was contacted with a view to representing a case study for this research.

At the same time, as a member of Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC, 2014a), one of the most prevalent concerns for the senior management team is their reputation in the industry. Besides retaining current customers, reputation is a central issue to ensure DEMC's participation in the national level program including MHTC (MHTC, 2014b).

DEMC Specialist Hospital (DEMC, 2014a) is one of the fastest growing healthcare centres in Malaysia, offering a combined spectrum of primary care, specialist services and health wellness programs to serve the healthcare needs of their community, national and international customers (DEMC, 2014b). Independently owned by a group of entrepreneurs, DEMC strives to continually provide unique and differentiated service with uncompromising commitment to service quality to all their customers (DEMC, 2014c). The organisation aims to achieve a very strong reputation for a truly caring experience at DEMC which is founded on their enduring belief that employees and customers are their greatest asset (DEMC, 2014d).

The hospital employs a total of 576 employees who are divided into three main divisions: business operations, doctors and nurses. The frontline employees represent 70% of the total employees. This shows that as a service organisation, the frontline employees are vital for the business operations of the hospital.

3.1.2.3   Sampling strategy for the case study

The goal of this study in terms of data collection is to acquire information from employees of DEMC. As this thesis is focused on how employees perceive, feel and intend to behave in relation to the organisation, the main population of interest or the actors for this study is the employees in the subject organisation. Therefore, for the process of drawing a sample from the population, I have chosen the purposive sampling to select the employees (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Tongco, 2007) and adopted the snowballing technique to reach the customers (Singh, Pandey, & Aggarwal, 2007; Noy, 2008). Employees are selected based on the purposive sampling, a non-random sampling method in which "the researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest, and locates individuals with those characteristics" (Johnson & Christensen, 2010, page 231). Therefore, such individuals would be information-rich cases that are suitable for in-depth study (Wellington, 2000). This is because the unit of analysis is appropriately chosen based on "what is happening to individuals in a setting and how individuals are affected by the setting" (Patton, 2002, page 228).

Purposive samples are groups that the researcher has identified as the target group where the study's purpose and the researcher's knowledge of the population guide the process, and once that group has been identified, anyone can volunteer (Patton, 2002). In this case, the participants were selected from

the frontline employees and their line managers. These groups were chosen because they are involved in the day-to-day operations and have a direct interaction with the customers. The idea was to obtain an appropriate sample where I could observe the direct behaviour of the employees when interacting with customers.

An email was sent to all line managers and front line staff inviting them to participate in the project. The request made it clear that participation was purely on a voluntary basis. The details of the study included the objectives, the interview procedure and their roles. An interview schedule was prepared which the participant could choose based on their availability. I scheduled three interview slots from Tuesday until Thursday (e.g. Session 1: 9.00am – 11.00am, Session 2: 12.00pm – 2.00pm, Session 3: 3.00pm – 5.00pm). However, there were times when I had to conduct an interview on Friday, at the request of the participant.

My sample also included the senior management team as they are the policy and decision makers who are held responsible for the outcome by the board of directors. By having a conversation with them, I would be able to understand the rationale of implementing organisational values, what has been implemented, what they are thinking of the current situation and the expectations. An individual email was sent to each of the senior management team to set up an appointment for an interview. I invited every member to try to capture the whole picture and to get a full perspective of the organisation.   In conclusion, the sampling was designed to involve a different level of organisational actors such as frontline employees, line managers and the senior management team.

In terms of customers, I was told by the management team that the hospital was reluctant to reveal the details of their customers. In light of this, I decided to employ snowballing sampling, a non-probability sampling method in identifying the customers where the researcher relies upon the social contacts between individuals to trace the customers (Noy, 2008). Snowballing sampling is advantageous when the population of interest is not fully visible or unveiling a hidden population (Noy, 2008) where the compilation of a list of the population poses difficulties (Patton, 2002). The method involves first identifying several customers with relevant characteristics and interviewing them. After that, these customers are then asked if they would like to recommend other potential individuals to participate in the study and who has relevance in some way to the research. This process helps to gain access to other participants until the size of the desired sample size is generated (Kendall et al., 2008) or unlikely to yield new information. With this cycle of recommendations, the number of participants increases.

The process of sampling the customers is initiated when I posted an invitation through the online social media site, Facebook, which is commonly used in Malaysia for both professional and social purposes. I received responses from contacts who were customers of the hospital or who knew others that were customers. I also contacted potential participants from the hospital Facebook's friend list. From this approach, I sent them personal requests either through email or through Facebook message. I then set an appointment to meet them for the interview at their convenience.

3.2 Fieldwork and data collection

The section reports and elaborates the detail of the data collection undertaken during the fieldwork in which the various instruments of data collection were used to address the research questions.

3.2.1 Gaining access

Gaining access to a particular research site means the researcher has to be aware of the organisational structure and secure clearance from gatekeepers. In this study, I contacted the Director of Corporate Culture of the hospital and provided my research proposal. In the proposal, I detailed the research aims and objectives, the data collection procedures, and the timeframe of my data collection phase. I also highlighted the benefit the organisation would receive from the collaboration and explained the reason for choosing their organisation. There were minimal expectations made of me, yet a contract had been established in which I would share the findings with the senior management team of the hospital.

For this study, I was assigned to a manager and an executive to assist me with the interview arrangements, especially to get in touch with employees who may be interested to participate. I was also allowed to use their facilities, including being assigned a designated area for the interview, computers, and printing which significantly helped with the entire fieldwork.

3.2.2 Data collection

Data collection is crucial to understand the contextual nature of the case being investigated. As the main aim of the study was to examine how organisational values influence organisational reputation, the kind of information that was needed included an in-depth understanding of different perspectives in term of

the perceptions and behavioural consequences of the employees who are directly affected by the enactment of organisational values. One possibility was to conduct a survey of all employees in the organisation. However, I felt the explanatory nature of the enquiry did not suit a methodology which presupposed quite specific prior understanding and/or relying on fixed variables with a structured limitation of a survey questionnaire.

Additionally, as this research is oriented towards a theory building approach, Eisenhardt (1989) emphasises the use of a combination of data collection methods. The various methods or procedures used are called triangulation, which serves to clarify meanings by identifying different approaches of the same phenomenon using multiple sources of evidence and provides stronger substantiation of constructs (Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin (2003) states the main sources of evidence typically used in conducting case studies include: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artefacts.

As this study focuses on perceptions, experience and interactions between people in the organisation, I employed in-depth face-to face interviews as the main data collection, alongside focus groups and non-participation observations as a complementary technique for the interviews. This triangulation technique or combining more than one source of data collection is important for developing converging lines of inquiry. The complementary methods were deployed under the assumption that weaknesses inherent in one approach will be counterbalanced via strength on another because different types of data provide cross-data validity checks (Patton, 2002). In this way, I would be able

to achieve greater data reliability, protecting the study from unnecessary bias and increase its trustworthiness.

This study adopted three types of method namely; face-to-face interviews, focus groups and non-participation observations. All methods were conducted during the fieldwork and were scheduled in advance with the consent from the management of DEMC.

Table 3: Fieldwork schedule

In-depth face-to-face interviews	Focus group with the employees	Focus group with the senior management	Observations
15,16/10/2014 (5 participants)	17/10/2014 3 groups (36 participants)	2/12/2014 (5 participants)	12/11/2014 (General ward)
21,23/10/2014 (6 participants)			8/12/2014 (Pharmacy and dispensary area)
28,29,30/10/2014 (7 participants)			9/12/2014 (Registration and triage counter)
4,5,6/11/2014 (3 participants)			
11,13/11/2014 (4 participants)			
18,19,20/11/2014 (8 participants)			
25,26,27,28/11/2014 (9 participants)			
1,3,4,5/12/2014 (8 participants)			
n=51	**n=36**	**n=5**	**n=3**

3.2.2.1 In-depth interviews

The study is situated within the interpretivist paradigm, seeking an in-depth understanding from participants. In-depth face-to-face interview was the predominant research method employed in the study to engage with the participants in order to elicit their perceptions of the implementation of organisational values. Interviews are acknowledged to be a powerful technique to appreciate views and experiences of subjects because "past behaviours cannot be observed and there are situations where the observer cannot be present" (Patton, 2002, page 340). It allows construction of knowledge and exchanging of experiences between the interviewer and the interviewee and deeper significance of the phenomenon (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This is because the interviewer would be able to understand central themes and specific experiences of the life of the interviewee (Qu & Dumay, 2011). In this sense, interviews require the interviewee to think back over how a certain series of events unfolded in relation to a current situation. Moreover, interviews provide information that is not recorded or printed elsewhere (Grix, 2010). Considering the importance of using interviews, I argue for the use of semi-structured interviews in eliciting perceptions of the employees.

Semi-structured interviews are the main mode used in the study for a number of reasons. First, semi structured interview is similar to everyday conversation which allow participants to respond in their own terms, language and in the way that they think (Qu & Dumay, 2011). It adds flexibility to the investigation (Cohen et al., 2007) because it allowed me to encourage participants to respond in detail and at the same time cope with unexpected findings. Additionally, it also enabled me to pursue unexpected questions based on interviewee responses (Grix, 2010). For example, when I introduced an

interview question, the participants expressed their opinions in their own words surrounding the question, conveying their insights from their own perspective. This shows that the conversation arose naturally and encouraged in-depth contributions from interviewees, which sometimes led to the emergence of new themes that had not been identified prior to the data collection.

Second, semi structured interviews has a specific aim and is guided by some predetermined themes, which in this case was grounded by a thorough review of the theoretical literature. Even though the questions in semi structured interviews were predetermined through the use of an interview guide, in order to cover important topics, but there was a certain degree of flexibility for participants to express issues in their own idiosyncratic form. In this sense, I did not necessarily follow a specific order of questions, allowing modification of wording, and adding or omitting certain questions during the interview depending on the flow of the conversation (Robson, 2002, Saunders et al., 2003). With these characteristics, after asking participants each question, I could follow-up with additional queries by prompting questions to further clarify or to gain clearer explanation about what has been said or seeking detailed descriptions on certain interesting responses from the participants. I used scheduled and unscheduled probes to draw out more complete responses and drilling down a particular issue to evoke fuller responses (Qu & Dumay, 2011). For instance, I immediately followed up with question such as "could you say something more about that?" or "do you have a further example of what happened?" where participants would be require to elaborate on unexpected or stimulating answers. With this technique, I encountered remarkable responses that were worth pursuing further when new questions were necessary. I allowed insights to emerge as the interview progressed and stopped the

conversation when I was satisfied with the depth and quality of responses. Even though the research might generate a wide variety of different issues as compared to data from structured interviews where the questions are standardised and is not designed to cope with variation of questions (Grix, 2010), I would not compromise the possibility to achieve richness in data that might be obtained from semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews also provided me with more control over the interview than the unstructured interview because the sequence of the questions is not completely predetermined and can be modified (Robson, 2002). For example, I asked a question and probed participants for further detail as necessary. I followed up the ideas to explore the motives and feelings of participants which are of importance to them even though the answers given were related to a later question. For instance, I used "what do you mean by…?" to seek clarification, "can you tell me more about that?" to ask more information or "could you give me an example?" to ask for an illustration. I followed the participants' construction of ideas as long as the response given was within the context of the study's research goals.

The face-to-face interviews with the employees were conducted between October and December 2014 with the vast majority lasting between 30 to 45 minutes in duration. I was allocated a comfortable sitting area in the executive lounge where the interviews took place except in two instances where participants requested that interviews be conducted at their work station. The physical setting in which the interviews takes places is considerably important (Alvesson, 2003). (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008) suggest that wherever possible, interviews should be conducted in areas free from distractions and at times and locations that are most suitable for participants.

Besides allowing discussion to happen with minimal disruption, it also gives me the space to reflect upon participant's responses after each session. The space allocated by the management of DEMC was quiet without any background noise and away from any distractions that enabled both, the interviewer and the participant to concentrate and the recording was clear. I found that participants were also comfortably uttered their views without having to worry if anyone could hear their responses. At first, I was quite concerned about the space being too formal and could be a bit intimidating for some participants. However, I found that participants were relaxed and enjoyed the interviews comfortably. Picture 1 shows the setting for the face-to-face interviews.

Picture 1: The interview setting
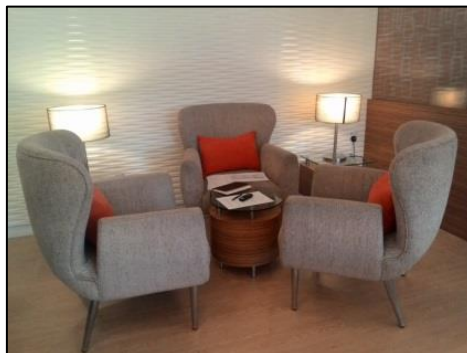
Source: Researcher's collection

In total, I conducted interviews with 51 employees consisting of 11 line managers and 40 frontline staff which presented 14% of the total frontline staff from different department. Based on that, 63% of participants are women, and 37% of participants are men. The composition of the participants is summarised in Table 4 below:

Table 4: The composition of interview participants (n=51)

Participant ID	Position	Department	Gender
1	Line manager	Front Office – Outpatient	Male
2	Line manager	Front Office – Inpatient	Female
3	Line manager	Physiology	Male
4	Line manager	Nursing - Ward General	Female
5	Line manager	Nursing - Ward Peadiatric	Female
6	Line manager	Nursing - Ward Maternity	Female
7	Line manager	Nursing - Specialist Clinic	Female
8	Line manager	Accident & Emergency	Male
9	Line manager	Pharmacy	Female
10	Line manager	Wellness	Female
11	Line manager	Corporate Culture	Female
12	Doctor	Accident & Emergency	Male
13	Doctor	Accident & Emergency	Male
14	Staff Nurse	Nursing	Male
15	Staff Nurse	Nursing	Female
16	Staff Nurse	Nursing	Female
17	Staff Nurse	Nursing	Female
18	Staff Nurse	Nursing	Female
19	Staff Nurse	Nursing	Female
20	Nurse	Nursing	Male
21	Nurse educator	Nursing	Male
22	Nurse	Nursing	Female
23	Nurse	Nursing	Female
24	Nurse educator	Nursing	Female
25	Nurse	Nursing	Female
26	Nurse	Nursing	Female
27	Nurse aid	Nursing	Female
28	Nurse aid	Nursing	Female
29	Nurse aid	Nursing	Female
30	Nurse aid	Nursing	Male

31	Pharmacy assistant	Pharmacy	Female
32	Physiologist	Physiology	Male
33	Physiologist	Physiology	Female
34	Billing clerk	Front Office	Male
35	Billing officer	Front Office	Female
36	Admission and record clerk	Front Office	Female
37	Admission and record officer	Front Office	Female
38	Admission and record	Front Office	Male
39	Admission and record	Front Office	Female
40	Admission and record	Front Office	Female
41	Guest Relations Officer (SUTERA)	Front Office	Female
42	Receptionist	Front Office	Female
43	Receptionist	Front Office	Male
44	Concierge	Front Office	Male
45	Guest Relations Officer	Front Office	Female
46	Concierge	Front Office	Male
47	General frontline	Front Office	Female
48	General frontline	Front Office	Male
49	General frontline	Front Office	Female
50	General frontline	Front Office	Female
51	General frontline	Front Office	Female

At the beginning of each interview, I greeted my participants and thanked them for agreeing to take part. Then I introduced myself stating my name and institution. The first 5 to 10 minutes of the interview was spent discussing my background, the reasons for conducting the research, and what I hoped to

achieve. I also emphasised that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions and that their views were critical for the research. I went through the consent agreement with each of the participants, explaining the terms and conditions related to the study in both languages: English and Malay. Together with the consent form, I enclosed the study information sheet where I explained the nature of the research including confidentiality and voluntary participation. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any point without any obligation to provide reason. This is to ensure that the participants were aware of what the study intended to explore and their roles in it and the participant had the opportunity to decide whether to participate or not in the study. At this point I also requested permission to audio record the conversation for transcription and to take notes as back-up in case of equipment failure. By audio recording the interview, I would able to capture the detail of the participant's responses particularly the language and concepts they used to express their experience and perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The participants were then asked to sign the consent form to gain their informed consent and were given a copy of the form for their own reference.

The introduction was then followed by asking the participants general questions about their position, responsibilities, feelings towards their job and discussion about the people they normally interact with. By doing this, I would collect more personal detail about the participant. I paid particular attention to the relationship between the interviewer and the participants because this would affect the quality of the interview. At the same time, establishing rapport with participants prior to the interview is important as this can have a positive effect on the subsequent development of the interview. For instance, initially, I felt that the participants treated the interview very formally. I saw that they were

anxious that they might not be able to give the right answer and tried to answer with very good sentence structures. In the first two interviews, I noticed that the answers provided by them reflected positive perceptions on the implementation of organisational values and none touched on the negative sentiments of it. I suspected that the kind of responses might be because the participants saw me as a person who might asses them. So, I changed my strategy by being more casual with them. I had some casual chat before the interview started, asking them about general issues about the local news and other interests. Then, I clearly informed them that they were not assessed for any form but the interview was conducted just to ask about their experience and perceptions. I also emphasised that they were allowed to use Malay language or a mix of Malay and English throughout the interview. When they could use Malay, I realised that the participants responded faster. This is probably because they felt that it was easier to express certain points using our mother tongue.

I asked approximately main five questions to employees and four questions to line managers in the interview. The questions covered the two main research questions. All questions were worded clearly and asked in a natural tone of voice either in English or Malay based on the participant's preference. If there was any misunderstanding, the questions would be repeated or I would frame the questions in a different way without compromising the meaning. I always observed participants' body language and facial expressions to gauge whether they had understood my question or whether they required further elaboration and explanation.

Participants were given ample opportunity to express their own thoughts freely without any intervention either with comments or gestures that would create bias in the participant's responses to the questions being asked. As much as

possible, I tried to appear non-judgemental about what the participant was saying by adopting emotionally neutral body language (e.g. head nodding, smiling) and posed non-evaluative encouraging noises like 'mm', 'yup', 'mm-hm' to convey to the participants that I was actively listening to them. Comments such 'Ah-ha, yes I know what you mean' was also used to signal that I agree or understand with what the participant has just said. At times, I would simply remain silent to give the participant a moment to think or contemplate their responses as well as to encourage them to expand on what they were saying before. I carefully listened to the participants' responses to make sure they provided appropriate answers to the questions that were asked. The ability to recognise and distinguish what kind of data and information needed is important as to get quality responses (Patton, 2002). When I felt that the responses were not along a relevant track, I politely interrupted the participant by interjecting a new question as soon as the participant paused for breath, for example: "The next question is about…" or simply call attention "Let me stop you here for a moment. I understand what you try to say but I want to make sure I fully understand your points earlier". The strategy seemed to work well because my participants did not show hesitation to proceed with the interviews.

During the interview, as mentioned earlier I used audio recording to devote my attention to listening to the participants and allowed probing in-depth. This helped me to provide an accurate, verbatim record of the interviews, capturing the language used by the participants including their hesitations and tone in far more detail than would ever be possible with note-taking.

At the end of the interview, all participants were asked if they were keen to be contacted for a follow-up session and all participants agreed to the request. Finally, they all were thanked for their time and were given my contact details

should they feel like providing more information to me. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed as discussed in the later section of this chapter.

I followed the same approach in interviewing the employees as I interviewed the customers. I asked approximately five questions focusing on their perceptions on the organisational values and their experience patronising the hospital. A total of 15 customers were interviewed face-to-face at various locations at their convenience such as their houses, at restaurants or in the patient's ward. On average, the interviews lasted about 30 minutes. The composition of the participants is summarised in Table 5 below:

Table 5: The composition of customers (n=15)

Interview date	Customer Identity	Patronising category	Gender
20/10/2014	Customer 1	In-patient	Male
24/10/2014	Customer 2	Out-patient	Female
27/10/2014	Customer 3	Out-patient	Female
3/11/2014	Customer 4	Out-patient	Male
3/11/2014	Customer 5	Out-patient	Female
5/11/2014	Customer 6	In-patient	Male
6/11/2014	Customer 7	Out-patient	Female
7/11/2014	Customer 8	Out-patient	Male
7/11/2014	Customer 9	Out-patient	Female
10/11/2014	Customer 10	In-patient	Female
12/11/2014	Customer 11	Out-patient	Male
14/11/2014	Customer 12	Out-patient	Male
24/11/2014	Customer 13	In-patient	Female
2/12/2014	Customer 14	Out-patient	Female
3/12/2014	Customer 15	In-patient	Female

3.2.2.2 Focus groups

Focus groups were another method adopted in this study. Focus groups are a method where data are collected from multiple varieties of perspectives or collective views at the same time (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and the meanings that lie behind those views (Gill et al., 2008). There were several reasons for choosing focus groups. First, they allow the researcher to develop an understanding about why individuals feel the way they do. Since the focus group involves a group of participants typically 6 to 10 people (Patton, 2002) brought together to discuss a specific research topic given by the researcher, this provided an opportunity to explore how people think about the topic, how they shape their ideas and how this conversation emerged. Through focus groups, participants can probe each other's reasons for holding a certain view (Berg & Lune, 2012) and this allowed me to understand how members of the group arrive at certain conclusions which may not have been possible purely through conducting one-to-one interviews. For instance, because this group discussion allows participants to hear from others, this provides opportunity for individual participants to reflect on their own responses. An individual may answer in a certain way during a focus group, but as he or she listens to the answers of others, he or she may want to qualify or modify a view which is helpful in the elicitation of a wide variety of different views in relation to certain issues (Bryman, 2008). The researcher may benefit from the process of arguing and may stand a chance of ending up with more realistic accounts of what people think because they are encouraged to think about and possibly revise their views (Berg & Lune, 2012).

Focus groups also make possible to study the processes whereby meaning is collectively constructed within each session. Interactions between participants

for example, take place within its social context, within which discussion is experienced together, which shows that context can shape participants' view (Bryman, 2008). Through this, the researcher would vividly see the differences between participants and provide greater opportunity to gain understanding of the issue under study from the spontaneous responses from participants.

I was aware of the possible problem of group effects that may occur owing to overly prominent participants who might steer the group responses (Berg & Lune, 2012). To overcome this, before the discussion began, I cautioned the group that each member's view is required and equally important. Additionally, my role was to moderate the discussion which was also vital to control the dynamic of the group and allow the discussion to evolve without being influenced by me.

In this research, focus groups were used for two separate purposes. First, it was used as a technique of triangulation with face-to-face interview data and observations. As focus groups enable dynamic discussion of topics leading to the co-construction of meaning, the data is expected to generate important insight which individual interviews might overlook or are not well explained by the participants (Berg & Lune, 2012). It was also intended that the interactive nature of focus groups would allow participants to express their individual feelings, compare and contrast their perceptions and experiences of their involvement in the process of internalising organisational shared values. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000) note, what distinguishes focus groups from individual interviews is that participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer. Therefore, group members respond to one another without disrupting underlying normative group assumptions.

I secured three focus group sessions with a total of 36 frontline staff during their annual team-building program which was held from 17 -19 October 2014 at Dusun Eco Resort, Pahang. This was conducted after I completed nine one-to one interviews at the office. Even though the program was organised by the management, none of the committee members were present during my session. The participants were the eighth group out of ten groups of employees selected to attend the teambuilding program for 2014. The summary of composition of the group is as follows:

Table 6: The summary of focus groups participants (n=36)

	Participant ID	Group	Gender
1	Participant 1/G1	1	Male
2	Participant 2/G1	1	Male
3	Participant 3/G1	1	Male
4	Participant 4/G1	1	Female
5	Participant 5/G1	1	Female
6	Participant 6/G1	1	Female
7	Participant 7/G1	1	Female
8	Participant 8/G1	1	Female
9	Participant 9/G1	1	Male
10	Participant 10/G1	1	Female
11	Participant 11/G1	1	Male
12	Participant 12/G1	1	Female
13	Participant 13/G2	2	Female
14	Participant 14/G2	2	Female
15	Participant 15/G2	2	Female
16	Participant 16/G2	2	Male
17	Participant 17/G2	2	Male
18	Participant 18/G2	2	Male
19	Participant 19/G2	2	Female
20	Participant 20/G2	2	Male
21	Participant 21/G2	2	Female

22	Participant 22/G2	2	Female
23	Participant 23/G2	2	Male
24	Participant 24/G2	2	Male
25	Participant 25/G3	3	Female
26	Participant 26/G3	3	Male
27	Participant 27/G3	3	Female
28	Participant 28/G3	3	Female
29	Participant 29/G3	3	Male
30	Participant 30/G3	3	Female
31	Participant 31/G3	3	Female
32	Participant 32/G3	3	Female
33	Participant 33/G3	3	Female
34	Participant 34/G3	3	Female
35	Participant 35/G3	3	Male
36	Participant 36/G3	3	Female

Upon arrival at the venue, I generally welcomed all participants, briefed the purpose of the study and carefully explained what will happen and gained consent. Then the participants were divided into three small groups and given marker pens and white papers to write down important ideas and opinions in answering my questions. The session was conducted in a relaxed and informal condition where participants were allowed to choose their own comfortable corner within the seminar hall to brainstorm on the questions given (see Picture 2).

Picture 2: Group brainstorming and discussion

Source: Researcher's collection

They were allocated an hour to discuss and debate within their group before I facilitated the interview for each group. The participants were asked to present their collective ideas and were allowed to make additional comments beyond their own initial responses. The focus group interview took 30 minutes for each group. From my observation, all participants were actively involved in generating and expressing ideas. I then collected the papers from each group and compiled them for analysis.

As the number of questions that can be asked in a group setting is rather restricted (Patton, 2002), I selected the two main questions as follows:

1. How do you perceive the implementation of organisational values?

2. What are the important enabling factors that could influence organisational values and reputation?

The questions were chosen because they could inform the normative group perceptions and sentiments which provide an opportunity for me to understand the overall views around the research question topics. The information generated during the focus groups was essential in developing probing questions for one-to-one interviews of the study. The insight gained from focus

groups highlighted differences and contradictions as well as similarities from the findings captured during one-to-one interviews.

