

## CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION LEADERSHIP, CORPORATE CULTURE AND CORPORATE REPUTATION IN THE LEADING MEDIA GOVERNMENT-LINKED COMPANIES

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### ABSTRACT

*This study will conceptually explore the role of CEOs as communication leaders among the leading media government-linked companies. The collective narratives are expected to yield ideas concerning how their respective corporate communication schemes are structured, managed and practiced. New forms of knowledge can be derived by generally address the research question: to explore the relationship between communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation. The data collected should be able to address research objective: to identify and/determine the relationship between communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation. The most crucial aspect is how the leading media government-linked companies are utilizing their media resources to promote corporate reputation, in view of their high vulnerability to strong institutional/political pressures. A qualitative research method is proposed because thick narrative data are needed in order to capture a robust understanding on practices of reputation management through communication. Data collection will be made through face-to-face in-depth interview. The institutional theory will be used to interpret the findings and guide the analysis is. This theory is pertinent in view of the structural preconditions that govern and give the leading media government-linked companies their legitimacy. A precedent study has used neo-institutional theories in explaining the interactions involved between the media, society and organizations in relation to CEO communication aspects. This study aspires to make a significant contribution since the amount of literature available on communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation in the context of Malaysian leading media government-linked companies is relatively scant.*

Keywords: corporate reputation, communication leadership, corporate culture, leading media government-linked companies

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the study

The concept of corporate communication may be simplistically assumed as both “internal and external” in form, like perhaps in a form existing in a non-mass media organization. In a mass media enterprise, however, the external component might nevertheless include elements that are related to the media contents they produce, because such are considered as company products. Thus, similar to managing tangible products, it is logical to assume that media-based CEOs would also oversee the quality of contents the production staff creates. The CEO may not be able to inspire a competitive strategy in tangible terms like product leadership, but intangibly as communication leadership among the various strands of communicators within the media company. A media company is practically composed of content producers who communicate through their creations via mass media.

Media companies maintain a set of standards by which their corporate reputation is anchored. Often, for news organizations, accuracy, independence and impartiality (reflected in their “products”) are key determinants (Riordan, 2014). Media ownership and other issues like funding or financial sustenance do nonetheless pose threats (real or perceived bias) to media independence and integrity. The chief executive officers (CEOs) of media outlets are neither spared of say, attribution of bias by affinity or by political association. For the CEOs of Government-linked media companies, due to the inherent structure of their organizations, the perceptions of bias by the public could be a lot more daunting.

Corporate structure influences what needs to be and how information ought to be communicated. In terms of positioning and managing corporate communication, the Government-linked media companies may take up forms and practices that are different from their non-government-linked counterparts due to differences with their respective ownership structures. With the Malaysian Government having a direct controlling stake, Government-linked media companies would appear as the more exposed ones to political influence or state intervention than privately-held media corporations.

Conceivable linkages like such may negatively impact on media credibility and contribute to the other reputational challenges that media companies may be facing already. Towards sustaining or improving corporate reputation, the leadership of the chief executive officer (CEO) in corporate communication is important. By *direct* means, the CEO assumes the key management responsibility in overseeing how corporate communications are undertaken. By *indirect* means, the CEO is the chief communicator and assumes an emblematic role, in the sense that corporate reputation and CEO reputation may be often viewed

as intertwined in the public eye (Kitchen & Laurence, 2003). Notwithstanding, what the CEO projects in public reflect a representation of the incumbent government to which, the CEO role in a Government-linked media companies is at the very least, nominally linked.

According to Schein (2004), the context of organizational culture and leadership are thought to be highly related aspects in organizational life, because they similarly functioned. Also, Hanges et.al (2000) claimed that it operates similarly too. In addition, according to Schein (2004), Schneider (1987), Trice and Beyer (1993), both have reciprocal influences on each other.

### **Problem Statement**

On the ground of corporate reputation, the proposed study seeks to understand how CEOs enact their roles as a media communication leader and as a political-appointee in some ways that do not compromise the reputation of the media organisation they represent. In the past, the relationships between the state, the ruling party, government-linked corporations and the mass media in Malaysia were linked to negative public perceptions towards a number of mainstream media outlets (Anuar, 2005). Government control over the mass media, (in the name of political stability and national security as reasons) has been criticized as a major cause that threatens media freedom and credibility (Anuar, 2005; Sani, 2005; Kim, 2001). On the other hand, credibility and trustworthiness of mass media are critical to corporate reputation (Armstrong & McAdams, 2009; Oyedeji, 2006).

