CREATE-ING BUSINESS

UNDERSTANDING PROFESSIONAL TENSION IN AN ADVERTISING AGENCY

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Vatsala Bisen, my friend and confidant who facilitated the initial thoughts for this project.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to concentrate on aspects of organisation culture in an advertising agency and how they help us in understanding professional tensions and conflicts. To do so I have looked within advertising agencies and endeavoured to understand their organisational dynamics.

Advertising business is known for stress and tension (Kover and Goldberg, 1995). From the tension of 'pitching'¹ for a client to the development of an advert, the agency goes through a variety of stages where conflict, stress, internal politics and tension influence the outcome. One such tension which this research attempts to understand is the ongoing professional tussle between the creative division of an advertising agency and management.

This tension between the two bodies has been studied by advertising research however these studies have only attempted to describe the conflicts that exist as well as suggest what the advertising industry can do in an attempt to tackle these scenarios. Alternatively this research applies concepts of Organisational Behaviour (OB) such as culture and identity to grasp the reasons behind this professional tension. It also recognises a strong link between identity and culture. Therefore the research challenges the common view of organisational culture, that is, it portrays culture as a form of normative control unlike the conventional notion of culture as the means of unison and conformity without resistance within an organisation. This approach will examine what role culture plays in the professional lives of an advertising agency.

¹ Is a key step in winning a client account, here several agencies are invited to respond in person to the advertisers brief. This is an important stage to demonstrate potential and add value to the product or client. Based on aesthetic values the client then makes a judgement to pass the responsibility to develop an advertisement for the product.

To analyse the role of culture as a form of control I developed a methodology that targets multiple facets of organisational culture. This research is based on a case study of an Aotearoa, New Zealand based advertising agency (pseudonym Organisation B). It involved the use of various research approaches including story or narrative analysis and rich pictures to capture the core assumptions, values and beliefs that sometimes surfaced as resistance within this agency.

As a result of completing this case study I achieved some understanding of reasons that may trigger tension within an agency. I learnt of the normative and bureaucratic forms of controls used within this contemporary organisation and the rationale behind their development which I have referred to as the overarching story of Organisation B. This research also provides a new dimension to advertising research by focusing on the role of organisational culture and identity in fostering professional conflicts within an agency.

This research has emphasized the role of organisational culture as a control mechanism for those in management positions. In this particular agency this is achieved via the development of a 'laid back' and 'casual' culture which is carefully designed by the owners of the business thus providing them an opportunity to curtail any resistance originating within the culture. Nevertheless, members of this agency continue to channel their resistance by striving towards the ideal creative identity. The implications of the findings to the larger advertising industry suggest that:

- i) Growing advertising agencies need to consider fractional views embedded in their organisational structures and realise that cultural change does not happen in isolation.
- ii) The research also proposes that having a strong culture is not synonymous to success and unity among a workforce.
- iii) There is a need to maintain a balance between creativity and strategic planning, as they are both crucial in an advertising industry.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	2
ABSTRACT.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS	6
TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	8
RESEARCH INSPIRATION	9
RESEARCHER BACKGROUND	11
OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS	13
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
INTRODUCTION	16
PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES IN A CREATIVE INDUSTRY	20
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OR ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL?	27
IDENTITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION	35
CONCLUSION	39
METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY.....	41
OVERVIEW	41
EPISTEMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE	43
<i>Nature of Reality</i>	43
<i>Role of the Researcher</i>	45
<i>Research Strategy</i>	46
<i>Nature of the Data</i>	47
METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES	48
<i>Case Study Approach</i>	48
<i>Narratives and Stories</i>	50
<i>Context Sensitive</i>	53
CONCLUSION	55
METHODS.....	56
OVERVIEW	56
INTRODUCTION TO ORGANISATION B.....	57
SEMI-STRUCTURED, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS.....	59
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION.....	61
RICH PICTURES	62
DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE	65
LIMITATIONS OF METHODS.....	68
RESEARCH ISSUES	69

<i>Ethical Issues</i>	69
<i>Confidentiality Issues</i>	70
DATA ANALYSIS	71
OVERVIEW	71
STAGE SETTING	72
<i>Let's Get Our Story Right</i>	72
<i>Characters Sitting Upstairs and Downstairs</i>	75
<i>The Prologue</i>	78
<i>Setting the Stage</i>	85
DATA ANALYSIS- THE PLOT	89
<i>Meta-narrative</i>	98
<i>Pulling the Stories Together</i>	104
CONCLUSION	108
DISCUSSION	110
OVERVIEW	110
<i>"It's A VERY, VERY FLAT PYRAMID"</i>	113
<i>"A VERY DISTINCTIVE CULTURE AND WE BUILT THAT CULTURE"</i>	117
<i>"WE HAVE ACTIVELY CREATED A GROUP OF PEOPLE..."</i>	121
MY NARRATION OF THE STORY OF B	123
<i>Normative Control</i>	123
<i>Bureaucratic Control</i>	128
IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH	131
<i>For Literature on Organisational Culture and Identity</i>	131
<i>For Literature on Advertising</i>	133
<i>For Professionals in Advertising</i>	133
CONCLUSION	136
SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS	136
LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH.....	137
FUTURE RESEARCH.....	139
REFERENCES	141
APPENDIX	151
ILLUSTRATION 1: SAMPLE RICH PICTURE PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS	151
ILLUSTRATION 2: SAMPLES OF SYMBOLS PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS	152
INFORMATION HANDOUT	153
RESEARCH AGREEMENT	155
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: FOR LONG SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW.....	157
INFORMATION HANDOUT FOR RICH PICTURES	159