Another focus group was conducted with the senior management team which was requested by them due to individual work commitments. Initially, I planned for individual interviews but with the access constraint, I resorted to this method. However, this did not hamper me from gaining good quality data from the management team as they gave their full cooperation and attention in answering questions.

The focus group interview with the senior management team took about two hours at the Chief Operation Officer's (COO) office. It was challenging to get a suitable time to group them together due to their busy schedules, however with the help from the COO, a meeting was finally arranged with five senior management members out of nine. Their responses were audio recorded which then were transcribed, summarised and analysed.

The demographic data of the senior management participated in the group interview are as shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Demographic data of senior management team (n=5)

Participant ID	Designation	Gender	Years of service
Participant 52	Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Female	10 years
Participant 53	Director of Nursing	Female	8 years
Participant 54	Director of Doctors	Female	10 years
Participant 55	Director of Corporate Culture	Male	6 years
Participant 56	Director of Finance	Male	9 years

It was formally conducted at the beginning with me asking questions to each of them but the session turned less formal when they started to actively engage in the conversation. From my observation, everyone was enthusiastic to give their opinions; in fact no one was left in silence. I could recognise the bond that they have as a senior management team as they have been working together in DEMC for more than five years. Their responses were always in agreement with each other and occasionally they burst into laughter. Additionally, I could sense the seriousness in their voice especially when giving examples to describe and explain every incident related to the point of discussion.

3.2.2.3 Non-participant observation

From the face-to-face interviews and the focus groups, I was able to capture information on the perceptions, experiences and expected behaviour of employees. Limited by the fact that bulk of the behaviour is verbal through interviews, I wanted to validate the claims through observations. In other words, I felt the information could be reinforced with direct visual evidence which could ascertain actual behaviour in the situation and enable me to develop my understanding of how shared values guide the daily operations of the hospital. This supported my investigation and enabled me to understand aspects about the organisation which were difficult to extrapolate during interviews when the participants would be reluctant to talk about them.

Since I was able to access the case study site for the whole period during my fieldwork, I also adopted non-participant observation as a complement and form of triangulation for the interviews and focus groups. Observations which are guided through a sets of questions offer the opportunity to record and analyse events, actions, behaviour and interactions as they occur naturally or unplanned

events, which are seen through the eyes of the researcher (Patton, 2002; Thomas, 2003). Observations for this study were performed mainly to confirm the pattern that emerged from interview findings with the actual behaviour because observations do not rely on what participants say. This is direct evidence to determine whether participants behave in the way they claim to behave (Bell, 2005). Observation is only focused on the external behaviour (Patton, 2002) therefore I was not able to explore individual feelings and perceptions. Nevertheless, for this study non-participant observation was advantageous in investigating the 'interaction process' involving several players within the organisation where an understanding of non-verbal communication is important and the behavioural consequences of events form.

Initially, I planned to employ a participant-observation where I could be involved with the day-to-day activities and have the opportunity to perceive reality of the phenomenon from the viewpoint of someone inside the case rather than external to it. However, due to the time limitation and the fact that the sample groups were physically dispersed across the hospital, it was difficult for me to be at the right place at the right time, either to participate in or to observe important events.

I decided to take the position as a passive observer where my presence would not directly influence and affect the flow of events (Grix, 2010). I always took a seat a little distant from observation areas but within the range of my eyesight and made my own notes. Field notes were taken throughout the observation process to capture observable events and task involvement by documenting any relevant behaviour, incidents and actions between the front line employees and the customers upon its occurrence.

Since the observation was conducted after I completed most of the interview sessions, based on the knowledge from the literature and interview data, I went into the field with particular concepts and classification in mind, which orientated my observations. Guided by my research questions that I attempt to answer, I was particularly interested in the specific behaviour exhibited by the frontline employees while carrying out their duties and the reaction of the customer. I watched the way frontline employees carried out their duties, adhering to all procedures and meeting the customers' requests. It was important to see if the actual behaviour matched the data from the interviews and focus groups.

I had a tour of the hospital accompanied by the executive who was assigned to assist me throughout the fieldwork. I then selected three main areas within the hospital to perform the observation, namely the patient registration and triage counter (see Picture 3), the pharmacy and dispensary counter (see Picture 4) and the general ward (picture not available due to confidentiality issues).

Picture 3: Observation at the registration and triage counter

Source: Researcher's collection

Picture 4: Observation at the pharmacy and dispensary counter
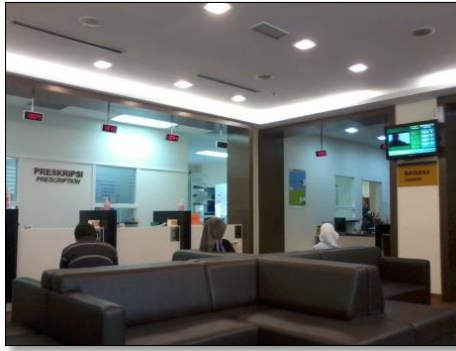
Source: Researcher's collection

The areas were chosen because most of the interaction between the employees and the customers usually took place in these three spaces. I prepared a schedule for the observations and also a notification email to all employees (see Appendix 2 for the excerpt of the notification email).

Research field notes

I kept a research diary to record reflections of the on-going research process, to document the process of approaching the field, the experiences and the problems in the field, including with interviewees, and in applying the methods. As researchers are inescapably part of the social world they are investigating (Flick, 2014), I am affected by what I see, feel and perceive which would influence the phenomenon being studied. Hence I documented all relevant information before, during and after the fieldwork took place. I recorded my thoughts about the primary and secondary source materials on the research subjects that I read as well as making connections between what I read and what I found during the fieldwork. The reflections that I documented in my research field notes in some way helped me to map tentative answers to my study.

In summary, the data collection process consisted of three main methods for four different participant groups as shown in Table 8:

Table 8: Summary of the data collection process used in this study

Method	Activities	Participants group	Time taken
Interview	In-depth face-to–face interview sessions Venue: 　1. Sutera Lounge 　2. Office area Time: During office hours or any convenient time to the participants. Tool: Voice recorder	Line manager - 11 Frontline staff - 40	30-45 minutes
Focus group	Group discussion and interview during teambuilding program for frontline staff Venue: Seminar Hall, Dusun Eco Resort Time: session was scheduled within the program itinerary. Tool: Voice recorder	Frontline staff – 36	1 hour discussion 30 minute interview
	Group interview with the senior management team. Venue: 　1. COO office Time: During business hours Tool: Audio recorder	Senior management team – 5	2 hours
Non-	3 observation sessions	Frontline staff	3 hours for

participant Observation	on daily interactions between the employees and customers Venue: 1. Registration and triage counter 2. Pharmacy and dispensary counter 3. General ward Time: During business hours Tool: Field note diary		each session (11am – 2pm)

The main concerns throughout the process of data collection were related to ethical considerations, and the trustworthiness of the study which will be addressed in the following section. Before that, the next section outlines the pilot study of the interview questions.

3.2.3 Instrument construction and pilot study

When designing interview questions it is imperative to ask questions that are likely to yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible and also be able to address the aims and objectives of the research (Gill et al., 2008). The questions posed in the interview were directly linked to the research objectives and were arrived at by considering the literature along with my background on the topic studied. The questions were made firstly in English and then were translated into Malay. A two-way translation examination was conducted by two independent bilingual professionals. The translation result was compared and refined to ensure translation accuracy and correctness.

In this study, interviews were structured through the use of an interview guide and developed following a review of relevant literature in order to cover important topics, but leaving room for participants to interpret and express issues in their own idiosyncratic form. The interview guide contained questions on an individual's role within the hospital, their views on the implementation of organisational values, their perceptions of organisational reputation, whether and how organisational values may change their working behaviour and how their behaviour may impact upon organisational reputation. It did not specifically focus on conflict in implementing organisational values, nor did the interview guide contain direct lines of questioning on roles of employees and its influence, discussions surrounding the latter emerged from the interviews rather than being imposed by the researcher. The interview guide of this research is attached in the Appendix 1.

It is often suggested to first pilot the interview questions on several people prior to data collection proper. The pilot study was conducted to clarify the instrument used which allows the researcher to find out if the questions were clear and understandable so that participants would understand them in the same way and would be capable of answering the research questions (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Several iterations of interviews were conducted with two colleagues from the University of Exeter, and a professional from a service industry to validate and refine the overall layout and the wording of the questions before the final executions. This was conducted to minimise the risk of misinterpretation, ambiguity, misunderstanding and confusion and to increase the credibility of the interview questions (Kim, 2011; Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, & Spier, 2002; Beebe, 2007). All comments were addressed and changes were made accordingly wherever necessary. I did not include the

potential participants from the sample in the pilot study mainly because of the distance and cost to reach them. However, this did not jeopardise the result of the study as a pilot study is not a guarantee of the success of the full- scale study and problems might not become obvious until scaled-up to a full study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Additionally, the pilot study provided me with more confidence in carrying out interviews.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

As this study primarily sought to understand a phenomenon through people's interactions, I needed to ensure that my work did not pose any harm to those participating in the investigation. This is important to create trust so that the participant felt free to express his or her feelings without having to worry about the implications from their participation.

In my ethical consideration, I was guided by the institution guidelines for research by the University of Exeter's Ethics Policy (2014). Certificate of ethical research approval from University of Exeter Business School was obtained before the study commenced (refer to Appendix 3). The following section discusses the ethical issues observed in the study.

3.2.4.1   Informed consent

Farrimond (2012, page 109) defines informed consent as "the formal agreement between researcher and participant or group to make an independent decision, with enough relevant information, enough understanding and no pressure to participate in the research". In this study, the consent form was emailed to three hundred and sixty frontline employees. Together with the consent form, I enclosed the study information sheet where I explained the nature of the research and what it aims to achieve. This was to ensure that they were aware

of what the study intended to explore and their roles in it. The employee decided whether to participate or not in the study. For those who chose to participate, they submitted the consent form to me by email and would need to choose the interview slot which was also made available to the potential participants. I then subsequently interviewed them.

Before I conducting the interview, I went through the agreement with them again, explained in both languages: English and Malay, and reminded them that they had a choice whether to participate in the research or not. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw from the research without any obligation to provide reason.

The consent form that I used for this study was adapted from Farrimond (2012). A sample of the consent form is in Appendix 4. It was divided into two sections: the first section was on the personal declaration and the second section was the study information sheet. The participants signed the consent form before the interview session, copies of which were retained by participants and me. In doing so, I am confident that all who took part in the research did so willingly, without coercion or obligation.

3.2.4.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Farrimond (2012, page128), anonymity in the context of research means "disguise, remove or not known the identity of participants" while confidentiality means not sharing, revealing or discussing the data after collection with any party beyond agreed limits. Anonymity is a way of ensuring confidentiality (Farrimond, 2012).

In my study, I constantly assured my research participants of confidentiality but because I was conducting the interviews in person I could not guarantee

anonymity as I was aware of their identities. The data collected from the participants, both interview and focus groups were not discussed in anyway with their supervisors or any relevant authorities as recommended by Morrow and Richards (1996) who suggest that the ethical issues should continuously be addressed throughout the study. In order to protect the rights of the participants, I chose to remove or change the identity of each participant including the true names, and use a special coding system to represent the participants. All raw data and other documentation have been kept secure by me on my personal computer or in paper files, with no data or documentation available to others, including my supervisors. Any list containing the participants' information (e.g. real names and/or contact details) is stored in a separate location from all other data or on an entirely different hard drive with no data or documentation available to others.

The audio files from the recording device was downloaded at the earliest possible opportunity, and then deleted immediately from those devices. The electronic data was stored on the university U-drive, protected by my password. The hard copy data (e.g. signed consent forms and any other paper based data) was stored in a locked filing cabinet.

In terms of non-participant observations, the participants did not sign consent forms as this would have been impractical. Observations were conducted within a stipulated schedule. The management of the organisation notified every employee through email and issued a reminder memo to the head of departments about the observation sessions, indicating the time and the specific venue prior to the study (see Appendix 2). This was done to ensure

that all employees were aware of the exercise and would allow them to avoid the observation area if they did not wish to be observed.

3.4 Data analysis

In this section, I provide a detailed overview of how the data were analysed. There are several recognised procedures for analysing data for qualitative research (Yin, 1994; Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2013, Berg & Lune, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The adoption of certain techniques in data collection entails the use of particular approaches in data analysis. Generally, analysis involves a constant iteration between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that are analysed, and the analysis of the data that are produced (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the current study, to analyse the data from the interviews and focus groups, I decided to use thematic analysis to identify the major issues that recur as well as the main themes that summarise the perceptions of participants. Thematic analysis is considered appropriate for this study because it allows the identification of any issue generated by the participants gathered in different situations and is a technique for giving explanations for their behaviours, actions and thoughts, as explained by Namey et al. (2008, page 138):

> *"Thematic moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas. Codes developed for ideas or themes are then applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis, which may include comparing the relative frequencies of themes or topics within a data set, looking for code concurrence or graphically displaying code relationships."*

Hence I could draw interpretations from the data that was collected and able to understand the phenomenon widely. The pattern and relationships discovered under the themes will be the basis of how the findings section is structured. In analysing interview data, I adopted the six phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis reports "experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, page 81). In other words, it acknowledges the ways individuals make meaning of their experience. The stages in thematic analysis include Phase1: Familiarizing with the data; Phase 2: Generating initial codes; Phase 3: Searching for themes; Phase 4: Reviewing themes; Phase 5. Defining and naming themes and Phase 6: Producing the report. The following section elaborates on these stages.

3.4.1 Data familiarisation, transcription and translation process

As mentioned earlier, all interviews (employees and customers) were audio recorded. I transcribed all recording verbatim so as not to miss any important quotations or expressions. Each interview took between 30 to 45 minutes, and I took an average of five hours to complete a recording. While for focus groups, it took longer time to complete each group. On average, it lasted for seven hours for each focus group with the employees and fifteen hours for the focus group with the senior management team. While transcribing them, I started to analyse the meaning of what was said and I took note of potential points of interest.

I took two hours to translate relevant important quotations into English as most of the interviews were conducted in Malay. I did not use a transcription service

and interpreted the meaning of the interview myself because as I conducted the interviews, I remembered my participants' gestures when conveying their points. However, to ensure data were transcribed and translated with a very high degree of accuracy, I sought assistance from an independent bilingual professional who held a Master's Degree in Teaching English as Second Language (TESL) to recognise the unclear taped conversations and to cross-examine the translation. The independent bilingual professional understood the cultural context of the case under study which increased the consistency in the translation of the data. I also validated the correctness and accuracy of the data with some of the participants by emailing the transcript to them. In terms of the observation notes, it was immediately documented as soon as I completed the observation sessions and was saved to Microsoft Word files. After the transcription process was completed, each transcript was saved in Microsoft Word file with a separate file name. It is important to store collected data comprehensively and systematically so that it can be analysed and easily referenced (Pickard, 2013).

3.4.2 Generating initial codes

I stayed close to the data all the time. I read the interview transcripts several times to get familiar with the data and I generated an initial list of ideas which increased the possibility of identifying patterns related to my research questions. According to Bazeley and Jackson (2013), coding involves attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement. In this study, I looked for repetitive patterns and regularity of actions (Saldana, 2015) and consistencies in sentiments of participants by what the participants talked about. I used complete coding because I aimed to identify anything and everything of relevance from the entire

data set to give me rich insight to answer the research questions. I began by systematically working through each transcript looking for chunks of data that potentially address the research questions. Codes are assigned to whole transcripts. As the research questions were already specifically determined, I only coded data that captured the essence of the issue. This process was used in the same way for the rest of the dataset. Figure 1 illustrates a vignette of the coding process.

After completed the coding, an initial review of the dataset generated lengthy codes. I then grouped codes that showed something in common together in order to find similarity and overlap between codes. Then I collated them into tables to identify shared themes and sub themes.

Figure 3: A worked example of coding

Data extract	Codes
Researcher: What is your general perception of the implementation of organisational values as a way to build reputation?	
Participant: For me, it is a good initiative. I always support this because I believe organisational values could help shape our reputation because values guide our way of working. I mean, the same way... the standard working style in providing services. Personally, I am all for it!	Positive about values Standard working style Support initiative
Researcher: Do you think that the values are being embraced?	
Participant: I'm not sure if everyone is willingly embracing our values but I think most of us do. Personally, the values we are supposed to	Reluctant to embrace Different sentiments in

uphold in this hospital are similar with my own values. So, I don't have any issues to embrace them.	embracing values Aligned with own values Embracing values
Researcher: *You've mentioned that some of the staff are not willing to embrace the values. What can possibly be the reason?* **Participant:** *I thought it is very important that our personal values are in tune with the one that the organisation has enacted. At the same time, I expect the organisational values be explicitly spelled out… the meaning of each element must be clear so that we know if it is aligned with ours.* *(Participant 12/doctor/male)*	Personal values Enacted organisational values Expectation of values Clearly articulated Lack of understanding Alignment of values

My approach to the process of coding was a deductive and concept-driven because I created a list of preliminary codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) before line-by-line review of data which were stemmed from engaging with the literature and initial observations by the researcher. The preliminary codes were useful in integrating concepts already known in the extant literature (Bradley, Curry, & Devers, 2007). Although the coding was guided by theoretical assumptions, I allowed other new themes (data driven) that were implicitly embedded in the responses and those explicitly mentioned by the

participants were also coded as they emerged. Both inductive (data driven) and deductive (concept driven) approaches were used especially because the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way.

3.4.3 Searching for themes

A theme is an outcome of coding which captures and unifies the nature of the phenomenon under study into a meaningful whole (Saldana, 2015). It must "describe the bulk of the data" (Joffe & Yardley, 2004, page 67) and has "a central organising concept" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, page 224) in which codes combined to form themes. In this study, I identified emerging themes through iterating between the data and the main arguments in the literature. The themes derived were categorised into three, namely overarching themes, themes and subthemes. Overarching themes captured an idea encapsulated in several themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Table 9 illustrates the example of the themes identified for the first research question that captured the salient patterns of the codes.

Table 9: An excerpt of themes categorisation

Code	Overarching theme: Conflict in the expectation of values	
	Sub-themes	**Themes**
Positive about values Uniformity in employee behaviour Element of values	Values advocates reputation	Alignment of values - expectations of senior management team
Different sentiments in embracing values Enacted organisational values	Values must be shared by all	
Time to participate	Work load issues	Alignment of values -

		Expectations of employees
Value-based activities Work schedule Back-to-back rotational/shift		
Personal values Aligned with own values Embracing values Standard working style Support initiative	Consequences of values congruent	
Reluctant to embrace Behave unwillingly Inconsistent performance	Consequences of values incongruent	

3.4.4 Reviewing themes

Themes and sub-themes were then reviewed and refined after I clustered and labeled the distinct and dominant themes that captured the sense of the entire data. I mapped them against the broader data set to check for consistency. In other words, each theme must contribute towards understanding the whole issues, which leads to an appreciation of the whole phenomenon. Related illustrations from the research field notes were used to support the themes found. I went back to the whole data set to ensure themes fit well with the coded data (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and effectively captured the meaning of the data. At this point, the transcripts were reviewed one more time. Most importantly, the themes must address the research questions. At this point, by iterating between coded data and themes, I started analysing the themes and determined how they fit together. By now, the themes must reveal a convincing and compelling story about the data.

3.4.5 Defining and naming themes

According to Braun and Clarke (2013), themes need to be clearly defined in terms of the focus, purpose and boundaries in which to specify what each theme is about. For instance, Figure 4 presents the example of definitions used for the overarching themes of the first research question which was "conflict in the expectation of value".

Figure 4: Themes definition for overarching theme for RQ1

"Conflict in the expectation of value" explains the distinctive differences between the perception and expectations of the senior management and employees that occurs as a result of the implementation of organisational values".

Finally, all themes were named which captured the essence of the theme's focus.

3.4.6 Producing report

Displaying the data can be done in a variety of techniques in order to facilitate analysis and interpretations (Yin, 2009). In this study, I organised the data in a narrative text according to each research question. In addition, I used direct quotations in the form of excerpts from the participant's full text and observations notes to provide support and meaning to the interpretation of the data (Patton, 2002) to support the conclusions.

Although the six phases of the analysis is presented as a linear step-by-step procedure, the analysis was an iterative and reflective process in which I consistently revisit the data throughout the process.

Computer programs analysis

The computer software application such as NVivo, MAXQDA, ATLAS.ti and others have been commonly used to facilitate qualitative data analysis. The software helps the researcher to organise and structure data and hence facilitate analysis patterns in the evidence (Remenyi et. al, 2003). However, the software cannot discover themes as it remains the responsibility of the researcher. Thus, I elected not to use software to support my analysis since it can be time consuming to master and use. I used Microsoft Word processing and spreadsheet packages to organise and analyse my data. My approach worked well for the volume of data that I gathered and analysed. Nevertheless, if I have access and time, it is an ideal opportunity to learn how to use such software, particularly if I am using large volumes of data.

3.5　Trustworthiness

The issue of assuring and addressing research quality in non-positivist research has been argued by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1994). They propose that the essential task addressed by trustworthiness is: "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, page 290). Thus, in establishing the trustworthiness of this study, I observed the following actions.

First, I pursued engagement in the field with the participants before the actual interview took place. I joined them for breakfast or lunch at the cafeteria and sometimes informally talked to them in the corridor. By doing this, I managed to minimise the power distance between the participants and me, hence increasing the quality of responses from them. Second, I used multiple sources to gain a fuller picture of the phenomenon, which provided a strong foundation

to support the findings. Third, participants checking the interview transcript and the interpretation that the researcher has made ensured that the transcripts were an accurate reflection of the discussion (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This also ensures that participants grasped the meaning well and were able to redefine should there be discrepancy in the meaning. Finally, the process of coding and re-coding was conducted several times to ensure understanding and the accurate interpretation of the interview transcript.

3.6 Chapter summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the philosophical stance of the research, and then located the current study in the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is appropriate because the approach enabled in-depth investigation in providing theoretical conclusions about the enabling mechanisms for linking organisational values and organisational reputation. By focusing on interpreting the meaning from a specific context and participants, it is important for the researcher to understand the phenomenon in its actual settings.

The chapter subsequently presented the justification for choosing a case study as the research approach as well as the description of the sampling technique and the data collection methods. A case study approach allowed the researcher to empirically investigate the actual behavioural events at the subject organisation through various methods such as interviews, focus groups and observations.

Subsequently, the main stages of the data analysis for each data collection method were outlined. The data analysis adopted the six phases of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun & Clarks (2006) and was conducted manually by

the researcher. The themes discovered from the analysis will be the basis of the findings.

This chapter also outlined the major ethical considerations and the steps taken to ensure that the study adhered to the highest standards of ethical procedures. Finally, this chapter also offered evidence of the high trustworthiness of this research. The results of the analysis will now be discussed in the subsequent two findings chapters.

CHAPTER 4: ALIGNING EMPLOYEES AND ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

The main findings of this study are included in two separate chapters (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) to address the two main research questions. This chapter opens by providing an overview of the implementation strategy of organisational values in Darul Ehsan Medical Centre (DEMC). The purpose is to provide important context for this case study within which to consider the consequences of the strategy undertaken by the senior management team. It highlights the philosophy behind the organisational values established in DEMC and discusses the context of programs which have been structured to support the implementation of the organisation's values.

In investigating how the implementation of organisational values has influenced the organisation's reputation, the research questions were driven by prior theoretical assumptions as discussed in the literature review chapter. In this chapter, the findings are structured in relation to participants' reflections and responses to the first research question:

> How does the alignment of individual values and organisational values build organisational reputation?

The analysis of the interview data and observations led to the conclusion that organisational values can affect employee behaviour which in turn promotes the development and maintenance of organisational reputation. This suggests that an organisation can shape its desired reputation through its employees when guided by a set of organisational shared values and may embrace the values in performing their everyday work. However, employee perceptions of organisational values were not always consistent with what is expected by the

organisation. Through interviews and focus groups, the study found first that the mismatch of perceptions between employee values and organisational values was critical in linking organisational values and reputation. This is because the ways employees conducted themselves was normally based on the values they believed in. Second, the alignment of values was important for bridging any mismatch of perception between employee values and organisational values. The data suggest that the process of bridging the gap is driven by four remediation phases of conditions namely: *aware, articulate, accept* and *act*. The bridging process creates the opportunity for the organisational values to transform into an approach that permeates thinking, ways of working and employee behaviour which in turn help build the organisation's reputation. Finally, the chapter shows the reputational outcomes as a result of alignment of employee values and organisational values.

4.1 The implementation of organisational values in Darul Ehsan Medical Centre (DEMC)

This section provides an overview of the philosophy and the implementation strategy of organisational values across the organisation. Data were mainly collected from an interview with the Director of Corporate Culture who was the gatekeeper for information with regards to the initiatives as well as the Chief Executive Officer (the founder of DEMC) and from the focus group with the senior management team of DEMC.

The organisational values were typically derived from the organisation's mission, vision and the underlying belief of its founder. As an entrepreneurial organisation, since its establishment in 1997, DEMC's organisational values were predominantly grounded by the founder's personal inspiration and traits.