Dimension of reputation orientation is commonly known as shared culture. According to Balmer and Greyser (2003) and Goebel et al. (2004), vision of top management in expressing a purposeful identity is informally or formally communicated to internal stakeholders frequently and credibly. It is to ensure that a particular identity is instilled into shared cultural values as stated by Melewar and Karaosmanoglu (2006). According to Pruzan (2001), internal stakeholders appreciate a clear understanding of a company's mission, vision, and values and how the company interacts with key stakeholders. Also, understanding relationships between CEOs' personality traits and the cultural values of the organizations they lead will advance theory and practice regarding organizational culture, particularly as it relates to organizational change and development. Undoubtedly, culture in an organization plays and serves a similar function. Where according to Louis (1980); Rentsch (1990); Schein (2004), it addresses shared meaning and interpretation of organizational events.

While such criticism on the quality of some mass media may be considered valid, there is little information available that could inform how the Government-linked media companies protect their corporate reputations amidst various relationships between actors and agencies governed by institutional context surrounding it (Lanczi & O'Neil, 1996). Anuar (2005) examined the relationship between the state and the mass media from a political perspective, yet, corporate reputation by any mass media organization was not mentioned. Abbott (2011), in his study of electoral authoritarianism and the print media in Malaysia, has found a strong presence of pro-government bias in some newspapers. His study attributes such bias to corporate ownership and its perceived impact; to the legislative framework; and, lack of critical reportage that can be explained by the predominant cultural, political and social values embedded in the institutional context.

### **Purpose of the study:**

Institution has its own structure with certain level of height in social aspect. According to Scott (1995) that in order to gain stability and meaning in social life, the combination of 3 majors elements which are cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements with the association of activities and resources should be uphold. Corporate structure influences what needs to be and how information ought to be communicated. In terms of positioning and managing corporate communication, the Government-linked media companies may take up forms and practices that are different from their non-government-linked counterparts due to differences with their respective ownership structures. With the Malaysian Government having a direct controlling stake, Government-linked media companies would appear as the more exposed ones to political influence or state intervention than privately-held media corporations.

Reputation and credibility are two fundamental elements which are linked and non-separable. It could lead to either a make or break of an organization. Wrongly handle of reputation will tend to destruct credibility and vice versa. As indicated in the model of reputation building and destruction, Herbig, Milewicz and Golden (1994) had clearly demonstrated and developed the relationship between the credibility and reputation of a firm. Conceivable linkages like such may negatively impact on media credibility and contribute to the other reputational challenges that media companies may be facing already.

Given the perceived impact of pro-government bias, the purpose for this study is to fill the gap in the literature by studying how the CEOs are addressing issues of biases and protect their reputation through corporate communication. The aim is to conceptually explore how the CEOs of Government-linked media companies enact their roles as communication leaders and to inquire how their corporate communication schemas are structured and managed. The study can offer insights, perspectives and concepts on structures and practices of Government-linked media companies. Where, new forms of knowledge can be derived by exploring the relationship between communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation. The collective narratives are expected to yield ideas concerning how their respective corporate communication schemes are structured, managed and practiced.

### **General Objectives:**

To examine how does the role of the CEO influence or mediate in the relationship between communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation in leading media government-linked companies. By addressing this main question, new forms of knowledge can be derived.

### Research Objectives

- 1) To identify the relationship between communication leadership and corporate culture;
- 2) To determine the relationship between communication leadership and corporate reputation;
- 3) To identify the relationship between corporate culture and corporate reputation; and
- 4) To develop a structural measure of communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation.

### Research Questions

- 1) What are relationship between communication leadership and corporate culture;
- 2) What are relationship between communication leadership and corporate reputation;
- 3) What are the relationship between corporate culture and corporate reputation; and
- 4) How to develop a structural measure of communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation.