The focus was to establish awareness of their presence in the industry particularly in the Shah Alam vicinity and to create more customers. Therefore, the founder's traits and personality has driven the way decisions were made and work was carried out in the organisation. The reason why most of the effort was centred on attracting customers was because at that point in time the number of customers patronising DEMC was critical to its business survival. Therefore, values such as "taking ownership by taking care of the organisation and customers as they were one's own" and values that can impact how the organisation serves its customer constituted the fundamental identity of DEMC. The Director of Corporate Culture reported:

> *"During our humble beginning, our focus was to attract as many customers as possible in order to survive in this kind of business. Our founder wanted us to hold ourselves accountable for our action and how we do our job especially when attending to our customers. He expected us to take ownership on a personal level as well as a team effort because he believed that we could be more attentive to customer needs when we felt as if we owned the business" (Participant 55/Director-Corporate Culture/male).*

However, in early 2010, after twelve years in operation, DEMC realised that the current values were insufficient to support the new challenges they put forward in their vision and mission. Now, becoming a reputable hospital among its competitors was the ultimate vision: "DEMC would be the first choice for health care services", it realised that it could not only rely on employing competent employees. Even though 'taking ownership' was a strong value, DEMC realised that it was no longer capable to support and guide the employees who have

increased from 30 staff in 1997 to 430 staff in 2011. According to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in a private 30 minute interview with him, DEMC recorded revenues of RM357,723 (£65,040) in 1997 and this increased to RM76.6 million (£13.9 million) in 2011. The CEO added that the rapid growth has triggered the necessity for DEMC to relook at the present organisational values and to highlight the importance of precisely articulating and being accountable for the values. Even without a proper internalisation strategy in their early establishment, the senior management recognised the potential impact of organisational values on organisational performance, which the Director of Doctors acknowledged:

> *"Previously, we have not focused on values so much and were really dedicated on competencies development instead. No doubt that those technical competencies are important in this kind of business, but we believed what underlying competencies that make the organisation sail smoothly are the core values. Therefore, we realised that we can do better by upholding a set of organisational values and if we were to excel in the business. At the same time, our values should guide us in the decision-making processes and educate our customers on who we are (our identity) […] defining what we stand for" (Participant 54/Director-Doctors/female).*

In 2010, the senior management team decided to seriously embark on establishing organisational values for DEMC with an investment of approximately RM1,000,000 (£170,000). At this point, the organisation's vision and mission, including employee's competencies, drove the philosophy. DEMC realised that a unique identity with specific characteristics was needed for it to

establish its reputation in the way it wanted in the market and should help the organisation to become prominent as a leading service provider. A manager shared the philosophy behind the process of identifying the appropriate organisational values for DEMC:

> *"As we are aiming to be known in providing a 'boutique service' concept to our customers, we believe that organisational values can be a worthy strategy. If we do not have organisational values, a set of characteristics that is necessary for us as a service provider to achieve our aim, to guide us in our actions, we might lose focus and will not establish ourselves in the industry. We like to have a specific identity. Therefore, we seriously take effort to identify the right values for us which could reflect who we are. We did browse through the internet to benchmark with other industries, specifically the service sector including hotels, banks, retailers, and of course with other private hospitals. Then we match them with our own setting, people and our business processes. […] each value element is aligned with the critical function of our business as a health care provider" (Participant 3/manager physiology/male).*

Reflecting on the manager's response, the main focus when researching and identifying the appropriate values elements was to become known for its 'boutique concept' with the aim of distinguishing DEMC from other private hospitals. 'Boutique' according to the CEO:

> *"[…] means that we are operating as a small and exclusive hospital offering customised as well as personalised services. It is almost similar to the boutique concept in the shopping malls, boutique hotels, etc. The ambience, services and offering that we are providing to our customers*

have to be unique, different, personalised and exclusive. It is all about adopting a differentiation strategy and 'running away' from the crowded market by trying to be 'different'. DEMC is positioning its reputation based on this concept" (Chief Executive Officer/Founder).

Thus, all value elements that were chosen reflected the characteristic of a boutique hospital concept with the hope of promoting a favourable reputation in relations to its competitors. With the philosophy at the back of their mind, after a series of brainstorming meetings at the top management level, they identified a series of unwritten values that they believe already underpinned the culture in DEMC. These values were benchmarked against other multinational organisations along with other private health care providers. The five multinationals used in benchmarking were:

☐ <u>Southwest Airlines</u> - Encourages informality and wants staff to have *fun* in their jobs;

☐ <u>Wal-Mart</u> - Concern and *respect for staff*;

☐ <u>Toyota</u> – *Empowering* its workers to fosters creativity, continuous improvement, and innovation;

☐ <u>Apple</u> – A passionate commitment to *delight consumers*;

☐ <u>General Electric</u> - A place for creating *and bringing big ideas to life*.

In identifying the values, the senior management team was in the position to manoeuvre this process to list appropriate values for the organisation. It was not merely choosing fancy words but was an arduous process that required the understanding of how the impact of each value could benefit the organisation.

"We are aware that organisational values is not about picking out of thin air and trying to fit them into our organisation, they should be tailored towards achieving our goal and authentic to our organisation particularly our employees" (Participant 55/Director-Corporate Culture/male).

Talking in a similar vein, the Chief Operating Officer explained:

"[…] when we choose the elements for our organisational values, we were based on the characteristics that we think will help to achieve our vision and mission. We browsed through the internet to benchmark with other industry (service sector) including hotels, banks, retailers and of course other private hospitals. However, we realised that core values are not a "one size fits all" or the "best practise" in the industry. Many organisations make the mistake of picking values out of thin air and trying to fit them into their organisation. This is risky and we must avoid it!" (Participant 52/Chief Operating Officer/female).

From the Chief Operating Officer's perspective, the key insight here is that values are unique to a particular organisation in which a "one size fits all" does not work. Therefore, she claimed that DEMC identified values that displayed its most prominent characteristic as a service provider that would satisfy the reputation DEMC wished to achieve. This is because DEMC comprehended that by embracing a set of values that reflected DEMC's characteristic, it was essentially projecting an identity. She also recognised that if DEMC did not choose the correct values, it was likely to yield an unfavourable outcome. The Chief Operating Officer further added:

"Yes, we can hold the same values as our competitors but then the values must fit and be realistic with our own organisation. Since we have

already in the industry for more than 10 years, we have been living in a certain unwritten values. We realised that we need to consolidate the way we do work here therefore a standard values are what we really need. It was not a straightforward exercise […] each element was aligned with the critical function of our business as a private health care provider. Therefore, we want to make sure that employees embrace them. Otherwise we will be in trouble!" (Participant 52/Chief Operating Officer/female).

The Chief Operating Officer stressed that the unwritten values that have somehow been supporting the organisation should not be neglected. Thus, combining the present unwritten values in DEMC and the core values from other multinationals, DEMC listed five initial core values, which were 'Fun', 'Respect', 'Empowering', 'Customer focus' and 'Evolving'. Using the five values as the foundation for discussion, the senior management team commenced brainstorming sessions with employees to finalise distinct and meaningful core values for DEMC. The idea was to ensure employees were involved in determining the values to build on the current unwritten values.

In the words of one of the directors:

"[…] When we think of a value to reflect our organisation, we want our customers to feel confident that DEMC is acting in their best interest. We focus on a critical few behaviours with the most impact. For instance, "care and respect" emphasises our serious intention to provide the best attention to fulfil the needs and feeling of our customers and other people including our own employees" (participant 53/director-nursing/female).

From her comment, consideration in selecting the values that are in the best interests of the customers is important. Values that directly impacted on customers' experiences were also the priority.

4.1.1 Creating the organisational values

A few focus group sessions with employees at different were conducted. The senior management team and the line managers selected the participants among the employees who were distinguished as the top performers and who they believed were well respected by other colleagues. All sessions were led by the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer who facilitated most of the discussions and brainstorming sessions. In every session, participants listed down what they believed to be the organisation's imperatives and ideal behaviour that would give greatest strength for DEMC to shape its desired reputation. As a result, an extensive list of values was identified which then were grouped into related themes and a sizeable list of values. The exercise disclosed that some significant values such as 'teamwork', 'service excellence' and 'social responsibilities', were already embedded within the organisation, which arguably had contributed to its positive reputation. In realising the fact that the pre-existing values were important, the Director of Corporate Culture highlighted:

> "During this exercise, we discovered that DEMC should reinforce values that are already ingrained in us (unwritten). We should strengthen and build on them. Perhaps the values have helped us in building our reputation all this while. There is no point for us to embrace the same values as other organisations if the values are not actionable for us and do not support our vision and business challenges. For example, "service

excellence" and "teamwork" […] the type of values that we really want to encourage and stand for" (Participant 55/Director-Corporate Culture/male).

He pointed out that the pre-existing values were representing the primary behaviours of their employees and were relevant to the current business expectations and challenges. He said that the unwritten values might have already contributed to DEMC's reputation and therefore these values should be embodied and signified.

Apart from identifying the value elements during the brainstorming sessions, participants were also asked to define the meaning for each element to capture all of the desired behaviours. The main concern was to ensure that the values are congruent with the desired behaviour and employees were able to encode the values in their minds in order to uphold them. Eventually, a set of values was selected and defined as follows:

Table 10: DEMC Organisational values

Values	Value-based Behaviour
Care and respect	I am a professional who pays attention to the quality of work with respect including seeking to fulfil the needs and feelings of others.
Passionate	I will nurture the spirit of earnest to work beyond the limits of the job expectation in order to provide the best service to our customers and their families.
Accountability	I am responsible for my job, able to improve the quality of work and strive to create changes that will affect the lives of the customers and my colleagues.
Service excellence	I will create an extraordinary experience for our customers by extending beyond expectations service and will strive to meet with every customer request in a remarkable way.

Anticipation	I will always anticipate and take action in advance each time I serve our customers.
Team spirit	I will establish strong team bonding to form real friendship with my colleagues by constantly giving support and sharing experience in overcoming challenges.
Change and grow	I will always strive to achieve excellence in working by continuous learning and experience sharing to keep up with the changes and developments of DEMC.
Quality and safety	I will continue to boost efforts to provide the supremacy of the quality and the best level of safety to customers at all times.
Social responsibility	I will continue to give overwhelming commitment towards social responsibility by giving positive contribution to the community, environment, fellow colleagues and my customers.

Source: DEMC

4.1.2 Communication of the values

After arriving at the nine organisational values stated above, the senior management team worked closely with the line managers to develop the roll out plan to ensure organisational values permeated through the entire organisation. The outcome of this was the establishment of DEMC values blue print which outlined the strategy to internalise the organisational values. There were various platforms and communication channels used to promulgate and communicate the values, for instance in internal documents, an awareness campaign through distributing copies of core values to employees, visual displays such as posters and displaying them around the hospital premises, and making values as reference in corporate dialogues. Besides the awareness campaign, the senior management team also introduced programs to explain

the purpose of the organisational values deployment. Table 11 summarises the main programs.

Table 11: DEMC Values internalisation programs

Programs	Main objectives
"DEMC Way" on poster boards, corporate website, teambuilding and induction program	To create awareness and to establish the "DEMC Way"
Huddle	To encourage open communication between superiors and subordinates
Lunch and learn sessions	Sharing session by internal or external consultant on best practices or good initiatives
7 Steps Problem Solving Methodology	To realign the methodology of continuous improvement in DEMC
Genba Visit	To explore and learn good improvement practice from various industries
5S Initiative	To embark on effective housekeeping practices
Newsletter	To disseminate information and update the best practice and success stories for past and upcoming events on monthly basis

Source: DEMC

It is important to note that even though the programs were instigated by the senior management team and was placed under the purview of the Corporate Culture and Process Development Department, in terms of the implementation process, it was mentioned that employees were empowered to be actively involved and/or to lead the change process by participating in various employee-led activities. This will be further elaborated on in Chapter 5. Regular engagement with the employees in the forms of department huddles

and a series of structured activities in small teams were organised to impart values and build a shared understanding of what behaviours were expected based on the values.

4.1.3 Enacting organisational values

To reinforce values, the senior management team also embodied the core values based behaviour as part of performance evaluation and employee development. The introductions of reward and recognition for employees who showcase values were created to highlight how important the strategy was to DEMC. In addition, there was also a mechanism to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the implementation through performance management, internal audit, service level standard including customer feedback, which was carried out throughout the year.

In summary, through introducing a set of organisational values, DEMC considered first that the organisational values should reflect its identity which is underpinned by the organisation's vision and philosophy. Second, organisational values should consider the strength of the current unwritten values that have already supported good outcomes to DEMC particularly in its daily operations. Third, organisational values should be able to transpose specific behaviours that promote its reputation.

4.2 Conflict in expectations of values

In this study, the data captured the perceptions and expectations of the senior management team and the employees on the implementation of the organisational values which was expected to support reputation building for DEMC.

4.2.1 Senior management expectation of organisational values

The senior management team were determined to ensure the organisational values were being embraced throughout the organisation. They believed that the implementation of organisational values would help the organisation to build its reputation. When asked about how the senior management perceived the organisation's reputation, the Chief Operating Officer stressed its importance:

> *"We are in the business where convincing people to like us are subjected to how people see us in different angles therefore a good reputation is what we like to achieve as an organisation. A good reputation translates to more of credibility and that in return is beneficial to us in many ways. Thus, the effect of our actions can be manipulated or worked on and must be managed accordingly" (Participant 52/COO/female).*

The Director of Finance built on this point:

> *"When we think of a value to reflect our hospital, we want our customers to feel confident that DEMC is acting in their best of interest. For instance, "care and respect" emphasises on our serious intention to pay attention to fulfil the needs of our customers as well as our employees" (Participant 56/Director-Finance/male).*

The above quotations gave a good indication of the senior management team's perceptions of the importance of reputation building for DEMC. This also indicated that the senior management team thought deeply around clarifying how they wanted to be seen by others, particularly their primary stakeholders, and made great effort to generate a group-shared behaviour that could project its desired identity. They were very passionate and objective in determining what form of identity they should be holding to characterise DEMC and to

differentiate them from their competitors. To be successful in this aspiration, the senior management team realised that their employees must also share a similar mind set:

> *"A set of organisational values that complement and reinforce each other was the key when we choose the values. All values are translated into behaviour that we believe can contribute to our reputation. So our employees must share this inspiration and be willing to uphold the values" (Participant 54/Director-Doctors/female).*

Her comments represented the expectation among senior management to see organisational values being internalised and translated into behaviour.

4.2.2 Employee expectation of organisational values

The data revealed a mixed reaction in employee perceptions of organisational values. There were employees who positively perceived organisational values but inevitably there were employees who did not feel comfortable with the implementation of organisational values in which employees felt they had to compromise their personal values to do what the organisation expected of them. Among the prevalent reasons given by the participants were the fundamental conflict with their personal values, workload demand and lack of understanding of the role of values. Based on the focus group session conducted with employees, there was evidence of scepticism and some were not convinced with elements of the organisational values.

> *"I don't really care about organisational values. I don't see how organisational values can help me with my work. I feel like being forced to be someone else when they [the senior management team] ask me to behave differently (to practice DEMC Way). I have my own way of*

working […] then again I have no choice but to follow" (Participant 3/group1/male).

In the above extract, the participant perceived the organisational values as irrelevant to him and he did not believe they matched up with his own personal values but was willing to half-heatedly abide by them. His opinion was echoed by several participants as summarised in Appendix 5. There were participants who simply disassociated themselves from the behaviours demanded from the proposed organisational values and others who felt that having to be involved in value based activities was an additional burden to their current workload. These sentiments disclosed a clear perceived gap between the organisational values and the individual values of the employees. The senior management team realised that the negative sentiments could potentially hamper the pursuit of building the organisation's reputation through its employees if they were reluctant to uphold its organisational values.

Most of the participants however, positively perceived organisational values and believed it was important to DEMC, as the representative quotation below indicates:

"The organisational values are indispensable. Every element supports the way we should be working at DEMC to better serve our customers. At the same time, when customers are happy with our service, they would remember us." (Participant 10/Group 1/female)

Even though this inauspicious sentiment did not represent all of the participants in the focus groups where only 8 out of 36 participants voiced issues nevertheless, this dispute could influence more people if DEMC had not

addressed it accordingly. This emphasises the importance of achieving congruence between the values of the organisation and its employees.

The other aspect is the question of how important it was to work for an organisation which operates in a way that is aligned with employee values. The interviews revealed that alignment of values was regarded as important to the great majority of participants and they were convinced that it was necessary to explicitly spell out what the organisational values should be.

> *"I thought it is very important that our personal values are in tune with the one that the organisation has enacted. At the same time, I expect the organisational values be explicitly spelled out… the meaning of each element must be clear so that we know if it is aligned with ours"* *(Participant 12/doctor/male).*

Based on this case it was clear that having explicit organisational values mattered to most employees and DEMC should be operating in a way which was congruent with both the values of its employees and the values of the organisation. The alignment of values was important for bridging any conflict in expectations of values.

4.3 Bridging organisational values and individual values

Drawing from the above conversation around the conflict in expectation of values, the results of this research shows that the foundation in connecting organisational values and reputation was underpinned by the need for aligning the values of the organisation and employees. This was evident in the way employee behaved when both values were aligned. For instance, in the case of the nurse and patient interaction, a nurse manager claimed that it was important

that every nurse in her department upholds the organisational values. Particularly in handling patients, even though there was a standard operating procedure to guide them, they believed that values such as 'care and respect' would differentiate the level of service the patient would experience. 'Care and respect' required nurses to be mindful of the patient's feelings and attentive to their needs, not only during the treatment but also in other sensible aspects that could bring comfort to the patient while patronising the hospital. Demonstrating 'care and respect' through the physical act, verbal and facial expression is what was expected by the patient from every nurse they encountered and dealt with.

> *"Because we have displayed our values everywhere in the hospital as you can see at the waiting lounge here, our customer would expect that we are what we claimed we are. Recently, I have issued a warning letter to a nurse for being rude to one of the patients. She refused to entertain a request from a patient because her shift was about to end and simply ignored the request without giving any response. This sort of manner was really against our values that put our customer as priority. The patient eventually lodged a complaint to us expressing her disappointment. Obviously, our staff has placed our reputation at stake"* (Participant 3/line manager-nurse/female).

The situation clearly demonstrates the consequence if an employee's values is incongruent with the organisational values, with consequences for reputation when there was disparity between the employee's behaviour and the customer's experience. Also, there was a consequence for the employee who was formally reprimanded by the line manager for her behaviour.

At DEMC, 'Care and respect' was not only referring to the patient but also to the relationship among employees. For example, there was a case of a routine relationship between a manager and his staff in the front office department. The department was operating on a 24 hour basis because it supported the admission of patients to the hospital including cases at the Accident and Emergency Unit. Employees in this department were working on a shift basis which was managed by the department manager. From my observation, I noticed that the assignment of duty was not equally distributed. When I asked one of the staff members how they determined the rotation, he explained that they have a systematic rotation and every staff has equal opportunity to work on every shift. However, they could voluntarily exchange their timetable among each other. This was to permit flexibility especially if any of them were unable to work at any particular shift and to support a sense of responsiveness towards the employees' needs. This arrangement was not written in the policy but more of the consensus among the members of the department.

The above situation appears consistent with 'care and respect' and 'teamwork' as guiding values. This is also an example of where values are aligned. With that in mind, however, if the understanding of the arrangement (flexible to change rotation) was differently interpreted by employees, the behaviours would be inconsistent with the definition of the values, which would cause dissonance. In this instance, remarkably employees seemed to share the same ethos and understanding.

When employee values were aligned with the organisational values, they would appear to be working together, reflecting the behaviour prescribed by the values

which gave a better opportunity for reputation building. A good illustration of this sentiment is expressed by the following participant:

"Most of the elements of our values here are already part of me as a person. For example, 'care and respect', 'passionate', 'teamwork', 'service excellence' and 'accountability', I feel connected with those values. Therefore, it is not difficult for me to follow and embrace them. In fact, my conscious become clearer to perform better every day" (Participant 36/admission record/male).

In the participant's quotation above, he perceives the organisational values as aligned with his individual values. This is another example which shows the importance of value congruence on employee attitudes and behaviour regarding work. Since the organisational values match his individual values, his acceptance level towards organisational values is substantial. Thus, the participant's quotation draws attention to the knowledge that it is possible to connect the tenet of aligning values with a positive influence on employee behaviour and this progression could be viewed as an important enabling mechanism.

In order to mitigate any value dissonance, there are four remediation phases that accentuate the aligning process of organisational values and employee values in the organisation: aware, articulate, accept and act.

4.3.1 Aware

The first remediation phase in aligning values is aware. The term 'aware' is used to describe the state where the observer (employee) is conscious of events or thoughts without necessarily implying understanding. This phase constitutes awareness in four situations. First, awareness of the existence of

the organisational values when organisational members consciously recognised and remembered every element of the values. Second, awareness of the importance of organisational values when organisational members could identify the benefit of organisational values. Third, awareness of the influence of organisational values on reputation when organisation members could relate to how values shape reputation. Fourth, awareness of the importance of organisational reputation when organisational members could acknowledge the consequences of overriding a particular reputation either positively or negatively.

DEMC frequently articulated the importance of organisational values as well as the importance of the organisation's reputation, both of which were relevant and important for DEMC. Based on the group interviews, the management team of DEMC (senior management and line managers) showed strong support to ensure organisational values were embraced throughout the organisation because they strongly believed that it would help the organisation build its reputation:

> *"We trust the organisational values that we are upholding at DEMC: standardise our behaviour at work and this eventually we believe would trigger a good reputation. Hence, we would make sure that the values are being embraced by all employees" (Participant 56 /Director-finance/male).*

The management team recognised that an exemplary reputation for DEMC was paramount particularly with the emergence of new competing private hospitals in various sizes. When asked about how the senior management perceived organisational reputation, the Chief Operating Officer stressed that a negative

reputation as the result of organisational actions and behaviour, if wrongly represented and managed, would jeopardise the organisational life cycle.

> *"We are aware that a bad reputation would bring us down. It takes ages to build a good reputation but a second to ruin it. We are very careful in our decisions and actions as not to create negative implications that would harm DEMC's survival" (Participant 52/COO/female).*

The awareness phase is necessary because it helped to prepare employees to be more attentive and involved in the process. This is because when the employees could see the reason and potential advantage for them and the organisation from the implementation process, they became more open to participate and were more cooperative. For example, a front office staff commented:

> *"I recognise that each value has an impact on every aspect of my work. I feel guided and this makes it easy for me to perform my duty. This is good for the organisation. Definitely worth it! I would support any activities to strengthen our values" (Participant 38/admission and record/male).*

The above participant appreciated the fact that organisational values have been guiding him through his daily routine and found that it was beneficial. This indicates that employee perceptions become positive when the gap is closed or minimised. Hence, the effort to create awareness among employees should be emphasised.

When the employees were asked about how they were introduced to the organisational values, they gave a combination of responses. Employees were aware of the organisational values through various means including new staff

induction programs, internal talks and meetings, weekly huddles, as well as through interactions among colleagues. For instance, during the new staff induction program, there is a special session on organisational values. New staff are introduced to each element of the values in a presentation by either the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operating Officer and further enhance their understanding through small group activities. By doing this, employees become aware of DEMC's organisational values at an early stage of their employment with DEMC.

Another aspect of awareness is when employees of DEMC were aware of the relevance and importance of reputation for the organisation. When asked about the employee's conception of reputation, a variety of definitions ware reported. Most of the participants would describe reputation as "the name to remember as compared to other competitors". Some employees associated reputation with "well-known", "famous", "renowned", "fame", "goodwill" and some were also implied reputation as "the name that being the talk of the town" when relating to a private hospital. The common definitions of reputation reflected positive outcomes and none of them considered it a negative connotation. This was also related to the idea that organisational reputation was perceived by employees as 'being known for something'. In this case, employees could influence the organisational reputation by providing an excellent personalised service to customers in order to be known as the 'boutique' hospital.

Additionally, most participants declared that a favourable reputation is how DEMC should position itself.

> *"It is about time that we should aim for a strong reputation. We are conscious that reputation is what we need and it is essential for us. We*

want to be remembered by our customers" (Participant 22/nursing/female).

Correspondingly, the majority of participants highlighted that customers chose to receive treatment at DEMC for various reasons such as location, ambiance, service quality but one of the most frequently mentioned and most important explanations was the hospital's reputation. When asking about how reputation is perceived, a nurse said:

"Reputation is of absolute importance for DEMC. Customers come to us because of our 'boutique' service. Customers always remember our name and keep coming to us again and again, for me it is some kind of recognition and above all, it is a reputation that we have gained" (Participant 20/nurse/female).

Similarly, another employee, a pharmacist, pointed out that:

"Reputation for DEMC is imperative because we are providing services where it is difficult to influence the customer to engage with our service unless we are well known or having a good reputation" (Participant 31/pharmacist/female).

From the above quotations, it is evident that those employees were conscious about reputation and realised the benefit of banking on a reputation particularly in the service industry. Participants collectively agreed that reputation impacted DEMC positively.   About half of the participants recognised reputation as important for the organisation. They believed that the reputation of the hospital was growing positively and they would do their utmost to protect it. A comment from a doctor exemplifies the situation:

"I will do my best to perform my job. Depending on some situation, I am willing to take up double shift just to make sure that we have enough staff

especially during peak hours. In fact, we must have enough staff to serve

our customers at all times. I will not jeopardise the reputation of my

organisation which is standing at a good position right now" (Participant

12/doctor/male).

His comment indicates the positive reaction of employees when they could connect their actions to the reputation of the organisation. Thus, in this line of thought, supported by the data, the first resolution in enabling the alignment of values is the state of awareness.

4.3.2 Articulate

The second remediation phase is the articulation of explicit meaning for each organisational value. It is important to ensure employees have the same level of understanding on what was expected of them. Essentially, articulation refers to the specific behaviour expected from each value. Employees can identify the appropriate behaviour that demonstrates the values that is being espoused. As mentioned earlier in section 4.1.1, besides identifying the values, thorough discussion about the specific behaviour expected from the values was also carried out. The data showed that most of the participants were convinced it was necessary to explicitly codify what the organisational values should be and clearly defined organisational values were just as important as a defined business strategy because they provide direction for employees. They also acknowledged the effort set by the management team in taking various steps to promulgate and cascade the organisational values.

"[…] in terms of making sure that every employee regardless of their

positions in the DEMC especially the front line staff understand and

embrace our values, we have programs that involve interactions among

the employees, for instance teambuilding, talks, workshops, etc. As early as possible, all new recruits will attend a compulsory induction program that will expose them to our values" (Participant 55/Director of Corporate Culture/male).

Participant 55's response stresses the various strategies to ensure employees understand the values that they need to uphold while working in DEMC. The claim is supported by a nurse:

"Since I joined DEMC, I have attended various programs that are related to our organisational values. Last month for instance, I went to the teambuilding program organised and conducted by our top bosses. I really enjoyed all the sessions that were aimed to improve our understanding on the values. We participated in team initiatives and role plays and were involved in a lot of discussions. This kind of program has given me the opportunity to clear all of my doubt" (Participant 25/nurse/female).

The nurse's expression indicates that she enjoyed the program and has benefitted from it. Her reaction was shared by her other colleagues who have also participated in different types of programs. Another nurse aid added:

"Every time I joined our value programs, my understanding on the values increases. The way the trainer addressed each element of values was easy to follow, hence I look forward for more activities that can increase our familiarity with all the values" (Participant 28/nurse aid/female).

These two examples show the positive feedback from employees of their experience participating in programs that helped them to articulate the organisational values.

4.3.3 Accept

The third remediation phase is the acceptance level of the enacted organisational values when employees have a sense of purpose to embrace organisational values. There were possibilities for the values to either be accepted or rejected by the employees despite their awareness and ability to articulate organisational values. This situation occurs because employees may differ in their personal values compared to the enacted organisational values imposed by the organisation. For example, in DEMC, "teamwork" was enacted as one of the core values that was deemed essential for its daily operation. A frontline officer pointed out the difficulty he encountered when he first joined the organisation because he preferred to work on his own instead of performing in a team. He struggled to adapt to the different working style that he was expected to carry out:

> *"With my previous employer, I was responsible for my own job so did my other colleagues. When we're working, we restrained ourselves to our own task and were not allowed to meddle with other people's job. I was a shy and an introverted person back then so I felt comfortable to be working alone, in fact I'm so used to working alone" (Participant 48/general frontline/male).*

He was not the only employee who struggled and felt challenged with the same predicament. Among others: "I will do things my way", "This is very different from the way I used to do", "It is tricky to do it differently, work more as a team"

and "It is a challenge when I need to work together with other staff". Elaborating on this point, he nonetheless recognised the need to change:

"[…] at first I felt uncomfortable to follow the values in DEMC but now after involving in various value related activities and programs, be it formal or informal sessions, I've realised and accepted the fact that I need to be able to adapt to the new work values and I am willing to change in accordance to our values" (Participant 48/general frontline/male).

His comment indicates his willingness to change his behaviour having participated in value related programs organised at DEMC. This also shows that he has not only accepted organisational values but also decided to behave in a way which is consonant with the organisational values. This was also shared by many others who later concluded: "I have no hesitation to embrace the values, "I will always uphold them passionately", "I am embracing the values" "I like each element of the values and willing to accept them", "I agree to follow the values" which indicates most of the participants positively perceived the organisational values and were willing to uphold them.

On the other hand, in the case of rejection, it is noticeable that at DEMC employees who refused to accept the values struggled to work with other employees and would resort to leaving the organisation. The following quotation from a manager explained the situation:

"Organisational values guide how we should behave in carrying out our work. It is a standard where everyone follows in DEMC. If organisational values don't align with your personal values and at the same time you are reluctant to adapt and change yourself to embrace them, then the staff will normally resign voluntarily. Otherwise, they will have difficulty to

work with others. They felt awkward to be part of DEMC team"
(Participant 4/line manager/female).

Similarly, the other perspective of acceptance is when employees admit and agree to the fact that the organisational values would contribute to the reputation of DEMC. The findings of this study revealed that employees had a strong belief that organisational values would influence the construction of the organisation's reputation. Most employees reported that the values that are currently enacted in the organisation are appropriate and significant as a foundation for a good work culture which they believed shapes a favourable reputation. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

"If employees understand and embrace each element of our organisational values for example 'service excellence', the value will reflect in our behaviour, in how we perform our job which then affects the customers who make perceptions of the organisation. When we provide a good service to our customers, and perform it beyond their expectation, they will remember us and recommend us to others. A good reputation is what we get by the end of the day!" (Participant 17/staff nurse/female).

Her sentiment was shared with many of the participants including an admission clerk:

"I trust the values are strong to support a positive reputation for DEMC. Reputation really matters to us. The values that we hold guide us to behave appropriately and this helps to build our reputation with our customers" (Participant 36/admission and record/female).

The finding clearly demonstrates the importance for employees to accept the organisational values because it determines their behaviour which has consequences for the organisation's reputation.

4.3.4 Action

The final remediation phase in aligning values is the course of action undertaken by the employees to embrace organisational values through living the values ("organisational values-prescribed ways"). At this juncture, two aspects of actions are important to be recognised. First is to observe the change of behaviour and second is the action taken to reinforce value based behaviour.

Referring to the first aspect of this resolution phase, values are transposed through employee behaviour not only towards the daily work but also to their daily lives. DEMC coined the specific behaviour transposed from the values as value prescribed behaviour or the "DEMC Way". The DEMC way is the implicit agreement among its members about what constitutes appropriate behaviour. Most participants reported that they performed their job the "DEMC Way". Typical responses from the participants were "I work the DEMC Way", "DEMC Way guide the way I perform my duty", "When I attend to a customer, I make sure that my work resemble our values", "I work the DEMC Way not only when attending to our customers but also among peers", "I deliver my service the DEMC Way" and "It doesn't matter with who I deal with, it is always the DEMC Way. These responses clearly indicate that employees were behaving in accordance with the enacted organisational values. The responses also represent the conscious actions taken by employees to show that they have been embracing the values in their daily interaction and behaviour at work.

In addition to the interviews, observations sessions were conducted to corroborate findings from interviews. There was uniformity in terms of how the employees render service to the customers. From the greeting to the tone of

voice and to the gesture were all as described under the banner of 'care and respect' and 'service excellence'. It was hard to encounter any staff without smiles on their face. In one occasion, while I was observing, one of the front desk staff approached me and ask if I need any assistance because he saw me sitting for more than an hour unattended. This demonstrates the responsiveness to the customer's need in accordance to their value, 'anticipation'.

Besides the uniformity in their actions, I also observed the bonding among employees. For example, at one of the wards that I observed, I saw how nurses helped each other preparing instrument and appliances for the doctor's visit to the ward. They talked to each other in a respectful manner even at a time when mistake occurred and together they quickly rectified it. There was no sign of dissatisfaction. As a matter of fact, during one morning huddle led by the nurse manager, the nurses shared the learning from the incident with other colleagues so that the mistake will not take place in the future. They showed a high regard to the values - 'care and respect', and 'accountability'.

Another challenge exists between the enacted organisational values and what is being espoused by the employees. At this stage, the problem is not about the values but lies with those individuals who fail to behave in a way which is consonant with the organisational values. Even though employees accept organisational values and can change their behaviour to conform to the enacted values, there were cases of inconsistency. For instance, during the interviews, three participants were reluctant to answer when asked about the extent to which they perform their job in accordance to the values. Even though it was not possible to gain specific examples to show the discrepancy, their silence

indicated that they had some level of reservation in terms of behaving in line with the organisational values.

To minimise resistant to change, another perspective of taking action is about reinforcing value based behaviour. Regular reinforcement is required to sustain the value based behaviour so that eventually it would become part of the culture of DEMC. In reinforcing the values, the senior management team initiated value related group projects that were led by employees. For instance, the 'Gemba visit' in which teams of five employees were assigned to visit different establishments to learn from the success stories of others. This annual visit requires each team to identify a successful service organisation and analyse how values were implemented within those organisations. The teams then prepared brief articles based on their experiences and disseminated the information through the employee portal. DEMC would reward the best group to boost motivation for each group to produce an insightful case study. According to one of the team members, the visit was highly beneficial and could help DEMC to challenge their status quo by learning from other successful organisations.

> *"I was pleased to be selected to participate in the Gemba visit last year. It was a fruitful experience. We have learnt how other people successfully ride on their organisational values to provide service to the customers. Having to experience yourself the impact of values on customer experience was a powerful indicator to realise that we should do the same at DEMC. I believe that DEMC should leverage on its values to move forward" (Participant 29/nurse aid/female).*

Alongside the "Gemba visit", DEMC also runs in house programs and talks around its values. Often, DEMC rewards staff who exemplifies one or more values in order to highlight the importance of embracing and demonstrating value-based behaviour at DEMC. These activities ensure employees are regularly reminded and practise values to communicate and work together.

4.4 Reputational outcomes

Data from interviews with customers show the positive impact of organisational values on DEMC's reputation. As the organisational values were displayed around the hospital vicinity, customers could evaluate if the service rendered by DEMC employees was in accordance with the values they preached. As illustrated below:

> *"I am aware of their values. They [DEMC] wanted to give a good service to us, particularly 'care and respect' and 'service excellence'. […] All I can say, every time I visited them, they have never failed to meet my expectation. Their service is much personalised and I love them"* (Customer 6/out-patient /female).

In a different perspective, a customer revealed that he was not aware of the existence of organisational values but he positively appraised DEMC for its service delivery:

> *I'm sorry… I don't know what their values are but from my experience, they are doing very well. I have nothing to complain about because they [DEMC] give good service although sometimes it took such a long time to see the doctor. They always find a way to make you comfortable. […]*

For example, they give you a meal voucher if you have been waiting for more than two hours" (Customer 12/out-patient/male)

This sentiment was also shared by another customer who claimed to be a regular customer of DEMC. She has been very satisfied with her experience at DEMC that she recommended DEMC not only to her relatives but also to her friends.

"On a personal note, I am no stranger to DEMC. It is like my family's hospital. Few of my friends and family members had been admitted here, my nephews were born and treated here. So far, not much complain-we were really treated promptly and courteously just as what their values say. The only fuss we ever made here is because the hospital was fully booked!" (Customer 10 /in-patient/female).

Recommending DEMC for its service excellence was found across the data. As another satisfied customer said:

"My stay was a pleasant one. The doctors, nurses and staff's service were extraordinary. They were polite and attentive irrespective of your background. If you have to stay a couple of days in a hospital, DEMC would probably the perfect choice" (Customer 1/in-patient/male).

This customer was not only highly satisfied with the user experience, but also considered it a boutique hospital:

"DEMC has put a lot of effort into the interior design to show that they are a boutique inspired hospital. […] Yes, truly, the environment creates a healing and comfortable atmosphere for the patient and their families too. But importantly, they also focus on providing a

personalised care to patients to ensure they get the best treatment. […]

Yes, DEMC is a boutique hospital!" (Customer 4/out-patient/male).

Similar positive recognition was captured from a customer who chose to give birth at DEMC:

"Both my labour experiences were wonderful. The nurses were great, caring and helpful. They treated me as if they have known me all my life. Like they said – DEMC is a boutique hospital" (Customer 13/ in-patient/female).

Based on the above quotations, these findings suggest highly positive reputational outcomes, as recognised by customers, as a result of DEMC's organisational values.

4.5 Chapter summary

In answering the first research question, the findings revealed first that aligning organisational values and employee personal values is significant. The existence of a gap between organisational values and individual values can potentially lead to a misalignment of values. The misalignment of values could have hindered the organisation to achieve the expected employee behaviour that should transpose from organisational values. Second, to close or minimise the gap between organisational and individual values, the data suggest four remediation phases (aware, articulate, accept and act), which enable the senior management team and employees to realise how their perceptions and reactions towards the implementation of organisational values impact on attitudes and behaviours. The alignment process encouraged change in employee work-related behaviour, with an emphasis on values-prescribed

behaviour, which influenced the organisation's reputation. Table 12 illustrates the data coding structure for the findings.

Table 12: Data coding structure for Findings 1

Overarching theme: Conflict in the expectation of values		
1st Order Code	**2nd Order Sub-themes**	**Themes**
• Positive about values • Uniformity in employee behaviour • Element of values	Values advocates reputation	Alignment of values - expectations of senior management team
• Different sentiments in embracing values • Enacted organisational values	Values must be shared by all	
• Time to participate • Value-based activities • Work schedule • Back-to-back rotational/shift	Work load issues	Alignment of values - Expectations of employees
• Personal values • Aligned with own values • Embracing values • Standard working style	Consequences of values congruent	

1st Order Code	2nd Order Sub-themes	Themes
• Support initiative		
• Reluctant to embrace • Behave unwillingly • Inconsistent performance	Consequences of values incongruent	

Overarching theme:

Bridging organisational values and employee values – remediation phases

1st Order Code	2nd Order Sub-themes	Themes
• Clearly spotted • Identify all elements	Awareness of the existence of the organisational values	Aware
• Recognise value impact on work • Value guide daily operations	Awareness of the importance of organisational values	
• Values related to business nature • Values influence define behaviour and reputation	Awareness of the influence of organisational values on organisational reputation	
• Absolute important • Imperative in service business • Will not jeopardise reputation	Awareness of the importance of organisational reputation	
• Understand each element	Understanding of meaning	Articulate

• Elements are clearly defined • Not misleading		
• Related to behaviour	Clear specific expected behaviour	
• Help in daily work • Sharing values ease communication • Understand same expectation • Promote better relationship • Uniformity in working attitude	Agreeable to values	Accept
• Treasure team spirit • Enjoy team player • Strive to provide excellent service	Change of behaviour	Action
• Regularly seek input and feedback • Continuous process • Constant reminder • Inspiring others through success stories	Enforcement of values	

Even though the aligning process encouraged changes in employee behaviour to impact upon reputation, this required a social influence support mechanism which leads to the next research question in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE ON REPUTATION BUILDING

In the previous chapter, the analysis of data showed the need to bridge organisational values and employee values to build the organisation's reputation. This chapter is a continuation from the thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, focus groups as well as observations. It presents findings related to the second research question:

How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?

In this chapter, three themes from the data seemed to explain the importance of social influence and how they connect organisational values and reputation building. The first theme is the participative role of the senior management team and line managers in propagating organisational values. Both, the senior management and line managers were found important in role modelling the organisational values. Besides demonstrating the value driven behaviour, their management style also helped to fulfil employee expectations. By participating and socialising in organisational-based activities as well as empowering employees to lead those activities, the management style demonstrated by the senior management team and line managers appeared to have a positive influence on employees.

The second theme is the introduction of employee ambassadors which impacted upon organisational values and employee behaviour. Although the management style was arguably working on advocating and disseminating information on organisational values, the introduction of employee ambassadors built bridges to multiple groups of valued stakeholders, particularly employees.

Employees that have a strong bond and a clear understanding of the organisation's direction are arguably a valuable asset for an organisation and act as role models for other employees. To generate this type of enthusiasm and unity, this group of employees must feel a sense of shared purpose and a fundamental connection to the organisation's mission, vision and values, and an understanding of how they contribute to the organisation's success. Therefore, they must feel empowered with the right tools to communicate the values and represent the organisation in social or business settings, through email, social media or a telephone call not only to their colleagues but also to customers and other salient stakeholders.

The third theme is the reciprocal relationships among employees in which the act of giving and taking are to be repaid in equivalent measures. Reciprocal relationships and behaviour as a result of embracing organisational values was observed and employees seemed to reciprocate positive gestures, particularly in work and there was a tacit understanding to give back immediately or to return the act on another day. Such reciprocal relationships were described in two forms: the issue of behaviour mimicry and conformity to social forces.

While the three themes above are reported individually, as will become apparent in the discussion of the results below, there was considerable overlap between them. Finally, the chapter ends with the illustration of the outcomes as the result influencing employees to behave in accordance with the organisational values.

5.2 The importance of social influence

As revealed in Chapter 4, while the remediation phases arguably helped mitigate a level of resistance in espousing organisational values and

demonstrate change in employee behaviour, the literature also highlighted the importance of social influence in modifying ones action and reaction, hence engaging in social interactions is arguably important in permeating organisational values. Social interactions can be verbal, for instance engaging in any conversation be it a lengthy or just a quick impromptu conversation between colleagues, casual chatter around the office pantry or water cooler or at the café, and nonverbal such as eye contact and facial expression made between colleagues. With the dynamic nature of social influence in which employee interactions can happen anywhere at any time, the senior management team of DEMC was concerned about the daily working relationships that employees build in the organisation. They also realised that the routine and continuous interactions among employees triggered a particular form of social norm. This is because the actions of other employee can directly and indirectly influence an individual's preferences as they are not working in isolation, as suggested in the following quotation:

> *"Although information dissemination trumpets our values throughout the organisation, I have no doubt that the opportunity for social interactions could speed up the permeating process of values. I see people (employees) interact with each other almost around the clock. They have the chance to exchange diverse ideas and take part in conversations that would determine their perspectives of the organisation" (Participant 7/line manager/female).*

Suggesting that the social interaction enabled employees to build a certain level of bond, the line manager above suggests that social interaction is powerful for internalising values within the organisation. Employees seemed to appreciate

the adequate opportunities for social interactions between working colleagues, as illustrated by the following quotation:

> *I'm enthusiastic in learning from others and I have learned a lot through my day to day working with my colleagues. I have valued the social interaction offered within this organisation especially at training sessions, internal social events as well as working within a team"* (Participant 16/staff nurse /female).

The way in which social interactions were discussed suggest that how organisational values were manifested across the organisation was compounded by the impact and outcomes of employees' everyday relationships in the workplace. These were observed in various situations and involved both the management team and employees, which are discussed in the following sections.

5.3 Participative management style

Detailed discussions with the senior management team suggested that a clearly articulated reputation was the foundation of DEMC's organisational values. It is important to note that the nine organisational values of "care and respect", "passionate", "accountability", "service excellence", "anticipation", "team spirit", "change and grow", "quality and safety" and "social responsibility" are what the senior management team felt represented DEMC, leading to their vision to be known as a "boutique health care" in the industry.

The senior management team also recognised that DEMC was not the biggest hospital in the market, particularly in Shah Alam, but through the organisational values, they believed the hospital would establish a distinct reputation in relation to its competitors. The senior management team were clear in terms of 'who

we are' (its organisational identity through a set of organisational values) and 'what we want to be' (its intended image). To ensure that they achieve the intended reputation, the senior management team as well as line managers claimed that they practiced consensus and participation in managing the employees and in decision making. In other words, they employed a participative management style with the aim of building strong and close relationships not only with employees but also with their customers. This is because they realised that everyone in the organisation has the potential to influence the perceptions and behaviours of different stakeholders through their daily working social relationships. Hence any possible perceptual gap between the senior management team and line managers and the employees might hinder them from achieving their goals. With respect to the supposed participative management style, interviews revealed two distinguishing characters of participation: first, the senior management's level of engagement and second, the line manager's relationship-oriented approach, which are now discussed in the subsequent two sections.

5.3.1 The senior management's engagement

The senior management team said that they want to be part of the organisation and its daily interactions as well as being role models for employees. By facilitating employee communication in this way, as claimed by most of the senior management team, they did not want any hierarchal communication problems concerning the storytelling of the organisational vision and values as well as barriers for receiving feedback within the organisation. They made it clear that they wanted the employees to feel a sense of ownership with internalising the values at DEMC. An "open door" policy allowed the top

management team to have access to first-hand information as well as the added benefit of personally getting to know their employees.

> "*the current organisational structure allows us, the senior management team, to enjoy a healthy relationship with our employees. We practise an "open door" policy where employees can come and share any concern with anyone of us at any time. We love to listen to our employees. We act to their suggestions and grievances appropriately. This provides the organisation with an easy and quick decision-making process especially for the benefit of the employees because to us, every single employee is equally important to drive the hospital forward. Therefore, we operate on the basis that if our hospital does well, we will make sure that employees will benefit from being part of the success*". (Participant 52/COO/female)

With the intention to avoid a communication barrier in cascading organisational values, the senior management team focused on establishing close relationships with employees by having direct communication with them whenever possible. Not only by employing an 'open door' policy to encourage openness where employees could stop by whenever they felt the need to meet them, they would also volunteer their assistance on employee activities either providing financial support or personnel support. For instance, the senior management team would help in setting up the venue together with the particular event committee members or sponsor lucky draws prizes. They stressed the importance of being in the loop with employee communications so that they would be able to overcome and take action should there be unpleasant sentiments among employees. Several interviewees said that this was achieved through this unique communication style with employees.

From the non-participant observations, the senior management were frequently observed walking around the hospital, talking to the staff and greeting the customers. Their presence at different workstations in the hospital gave cues for the employees that the senior management team are around to support them. For example, the Chief Operating Officer would come around and talk to employees at their work stations on a regular basis. She wanted employees to feel comfortable to express any concerns and that their voice is important for the success of DEMC. The Chief Operating Officer emphasized:

> *"I make a point of walking around the hospital and thanking staff and being appreciative for their contributions. It could be something as small as, 'thanking for handling that tough situation last week' or something more substantive" (Participant 52/COO/female).*

The senior management team relied on the entire organisation to perform to the best of their ability, therefore the structure of being close knit helped to highlight the importance of every individual for DEMC's success.

> *"I do not want any barriers to stand between me and my staff. I would join them for lunch for instance, to listen to their stories and concerns, asking them for ideas and feedback on how to make DEMC a better organisation. All these are to make them see that I 'care and respect' them and that I am 'accountable' for their well-being in the organisation." (Participant 54/Director of doctor/female)*

Nevertheless, the senior management team realised that it was hard to empathise with everything that individual employees felt and did. This was because different people contributed to diverse tasks according to their ability and expertise, hence employees would expect different treatment from their line

manager. They knew that this issue of employee expectation was very difficult to completely overcome but by demonstrating that the senior management shared their concerns, they hoped that organisational values would minimise the differences in employee expectations.

Besides facilitating employee communication, the top management team identified that role modelling organisational values was also important. Providing an appropriate role model refers to leaders setting examples for employees that are consistent with the values they hold. In this vein, as the Director of Nursing stated, in order for employees to believe in the organisational values, the actions should start at the top of the organisation where the senior management are the role models. For example, although the senior management team enjoys some privileges such as flexible working hours and the option of not wearing corporate uniforms during office hours which was made mandatory to other employees, the Director of Nursing said that she would as much as possible observe office hours and wear corporate uniform especially when having a meeting or engagement session with employees. She hoped that by being an example herself, she would influence employees to uphold, think and believe in the organisational values (i.e. the DEMC Way):

> *"[…] if the top management team do not believe and embody the values, then we cannot expect the rest of the employees to do so. Like it or not, the employees are looking at us, observe our lives and are counting on us to showcase values. Therefore, we must be very intentional about how we model those values" (Participant 53/Director-nursing/female).*

This sentiment of leading by example was supported by another Director:

"In my view, it is easier to show the employee how to do things by doing it yourself which apparently become a standard to follow. Our behaviour is always communicating our values. For example, by putting a smile on your face at all times and greeting people by names, this basic gesture creates phenomenal impact on your employees" (Participant 56/Director-Finance/male).

Role modelling by the senior management team was also considered important by employees. Employees used the term role modelling, management style, and exemplar interchangeably to describe the expected management's disposition in permeating organisational values. Most of them agreed that the management style determined their perceptions of the organisation which impacted upon their attitude to uphold values. They recognised that the top management team's foremost priority is to espouse and disseminate the organisational values in every aspect of their decisions and actions. They thought that the senior management should be able to convince employees that they believe in and are willing to embrace organisational values themselves:

"I would say, the senior management team is supposed to demonstrate good examples and show us how we should put this into practice. Displaying the values framed posters on the wall, print them on our corporate name card, website, banners, booklets, brochures, etc. are meaningless without a proper example in actions especially by our top bosses. We want to see them lead the way. Tell us how to go about it. This is important because they are the ones who initiate and introduce the values. They must practice it first. Then only we would adhere and embrace them too" (Participant 22/nurse/female).

Another colleague reinforced the comments above and recognised that the top management team worked hard to build strong relationships with employees. In particular, employees were provided with a supportive environment including spaces for interactions and relationship building.

"Our top management, they are capable of doing their job. They deserve the position they are at now. I can see the effort they have put forward to promote good relationship with all of us and to ensure a conducive working environment for us. They really demonstrate the values for instance they come early to work, they perform their job very well […] we can talk to them anywhere, anytime because they want to have a free flow of information happen around us. We always have social gathering with our bosses. Because of that they can even recognise most of us by our names" (Participant 26/nurse/female).

This sentiment echoed by many other interviewees (also see Appendix 6 for further illustrative quotations) who agreed that senior management capability and attitudes mirrored the expectations of the organisation. This sent a message to employees of the importance of the organisational values. In essence, the senior management's efforts to cascade organisational values by exhibiting values through their management style and behaviour was considered more personable to the employees then using other communication platforms such as posting articles through emails, posters in the office, printing the values on business cards and other approaches. It is also important to point out that employees appreciated the fact that the senior management team were role models for the organisation's values.

In summary, there were two important factors informing the participative management approach which the senior management team and employees recognised: first, building close relationships with employees through direct communication and engagement; and second, role modelling organisational values to influence employee perceptions.

5.3.2 Line manager's relationship-oriented behaviour

The data show that line managers played a key role in internalising organisational values. At DEMC, the management style of the line managers created a greater view of the importance of organisational values and reputation for the organisation as they connected organisational values to the functional values of employees. The line managers interpreted values in terms of how they related to the everyday work responsibilities of employees. This is an additional role assumed by the line managers compared to the senior management in this values process.

> *"Our role in permeating organisational values is more than role modelling the values. Our concern is to ensure every staff lives the values naturally as if it is already in our DNA and this must begin here, in this department. To do that, as much as possible I will make sure I attend every meeting and social gathering either at the department level or the organisation based event so that I can always have the chance to get together with my staff" (Participant 7/line manager/female).*

The above response shows the importance of organisational values to be practiced habitually and must become part of the daily operations. She also claimed that she would constantly take the liberty to showcase organisational values.

As line managers are closer to the employees than the senior management team, their roles go beyond merely role modelling the organisational values. One manager explained that her department's expectations are centred on functional values such as 'teamwork', 'care and respect' as well as 'passionate'. At every huddle, she would ask her staff to share specific actions related to values that have affected their work or highlight issues concerning value-based behaviour. She would also publicly praise staff who demonstrated organisational values. Building on these values, she believed that she would be able to encourage positive working relationships with employees and a consistent message would transmit to others.

> *"Role modelling values is important but it is not enough to influence your staff. Therefore, I would prefer to link specific values to our daily work and get the staff to notice every behaviour transposed from those values. For example, when we achieved a high score on our monthly customer service rating, firstly, we would celebrate by having a small party at the office. Then, during our monthly meeting, we will debrief the possible success factors. In most cases staff would recognise values based behaviour as the main contributor"* (Participant 2 /line manager/female).