### Developments of hypothesis are as follows:

- H1: there is positive relationship between communication leadership and corporate culture  
H2: there is positive relationship between communication leadership and corporate reputation  
H3: there is positive relationship between corporate culture and corporate reputation

### Significance of the study:

On the ground of corporate reputation, the proposed study seeks to understand how CEOs enact their roles as a media communication leader and as a political-appointee in some ways that do not compromise the reputation of the media organization they represent. Dual roles of CEO are significantly important in the context of corporate communication of GLCs. Where Argenti (2003) found that to be an expertise in communication and as a leader of organization, CEO is the person who is taking full responsibility. He also emphasized that CEO should critically function towards adding value for both involving business and in aligning strategic decision (Argenti 2002).

The proposed study justifiably will aspires making it significant contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of corporate communication in the context of state-owned media organization. The study also will be an additional to the existing literature on corporate communication in the local Malaysian context focused on government-linked media enterprises, which is lacking so far. Probably unprecedented, its completion may bring forward new knowledge on, for example, the management structure of corporate communication in the leading media government-linked companies. If the study succeeds in addressing the research questions, the findings may inspire future research in the context of communication leadership, corporate culture and corporate reputation that still has a vast unexplored area.

### Literature Review:

Media contributes a significant impact toward reputation. Also, change is the nature of time. Therefore, due to fast pace of development mainly in digital era, the communication has also rapidly change and significantly influence the landscape of mass media. According to Carroll (2011a, 2011b) and Carroll & McCombs (2003), the news media closely and importantly play part towards building up and influencing reputation. Any sorts of damaging on reputation will leads to a crisis particularly in the communication aspect. This is true as indicated in the study by Lucero & Kwang & Pang (2009) pertaining the CEO's role in crisis communication which partly important aspect of communication namely reputation, branding, image.

The subjects of academic interest for the proposed study are the CEOs of Government-linked media companies that appear to have two roles, first, as a leader of a government-linked corporation and second, as a leader of a mass media organisation. Each organisation has its own structural attributes that determine how CEOs ought to function (Gabbioneta, Greenwood, Mazzola & Minoja, 2013). Conceivably, as consistent with expectations of an institutional view, these CEOs perform dual roles that can be sometimes conflicting, especially if the state-owned media is politicized (Anuar, 2005) and the mass media, as an institute, is ideally independent, objective and non-partisan (Biagi, 2016; Street, 2011; Detmer, 1997).

As viewed by Scott (2001), CEOs are actors within structured institutions that shape their identities and interests. Thus, enacting dual institutional roles could mean much as a division of focus (Pinder & Usherwood, 2013) which can be critical to legitimizing the adoption of specific corporate and business strategies due to other industry associations (Nordqvist, Picard & Pesamaa, 2010; Papaioannou, Watkins, Kale & Mugwagwa, 2015). Therefore, clarifying the roles of CEOs could be of some great importance (Rothwell, 2015) in the area of winning stakeholders' trust or of the corporate board, as one example (Rivero, 2004).

### Institutionalized role orientation

Towards further theoretical discovery, *Institutional Theory (Figure 1.0)* is found relevant in drawing some explanations over these CEO roles. More particularly, the CEO role is embedded in a social institution of normative, cognitive and regulative social processes that legitimize the concepts and the functions attached to the role (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Amenta & Ramsey,

2009). These processes/elements, when translated into expectations, can exert pressure upon CEOs to respond or behave in a way deemed legitimate (Mutizwa, 2015). Deviation from the institutional order that may not successfully result to wider acceptance may be meted with criticisms. Fearing possible reprisal, a CEO may instead respond by complying with the expectations or mimicking successful business models (DellaPosta, Nee & Oppen, 2016) for the purposes of maintaining stability and consistency amidst uncertainty.

In an institutionalized orientation, therefore, obedience and conformity to rules and norms are encouraged. Individuals are taught to respond in the same way that existing organizational members would respond (Jones, 2013). This could explain why organisations in a given field are similar (Palthe, 2014). The process by which organizations in a population become alike or similar is called organizational isomorphism (Jones, 2013).