The line managers facilitated the continuous process of integrating organisational values into employees' existing values through social interaction and activities. For example, they repeatedly emphasised establishing rapport and engaging with employees:

> *"Not only employees see us as a role model, how managers and employees act in relation to one another and in treating each other affect the perceptions of employees. They are judging the way we manage our work and our people around, or I would say our management style.*

Although I am well aware that my staff are subjected to his or her own interpretation on my actions, they also hold obligations to do their work and are answerable for their performance. This means even if they do not like me as their superior, they still have to do their work. In realising this, somehow, my role is to make sure that my staff have positive perceptions towards me and their job. I should always be by their side, to support, to encourage and importantly to make them trust that I'm working in their best interest. With our values, particularly 'care and respect', I suppose my relationship with my staff has never been better" (Participant 9/line manager/female).

The above line manager further described that the support and engagement has been a continuous process and not a one-off attempt. Her approach is shared by other line managers who agreed that the process involved both the managers and their subordinates through routine face-to face interactions either in formal or informal sessions through various platforms celebrating achievements, birthdays, new born babies and updating progress.

"Our role in permeating organisational values is more than role modelling the values. Our concern is to ensure every staff lives the values naturally as if it is already in our DNA. To do that, as much as possible I will make sure I attend every meeting and social gathering either at the department level or organisation-based events so that I can always have the chance to get together with and communicate directly to my staff" (Participant 7/line manager/female).

The interviews also revealed that the line managers acknowledged that by focusing on organisational values and communicating it in the right way,

employees would be able to operate with a great deal of responsibility and initiative, even when working within limited resources.

Similarly, employees acknowledged the line manager's effort in providing platforms for employees to express their concern. A nurse commented:

> *"In my department, we take turns to chair our 15 minute huddle with the presence of our manager. During the huddle, we go around answering what we're most excited about doing that day (to satisfy one of our values 'passionate' and then we talk about work related or personal problems, discuss priorities, identify where they might need help or propose ideas for the department or the hospital and review good news, even ask a silly question (to show 'care and respect'). It is a refreshing way to start the day. These quick meetings connect us in a fun yet purposeful way which are very useful especially from an operational perspective. By doing this, from my observation, initiatives implemented particularly within our department are well accepted and supported by the members of the department"* (Participant 20/nurse/male).

The above response indicates that employees seemed to appreciate the close-knit relationship with the line managers and accessible communication helped build positive working behaviour. This is because employees could use various platforms to discuss any concerns with their managers. He believed that this two-way communication helped DEMC to perform in a consistent way and operate in an environment where people appreciate each other's presence.

Besides encouraging employees to generate ideas actively and support two-way communication, the line managers were also willing to participate in value-based activities organised by employees. Most of the line managers agreed that employees were encouraged to initiate programs and activities that support

values. At the same time, they were also prepared to participate through social interactions.   As one of the managers who referred to himself as a 'walk-through' manager described:

> *"I like to see my staff initiate or lead activities that can foster our values further. We work as a team. I sit down with employees and ask what can we do to improve our service to the customer? There is always good dialogue. I would know if there is a problem and I let them know right away if there is. I will be more than happy to be involved in the activity or initiative as a participant because I must show that I value teamwork and able to respect my own staff" (Participant 1/line manager/male).*

Such efforts reflected the line manager's strong determination to advocate organisational values by regularly interacting with employees. Although there may be an inherent variation in how line managers approached their subordinates across the various departments, the aims and outcomes in terms of individual understanding and perceptions of the management style were similar.

Employees claimed that their relationship with other colleagues was positive in many ways and the line manager's management style and approach were commonly mentioned as the key factor. For example:

> *"We have developed a strong bond with our colleagues organisational wide. It is very enjoyable and satisfying to work when you know many people. I can understand why my supervisor keeps encouraging us to build good rapport with staff in other departments. It is all about 'teamwork'! Frankly, I like the way my supervisor manages his staff" (Participant 39/front office/female).*

Additionally, the employees stressed that most of the line managers propagate and advocate values and encouraged others to embody organisational values in their everyday working lives. Interestingly, participants did see this as an opportunity to contribute to their department's progress. This sentiment is best described by one of the nurse educators:

"Our managers are always talking and reminding us about DEMC's values. They want us to understand how our values can be a powerful tool to strengthen our relationship and the organisation's reputation. In every huddle, we are always encouraged to provide ideas on how to demonstrate and showcase these values. My manager, for instance will make sure that we remember every single element of the values. She always pointed out how organisational values relates to our job as nurses (Participant 24/nurse educator/female).

The nurse educator above highlights the seriousness of his line manager in ensuring that organisational values are not only for recalling, but also should be linked to the particular aspect of an individual's job. He further added:

"Then, importantly, we have to share specific examples of how we demonstrated at least one of our organisational values for the last 24 hours. Interestingly, by doing this, we manage to propose brilliant values related programs. So far, most of the programs that have been implemented in DEMC are the result of our collective ideas" (Participant 24/nurse educator/female).

This example expresses how the line manager encouraged employees to propose activities to support organisational values based on the direct experiences they encountered in the process of internalising values.

In contrast, during the focus group session, a few participants raised disagreement with the view that the line managers in DEMC embraced organisational values. When asked about enabling factors in internalising organisational values, most participants identified the line manager as an enabler that connects employee with organisational values. As the 'middle person' participants suggested that the line managers should be an example in upholding values. However, in reality some participants felt that the line managers failed to make them believe in the values, as commented by one of the participants during the group presentation:

> *"Yes, values should be espoused and practiced from the top down. There is no point for DEMC to have values if our bosses don't 'walk the talk'. From my observation, some of our bosses (even though not all) do not role model certain values of DEMC. For example, I rarely have a chance to talk to my manager openly. He is not approachable and I don't feel comfortable to voice out my opinion and ideas" (Participant 3G3/focus group/male).*

The above comment, which was shared by a few others (see also Appendix 7 for further illustrative quotations), expressed a concern in terms of the impact of line manager's attitudes to behaviours they demonstrated. Having said this, he proceeded to argue:

> *"I do not see the point why do we need to have organisational values if it is not making any difference to the way we work? From my point of view,*

the values seem to be imposed only on us, not on the bosses. Even though we are supposed to share the same understanding on what is expected from us (to embrace and demonstrate values), yet in practice I sense flaws in the enforcement" (Participant 26/goup3/male).

The evidence above highlights that when employees saw their managers' behaviour conflicting with the organisational values, they started to question the purpose of these organisational values. This potentially leads to a negative interpretation not only towards the line managers and their management style but also towards employee perceptions of the organisational values.

On the other hand, employees who recognised the supportive and proactive approach displayed by their line managers around demonstrating positive perceptions around embracing values, they commonly expressed them positively: "values unite us", "internalising the organisational values are worth pursuing", "values represent who we are", "upholding our values are the right thing to do", "values are for everyone in this organisation" and "values defines us".

5.4 Employees valuing ambassadors

According to the Director of Corporate Culture, DEMC relies on its friendly working environment for employees to socialise within the organisation. For example, in Malaysia there are many cultures and religious-related festivals for the major racial and ethnic groups in Malaysia such as Eid, celebrated by Muslims to marks the end of the fasting period, Chinese New Year celebrated by Chinese, and Deepavali celebrated by Indians. DEMC organises events for employees to celebrate these festivals and the gatherings would create an environment that not only encourages a friendly environment among employees

but also the opportunity for teambuilding because employees and the senior management team as well as line managers spent time together and were more likely to engage with each other and become friends because of non-work related events.

> *"If you want to nurture an environment that is friendly, then you need to spend time with your employees even outside the working hours, treat them with respect, find opportunity to talk to them, listen to them, allow them to have fun and have fun with them. Above all, put them first, let them feel how we 'respect and care' for them. Then, you will be able to build a good team to support you through" (Participant 55/Director-Corporate Culture/male).*

In this regard, his comments were also indicated that he believed in the value of people interaction and looked at it as a platform to communicate and propagate organisational values. Equally, the senior management team of DEMC was keen that everybody upheld the organisation's values and would expect employees to regard DEMC as a "family company". The senior management team hoped that all employees felt at home when working within these values, as mentioned by the Director of Nursing:

> *"Given the amount of time we spend at work, it is important to make the office ambiance either physically (the work stations, staff rest area) or socially (close knit relationships) conducive and encouraging. We hope to achieve that by living the values" (Participant 53/Director-nursing/female).*

She further notes:

> *"The management team is expecting the employees not only to accept the organisational values but also to own them. Authorities may in a way*

influence employees to act upon but we want the values to reflect in their everyday actions and performance in a very natural way and not mere compliance to a hierarchal position" (Participant 53/Director-nursing/female).

The comment above implies that role modelling by the management team can sometimes be seen by employees as a directive from authoritative figures and a means to enforce employees to follow for compliance purposes. However, the top management team pushed back on the approach of obedience through top-down approaches. Instead, they believed that employees should feel that they have a personal responsibility towards the organisation and be able to behave in a way that appropriately represents DEMC for them individually. In other words, they do it because they fit the organisation's values in relation to their individual identities because they want to rather than because it is being imposed on them by others.

"Our role (the senior management team) is to inspire employees to uphold organisational values. The actual drivers are the employees themselves. We encourage them to do whatever it takes to ensure everybody lives the 'DEMC Way'" (Participant 56/Director-finance/male).

The senior management team placed a lot of trust on all employees to run everyday activities. They wanted employees to feel attached to the organisation. The COO admitted that it was very important for employees to have faith and trust in the organisation's philosophy so that they can support the organisation's aspiration and behave accordingly, although she also noted that this is not always guaranteed:

"We cannot force anyone to feel this or want to feel this but we believe that there is a group of employees who identified themselves with our values" (Participant 52/COO/female).

In considering the above, DEMC functions by giving employees responsibility and empowerment in addition to the support to work from the organisational culture and structure provided by the organisation, with the intention of consistently presenting the hospital in a positive light to the customer. In this case, DEMC empowered employees with the responsibility to permeate organisational values by establishing the "DEMC Values Ambassador" program. The ambassador is a formal appointment given to selected employees who have a strong sense of person-value fit and identified themselves with the organisational values.

From detailed discussions with the senior management team, it was understood that the program was initiated by the senior management team but the success was predicated on how effective the selected ambassadors played their role. As an ambassador sees the day-to-day activities, he or she is expected to identify issues that other employees face as well as make useful suggestions and improvements to the top management team.

"Values ambassador program is introduced to get involvement of employees in permeating our values. We want more employees to believe and espouse values. All ambassadors were selected from those who have been 'living' the DEMC Way and willing to participate in helping us in this effort" (Participant 55/Director-Corporate Culture/male).

To begin with, an advertisement to invite employees to apply for the program was posted through the employees' internal email. A set of criteria was fixed as a basis of selection. Among the important criteria was that the person must

believe in the values, be passionate about it and able to inspire others. Above all, the person must demonstrate leadership skills and the ability to take his or her own initiatives because he or she would be 'running the show' and not the senior management team. All applications who fit the criteria were shortlisted and went through the next phase. Twenty candidates were selected to go through to the next stage. Following the application stage was the interview sessions to identify the right candidates to be appointed as the ambassador. During the interviews, the candidates were asked to say what they felt in response to DEMC's core values. They were also required to share their thoughts on how to improve the way things were conducted in the hospital. Every candidate was given 10 minutes to express their standpoint. This helped the selection panels to evaluate if the employee was potentially a strong personal fit and able to inspire and influence other employees to share their values. Additionally, the selected ambassadors were formally appointed and required to undergo a series of special training to equip them with specific competencies to undertake this important role such as interpersonal skills, personal grooming, customer service and teambuilding. The program was positively viewed by most of the employees because they felt important and appreciated.

> *"This program provides opportunity for me to be not only a better worker but also a better person. With all the development programs planned for us, personally I am more confident to present myself as the ambassador for DEMC and eager to play this role effectively" (Participant 49/general frontline/female).*

Through the employee ambassador program, the senior management team of DEMC essentially harnessed the interactions between the ambassadors and

other employees in terms of communicating organisational values across the hospital. Additionally, the data revealed that the program enhanced employee self-identity which was found to be aligned with the DEMC way, which will be elaborated on in more detail below. The following sections show how empowering ambassadors helped to communicate values and a sense of self identification with the organisation when employees embraced the values.

5.4.1 Empowering employees to communicate values

The responsibility of an ambassador is mainly to model the "DEMC Way" by showcasing the standards of behaviour associated with organisational values. In other words, DEMC aims to communicate values in a natural and familiar way by the influence of peers. As expressed by one line manager:

"[…] we do it together with our employees. Values, if no one knows them, they are not worth the paper they are written on. Therefore, the first thing in communicating the values are making sure employees know what they are (the values) and what is expected in term of values-based behaviour. Similarly, it is not enough to profess organisational values only at the top of the organisation" (Participant 6/line manager/female).

The above manager stresses the importance of articulation of organisational values and behaviours attached to them. Communicating values should be a two-way process that involved both the senior management team and employees, as she further commented:

"Although the values initially set from the "top" and likely to be seen as hierarchically imposed, but we recognised that employees would respond to organisational values better through routine interactions among employees. We want them to get involved in the process. It is essential

to gain trust and commitment from them. If employees resonate with the values on a personal level, they are more likely to champion the values. They should own it and feel responsible to uphold them (the values) too!" (Participant 6/line manager/female).

By involving employees in communicating and permeating values, the line manager hoped to encourage employee to own organisational values. Emphasising the importance of living the values, another line manager added:

"When we 'live the value' we are helping the organisation to enhance its reputation. When we communicate what makes us special (which is our 'boutique concept' and values), we are in a way setting expectations for our patients and customers. In service industries including healthcare, the entire experience and relationship that patients have with your team will establish and reinforce a specific reputation for the organisation. Therefore, patients should get the benefit of our unique values, a consistent and quality experience each time they visit or call us. Due to this, by giving more opportunity to the employees to be part of the value internalisation process, empowering them to freely share values, we anticipate a better understanding of values and relevant behaviour showed by our employees" (Participant 1/line manager/male).

The line manager's opinion around the potential of shaping reputation through employee who lives the values was also shared by other colleagues who also recognised how contagious an employee ambassador can be in permeating organisational values.

"Those ambassadors are often well connected and potentially build bridges from within their own circle of friends to a different level of

employees. Therefore, they potentially build trust and engage in ways

that support organisational values" (Participant 11/line manager/female).

Trust-building was important as it was difficult to move people from words to actual behaviours or as some said by just telling the employees to change would not help the hospital to achieve any positive results. Instead, the line manager agreed that employees would easily be influenced by their own peers who illuminate the values in their everyday life, a true exemplification of what it meant by 'living the value'. Hence, all line managers who were interviewed supported the introduction of an employee values ambassador.

"From the beginning, they make us involved in the introduction process

of organisational values. Then some of us have been appointed as the

'employee values ambassador' for DEMC to help the senior management

in this initiative. I like the idea because I believed in peers learning from

peers. I think it is powerful because it has credibility" (Participant

36/admission and record/female).

Additionally, the participant's view of the credibility of the ambassador programme was also shared by a nurse aid who commented:

"As the ambassador, the management allows me to use my own

creativity and approach to communicate values. There is no influence

exercised by the top on what should I specifically do. During our training,

we were exposed with the role of an ambassador and the adequate

knowledge of the values and the expected outcomes. Then they expect

us to do the rest. […] I would say that I'm so excited to see the

organisational values that all employees should aspire to be implied. I

know that through my daily interactions and conversations with my

colleague and customers, I can continuously spread the values"

(Participant 28/nurse aid/female).

The quotations above illustrate that employee ambassadors at DEMC were empowered to communicate organisational values in any appropriate means within the capacity and knowledge of an ambassador as long as the outcomes favour the organisation's aspiration.

"It is necessary to religiously communicate organisational values to all employees everyday either consciously or unconsciously. Only through communication, employees would get the sense of direction necessary for making progress" (Participant 53/Director-Nursing/female).

5.4.2 Employee self-identification

The data show that employees who aligned themselves with the organisational values and showed their commitment to embrace the values were likely to identify themselves with the organisation as well as influence other people around them. This was because they felt attached to the organisation and proudly claimed that they exercised the DEMC way. They also felt passionately that others shared this sentiment.

"I feel very excited and proud to be part of the value ambassador team. Apart of being recognised (for living the values), I feel completely honoured to be able to drive my colleagues to act upon and adopt organisational values of DEMC. We keep reminding ourselves about working the DEMC way and keep talking about it whenever possible. I can see people react to what we (the ambassador) do positively and many have gradually changed. They started to do things the DEMC way" (Participant 46/general frontline/male).

Similarly, a physiologist associated herself with the organisation when she claimed to be the "face of DEMC" and to do it, she evidently enjoyed the additional roles which reinforced a sense of identification with the organisation.

> *"When I was appointed as the ambassador for organisational values, I know that I hold a big responsibility to disseminate and share any information and knowledge about our organisational values to my colleagues. Well, I am willing to do that because I'm part of the organisation, and I am the 'face' of the organisation. […] Just like corporate ambassadors, we, the "Values Ambassadors" are expected to establish trust and build relationship with other employees as well as our customers by sharing information about our values and showcasing it through our behaviour" (Participant 33/physiologist/female).*

The above sentiments were a means by which the ambassadors took pride in their role to continuously advocate the organisational values.

5.5 Tacit understanding of reciprocity

Another important facet of social influence which was strongly evident from the data was reciprocity. This theme was mainly derived from non-participant observations which were conducted at the hospital and were explained during interviews. When I first entered the hospital lobby, I was welcomed by the concierge who asked me where I was heading to. When I told him that I was looking for the management office, he quickly picked up the phone and called the office receptionist. He then directed me to the office. On my way to the office, I saw a group of staff in a different uniform handling a patient at the registration counter. I was made to understand that the different colours of the uniform or 'scrub' represented the roles and the departments.

Picture 5: DEMC uniform

Source: DEMC's website

The use of the colour coded uniform and scrub helped me to identify and differentiate when a group of staff were working within their own department or working across functional teams. For instance as in Picture 5, the nurses at the specialist clinics dressed in peach scrub while the doctors at the emergency department wore purple scrub. The front line staff wore special designed corporate uniform (grey). This provided an opportunity to investigate if working within or across roles advocated differences in behaviour.

From the observation of employee working behaviour, another important aspect of social influence was reciprocal relationships and behaviour. In this context, employees tended to repay others for what they have received, particularly in work related contexts.   This tacit understanding existed because other employees had been helping an employee or behaving in a particular way and in return for the goodwill gesture, the employee gave back in return. For example, during the observation at the main lobby of the hospital, I noticed a physiotherapist wheeled a patient from the physiology clinic to the patient's ward. Based on the work process, it was not his responsibility and he should call the nurse from the ward to bring the patient back to his room. When I saw him unoccupied, I approached him and asked for permission to interview him. I questioned him why he would do somebody else's task and if he was expecting anything in return. He responded:

"I know that they (the nurses) are busy handling new cases and short of staff today. Frankly, I'm not expecting for any return specifically from them. I believe, we should support other departments whenever possible because we are working under the same roof. […] When I make effort to help whenever I can, it seems to magically work out in the end without me having to ask for it. Somehow, sometime, somewhere, it does come back to you. Perhaps it's the law of the universe and this has been working fine in DEMC. Everybody is kind of acknowledged it, so I want to be like everyone else. Wouldn't it be nice to go with the majority?" (Participant 32/physiotherapist/male).

Based on his initial comment, I probed him on his standpoint regarding the expectation of reciprocity, he confessed:

"I admit that there have been times where I've lent a hand or gone out of my way to do a favour and felt disappointed when there was no reciprocation. I was probably doing the favour for the wrong reasons in the first place. In order to avoid future resentment, I try to steer clear of doing out of sheer obligation. I will get in tune with why I'm doing it, for instance, I do it to go extra miles in helping our patient and not because of trying to impress my boss or expecting for any return from the patient […] and often do it with a conscious mind. Nobody forces me. […] Oh yes! I used to see my seniors did the same thing before, I mean… helping the nurses. It is a good gesture to practise, isn't it? After all, we do 'care and respect' our fellow colleagues" (Participant 32/physiotherapist/male).

From the above instance, his expression described two views of reciprocity: imitating specific behaviour and conforming to pervasive social norms. It was telling that employees seemed to understand this unspoken rule of reciprocity. Some employees chose to foster their relationship according to the tacit understanding either to give back right away or to remember the act on another day. Interestingly, his comment highlighted that the exchange was effortless and happened organically without any hesitation. Additionally, he also pointed the fact that his behaviour was influenced by the example set by the senior management team. This brings the understanding that when the senior management team were seen as role models in championing values, it sends a message to employees that they should do the same.

5.5.1 Behavioural mimicry

The first aspect of reciprocity reflects a certain level of behavioural mimicry. In order to create affiliation and rapport, employees unconsciously imitated others around them in order to feel similar. At DEMC, generally when a patient arrived at the hospital except for emergency cases, the concierge would greet and usher the patient to the registration counter. Then the registration team would register the patient as well as conduct a pre-check before transferring him or her to the clinic or other specialist services such as Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation. The nurses at the clinic would take over to register the patient and proceed with medical attention and/or treatment by the doctors. Following the medical treatment, the patient would either be admitted or sent to the billing counter and finally to the pharmacy. Within this work process, a patient would encounter different staff from various departments. The nature of relationship among employees was crucial because it would determine the level of experience for the patient.

From my observations, I witnessed how the employees relied on each other in handling their customers. For example, at the aid station, transporting the patient from the ward to the surgical suite and preparing for surgery involved more than lifting the patient onto the litter. An elaborate procedure was necessary to ensure the smooth and safe running of the process. This included "dressing" the litter to ensure the safety and comfort of the patient while in transit which was done by a nurse aide or nurse attendant. Then the charge nurse, who would transport the patient, would prepare the patient's chart containing all laboratory reports and relevant paperwork. Together, they (the nurse aid and charge nurse) would take the litter to the patient's bedside and lifted him/her onto the litter. Additionally, I recognised the element of 'care and respect' as well as 'accountability' being practised. The staff always smiled and pleasantly greeted the patient. They also explained every step of what they were going to do to inspire confidence in the patient. Normally, the charge nurse would wheel the patient on the litter especially when the patient has no special kind of apparatus connected to him/her such as drainage equipment. However, for this particular observation, the nurse aid helped wheeling the patient due to the body weight of the patient. When I asked her if wheeling the patient was part of her job scope, she replied:

> *"No, this is not included in my job description. Even under any circumstances, it is her duty to transfer our patient to the operation theatre. But as her colleague, I think, it is reasonable for me to help her. I have seen other nurse aid do the same before. Why can't? I don't mind at all" (Participant 29/nurse aide/female).*

Then they pushed the wheeled litter to the surgical suites. After a while I saw her already standing at the aid station and continued with her own tasks. I approached her and further questioned her action. She commented:

"I am happy to help the nurses because whenever I need advice or guidance, I always get their attention. In fact, I would remember every time when someone does something to help me. I will make note of it. I would probably not be able to return the favour right away, but I'll be aware of the time and opportunity where I could do something nice back. This is how I should keep doing to show my 'care and respect' to my fellow colleagues and the sense of 'accountability'. For me, it's a win-win situation" (Participant 29/nurse aid/female).

On another occasion, as a pharmacist in DEMC, generally they primarily were responsible for the dispensing of prescriptions to the patients including giving advice on the dosage and on how to use medicines correctly. At the pharmacy department, every staff is responsible to specific medicine shelves. As mentioned by a pharmacy assistant:

"During my previous employment, I was solely responsible and accountable for the medicine shelves under my care. This included stocktaking, inventory ordering and making sure all medicines are in a worthy condition. If any of the medicine got damaged or lost, I have to bear the cost myself. However, at DEMC, the situation is different. Even though we have to take care of our own shelves, we are accountable to all medicines in the department. In the case of any loss or damage, all of us in the department are going to share the cost. Because of this policy,

and in accordance with our values 'teamwork', we look after each other's

provisions" (Participant 31/pharmacy assistant/female).

Her comment highlighted the fact that they are all accountable and responsible for the whole inventory of the department. Adding to her comment:

"Whenever my colleague is busy handling inventories, I will help him or her and they will do the same for me. Basically, I'm doing what others do […] it is not written anywhere, not even in the work procedure but it is more to mutual compromise among us. This never happened in my previous company" (Participant 31/pharmacy assistant/female).

The above examples demonstrate how employees build rewarding relationships among them when they unwittingly imitate the act of another person as also mentioned by one of the receptionists:

"[…] when we are more concerned with others, depend more on them, want to feel closer to them, or want to be liked by them, unconsciously to some extent, we have a tendency to take over their behaviour […] sometimes I mimic how they handle things" (Participant 42/receptionist/female).

The above comment is another example of the common reactions received from the interviews with regards to their nature of relationship among their colleagues that show the tendency to replicate behaviours deemed acceptable at DEMC.

5.5.2 Pervasive social forces

The other aspect of reciprocity revealed in this study is the persistence of social influence on one's behaviour. In addition to authorities of hierarchical position, employees often look to social norms to gain accurate understanding of and

effective response to social situations. When asked about the nature of their relationship among colleagues, many described it as "very intimate", "it has been positive", "very close to each other", "more than better", and "share a lot in common". By upholding values such as 'teamwork' and 'care and respect', the employees expressed the need to work together and support each other not only in work related issues but also outside the office hours. They also said that the relationship that they have put together went beyond formal duties. As an example, they would invite their colleagues for private family functions or organise get-together events during the weekends or off days. For instance, as mentioned by a staff nurse, she invited all DEMC staff to her son's wedding and was surprised that the majority attended despite the distance of the event's location. She was so touched because she did not expect to see many of her colleagues at her event. She said that her experience resembled the sense of unity and bond that they have built together at DEMC. This showed that the employees implicitly developed a certain level of social norm in which they would act to what was typically done or accepted by the majority of employees. Accepting invitation and making the effort to attend the event has indirectly become a norm for them and it happened beyond the authority's boundary.

On another occasion, I was struck by the reaction that I received when my car tyre was punctured on one evening. It was noticed by the parking attendant who then called one of the staff who was on his way home and happened to be walking nearby. Without hesitation the staff examined the tyre and asked me for the spare tyre. Later, another staff stopped by and helped. They quickly changed the tyre and it was amazing to see them working together though they were not from the same department (which I observed based on the colour of the uniform). I noticed their name from the name tag and wrote it in my

fieldwork notebook. I bought some drinks for both of them and offered some cash as a token of my appreciation. They refused to accept the cash. I insisted on the drinks and they took it. The next day, I told the line manager of physiotherapy department about the incident. He asked me for the names of the two staff. He said that this kind of spontaneous gesture was a meaningful story to be shared with others and the staff should be rewarded for their act. Though according to the manager that this was not the first incident where staff went the extra mile beyond their formal responsibility in projecting good identity of DEMC staff, he saw such behaviour and attitudes (from many occasions) has become a norm in DEMC.

> *"I notice that some employees go extra miles in providing service and this keeps happening day by day. I am happy to see that this sort of attitudes is contagious. […] By observing the behaviour of others can potentially lead to increase in similar behaviour" (Participant 3/line manager/male).*

Taken together, the above examples suggest that employee actions are affected by sharing the common sense of social interactions and a generally unstated pressure to conform to the norm. At the same time, the relevant norms must be salient to the organisation's values to persuade others to engage in a particular behaviour. For instance, the salient norm evident in this study was the act of helping those in need in any circumstance.

5.6 Reputational outcomes

As a foundation for employee behaviour, the participants agreed that value-based behavior induced a positive reputation for the organisation:

"I believe that my behaviour (demonstrating values) influences my organisation's reputation. It gives an indication or an important signal to our customers of who we are. […] As staff, I am proud to work here because I believe that we are committed to providing personalised service to our customers which represent who we are" (Participant 44/male/front office).

The above participant refers to organisational reputation as "who we are" and identified the organisation's reputation as "personalised health care provider." The sentiment was also shared by a nurse who acknowledged that the hospital is known for its unique personalised services.

"For me, we are reputable as a hospital that focuses on personalised quality health services. I am confident that our customer can differentiate us from another hospital" (Participant 22/nurse/female).

Similarly, the senior management team shared the conviction that organisational values affect organisational reputation.

"The organisational values that we have selected define who we are. Each element of values is linked to how we want other people to know and remember us. We want to be recognised as a boutique hospital that provides personalised health care. Hence our staff must demonstrate this quality (values). […] So far, we have seen that our customers are happy with our services. You can see what I meant from the customer satisfaction index" (Participant 54/Director-Doctors/female).

Based on the above extract, the senior management team claimed that the organisational values had helped them to shape DEMC's intended reputation.

DEMC has been using the customer satisfaction index to measure the quality of services and to define its reputation (to be known as a boutique hospital).

The above quotations demonstrate the impact of organisational values on organisational reputation, as perceived by the senior management team and the employees. Even though these perceptions were captured from the internal stakeholder's perspective, they suggest that reputation is also internally constructed. Additionally, internal organisational actors are directly impacted by organisational action which in this case was the implementation of organisational values.

Additionally, responses received from the customers when asked about their perceptions of DEMC were positive. Generally, customers described their experience with DEMC's employees as a consequence of consistent demonstration of values.

> *"I am a regular customer of DEMC. They have never failed to meet my expectation (personalise service) and sometimes go beyond their regular duty. […] I'm very pleased and comfortable with their staff"* (Customer 15/in-patient/female).

The above customer was one of many people interviewed who was highly satisfied with DEMC's services. A similar positive acknowledgement was revealed by an out-patient:

> *"I am aware of their (DEMC) values. If you asked me whether they really embrace the values, I give a big yes! The staff are always friendly, helpful and attentive to most of my needs. They are who they said they are (a boutique hospital)"* (Customer 12/out-patient/male).

The above comments were reflective of the positive sentiments among customers about the service that they had experienced as a patient at DEMC. This implies that such positive reputational outcomes are a result of employees behaving in accordance with the organisation's values.

5.7 Chapter summary

In summary, the findings of this chapter demonstrate the advantage of social influence that provides the basis for linking organisational values and the organisation's reputation. There are three important enablers of social influence in organisational reputation building. First, the participative management style; second, the employees' value ambassador programme; third, the unspoken rule of reciprocity. Finally, positive responses were found from both, employees and customers in term of the reputation outcomes for DEMC. Table 13 below illustrates the data coding structure for the findings.

Table 13: Data coding structure for Findings 2

Overarching theme:		
Participative management style		
1st Order Code	**2nd Order Sub-themes**	**Themes**
• Supportive environment • Spaces for interactions • Relationship building • Direct communication	Creating values	The senior management's engagement and role modelling
• Exhibiting values • Employee's	Communicating values	

1st Order Code	2nd Order Sub-themes	Themes
• definition of role model • Capability and attitudes mirrored the expectations		
• Actively participate in value-based activities	Creating values	Line manager's relationship oriented behaviour
• Establish rapport • Celebrate values related to behaviour publicly	Communicating values	
• Support two-way communicating • Facilitate integrating process • Operationalise values in daily activity • Employee gain ownership	Enacting values	

Overarching theme:

Employees valuing ambassador

1st Order Code	2nd Order Sub-themes	Themes
• Ambassador criteria • Responsibility as ambassador • Employee involvement • Influence among	Communicating values	Empowering employees

1st Order Code	2nd Order Sub-themes	Themes
• colleagues • Close knit with colleagues • Freedom to act upon values • Encourage creativity		
• Self-commitment • Bridge to build trust • Learning from others • Peer influence	Enacting values	

Overarching theme:		
Tacit understanding of reciprocity		
1st Order Code	**2nd Order Sub-themes**	**Themes**
• Anticipate other employee's action • Foster positive relationship • Example by the senior management	Helping others in return of goodwill gesture	Behavioural mimicry
• Invitation to private function • Socialising at work	Relationship beyond formal duties	
• Replicate behaviour • Sense of unity • Beyond authority's boundary	Respond to social situations	Pervasive social forces

Having explored the findings from the data in the last two chapters, the next chapter examines the contributions of this research to the extant literature.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the major findings as presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 and explains the significance of the findings in relation to the literature. This study extends beyond previous research on the relationship between reputation and culture by Weigelt & Camerer (1998) who suggested that since culture influenced strategy implementation and performance, then culture would also support reputation building activities. Their research showed that organisational culture would be able to guide employees in ambiguous and unforeseen instances (Weigelt & Camerer, 1998). This study also supports other studies that empirically demonstrated the positive influence of organisational culture on reputation as organisational culture creates the context for identity and an organisation's identity is related to an organisation's reputation (Carmeli & Tishler, 2004; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2000; Kowalczyk & Pawlish, 2002; Kowalczyk, 2005). However, this research is not only relevant to support the previous research that has established the connection between culture and organisational reputation but it goes further in building on existing theory by explaining the enabling factors which underpin the influence of organisational values, which is the foundation of organisational culture, on organisational reputation.

The initial and fundamental propositions of this study are that first, organisational reputation emerges from employee behaviours as the result of the enactment and internalisation of organisational values and second, that value-based behaviour is shaped through the influence of important enabling factors that connect organisational values and organisational reputation. Two research questions were established to explain the enabling factors.

Research question 1: How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?

Research question 2: How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?

This chapter has four main sections. In the first section entitled "Bridging organisational and employee values", discussion of findings related to the issue of perceptions and conflict in expectation of values and the bridging of organisational values and employee values will be provided. Subsequently, in the second section entitled "Reinforcing values through social interactions", discussion of relevant findings such as the participative management style, employee value ambassadors and reciprocity issues will be provided. The third section focuses on the reputational outcomes as the results of the implementation of organisational values. The final section covers the discussion of the framework produced in this study by providing an in-depth explanation of the enabling factors which underpin how organisational values build organisational reputation.

To answer the first research question, the analysis of the findings in Chapter 4 identifies the importance of aligning organisational values and employee values in the reputation building process. In order to mitigate the misalignment of values, four remediation phases namely: aware, articulate, accept and act interrelate to reduce the gap. The four remediation phases is significant in reducing the conflict between organisational values and employee values. Although the results indicate the importance of these conditions, they are not discrete, but occur in sequence and are closely interrelated. Additionally, there

was no evidence to suggest that they are bounded by a specific timeframe. Diagram 4 illustrates the model for aligning organisational and employee values in order for organisational values to effectively support reputation building.

Diagram 4: Aligning organisational values and employee values to build organisational reputation
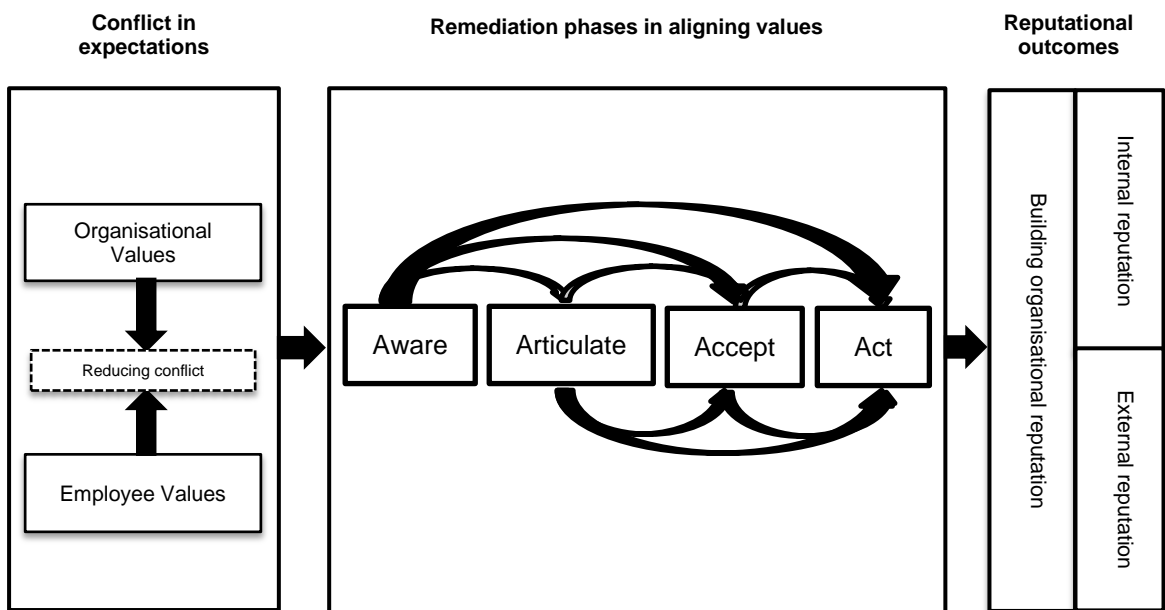
Source: Researcher's creation

6.1 Bridging organisational and employee values

The alignment of values in this case refers to the perceptions of employees of the enacted organisational values in comparison with their own personal values in which organisational values can either match or mismatch their values. The data show that in implementing organisational values there were some conflicts between employee and organisational values. The analysis also revealed the importance of the former for building the latter because it determines the perceptions and behaviours of the employees in relations to their work.

Given that values prescribed within organisations direct employee behavior (Cheyne & Loan-Clarke, 2009), this study argues that the implementation of organisational values was an important organisational action for reputation building through acquiring positive perceptions of organisational values. This occurred because when organisational values were embedded in the organisation and shared by employees, they behaved in ways that supported the organisation's strategy to build its reputation. However, particularly in the context of a service organisation (i.e. a hospital), the issue of how organisations may build their reputation from the implementation of organisational values was found to be almost nebulous, elusive and complex. While organisations heavily rely on their employees to deliver services to customers, it is difficult to recruit employees from diverse backgrounds who all share the same values as their employing organisations. When an employee enters an organisation with an established set of individual values, it is unclear whether his or her values will be congruent with those of the organisation. This issue of value alignment is important for all organisations, but arguably particularly salient in health care organisations where additional sensitivity is required towards the customer (patient) and there is less flexibility when there is a disconnect between organisational and individual values. Although there are a number of organisational initiatives that can be deployed to create positive perceptions among employees of organisational values (e.g. induction and training sessions), they are likely to receive varied reactions from employees, which can be positive, negative or ambivalent, and in almost all contexts will require proactive engagement.

This is an important gap in our understanding of reputation building because when employees perceive organisational values as incongruent with their own

values or negatively perceive organisational values, it determines the way they will perceive and act in relation to their work. As claimed by Kreitners and Kinicki (2010), the discrepancy between organisational and employee values significantly influence employee behaviour and attitudes. Thus, it impacts the standard way of doing things, either aligning with the enacted organisational values or employees being seen to be doing activities differently.

In the case of a misalignment of values, employees are likely to deviate from the desired behaviour of the senior management team, which could have serious implications on the organisation's reputation. The findings support the work of Weiss (2001) who concludes that the effective functioning of implementation of organisational values is predicated upon a match or mismatch between organisational values and employee values. For instance, a work culture that values responsibility and accountability must hire employees who are willing to be responsible for output and outcomes. Similarly, if employees prefer to work alone they are unlikely to fit a work environment that fosters closer relationships among employees, which may create challenges because of the lack of compatibility with an organisation's value.

However, this study goes further by showing the value of alignment for reputation building activities and in the context of a particular service industry where employees have significant direct contact with external stakeholders. This study agrees with Van Riel and Balmer's (1997) study that there is a requirement for employees to 'buy in' to the desired organisational identity because this links to whether employees feel fit to be the face of the organisation by subscribing to its value-based behaviour. Such arguments are also supported by Kleijnen et al.'s (2009) study who find that employee perceptions of organisational values lead to major consequences in terms of

employee behaviour. In the context of this study, it is argued that this employee behaviour has major ramifications for the organisation's reputation.

6.1.1 Perceptions of organisational values and organisation's reputation

In discussing the alignment of values, first the perceptions of organisational values and organisation's reputation were analysed. The findings found that an organisation's reputation was not only generally important but also acknowledged by most participants as significant for the organisation's success and survival.

Another key insight found in analysing employee perceptions was that the implementation of organisational values was recognised as an important organisational action for reputation building. This means that the employees positively perceived the emphasis on the organisational values in the organisation, which helps to build an organisation's reputation. As employees are said to be one of the key assets of organisations and one of the most important stakeholders groups in reputation management (Davies et. al, 2010) who are likely to shape the customer's view on an organisation, this thesis argues that acquiring positive employee perceptions to influence organisational action was imperative. This supports Saxton's (1998) argument that organisational action is powerful in influencing reputation among its own employees and these employees in turn affect the perceptions of customers. Thus, a positive employee perception of an organisation is an important precursor for impacting on customer perceptions of the organisation. This finding is consistent with the study of Davies et al. (2010) who finds that positive views of an organisation can be transferred from employee to customers through their everyday interactions.

Finally, in terms of employee perceptions, the findings also revealed that organisational values can guide employees to behave in a way that supports the organisation to build its reputation. This can happen because organisational values give a sense of motivation or act as a moral compass for employees to work and make decisions within an organisational framework. When organisational values are embedded in the organisation and shared between employees, it is likely to encourage employees to work together in the direction the organisation intends. However, particularly in the context of a service organisation, the issue of how organisations may build their reputation from the implementation of organisational values was found to be almost nebulous, elusive and complex. This is because, while organisations rely on their employees to deliver a service to their customers in a rather standard way, it is unavoidable to recruit employees across different spheres of life who bring their own values. For instance, an individual employee brings an established value system that is based on his or her family, religion, education, and national background. As suggested by Edwards and Cable (2009) when employees hold values that match the values of their employing organisation, the level of satisfaction with their jobs, the possibility to identify with the organisation and the opportunity to promote extra-role behaviours increases. On the other hand, when an employee enters an organisation with established individual values, this brings an element of risk and uncertainty for the organisation.

6.1.2 The conflicts in expectation of values

The following sub-section highlights three possible differences in expectations of values, as identified from the data. First, the data suggest that there was misalignment between the enacted organisational values and employee values. Second, conflict was due to perceived inconsistency between the enacted

organisational values and the espoused values, and third, there were conflicts in how organisational values were perceived. As discussed in Section 4.2, although at the beginning, the way the organisation operated was strongly influenced by the founder's personal core values, as the organisation grew, the senior management team realised that they needed to formalise the organisation's values to support the current demand from customers. Thus, the identification and implementation process of organisational values was deliberately planned and executed with the involvement of both the management team and the employees in order to impart a sense of ownership. Several activities were organised and various communication channels were used to create positive perceptions and build a shared understanding of what behaviours will be expected when embracing the values. The aim was for all employees to understand the organisational values in the same way, but the data suggest that this had mixed success. Not all interviewees agreed to uphold the enacted organisational values although this sentiment did not represent the majority of participants. This indicated that regardless of having a well-planned implementation strategy in cascading values, organisations would expect varying reactions from employees, which can be either positive or otherwise.

6.1.2.1 Conflict between organisational values and employee values

The data show the existence of a mismatch between the enacted organisational values and the personal values of employees. In other words, employees can share an organisational value while having very different ways of interpreting whether that value was congruent with their personal values. At an early stage, organisational values can contrast with employee values, which can lead to employees neglecting those values. This is because behaving in a way that

conflict with a person's values leave the person feeling uncomfortable around is or her identity within the organisation. This is similar to the study by Weiss (2001) who concludes that the effective functioning of an organisation's culture is predicated upon match or mismatch between individual values and organisational values.

Paarlberg & Perry (2007) demonstrate that the conflict could be either across different sources of values or within the content of values. From the participants' responses, the conflicts were due to several reasons. First, the mismatch between organisational values, which espoused through daily practices and employee personal values learned from family, religion and society (different sources of values). Second, an individual's disposition to respond to the organisational values to support either acceptable workplace behaviour and/or the strategic activities of the organisation to achieve desire outcomes (different content of values). Third, conflict originated from employees' own attitudes where they felt uncomfortable with or/and reluctant to adapt to changes particularly "the way things are done around here". While the first two reasons support the work of Paarlberg and Perry (2007), the third reason appears to be distinct.

6.1.2.2 Conflict between the enacted values and espoused values

Conflict was also found at the leadership level where there was misalignment between the enacted organisational values and the values espoused by the management team. This finding complements the early research by Schein (1985) who claims that values individuals and organisations espouse may differ from what they practice. Some although not the majority of participants, said that not all of the management team embraced organisational values.

Employee saw this as discrepancy that reduced their intention to embrace and internalise values. This is because the management team who do not 'walk their talk' were acting in contradiction to the enacted and codified organisational values, which impacted on employee perceptions of organisational values. This finding supports other research by Kreitners and Kinicki (2010) who conclude that the discrepancy between enacted organisational values and those being espoused significantly influence employee behaviour and attitudes.

6.1.2.3 Conflict in employee perceptions of organisational values

The way employees perceived organisational values was important. It was evident from the case study that some interviewees were unsure of the reasons for embracing organisational values while a few others were sceptical and not convinced with elements of the organisational values. Unlike a study by Sullivan et al. (2001) who argue that values serve as a motivation function for employees at work, in this study, some interviewees saw value based activities as an additional burden on top of their current work load. For example, when an employee is required to attend a program, the employee would have to leave his or her workplace for a certain time and sometimes this could be for several days. Upon completion of the program, the employees still needed to complete their work and catch up with datelines. As a result, some perceived organisational values as an unnecessary distraction for them.

However, there was no concrete evidence from the interviewees to explain why employee held such attitude towards upholding values. However, they realised that the consequences of not conforming to the expected values would compromise their fit within the organisation and their relationship with other colleagues as well as the management team.

This study found that the proposition of bridging the gap of value misalignment is a foundational issue that needs to be addressed if employees are required to carry out their jobs in accordance with the organisational values.

6.1.3 Reputation builds from values alignment

While acknowledging that not all employees will overcome dissonance between the organisational values and their own values, the analysis of the data identified four enabling remediation phases in reducing the gap. It should be noted that the intention is to reduce the conflict because arguably it is very difficult if not impossible to have no gap between organisational values and employee values. This provide valuable empirical evidence and support to the theoretical claims of how organisational values creates the context for employees to revise their perceptions of their organisational identity in this case, the organisational values, providing a sense of mission which ultimately enhances an organisation's reputation (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008). The enabling remediation phases complement the model of value of congruence of personal and organisational values (Vveinhardt and Gulbovaite, 2015) which has neglected the issue of how value congruence emerges as well as other studies that investigate the influence of values on the employee and the organisation (Vveinhardt & Gulbovaite, 2016; Edwards & Cable, 2008; James, 2014).

The first remediation phase revealed from the data was the awareness of each element of organisational values among the employees as well as the benefit of embracing such values. This links to the argument of Valentine and Barnett (2004) who found that employees with certain levels of awareness of organisational values appear to perceive their organisation more positively and

are likely to perceive greater 'fit' between organisational values and their own values. This suggests that the awareness level of organisational values is necessary as employees arguably need to be more alert and empowered in the values internalisation process. This is because when employees can see the reason and potential advantage for them and the organisation, they are more open to participating and giving their support, rather than changing their behaviour because this is requested by senior managers. For example, if a member of reception is not aware of the existence of organisational values such as "service excellence" and "care and respect", he or she will probably not attend promptly to the patient as soon as the patient arrives at the hospital especially if the values are not the staff's typical values. This is likely to affect the patient's experience and may influence subsequent decisions to come to the hospital. In this sense, the findings resonate with Davies et al.'s (2010) argument that positive views of an organisation can be transferred from employees to customers. Therefore, employee awareness of the existence and need to uphold organisational values is essential.

Besides the awareness of the importance of organisational values, the findings also captured the importance of how organisational values can support reputation building. The analysis of data showed that both the senior management team and employees were aware and concerned about organisation's reputation. As a private business entity, the organisation is aiming to be recognised as a healthcare provider "delivering premium quality healthcare with personalised experience", a specific reputation for something. The introduction of organisational values was aimed to support its reputation building. The majority of the interviewees agreed and were aware that the hospital's reputation is mainly affected by the customer's experience with the

staff. At the same time, they also acknowledged that organisational values helped shape employee behaviour that in turn supports reputation building. This is especially true when customers have the privilege of choosing other neighbouring health care providers. This is in line with the findings of Holden, Adnan, Browne, & Wilhelmij (2001) who argue that low awareness among employees about the reputational implications of their actions was the main barrier in reputation management. This study suggests that the awareness level of organisational values, particularly in a health care environment, is necessary for reputation building.

On the other hand, although reputation was relevant and essential for the hospital's survival, it was not the main reason for employee loyalty and long tenancy. Such findings challenge the work of Dowling (2002), who finds that employees prefer to work for high-reputation organisations. Since values can have different meanings to different individuals, it is important to define each value element and translate it into a set of behaviors expected. It was evident that organisational values should be articulated and communicated in such a way that they can be easily understood to ensure employees have the same level of understanding of what is expected from them. This can happen through various communication platforms and channels. Although memorising each element of values was found to be almost impossible for some of the interviewees, they could remember the essence of the values. This insight complements Ulrich and Smallwood's (2007) study who suggest that organisations with positive values not only define them but also incorporate values into the training programs and hold managers accountable for adhering to the enacted organisational values. The fact that clearly defined organisational values had a positive impact on employee perceptions is in line

with argument by Posner and Schmidt (1992) that employees who are clear about organisational values had the highest level of commitment to the organisation. This suggests the importance of communicating values for increasing employee understanding.

It is also argued that employees may revisit their personal values to match them with the organisational values as the result of articulating values. This gives a higher possibility for organisational values to be internalised and embraced. However, there was no evidence from the data to support if the level of understanding made any difference in articulating the values.

The findings of this study also show the importance of employees accepting organisational values, although there were possibilities for values to be rejected. In this third remediation phase, employees would either need to make a conscious or unconscious stance from one of resistance to one of acceptance. This is not a straight forward transition for employees especially if the organisational values were at odds with their personal values. These observations are in accordance with studies of value congruence in the workplace which have found positive relationships related to employee job attitudes (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007) and employee satisfaction (Kumar, 2012) as the result of congruence between organisational values and employee values. This work builds on these findings and suggests that employee acceptance of values is predicated on them recognising that the change in their behaviour can have positive outcomes for the organisation in terms of building its reputation.

Another important perspective in this phase is the employee's belief in the contribution of organisational values on organisation's reputation. The findings of this study revealed that employees have a strong belief that organisational

values would influence the construction of the organisation's reputation. The majority of the interviewees accepted the fact that the values that are currently in placed are appropriate and significant to form a good work culture which later helped to shape a favourable reputation among customers.

Organisational values are only visible through the actions of people in their daily tasks and activities and therefore they need to be practised and consistently reinforced. This forth remediation phase is in line with (Hofstede, Neuijen, Daval Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990) who argue that values cannot be observed directly but are manifested in the form of behaviours. In this line of thought, it is important to recognise which behaviours support or hinder the success. Through embodying the values, it is likely for the organisation to connect employees to its organisational goals, which complements the work of Dalton (2006) who argues that employees are in a position to subscribe to value-based behaviour.

This study moves the analysis beyond the mere observation that values need to be observed through behaviours (e.g., Dalton, 2006; Hofstede et al., 1990) by showing empirically that employees who consistently showcase the behaviours associated with organisational values are importantly contributing towards the building of organisational reputation. This supports Gioia et al. (2000) who argue that the alignment of behaviour with the values of the organisation is essential in building reputation. Thus, employees who showcase the behaviours associated with the organisational values are likely to contribute to reputation building.

6.1.4 Summary of first research question

In summary, the first section of the chapter provides important theoretical insights around how organisations can build their reputations through aligning employee and organisational values. The existence of a gap between organisational values and individual values would potentially lead to misalignment of values (value incongruence). Thus, the compatibility between organisational values and individual values must constantly be managed. This is important because confusion surrounding organisational values could impair organisational efforts to build its reputation.

In order to mitigate the misalignment of values, four remediation phases namely: aware, articulate, accept and act interrelate to close or minimise the gap. This remediation process encourages change from employee work-related behaviour into values-prescribed behaviour which fosters new patterns of employee behaviour that influence the building of organisational reputation. These insights shed important empirical light on the importance of organisational and employee values alignment as well as how they both impact upon organisational reputation. The remediation phases also advances the current model of congruence of personal and organisational values in terms of providing the mechanism at the stage where matching of values is measured (Vveinhardt and Gulbovaite, 2015). The model identifies the match between the values of employee and the organisation using a range of diagnostic instruments, suggesting that measuring the values becomes the focal point. However, the remediation phases suggested in this study advances the model by adding four interrelated remediation phases that demonstrate empirically the conditions to minimise the gap once value congruence has been measured.