Organizations are embedded in social environments and governed by structural preconditions that are driven by a need for legitimacy (Deephouse and Suchman, 2008). Therefore, the practices of strategic communication in general, and CEO communication and positioning specifically, are created, altered and performed through organization-environment relations (Fredriksson *et al.*, 2013). From empirical point of view, little is known about the role of CEO in managing corporate reputation through communication leadership particularly in the settings among the leading government linked media companies. This study has impact significantly in the context of Asian region, environment and culture. Researchers previously have used content analysis to explore how companies in the United States and Europe shape their CEO's profiles (Pollach and Kerbler, 2011).

### Responding to institutional pressures

From a neo-institutional theory perspective, organizations tend to respond in conformity with what constitutes acceptable behavior for that specific environment and particular moment (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). When affected by internal and external pressures (including uncertainties), organizations may adopt certain behaviors and copy strategies, structures and approaches from another, because of the belief that by doing so, they will increase their chances of survival/success (Jones, 2013). Hence, as more organizations perform similar approaches within the population, the more they become similar to one another (Amenta & Ramsey, 2009). This formation of similarities in processes/structures between organizations is referred to as *isomorphism* that developed as a result of coercive (regulatory and societal pressures); mimetic (copy, mimic, benchmark) and normative (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) processes that developed over time. Its cause and effect structure underpins the operational relationships found in a community of organizations (Strang & Meyer, 1993).

Thus, *isomorphism* can provide a picture of the Government-linked media companies' framework as a system and as an institution of its own. When applied to the proposed study, *isomorphism* can help explain similarities and variations in communication approach (Fredriksson, Pallas & Wehmeier, 2013) that Government-linked media companies take in relation to addressing both internal and external pressures they confront. Eventually, responses to the qualitative inquiry might also lead to informing the source and the nature of such pressures.

### Related studies

In the area of *CEO communication and positioning*, Zerfass, Vercic and Wiesenberg (2016) used the *neo-institutional theory* in explaining the interactions involved between the media, society and organisations in relation to CEO communication and positioning. Towards explaining the relationship between society and the media, the theory of *normative institutionalism* was selected. Aside from its affinity with, and being a sub-field of *neo-institutionalism*, it provides an explanation over what the media ought to be doing as it is being guided by certain norms and formal rules of institutions that guide their actions.

In a study on *media governance*, Puppis (2010) chose the *neo-sociological institutionalism* theory to explain the rules that aim to organize media systems. On democratic media governance, Hamelink and Nordenstreng (2007) cited the *normative positions* in determining the role and objectives rendered by the media, and cited the *institutional arrangements* towards understanding what directs the media to fulfill those rules and objectives.

In relation to corporate reputation, the *theory of social expectations*, as akin to institutional theory and its sub-constructs, will be explored to further ascertain its applicability. Based on the social expectation theory, meeting or failing to meet expectations has an impact on the corporate's reputation (Deephouse, 2000). Here, company reputation is anchored upon the perceived ability to fulfill roles expected by the public from corporations, thus, public expectations can become among the criteria for measuring corporate reputation (Davies, 2016).

In examining the importance of *public opinion and communication performance* to reputation, Zerfass and Sherzada (2015) made use of neo-institutionalism to develop their assumptions on the complex interactions between society, organisation and communication as agency. Part of that assumption was anchored on the symbiotic relationship between chief executive officers (CEOs) and communication professionals. They cited the work of Scott (2001) and referred to the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars for fleshing out the rules, regulations, the norms and values, and the shared beliefs that constitute social reality or the symbolic world that influences organizational behavior.

In addressing a research question which pertained to perceptions/expectations of CEOs and the executive board members on the relevance of public opinion and of the mediating role of corporate communications to organizational reputation and success, Zerfass and Sherzada (2015) mentioned some determinants of communication performance: (a) *shared expectations* as a key enabler of excellent communications; (b) personal communication which emphasizes the communicative role of the CEOs; (c) an

understanding of their own roles as communication professionals by those supporting the CEO; (d) personal engagement as communicator by the CEOs and top executives themselves; and, (e) sense of involvement from the top executives and the impression that they are personally responsible for communication as well. By these, Zerfass and Sherzada (2015) suggest that, a sort of “institutionalization” over organizational values, norms, beliefs and processes is needed in order to achieve better corporate communication performance that contributes to promoting good reputation, image and trust in a more consistent manner. Their study (Zerfass and Sherzada, 2015) presented some evidence showing that, differing views, perceptions and mindsets of top executives and the CEOs, weakens the alignment between principles and agents in corporate communications. Reputation is part of the corporate positioning process that requires consistency (among the chief officers) and a clear-cut idea of it as a core competency or competitive advantage (Deephouse, 2000; Schreiber, 2002).