6.2 Reinforcing organisational values through social interactions

To answer the second research question, I provide further analysis of how social interactions enforce the implementation of organisational values and how this affects employee behaviour. The finding was as expected, namely organisational values can be reinforced through social interactions. The study found that organisational values can be reinforced through a series of social influences which help change behaviour. This study builds on the previous work of Flatt and Kowalczyk (2008) and Vancheswar, Batra, and Gera (2015) in linking organisational values and reputation. However, this previous research has not characterised the role of different organisational actors in influencing various facets of the implementation process of organisational values.

The analysis of the findings in Chapter 5 demonstrates different roles in creating, communicating and enacting organisational values by three key actors: first, the senior management; second, line managers and third, the employees. Additionally, the data also highlights the consequences of social influences namely reciprocity and mimicking of behaviours.

Diagram 5 illustrates the model demonstrating the different social actors influencing the process of implementing organisational values to support reputation building.

Diagram 5: The social influence in the implementation of organisational values in reputation building

Social influence	Implementing values	Reputational outcomes

Role modelling and engagement of senior management

Embedding through line managers

Employee reciprocity

Employees mimicking behaviour

Creating

Communicating

Enacting

Building organisational reputation

Internal reputation

External reputation
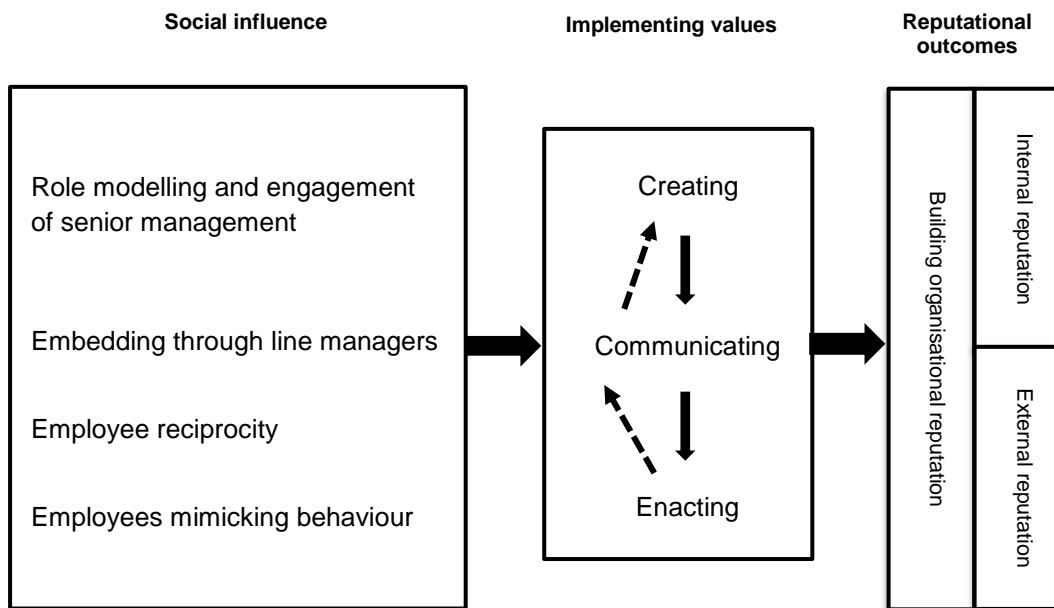
Source: Researcher's creation

6.2.1 Role modelling and engagement of senior management

The analysis of data supports the notion that senior management plays a pivotal role in introducing and influencing organisational values (Carter, 2006; Mahon & Wartick, 2003; Schneider et al., 2013). This study shows that organisational values are created by the senior management who communicate values through role modelling and continuous interactions with employees. By establishing close relationships and having direct communication with employees, the senior management team are able to convince and influence employees to embrace organisational values. Considering the findings of this study, there is nothing more powerful for employees than observing the "big bosses" enacting or behaving as they are requesting from others. This study supports the work of O'Reilly (1989) which acknowledges the social influence of leaders and managers of organisations on employee action. However, the findings extend this argument by suggesting that one of the ways for employees

to gain understanding of organisational values is by observing the actions and listening to the aspirations of others. Although the senior management team is in the position to sanction procedures and decisions, exhibiting values through their behaviour is an effective way of role modelling. In this sense, if employees see the senior management team are not living the values, the drive to uphold organisational values loses momentum.   At the same time, the senior management must be prepared to be challenged or picked up on non-value-based behaviour.   This insight adds additional support to the findings of Giberson et al., (2009) who observed that senior management characteristics impact the norm and pattern of behaviour among organisational members and the cultural values of the organisation.

Another aspect of why role modelling is essential in reinforcing organisational values was the fact that employees are looking for a consistent pattern of behaviour that supports whatever values the organisation projects and therefore both the communication and behaviour of the management team have important implications for strengthening organisational values. For example, the use of vivid language in conversation and story-telling about the organisation will have multiple meanings and interpretations by employees. Hence, senior management engaging with employees and being seen as visible are important for employees to understand what behaviours align with an organisation's values, particularly in complex organisations where expectations can be opaque.   Nevertheless, the downside to reinforcing organisational values occurs when senior managers request certain values and then behaves in ways that are contradictory to their stated values. In these circumstances, organisational values deflate motivation because employees do not trust their leaders.

Even though role modelling values by the senior management was found to be vital, the data suggest that they are not the primary influencer. This study argues that the senior management should facilitate the process by providing a suitable platform such as introducing a reward system for putting values into practice and the allocation of financial resources for any value related activities to occur in the organisation. Similarly, in a study by Gehman, Trevino and Garud (2013), they posit that the top managers were not the primary catalyst in permeating organisational values. Instead, the top managers are important in extending the communication of values to other networks such as board of directors and shareholders who are not directly involved in the operation of the organisation.

At first glance, the emphasis on the role of the senior management appears to resonate with prior top-down explanations for organisational values. But when exploring the data more deeply, the story is nuanced. For example, employee might infer that the initial proposal to introduce organisational values and the development of the implementation framework by the senior management as a legitimate order that they need to adhered to. Therefore, this study argues that the implementation of organisational values is not merely a top-down process, but requires an active engagement and buy-in from line managers and employees to create, communicate and enact organisational values. This supports previous research that suggests that the internalisation of organisational values should involve two-way communication as well as consensus between senior management and employees, rather than purely top-down or bottom-up approaches (Graber & Kilpatrick, 2008). However, this finding is in contrast with the thought that values management is a "top-down" process (Sullivan, 1983). This author suggests that leaders formulate values

and then seek to embed their core ideology into organisation communication and reward systems and thereby indoctrinate employees with organisation values.

6.2.2 Embedding through line managers

The line manager is found to be another organisational actor essential in reinforcing organisational values and reputation. In this study, line managers were well aware of the importance of values and the significance of maintaining a good organisational reputation. The causal effect is clear, when managers hold a positive view of their organisation, this spills-over onto the perceptions of their employees (Olmedo-Cifentes, Martinez-Leon, & Davies, 2014). On the other hand, a poor-quality supervisor-employee relationship is associated with managers not respecting employee feelings, not establishing open and effective communications, and not recognising employees for their efforts. All these are likely to adversely influence the reputation of the organisation involved.

In this study, alongside the senior management team, line managers participated in the brainstorming sessions and discussed the appropriate values and value-based behaviour for the organisation. In terms of communicating and enacting values, the middle managers were significant in role modeling values and in making them tangible through daily operations such as weekly meetings, huddles, and department gatherings so that values can be practiced and observed habitually. Paarlberg and Perry (2007) show that middle managers often integrate values within performance management systems, work processes and through the interpretation of strategic goals. When managers repeatedly behave in support of the values and continuously focus on ingraining values in both words and action, it develops a clearer understanding around behaviour, both among employees and between employees and customers.

Erkmen and Esen (2014) claim that when manager trust increases, employees tend to act positively with customers displaying behaviour such as patience and empathy. Similarly, this study shows the important relationships exist between managers and employees which extend the behaviours and social relationships of employees beyond their articulated job descriptions and beyond the boundaries of the organisation. The finding of this study confirmed the notion that managers are in the position to create satisfied employees because feeling empowered and positive about their organisation mean that employees can be strong advocates of the company in each interaction with customers and other salient stakeholders (Helm, 2007, 2011).

6.2.3 Employees empowering values

The analysis of data revealed that employees were influential in communicating and enacting values. Susskind, Kacmar, & Borchgrevink (2007) suggest that supporting co-workers leads to a higher level of commitment to customers while effusive supervisory support is not necessary to employee's service orientation. Indeed, the analysis suggests that the social influence among employees carries considerable value for communicating internal values. As a matter of fact, when employees were given the opportunity to be actively involved in internalising organisational values, this encouraged them to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. In particular, employees had opportunities available to them to interact, from formal events to informal social gatherings within the workplace.

The appointment of an employee value ambassador within the organisation is an example of where employees were given responsibility and commitment to ensure there was consistency in understanding of organisational values and

value-based behaviours across the organisation. Although initially the organisational values were developed in a 'top-down' way, the values were then reinforced throughout the organisation using various platforms including empowering employees to communicate values. Empowering employees related to this current study is to authorise employees to take control of value related action and behaviour in order to communicate values.

This shows the importance of both employee involvement in organisational based actions and peer support. The analysis of data supports the argument that organisational values provides a sense of mission for employees (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006), which ultimately enhances an organisation's reputation.

6.2.4 Employee reciprocity and mimicking behaviour

Data from this study revealed that reciprocity and mimicking behaviour is an important consequence of social influence that supports reputation building. According to Maierhofer et al. (2003), organisational values are embedded when they are shared to the extent that employees can anticipate other employee actions, behaviours, and expectations. It is argued that when employees adopt organisational values, reciprocity can occur, which can play a powerful role in reinforcing desired behaviours that relate to an organisation's values. For instance, employees were observed returning kindness without hesitation or offering help before being asked as if it was a normal part of their job.

Similarly, employees unwittingly imitated the act of their colleagues as a result of social influence. The data show mimicry behaviour would more be expected between employees of the same level compared to it being displayed between, for example, a manager and employee. This finding suggests that peers are powerful in strengthening behaviours that are perceived as socially acceptable.

For instance, employees imitated the gesture or behaviour of line managers and other colleagues when communicating with customers or volunteering to help customers in different circumstances. These findings corroborate the argument of Bolino and Grant (2016) who consider prosocial behavior (the actions employees take to benefit others) as an extra role behaviour employees utilise which may potentially be imitated by others. Hence reciprocity and mimicking behaviour are a powerful force an organisation can benefit from for both reinforcing organisational values through behaviour and for helping to build organisational reputation related to those values.

6.2.3 Summary of the second research question

The finding of this research elicits the impact of organisational values and social influences for reputation building within organisations. Because organisational reputation reflects stakeholder perceptions and expectations of organisations, the actions of organisations have the potential to create positive consequences (Dowling & Moran, 2012), particularly for employees regarding their work culture. This study provides strong empirical evidence to support the notion that organisational values and reputation are socially constructed (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007) and linked to different forms of social influence. The findings extend debates in the literature by showing the different organisational actors who enable this to occur (senior managers, managers, and employees) and the social influence process through which organisational values are created to build organisational reputation.

6.3 Reputational outcomes

An important issue which emerged from this study is the extent to which the implementation of organisational values impacted upon organisational

reputation. The issue of reputation as an outcome was important for both research questions. Although the focus of this study was centred around the internal mechanisms of reputation building from the employee's perspective, in order to establish this effect, information was collected from customers to establish their experiences at DEMC and therefore what reputation outcomes were observed.

The analysis of interview data revealed that customers were satisfied with the overall experience at DEMC especially its services. The fact that some of the customers were willingly recommended DEMC by their relatives and friends, and recognised the boutique nature of the hospital, comparing it to certain hotel brands, indicates that DEMC has successfully delivered on what it has promised as a 'boutique hospital'. Based on this finding, it is suggested that the service level delivered by the employees reflected its identity (organisational values) and its image (as a 'boutique hospital'), thus shaping customer perceptions of the organisation. It was apparent that the customers' experiences were congruent with what the organisation promised it would deliver. Thus, in the context of reputational outcomes, DEMC has gained a favourable reputation, as demonstrated in the previous two chapters, because of the implementation of its organisational values.

The favourable impact of organisational values on organisational reputation found from this study was expected because when the organisation is able to live up to the expectations of salient stakeholders, it may build confidence to enter and maintain a relationship with an organisation. This is particularly important to a service organisation because customers rely on reputation when making purchasing choices. This study supports the acknowledgement from

the previous literature that reputation, under conditions of uncertainty is used by individuals in evaluating organisations (Weigelt & Camerer, 1998). Moreover, due to the nature of reputation itself, which is perceptual (Fombrun, 1996), organisations can also attract new customers directly and through referrals as a result of having a good reputation. This finding supports Rindova et al.'s (2005) argument that a favourable reputation can be used as a signal to form expectations about the quality of the organisation and serve as an input to make purchases. Thus the empirical evidence from this study provides important insights around how organisational values contribute to organisational reputation (Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008; Johnston & Everett, 2012; Rindova et al., 2006; Rindova et al., 2005; Dukerich & Carter 2003).

6.4 The framework

This final section summarises the overall findings of this research by producing the framework for the empirical data of the two research questions. The framework demonstrates how the implementation of organisational values influences organisational reputation, which was the aim of the study. This framework extends the work from previous studies which recognise the prominent impact of shared values on reputation building activities (Flatt & Kowalczyk 2008; Sørensen & Sorensen 2002; Olmedo-Cifuentes and Martinez-Leon, 2011).

Although the framework demonstrates the key internal enabling mechanisms in reputation building, the analysis of the interviews revealed that not everyone in the organisation embraces the organisational values. These attitudes of not agreeing to live by the values have implications on the reputational outcome.

Therefore, the enabling mechanisms proposed in this research are important for shaping employee behaviour that supports organisational reputation.

Diagram 6: Framework of internal reputation building
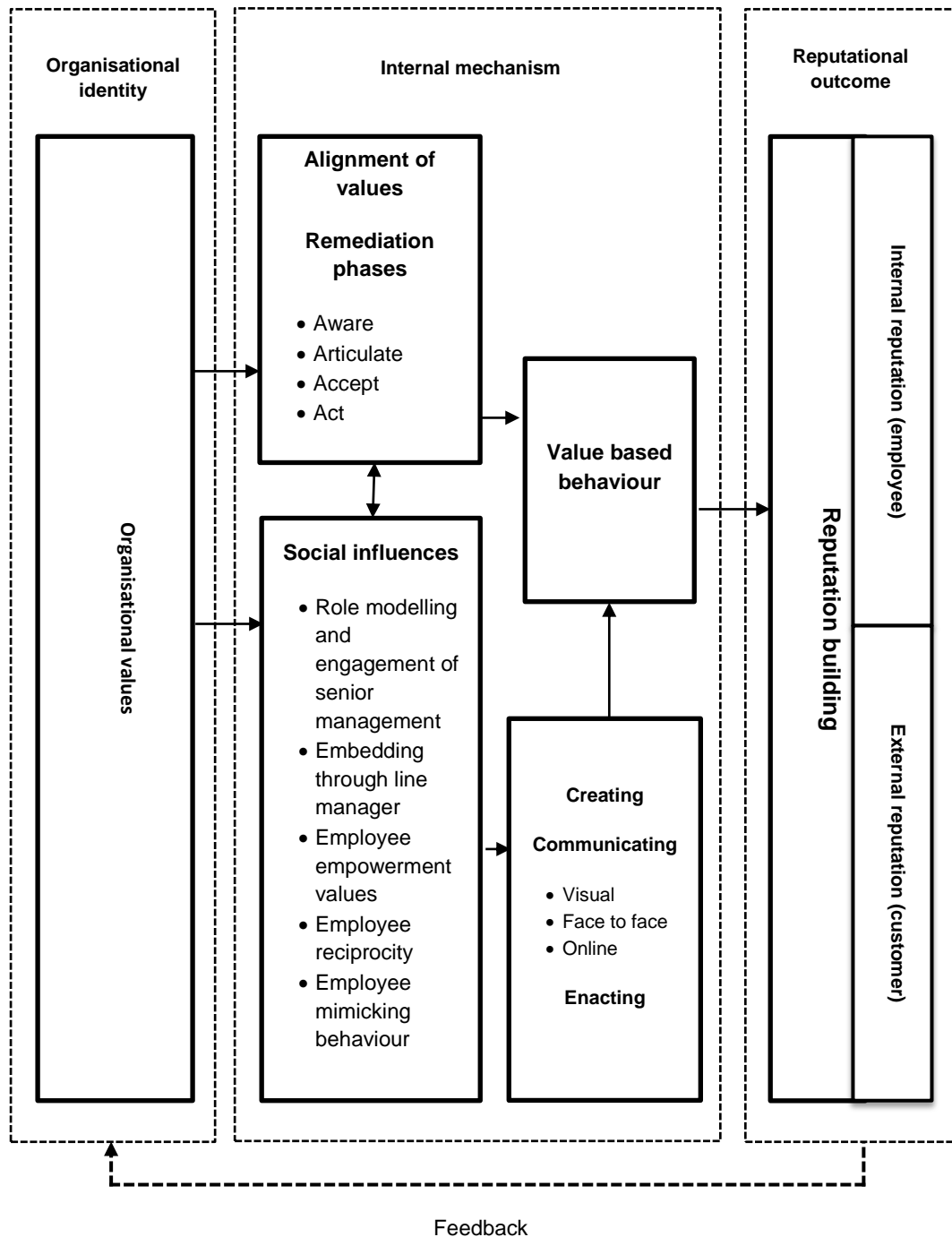
Source: Researcher's creation

The feedback loop reflects the dynamic nature of the framework. This indicates that organisational values may need to change over time when they are no

longer relevant to the organisation's priorities. It is also recognised that greater empirical and conceptual work will be needed to further test this framework.

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the overall findings of this research in relation to the extant literature. The first section offers greater understanding of how bridging the mismatch between organisational and employee values can be reduced through four remediation phases. It was then followed by the discussion of findings for the second research question that explain the different roles of senior management, line managers and employees in creating, communicating and enacting organisational values. Subsequently, the chapter discussed the reputational outcomes as the consequences of employee value driven behaviour.

This chapter concluded by demonstrating an overall framework that combines both research questions from this study. It demonstrated the main enabling mechanisms for informing the influence of organisational values on employee behaviour and organisational reputation.

The next chapter will summarise the main findings for the two research questions and will discuss the major contribution of this thesis.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

The importance of employees as stakeholders of organisations and in the formation of organisational reputation has been recognised for a long time, although the process of organisational reputation building among employees has been limited. This research was based on an extensive in-depth case study to investigate how organisational values influence employee behaviour to build and shape organisational reputation. Through taking an internal perspective, the aim was to investigate the factors that create effective internalisation of organisational values which support internal reputation building in the context of a private hospital in Malaysia. The subject organisation was chosen on the basis of its suitability to theoretically illuminate the logic of the two concepts: organisational values and organisational reputation (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

There were two key research questions which were developed to achieve this aim. First, "How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?" Second, "How do organisational values and social influence affect reputation building?"

This final chapter reviews and concludes the major findings of this research with reference to the research aim and questions. A new theoretical perspective was constructed that can add to previous research in organisational values and organisation reputation management in the context of a service organisation. Moreover, this chapter presents key contributions, limitations of this research and recommendations for future study.

7.1 Major findings

There are two key sections for the major findings in this chapter. These two findings explain the enabling mechanisms underlying the impact of organisational values on an organisation's reputation.

7.1.1 Aligning employee and organisational values to build reputation

Research questions 1: How does the alignment of employee values and organisational values impact upon organisational reputation?

The implementation of organisational values is an important organisational action for reputation building through acquiring positive employee perceptions of organisational values. This could occur because when organisational values were embedded in the organisation and shared by employees, they behaved in ways that supported the organisation's strategy to build its reputation. In order to acquire positive perceptions, the data revealed the importance of aligning organisational values with employee values. What appeared to be critical is the fact that employee behaviour in relation to their work can be affected by the degree to which personal and organisational values are perceived and shared. In other words, misalignment of values could impair reputation building because employees can be seen to be doing activities differently from the expected way of working guided by organisational values. Thus, the compatibility between organisational values and individual employee values should be constantly managed because organisational values are likely to receive varied reactions from employees, which can be positive, negative or ambivalent. This is important because confusion surrounding organisational values could impair organisational efforts to build its reputation because values may not be seen as all that important by employees. Therefore, for organisation, it is important that

employees subscribe to value-based behaviour and for managers to ensure that value congruence occurs to minimise any misalignment.

In order to mitigate the misalignment of values, this study suggests four remediation phases namely: aware, articulate, accept and act which interrelate to reduce the conflict. The first remediation phase is aware where employees could understand the reason and potential advantage for them and for the organisation from the implementation process resulting in employee becoming more open to participate. Second is the articulation of explicit meaning for each organisational value to ensure employees had the same level of understanding on what was expected of them as well as to identify the appropriate behaviour that demonstrates the values that is being espoused. The third remediation phase is the acceptance level of the enacted organisational values when employees may have had a sense of purpose to embrace organisational values. Nevertheless, there were possibilities for the values to either be accepted or rejected by the employees despite their awareness and ability to articulate organisational values. Finally, the fourth remediation phase is aligning values to ensure that employees embrace organisational values through living the values as well as the actions taken to reinforce value based behavior. The four remediation phases are interrelated and overlapping which suggest that they are neither bounded by a specific timeframe nor sequential.

This alignment process encourages change not only in employee perceptions of organisational values but also change from employee work-related behaviour, which is based on personal values, into values-prescribed behaviour. Importantly, the uniform patterns of employee behaviour when consistently practiced can have positive outcomes for the organisation especially its

reputation. Although the data in this study does not provide extensive evidence to suggest the reputational outcomes from the external stakeholder's perspective, it did reveal employee perceptions of the organisational reputation as a result of aligning and believing in organisational values.

7.1.2 The importance of social influence in reinforcing organisational values for reputation building

Research question 2: How do social influence and organisational values affect reputation building?

Within this research, it was clearly identified that social influence is an important mechanism in internalising and reinforcing organisational values for reputation building. This study suggests that organisational values can be reinforced through different forms of social influences among various internal stakeholders benefitting from the opportunity for continuous interaction among employees within the workplace. This study also provides strong empirical evidence to support the notion that organisational values and reputation are socially constructed (Paarlberg & Perry, 2007) and linked to different forms of social influence. This study extends on this literature by showing the different internal stakeholders who enable this to occur, namely the senior management team, line managers and employees, play an important role in creating, communicating and enacting organisational values. However, while the three internal stakeholders are either directly or indirectly responsible for value internalisation and reputation building, the level of participation and involvement varies.

First, this study revealed that the senior management team formulated and created organisational values that reflected the characteristic of the organisation

they envisioned to be known for (a boutique hospital). The enacted organisational values were communicated through role modelling and continuous interactions with employees. By establishing close relationships and having direct communication with employees, the senior management team were able to convince and influence employees to embrace organizational values.

Second, line managers participated in the creation of values through brainstorming sessions and discussion of the appropriate values and value-based behaviour for the organisation. The main influence the line managers were capable of was in terms of communicating and enacting values. This finding showed that middle managers are significant in role modeling values and in making them tangible through daily operations such as weekly meetings, huddles, and department gatherings so that values can be practiced and observed habitually. This means that when managers repeatedly behave in support of the values and continuously focus on ingraining values in both words and action, it develops a clearer understanding around behaviour, both among employees and between employees and customers.

Finally, the finding suggests that one of the ways for employees to gain understanding of organisational values is by observing the actions and listening to the aspirations of others. Therefore, managers who regularly engaged with employees and are seen as visible are important for employees to understand what behaviours align with an organisation's values, particularly in complex organisations where expectations can be opaque. At the same time, the analysis suggests that the social influence among employees carries considerable value for communicating and enacting internal values. When

employees were given the opportunity to be actively involved in internalising values, this encouraged them to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. The appointment of an employee value ambassador within the organisation is an example of where employees were given responsibility and commitment to ensure there was consistency in understanding of organisational values and value-based behaviours across the organisation.

Besides recognising the different roles played by senior management, line managers and employees in creating, communicating and enacting organisational values, this study also found an important consequence of social influence that strengthens standard value-prescribed behaviour. The influence especially from line managers and peers stimulates employee reciprocity and mimicking behaviour which is a powerful force an organisation can benefit from to build its reputation.

Importantly, this research also discovered the fact that the internalisation process of organisational values is partly a top-down process driven by the senior management team as well as line managers and a bottom-up process of employee involvement. Senior management alone cannot effectively enable the integration of organisational values and this requires active engagement and buy-in from line managers and employees in creating, communicating and enacting of values. This is to ensure consistency in employee behaviour which in turn increases external perceptions of the organisation.

7.1.3 Connecting findings to research aim

Research aim: to investigate how the implementation of organisational values influence employee behaviour to build and shape the reputation of the organisation.

Relating back to the aim of this study, the results show that the implementation of organisational values (organisational based actions) was an important internal mechanism for shaping employee behaviour to support reputation building. As organisational values are governed to delineate how employees should interact and provide a standard working practices which are shared across the organisation, this study suggests that organisational reputation, particularly internal reputation, can be built on the principle and foundation of organisational values. This reasoning suggests that if organisational values can modify and mould employee behaviour, then, in the long-term, it is likely to lead to the intended organisational reputation. This is because the more positively employees perceive their organisation and its actions, the more positively this will be expressed in their behaviours and in the resultant impressions of customers and other salient stakeholders (Helm, 2007; Olmedo-Cifentes et al., 2014). More importantly, the possible connection is enabled by ensuring employee values are congruent with organisational values so that employees are working in accordance with the value-prescribed behaviour. In addition to the influence of senior management, line managers and peers appeared to be powerful in permeating values across the organisation though they are involved in a different way within the value processes (creating, communicating and enacting). In other words, the initiatives involved top down and bottom up processes which involved all internal stakeholders.