Corporate reputation is a collective representation (Fombrun & Rindova, 2005), not merely by the CEO alone – who acts as the chief corporate communicator (Bennis, 1997), but even by the C-level or chief officers (i.e. CFO, COO, CMO, CIO and CCO) who are not only there to support the CEO, but also to offer their own insights and contribute to key decisions (Groysberg, Kelly & MacDonald, 2011). In some companies, top executives are considered a key driver corporate reputation (Zerfass et al., 2016). Just as so, the CEO may need the backing of a corporate communication specialist to develop programs for internal and external stakeholders in a manner consistent with the corporate identity (Kitchen & Laurence, 2003).

### **Communication and corporate reputation**

Corporate reputation is a complex business (Watson, 2010), and is not a matter of slogan-building or self-aggrandizing (Martin & Burke, 2012). According to Watson (2010), reputation does not occur by chance, for it is intertwined with leadership, management, organizational operations, relations (with stakeholders) and connected with communication activities and feedback mechanisms. Such a connection between communication and reputation has been established in a number of studies (Yamauchi, 2001; Kitchen & Laurence, 2003; Forman & Argenti, 2005; Neill, 2015).

An exploratory study by Forman and Argenti (2005) was guided by the assumption that a company’s reputation is influenced, if not determined, by the effectiveness of the corporate communication function. In their study, Kitchen and Laurence (2003) conclude that an unplanned, uncoordinated and uncontrolled communication will impact on the top, middle and bottom lines, which is why, corporate communication must be mastered by the corporation and those duly appointed to speak on its behalf. Neill (2015), in her study, was able to identify and expand a list of domain-specific specialties associated with corporate communications that include: media relations, crisis communication, content writing, social media, reputation management, internal communications and government relations.

### **Communication Leadership**

Noticeably, although there are programs in higher learning institutions about Communication leadership which contents are different, the rendered emphases in respect to leadership appear to follow a consistent universal line. That is, the course is designed to polish communication skills and offers opportunities for communication professionals to become influential and inspirational leaders – who can inspire action, persuade and influence change through effective leadership. Communication Leadership calls for environmental sensitivity (listening) and an interplay between an organisation and the needs of its constituency by connecting authentically with others.

Applying the said descriptions into the context of the proposed research, it is presupposed that Communication Leadership is mediated and managed by the CEO, and engages C-level executives to hone their own communication skills so they too, will have the opportunity to become effective communication leaders and vanguards of corporate reputation. In a book by Harrison and Muhlberg (2013) of Georgetown University, however, Communication Leadership is described as a shared effort/task between the CEO and the CCO. Although both of them are recognized as communication leaders, it is the CCO who takes the lead role and main person held accountable for conceiving/managing the content and information flow; for engaging/influencing the company’s stakeholders; and, for articulating corporate and shared cultures in promoting productive levels of attitude and performance (Harrison & Muhlberg, 2013).

### **Corporate Culture**

Group of people in senior management of an organization play the important and influential role mainly in making critical decision, collectively. According to Bennis and Nanus (1985), Davis (1984), Kotter and Heskitt (1992), Schein (2004), Schneider (1987), Selznick (1957), Trice and Beyer (1993), upper level leaders are believed to be the primary influence on the creation and development of organizational culture. There were also studies on the relation between performance and organizational culture. For instance, Tsui et al. (2006) found that CEO’s performance building behaviors (e.g., vision, visibility) and institution building behaviors (e.g., involving attention and delegation) lead to the creation of organizational processes and structural characteristics that strengthen organizational cultures. Schneider, Goldstein, and Smith (1995) suggested that the organization’s goals are an operationalization of the top leader’s personality broadly defined. Thus upper level leaders, embed their personal characteristics into their organizations by establishing the organization’s goals. An organization’s culture does not randomly form. Instead, it forms through the CEO’s key strategic and operational decisions which in turn are a reflection of the CEO’s characteristics. These decisions resulted with the formation of the basis for the shared values. Subsequently it’s becomes an organizational culture. Ultimately, the existence of relationship between personal characteristics of CEO and cultural aspect emerge in the organizations. In an organization, there is connectivity between CEO and culture. Here, understanding the personal

character and personality are important and helpful. According to Allport (1961), personality refers to the set of characteristics. Where, it defines a person and exemplifies involving interaction with others.

Culture is viewed from identity and image which directly relates to reputation. According to Hatch and Schultz (1997), culture is “a context within which interpretations of organizational identity are formed and intentions to influence organizational image are formulated”. Generally, understanding among each other is vital. In this context, CEO who is representing an organization most likely hires selective individuals similar to them. Where, they may view the organization and culture in similar ways. Schein (2004) provides specific prescriptions for developing and changing cultures based upon the theoretical relationship between leader characteristics and organizational culture. Leaders may play a critical role in the success or failure of organizational change and development initiatives.

Model of Organizational Identity Dynamics (OID) built on four processes linking organizational identity to culture and image. According to Nill and Schibrowsky (2005), corporate culture is exclusive. It is emphasizing profitability and short-term metrics which has positive correlation to unethical intentions. Also, according to Hatch and Schultz (1997, 2000, 2001, 2002) reputation orientation construct provides empirical support for the theoretical framework of OID, which indicate the interaction of identity, culture, and image towards formation of corporate reputation. Dutton and Dukerich (1991) viewed reputation orientation could provide guidance marketing managers to uphold and strengthen perceptions of corporate reputation through consistent behaviors and actions that result from the alignment of a company’s actions around identity, culture, and image. Reputation orientation is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct comprised of three factors which are labeled purposeful identity, shared culture, and image impact.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As indicated in *Figure 2.0 (Conceptual framework illustration)*, it’s a relational concept of C-level executives managing their own “reputational quarters.” Here is seen the CEO at the helm of the communication leadership. Down in the middle is found the “heart,” representing the role expectations from the CEO in his capacity as the organization’s overall leader. Internally, the CEO is cognisant about and oversees the operating functions associated with four “reputational dimensions”: governance mechanisms, financial performance, mass media content and, vision and leadership. The red matte represents hard reputational concerns (critical-to-business issues) while the blue one represents soft reputational concerns (non-critical issues).

Corporate communications is conceptualized here as a partnership between the CEO and the CCO. Together, they cover all four dimensions. The CCO’s task includes internal and external listening from the ground. Each dimension is a determinant of reputation respectively informed by one or more C-level executives whose role and competence are aligned with the context of that dimension. Yet ideally, as the literature suggests, the CEO is the person who could best personify the corporate vision, mission and culture. The CEO also embodies leadership. Thus, in this framework, the CEO joins the other C-level executives in assuming communication leadership roles according to their own expertise. All the C-level executives given a domain (to manage) reports directly to the CCO, while the latter, reports directly to the CEO.

## METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study is proposed in order to fully explore and obtain elaborative information through face-to-face interviews. A broad spectrum of preliminary questioning is anticipated before narrowing down to the core questions. The preliminary questions will be directed at establishing important industry backgrounds, more particularly in probing whether media bias is among the reputational issues they are confronting. The core questions will also contain a series of semi-structured questions that directly addresses the research question/s.

### Sampling

The corporate status, industry, names of organizations and the locations of the prospective participants are already available. To recruit, the researcher will write a formal letter of invitation, accompanied by a few statements explaining the purpose of the study. The letters will be individually hand-delivered. This can be conveniently done since the sample targets are few (just around four) located in Kuala Lumpur.

### Data Collection

**Interviews** – the researcher will make the necessary follow-ups until a confirmed schedule is arranged. The venue of the interview is requested to take place in the office or within a space designated by the CEO. Proper decorum will be observed. Permission to audio-record the interviews will be sought. The interviewee will be informed of his rights to refuse a question s/he feels uncomfortable answering. The interviews will last about one hour and conducted in English.

**Transcription** – the voice recordings will be replayed and transcribed in MS Word format. A completed transcription will be organized and filed in a flash disc to prevent accidental or unauthorized PC access. The data will be kept in a safe location until it is time for its retrieval.