7.3 Research contribution

7.3.1 Contribution to Theory

This study contributes to on-going debates in the existing literature around the relationship between organisational values and organisational reputation by

examining how organisational values influence the formation of an organisation's reputation from a social constructionist viewpoint. Indeed, the findings suggest how an organisation can take advantage of internal forces by understanding the pattern of connections among key enabling factors.

First, the study revealed that the issue of value alignment is salient particularly in service organisations because they heavily rely on their employees who are directly in contact with external stakeholders, especially customers, to deliver services. More specifically, it shows how organisational values impact upon employee perceptions and behaviours. The contribution goes further by showing the value of alignment for reputation building activities in the sense that the outcome of aligning values leads to major consequences in terms of employee behaviours within the workplace. This is an important contribution since existing research on the antecedents of organisational reputation does not specifically address the underlying issue of implementing organisational values. The findings of this research show empirically that employees who consistently showcase the behaviours associated with organisational values are importantly contributing towards reputation building. Thus, employee behaviour that is guided by organisational values has major ramifications for the organisation's reputation.

Second, with the intention to align perceptions of values, this study also suggests four remediation phases to increase compatibility between organisational and employee personal values. As such, the research contributes towards providing greater understanding of how bridging misalignment of values is important in reputation building, which has previously been neglected. The analysis presented in this study also contributes to on-going debates in the literature concerning the ability of organisational values to

build an organisation's reputation (Dalton, 2006). It is argued that a strong and positive organisational reputation can be built on the principle and foundation of organisational values. This reasoning suggests that if organisational values can modify and mould employee behaviour, then, in the long-term, it is likely to lead to the intended organisational reputation. This is because the more positively employees perceive their organisation, the more positively this will be expressed in their behaviours and in the resultant impressions of customers and other key stakeholders (Helm, 2007; Olmedo-Cifuentes et al., 2014).

Another significant contribution that this study makes to the literature is its support to the argument that reputation is socially constructed (Edvardsson et al., 2011; Paarlberg & Perry, 2007) by evidently show that social influence is important in reinforcing organisational values for reputation building. In other words, this study provides valuable evidence of the influence of different internal stakeholders for building reputation (Fombrun & Rindova, 1994). The findings suggest that organisational values can be reinforced through different forms of social influences among various internal stakeholders, including the involvement of the senior management team as well as line managers in exampling and communicating values as well as empowering the role of employees for permeating values.

Finally, this study argues that the internalisation process of organisational values is neither wholly a top-down process driven by senior managers, nor a bottom-up process of employee involvement, but a hybrid approach. This creates employee buy-in and ensures that consistent employee behaviour aligns with organisational values which in turn increase external perceptions of

the organisation. Additionally, social influence stimulates employee reciprocity and mimicking behaviour which strengthens standard value-based behaviour.

7.3.2 Contribution to Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative approach as much of the data on reputation has been quantitative in nature (Harvey et al., 2017). In particular, the incorporation of face-to-face interviews, focus groups and non-participant observations allowed an in-depth and rich understanding which enabled a detailed account of the perceptions of individual employees. To my knowledge, this study is the first qualitative enquiry to address the prominence mechanism of internal reputation building.

The research was conducted in a developing country, Malaysia, within a private hospital environment. To date, much of the work on reputation building has been conducted in the developed countries and has focused on North American and European contexts. As such, this research provides a unique empirical setting for exploring the building of organisational reputation in a non-western context. The context of a private hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia also provides a unique empirical setting because little empirically is known about how hospitals seek to build their reputations.

7.3.3 Contribution to Practice

This research has important implications for the management of organisations in terms of the development of organisational reputation and its impact amongst employees. In particular, this work provides pragmatic implications for organisational managers to better understand the notion of organisational shared values as a mechanism for building organisational reputation. It could

be used as a guideline for strategising initiatives and activities in internalising organisational values for their organisations.

In the case of a private hospital where reputation is vital, the results of this study have the potential to be adopted by managers looking to align the behaviour of employees with the organisation's objectives (reputation) through organisational shared values. It also would highlight that employees who exemplify the values in their work can have a direct impact on corporate reputation. Therefore, it would be important for managers to formulate and select the appropriate shared values to be propagated and to communicate these effectively to ensure the right behaviour is projected to and by employees. Employees who are guided by a set of organisational values and exemplify values in their work can consequently assist organisations in building better reputation because their behaviour might affect how the organisation is perceived by external stakeholders.

Davies and Chun (2007) state that organisations tend to focus strongly on what customers think of the organisation but the views of employees are also highly relevant to organisational performance. Organisations should therefore devote more resources to monitoring and developing their reputation with employees as this is an important factor in promoting positive word-of-mouth and increasing retention amongst staff. Results from this study also suggest that it is worth involving employees in the process of values internalisation to increase the chance of employees accepting values and minimising value dissonance. The more employees believe in the values, the higher the chances organisations will achieve their desired reputation through the behaviour their employees demonstrate. That said, how employees perceive the organisation determines what they say about the organisation outside, which in turn

constitutes reliable sources for other stakeholders to form perception of the organisation. Therefore, it is essential for organisational managers to involve employees in the internalising process of organisational values to support reputation building.

Additionally, the study also provided evidence of the different roles played by internal stakeholders in internalising organisational values. Because of this, it also has the potential to be adopted by managers in recognising the need to foster an environment that supports social interactions because internalising organisational values can be reinforced through different involvement from various internal stakeholders such as senior managers, managers and employees. Therefore, managers must continuously communicate values through different platforms and activities to take advantage of the opportunity of the employee's social interactions.

Based on the findings of the case study, the following managerial checklist provides practical ways to facilitate the implementation of organisational values and behaviours standards in an organisation:

Point 1:   Organisations need to determine the kind of organisation they want to be. They also need a strong reason to subscribe to a set of organisational values and understand how values link and support the organisation's vision.

Point 2:   In order to determine the organisational values, organisations must identify and recognise implicit unwritten values that are part of the current culture. These prior existing values need to be articulated and accessed in order to understand if they are aligned and sufficient to support the desired values and behaviours. At this

point, seeking the views of employees to get their buy-in up front is important.

Point 3: Identify values that can serve a common purpose and shared endeavour. The values must be simple enough for people to remember. However, it does not necessarily matter if people cannot remember the values word for word; they need to remember the essence and to enact the values in the workplace through their behaviour. As values can have different meanings to different people it is imperative to define each value and give examples of the constituent elements of the behaviour expected.

Point 4: Design and schedule a series of value alignment sessions in which all members of the organisation will participate. These sessions are aimed to reduce any possible conflict.

Point 5: Communicate organisational values through various platform and channels.

Point 6: Encourage employee involvement in communicating and enacting values as much as possible because values need to be made meaningful to employee roles and to promote a sense of ownership. This sense of ownership is important for engaging employees with the values initiative.

Point 7: Role modelling desired behaviours by senior management and line managers have important implications for strengthening organisational values among other members of the organisation.

Point 8: Make organisational values tangible through daily operations such as weekly meetings, huddles, and department gatherings so that values can be practiced and observed habitually.

Point 9:   Organisational values need to be integrated into every employee-related process including recruitment, performance management systems, criteria for promotions and rewards, and even dismissal policies.

Point 10:   Lastly the extent to which the values are present or not in the organisation needs to be measured as well as habitually revisited as they may need to change over time to ensure they stay relevant to support the organisation's vision.

7.4 Limitations of study

As with any research, it is often maintained that even the most carefully designed studies will have limitations. Despite the important contributions of this study, several limitations were encountered and should be addressed in future research.

First, this research was limited by resources in terms of time and budget and this affected the data collection process. The interview schedule was well organised to ensure that data collecting was completed on time (10 weeks). However, there were times when the participants were unable to attend the interview sessions due to work commitments and requested to arrange for another time. This was challenging because each session took about an average of 45 minutes and the researcher had scheduled for 3 interview sessions per day. Before the actual interviews took place, the researcher would start with an informal conversation with the participants to make them comfortable because it could encourage the participants to share their experiences through spontaneous feelings. Thus, it was not effective to have additional sessions. More importantly, the researcher needed positive energy

because in-depth interviews require a lot of concentration to listen to answers while thinking of questions to probe further explanation of the issues. Hence, from the researcher point of view, conducting more than three in-depth interviews per day would have jeopardised the quality of the data.

A second limitation was that the data were collected predominantly from the employees' perspective. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organisational reputation is built from the internalisation of organisational values, insights from both internal and external stakeholders should be more balanced.

Finally, the use of a sample from one single organisation in one particular industry, it is more difficult to generalise the findings to other economic sectors. However, the value of the current work lies in its theoretical examinations rather than its generalisability.

7.5 Suggestions for future research

Given that this study represents an initial conceptual and empirical investigation into the unique building of organisational reputation with employees in organisations, there is no shortage of potential avenues for future research. Although this study provides a detailed account of internal reputation building in a private hospital, there are important opportunities to extend the contribution of this work.

In recent years, most research on reputation management has focused on the antecedents, determinants and consequences of organisational reputation. Particularly in Malaysia, the interest has been on financial implications and CSR. There is little empirical and theoretical evidence highlighting how the internal factors provide valuable contributions in the area of reputation. Hence,

the results of this study will act as a framework for future research into the internal forces that enable organisations to shape and build organisational reputation. This research has evidently shown that organisational values that are aligned with employee values and reinforced through internal social influence potentially shaping an organisation's reputation. This can happen through the employees who believed and subscribed to value-based behaviour at work. This is particularly important for a private health care which heavily relies on employees. Future research would benefit from a wider range of samples from different types of service organisations across various industries such as hotels, restaurants, financial institutions, etc. which could be used to test the propositions and help to further generalise the findings. It is interesting to note that the process of formulating and selecting appropriate organisational values requires the involvement of both the management team and employees. Therefore, organisations should take caution of this issue because the chosen values would determine the way organisations would wish to be known by others, that is their desired reputation.

Additional research might also be conducted in comparing private health care providers across different country settings. This would be important because as one nationality, employees tend to share similar principles and cultures that potentially bind them together, although further research would be needed to test this supposition.

7.6 Conclusion

From this research, it is possible to conclude that the implementation of organisational values has an impact on organisational reputation. It is argued that this in turn can impact on employee perceptions of organisations and their

behaviour, which in turn can impact on external stakeholder perceptions. There are some limitations of this research such as the time and financial challenges as well as the emphasis on internal stakeholders. However, despite these limitations, this research has provided some important theoretical and empirical contributions to the organisational values and organisational reputation literatures.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

A. Interview questions – frontline staff

English	Bahasa Malaysia
1. How long have you been working here?	1. Berapa lamakah anda telah bekerja di sini?
2. Can you please describe your main roles and responsibilities? ✓ Who are the people whom you work with and interact with on a daily basis? ✓ How satisfied are you with your current job?	2. Sila terangkan peranan utama dan tanggungjawab anda ✓ Siapakah rakan sekerja anda dan dengan siapakah anda berinteraksi seharian? ✓ Sejauhmanakah anda berpuas hati dengan kerja anda sekarang?
3. Are you aware of these corporate values? [show the printed corporate values on a piece of paper] ✓ How do you become aware of the corporate values?	3. Adakah anda maklum tentang nilai-nilai korporat ini? [sambil menunjukkan helaian makluman nilai-nilai korporat] ✓ Bagaimanakah anda mendapat tahu mengenai nilai-nilai korporat ini?
4. What is your general perception of the corporate values? ✓ Why do you feel that way? Do you have any specific personal experiences? Do you mind sharing them with me? ✓ What do you particularly like about the corporate values? Why? Can you explain further? ✓ Is there anything that you do not like about the corporate values? Why? Can you explain further? ✓ Is there anything that is missing in your expectations of the corporate values?	4. Apakah persepsi umum anda terhadap nilai-nilai korporat ini? ✓ Mengapakah ada berasa sedemikian? Jika anda ada pengalaman peribadi, bolehkah anda ceritakan? ✓ Apakah yang anda <u>suka</u> tentang nilai-nilai korporat ini? Mengapa? Sila terangkan dengan lebih lanjut. ✓ Apakah yang anda <u>tidak suka</u> tentang nilai-nilai korporat? Mengapa? Sila terangkan dengan lebih lanjut. ✓ Apakah kekurangan dalam jangkaan anda terhadap nilai-nilai korporat?
5. Do you think reputation is relevant and important for this organization? ✓ What makes you think so? ✓ Can you provide any example?	5. Adakah anda rasa reputasi adalah relevan dan penting bagi organisasi ini? ✓ Apakah yang membuatkan anda berkata begitu? ✓ Bolehkah anda berikan contoh?

6. In your opinion, can corporate values influence organizational reputation? ✓ Why? ✓ What do you see as the outcome of corporate values? ✓ Can you give an example?	6. Pada pendapat anda, adakah nilai-nilai korporat mempengaruhi reputasi organisasi? ✓ Mengapa? ✓ Apakah yang anda lihat sebagai hasil daripada nilai-nilai korporat? ✓ Bolehkan anda boleh berikan contoh?
7. What effects do the corporate values have on you? ✓ Do they affect you in any way with your daily job? How? ✓ Is it important for you to work in a reputable organization? Why? ✓ How would you describe your relationship with your peers? ✓ How would you describe your relationship with your customers?	7. Apakah kesan nilai-nilai korporat terhadap diri anda? ✓ Adakah ia mempengaruhi anda dalam menjalankan tugas harian? Bagaimana? ✓ Adakah penting bagi anda untuk bekerja dengan sebuah organisasi yang mempunyai reputasi yang baik? Mengapa? ✓ Bagaimanakah anda gambarkan hubungan anda dengan rakan sekerja anda? ✓ Bagaimanakah anda gambarkan hubungan anda dengan pelanggan anda?
8. What do you recognise or identify as the most important factors for internalizing the corporate values? ✓ Why do you think that the elements you mentioned are important? ✓ Can you give me an example of a case that is relevant to what you have described?	8. Apakah faktor yang paling penting bagi memupuk nilai-nilai korporat dalam organisasi? ✓ Mengapakah anda fikir bahawa faktor-faktor yang anda sebutkan tadi penting? ✓ Sila berikan contoh kes yang berkaitan dengan apa yang telah dijelaskan?
9. In your view how would you describe the reputation of the organization? ✓ Can you give examples of what have shaped the reputation? ✓ Can you please explain what do you mean by that? ✓ When you say, […] what makes you say that? (prompt participants to give a few examples)	9. Bagaimanakah anda gambarkan reputasi organisasi ini? ✓ Apakah yang telah membentuk reputasi organisasi ini? Sila berikan contoh. ✓ Bolehkan anda jelaskan apa yang anda maksudkan? ✓ Apabila anda berkata sedemikian, [...] apakah yang menyebabkan anda memberi gambaran sebegitu (Dorong peserta untuk memberikan beberapa contoh)

B. Interview questions – line managers

English	Bahasa Malaysia
1. How long have you been working here?	1. Berapa lamakah anda telah bekerja di sini?
2. Can you please describe your main roles and responsibilities? ✓ Who are the people whom you work with and interact with on a daily basis? ✓ How satisfied are you with your current job?	2. Sila terangkan peranan utama dan tanggungjawab anda ✓ Siapakah rakan sekerja anda dan dengan siapakah anda berinteraksi seharian? ✓ Sejauhmanakah anda berpuas hati dengan kerja anda sekarang?
3. Do you think reputation is relevant and important for this organization? ✓ What makes you think so? ✓ Can you provide any example?	3. Adakah anda rasa reputasi adalah relevan dan penting bagi organisasi ini? ✓ Apakah yang membuatkan anda berkata begitu? ✓ Bolehkah anda berikan contoh?
4. In your opinion, can corporate values influence organizational reputation? ✓ Why? ✓ What do you see as the outcome of corporate values? ✓ Can you give an example?	4. Pada pendapat anda, adakah nilai-nilai korporat mempengaruhi reputasi organisasi? ✓ Mengapa? ✓ Apakah yang anda lihat sebagai hasil daripada nilai-nilai korporat? ✓ Bolehkan anda boleh berikan contoh?
5. What do you recognise or identify as the most important factors for internalizing the corporate values? ✓ Why do you think that the elements you mentioned are important? ✓ Can you give me an example of a case that is relevant to what you have described?	5. Apakah faktor yang paling penting bagi memupuk nilai-nilai korporat dalam organisasi? ✓ Mengapakah anda fikir bahawa faktor-faktor yang anda sebutkan tadi penting? ✓ Sila berikan contoh kes yang berkaitan dengan apa yang telah dijelaskan?
6. In your view how would you describe the reputation of the organization? ✓ Can you give examples of what have shaped the reputation? ✓ Can you please explain what do you mean	6. Bagaimanakah anda gambarkan reputasi organisasi ini? ✓ Apakah yang telah membentuk reputasi organisasi ini? Sila berikan contoh. ✓ Bolehkan anda jelaskan apa yang anda maksudkan?

English	Bahasa Malaysia
by that?	
✓ When you say, [...] what makes you say that?	✓ Apabila anda berkata sedemikian, [...] apakah yang menyebabkan anda memberi gambaran sebegitu
(prompt participants to give a few examples)	(Dorong peserta untuk memberikan beberapa contoh)

C. Interview questions – customers

English	Bahasa Malaysia
1. When was the last time you received a treatment from the hospital?	1. Bilakah kali terakhir anda menerima rawatan daripada hospital ini?
2. Were you registered as an in-patient or out-patient customer?	2. Adakah anda didaftarkan sebagai pesakit dalam atau pesakit luar?
3. How many times have you visited the hospital to receive treatments?	3. Berapakah bilangan lawatan anda ke hospital ini untuk mendapatkan rawatan?
4. Are you aware of these corporate values? [show the printed corporate values] ✓ How do you become aware of the corporate values?	4. Adakah anda maklum tentang nilai-nilai korporat ini? [sambil menunjukkan helaian makluman nilai-nilai korporat] ✓ Bagaimanakah anda mendapat tahu mengenai nilai-nilai korporat ini?
5. What is your general perception of the corporate values? ✓ Why do you feel that way? Do you have any specific personal experiences? Do you mind sharing them with me?	5. Apakah persepsi umum anda terhadap nilai-nilai korporat ini? ✓ Mengapakah ada berasa sedemikian? Jika anda ada pengalaman peribadi, bolehkah anda ceritakan?
6. In your view how would you describe the reputation of the organization? ✓ Can you give examples of what have shaped the reputation? ✓ Can you please explain what do you mean by that?	6. Bagaimanakah anda gambarkan reputasi organisasi ini? ✓ Apakah yang telah membentuk reputasi organisasi ini? Sila berikan contoh. ✓ Bolehkan anda jelaskan apa yang anda maksudkan?

Appendix 2: Email to the management team to formalise the request for observation sessions

Dear Sir,

Subject: Observation sessions at DEMC

I refer to our previous conversation on the above.

To recap, this study aims to explain the extent to which corporate values are reflected in organizational reputation by investigating the intermediating factors and perceptions among the frontline employees and customers. This study explores if organizational values are indispensable and should be considered as the mechanism in building organizational reputation.

As verbally mentioned to you during our discussion, the main purpose of this exercise is to observe the behaviour of the front line employees when interacting with other colleagues and when handling the customers. Through observation I would expect to gain a direct evidence to determine whether employees behave in the way they claim to behave as they occur naturally. Observation is used as a technique to support information gained from the interview sessions. For every session, I will be taking notes to capture and describe every occurrence. This exercise will not include any visual or audio recording.

The details of the observation sessions are scheduled as follows:

Date	Time	Venue
12/11/2014 (Wednesday)	11.00am – 2.00pm	Medical/General Ward
8/12/2014 (Monday)	11.00am – 2.00pm	Pharmacy and dispensary area
9/12/2014 (Tuesday)	11.00am – 2.00pm	Registration and triage counter

As agreed, your office will notify every employee through email and reminder memos to the head of departments about the observation sessions. This is to ensure that employees are aware of this exercise and may stay away from the observation areas should they do not want to be observed.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sharina Osman
Researcher in Organisation Studies
Department of Organisation Studies
University of Exeter Business School
Streatham Court, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4PU, United Kingdom
Email: so276@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Ethical approval form

Certificate of ethical research approval from University of Exeter Business School

Appendix 4: consent form for interviews and information sheet

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER | BUSINESS SCHOOL

CONSENT FORM - INTERVIEW

| Title of the study | : | **Building reputation through organisational values: A case study of a private hospital in Malaysia** |

| Name of the researcher | : | Sharina Osman |

| Institution | : | University of Exeter Business School, United Kingdom |

	I have read and understood the Study Information Sheet provided and had the opportunity to ask questions
	I understand that taking part in the Study will include being interviewed and audio recorded.
	I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and agree to take part in the Study.
	I understand that my personal details will be kept confidential (only shared with the researcher) and will not be revealed to people outside the project.
	I understand that my words may be quoted in any research outputs (publications, reports, web pages) but my name will not be used.
	I agree to assign the copyright of my interview data to Sharina Osman and that it will be stored in a data archive for future use, with identifying details removed.
	I understand I can withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason.

---------------------------------------   ---------------------------------------

Signature of Participant   Signature of Researcher

Name of Participant: Name of Researcher:

Date: Date:

Note: One copy to be retained by the participant, one by the researcher

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET (EMPLOYEES OF DEMC)

You are invited to take part in the above study. Before you decide whether to participate, please read this information sheet carefully.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This study aims to explain the extent to which organisationale values are reflected in organisational reputation by investigating the perceptions among the frontline employees and customers. This study explores if organisational values are indispensable and should be considered as the mechanisms in building organisational reputation.

2. Why I have been invited?

The study aims to seek information and responses from the line managers and frontline staff of DEMC.

3. What will happen if I take part?

If you decided to take part, the researcher will call you to arrange for a one-to-one interview. The interview will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded. There will be an interview schedule for you to choose from.

4. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

You will get to discuss your experience of espousing DEMC values and being part in the DEMC big family. Your responses would help the management to decide whether to sustain or to further improve the current climate of DEMC.

5. What are the possible risks of taking part?

There will be no physical involvement required and your involvement in this research will not affect your performance assessment and/or reward system with your organization. The interview sessions will be conducted in a safe environment between you and the researcher only. The information provided by you in the interview will be used for research purposes. It will not be used in a manner which would allow identification of your individual responses.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

All information we collect will be treated as confidential and will only be shared with the research team of my supervisors and me. The audio files of the interviews will be downloaded at the earliest possible opportunity, and then deleted immediately

from those devices. We will also make sure that all electronic data is stored securely and anonymously (without your name on it) on the University drive and protected by password.

7. **What will happen to the results of the study?**

Short quotes from your interview will be used in research papers/presentations in a way that will not disclose your identity or the organisation's to others outside the study.

8. **Who is organizing the study?**

The study is part of a four year PhD project. The study has been approved by Ethics Committee of University of Exeter Business School. If you have any issues or complaints about the study at any stage, please contact:

Prof. Dr William S. Harvey

Director of Research, Department of Organisation Studies

University of Exeter Business School

Streatham Court, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4PU, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1392 725970

Fax: +44 (0)1392 723210

Email: William.harvey@exeter.ac.uk

9. **Who do I contact for further information?**

If you have any special requirements when engaging with this research, you can contact me through my email to share any concern that you have about the research.

Sharina Osman

Researcher in Organisation Studies

Department of Organisation Studies

University of Exeter Business School

Streatham Court, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4PU, United Kingdom

Email: so276@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 5: Conflict in values expectations

Reasons for negative perceptions	Quotations
Work load	"The expectation of expressing values from the management is too much too bear. It has become an extra pressure for me besides the work load." (Participant 1/Group1/male)
	"The elements of shared values are too many to even be remembered, what more to be understood. I don't have time to spend on this" (Participant 14/Group2/female)
	"I only espouse some of the elements. My current work load limits me from doing beyond my job scope, so how can I participate in other thing? For example to attend trainings, talks, etc." (Participant 25/Group4/female)
Do not believe in values	"Staff bonding can potentially reduce respect between staff and supervisor. When we are too close with each other especially our boss, it can lead to favouritism." (Participant 20/group3/female)
Do not believe in values	"We feel being force to be someone else, not naturally comes from our heart." (Participant 35/group5/male)
Do not believe in values	"It doesn't really matter to me… I don't see how values can help me to do better…" (Participant 29/Group5/male)
	"I don't care about values. It's just there for nothing" (Participant 48/frontline/male)
	"I don't relate to those values." (Participant 40/admission and record/female)
Conflict with personal values	"We don't really care about the organisational values but we have no choice but to stand by it.

	Therefore, by the end of the day, it is merely an act […] very unreal!" (Participant 20/Group3/male)
	"Why should I become someone else when I'm not….?" (Participant 16/Group3/male)

Appendix 6: Senior management role modelling values

Codes	Quotations
Capability and attitudes mirrored the expectations	"He (manager) is very observant. He will talk to the staff when he suspects that his staff is facing a problem (care and respect) either work related or personal issues" (Participant 323/physiologist/male)
	"My boss is very supportive. She knows all the technical procedures and able to guide us whenever possible" (Participant 34/frontline/male).
	"Sometimes, I see my manager come to the ward to help with the work especially during peak hours" (Participant 26/nurse/female).
	"Our department's head is a friendly and helpful person. I notice that he is knowledgeable and understand our business clearly. (Participant19/staff nurse/female)

Appendix 7: Employee perception of line managers enacting values

Codes	Quotations
Enacting values	"They (the managers) ask us to embrace the values, but I don't think they do" (Participant 35/g3/male)
	"I have never seen my manager join any of our gathering […] but he keep reminding us about values" (Participant 19/g2/female)
	"Not all managers in the hospital seriously take the liberty to cascade values to the lower staff […] However, majority of them really good in making sure values are being embraced by the staff" (Participant 30/g3/female)
	"Yes, I think some of them (the manager) do not act according to some of our values. They do talk about the values during meeting or huddles but I don't see them applying it themselves" (Participant 31/g3/female).