### Analytical concept:

There are two sources of data for analysis – the interview data, which is the primary source and the literature – the secondary source. The interview data will be coded for patterns and themes. The themes will be analyzed alongside theories accounted in the literature to generate interpretive meaning and synthesized knowledge. The synthesized knowledge will be elaborated and evaluated to determine how the quality of the findings addresses each of the research questions.

### Data Analysis

**Theme generation** – after retrieval, the transcripts will be read and re-read many times over. Phrases or sentences that are relevant to the questions will be placed in cells (along with other excerpts) to a labeled table for coding, pattern matching and categorization. From the synthesis of the categories that developed (from the codes and the patterns), a theme is generated. These coding and theme generation processes will be repeated according to the number of samples at hand.

**Theme analysis** – a descriptive reporting for each theme will be written and used towards the stages of analysis. The analyses will be carried out by comparing and synthesizing of the results with the theories from which the interview questions were based. Depending on the turnout, individually analysed themes may be consolidated as common among all cases or otherwise treated as a contextual theme. Meaning, the findings appear to exist only in particular to a specific organisation.

### Research Ethics

The researcher will ensure that the study will be conducted in full compliance with ethical research standards. The researcher will submit all necessary documentations and seek the permission of the University prior to any conduct that will involve third party participation. The researcher will adhere to self-regulated ethical practices from the early stages of recruiting up to the final submission of the thesis. Among those that will be observed are: proper notifications and giving the participants the options to withdraw from the interview or decline a question; safekeeping of the raw and processed interview data and the destruction of data years after the study has been completed.

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Appendix

Figure 1.0: Institutional Theory

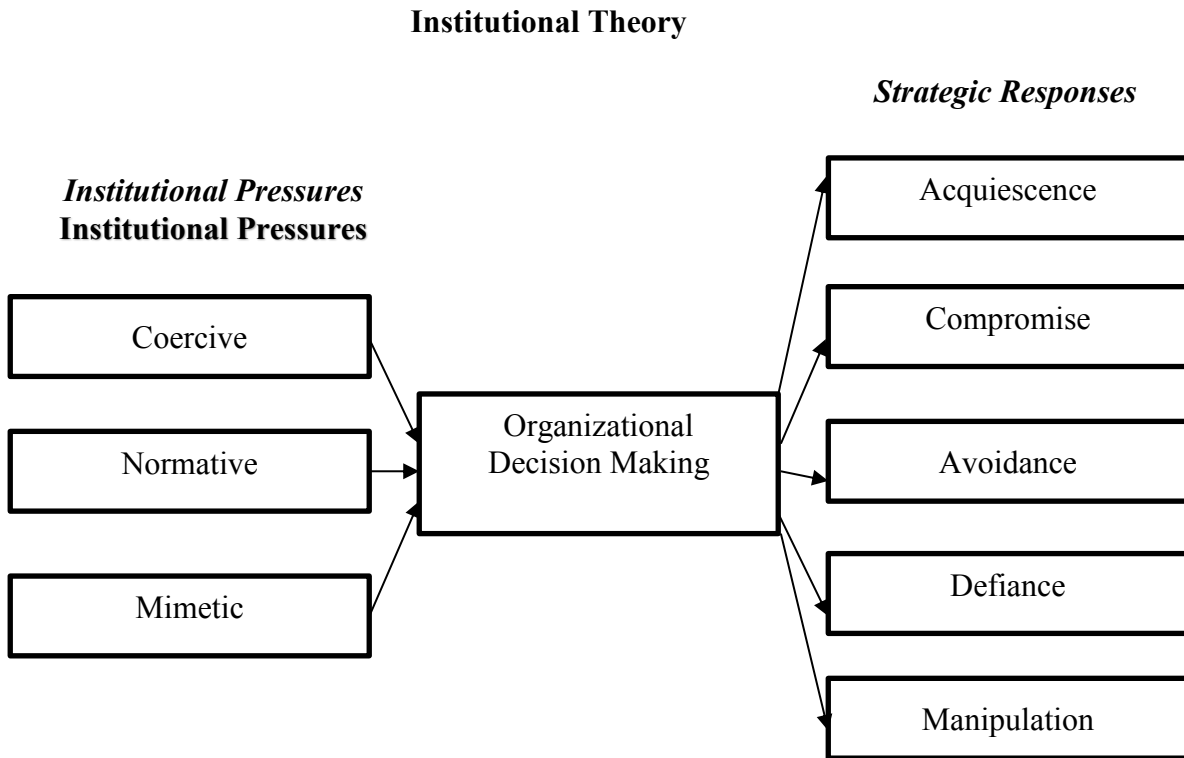
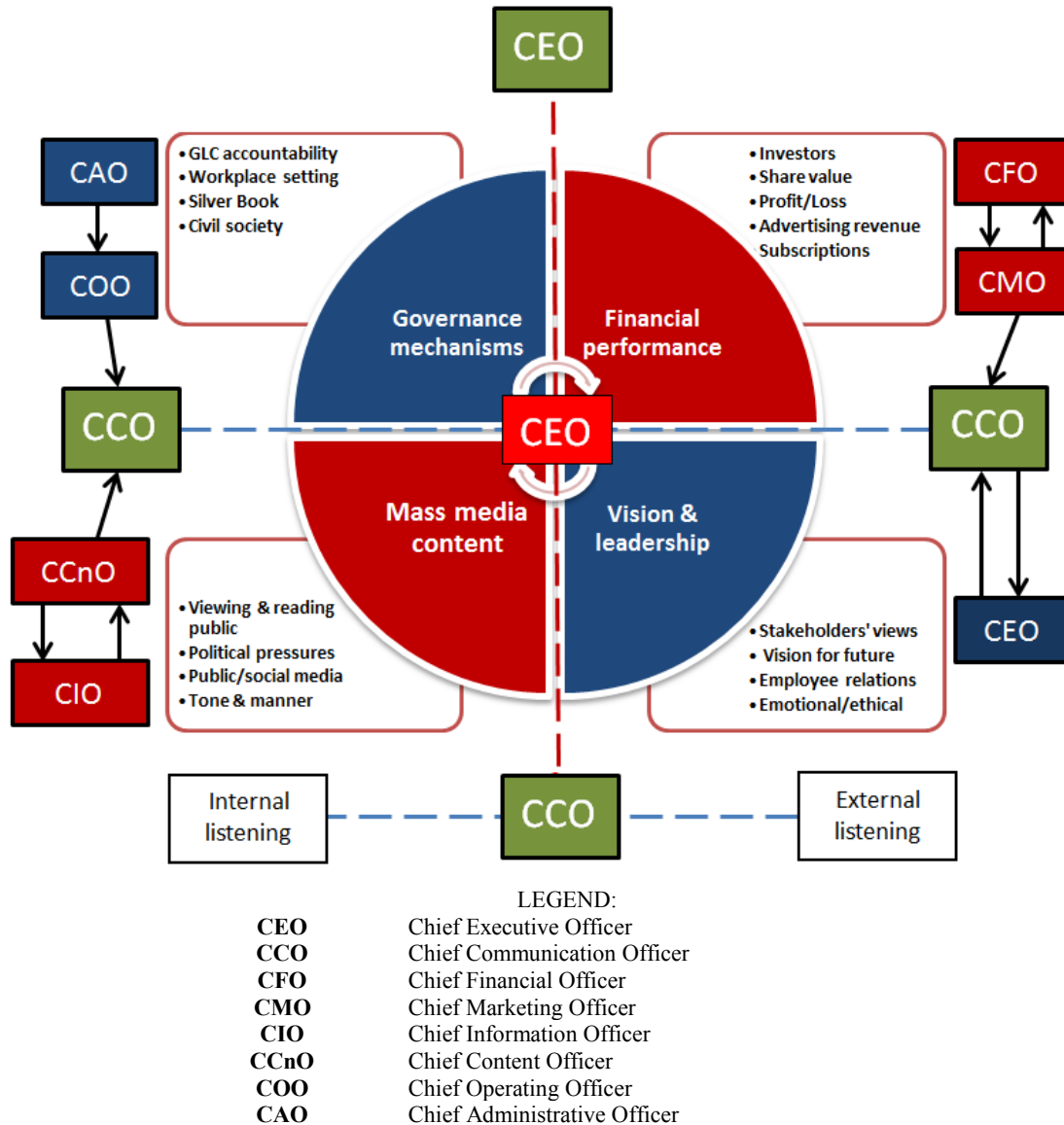


Figure 2.0: Conceptual framework illustration



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