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Diagram 1: Organisational Chart of Organisation B 58

Diagram 2: Overview of people and controls involved in developing an advert at Organisation B .. 73

Figure 1: Clayton’s Rich Picture showing management controls in Org. B 80

Figure 2: Mark’s rich picture showing the domination of one department in Org.B..... 81

Figure 3: Jack’s rich picture showing the constraints over creative teams..... 83

Figure 4: Rich picture by Nathan portraying the development and acceptance of an idea 84

Figure 5: Schien’s model of the three layers of culture. 86

Figure 6: Serena’s rich picture showing a connection between interesting work and money 103

RESEARCH INSPIRATION

Switch on your television set and I can assure you that within the hour of your favourite soap opera your mind has been the target of various companies selling what they want you to buy through commercials. Ruby Wax's *Commercial Breakdown*, an interesting series on Prime Television, presents a selection of the world's weirdest and funniest television advertisements. Such advertisements are only on-air for few minutes but they are a mark of originality and creativity. They serve their purpose of leaving an impression on the consumers, thus in turn effectively serving the marketing strategies of the large and small corporations who develop, and sell products and services.

My research draws its inspiration from these commercials; it goes behind the scenes and explores the world of advertising. While looking at what goes into making these product- selling devices, it asks how does creativity and project management come together to form a marketing solution for the producer? The research draws on organisation studies literature and uses this knowledge to understand the people dimension of the advertising industry. It addresses the tension between the creative side of an advertising agency and its management who manage the projects as well as find the clients, whom are of great value to the agency.

The theoretical inspiration is rooted in management literature that offers various dimensions to understanding and challenging organisations and their orthodox approaches. By this I mean that organisational studies assume a simplistic understanding of organisational processes, where, like in a science experiment, people can be manipulated and their behaviour can be calculated to achieve a norm. These studies eliminate the larger social, economical and historical influence over organisations. They treat organisations as machines therefore providing a causal,

usually positive, relationship between strategy and results, thus undermining the complexity of motivation, group dynamics, culture and identity. Analysis of culture and identity in this research is done so to challenge the conservative view of organisations as neutral instruments where members share common goals, and where political activity and contested goals hinder the effectiveness of an organisation. What makes this study critical in nature is that it attempts to understand culture and identity as more than just binding forces in organisations; it assumes that culture and identity can also act as softer forms of control over behaviour, values and beliefs. Soft controls that target the belief system of an individual have social characteristics, for example, the removal of bureaucratic control but introduction of softer controls such as expectations and values of work.

Parker (2000) began his book *Organisational Culture and Identity* by asking "Do organisations shape the identities of their members? And if they do, can (and should) managers seek to influence these identities in order to manage more effectively?"(pg: 1). This question has provided me with the curiosity and zeal to investigate the dynamics of culture and identity in organisations, particularly in advertising agencies, and the role of culture in shaping those identities. The aspect that I find interesting about this question is it challenges the notion of individual identity; it has the potential to question the role of managers in influencing subordinates to supercede their individuality in order to follow a path that leads to the success of the organisation.

RESEARCHER BACKGROUND

This research was a culmination of my academic interests and my personal experiences. My background has largely been in psychology, and I completed an honours programme in psychology for my undergraduate studies. Studying organisational behaviour in the third year of my undergraduate study I developed a keen interest in the human aspects in organisations. To further my interests I pursued the opportunity to study a Masters in Management Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. I was particularly attracted to the one year thesis project which was an opportunity for me to develop fascinating questions for research.

During the course of my first year study in Victoria University Wellington Management School I developed a deep curiosity in the dynamics of organisations, especially organisational culture. This was one phenomenon which remained a topic of discussion all throughout the papers I studied, such as strategic management and leadership. With the help of the school's management I was allowed to pursue a special topic; Culture in Organisations, which complemented the development of my research project.

In the process of pursuing my special topic, I reflected on my previous personal experiences with my friend who worked for an advertising agency. Her job profile in the agency was of a client service agent, which was a nexus between the client who approached the agency to develop commercials and those within the agency responsible for advert development. Her role was strenuous and she spoke a lot of clashes between team members and managers of various teams. One unique thing about her experience was that despite a stressful environment, the executives worked long tedious hours without complaints. This distinctive behaviour of her colleagues

brought me to question, and further explore, the influences of organisational culture in advertising agencies.

My understanding of organisational behaviour concepts made me inquisitive about investigating literature around organisational culture which could be reflected on the dynamics of advertising agencies. In the process I came across advertising research literature which confirmed my assumptions about existing tensions between advertising professionals. Consequently, my experience and interest in the organisational culture and of advertising professionals allowed me to question the frameworks applied to study these phenomena. I wanted to find out how these tensions had been studied earlier and what is it that previous advertising research has not considered in their investigations.

Therefore my research assesses the tension between advertising professionals through the lens of organisational culture and identity. Drawing my inspiration largely from the work of Anthony (1994) and Parker (2000), I was able to challenge the role of culture as a form of control in two aspects: firstly, how managers attempt to control their workforce through building a value system and secondly, how these control mechanisms are maintained in organisations. My research will attempt to provide an analysis of deep rooted assumptions and beliefs which form organisational culture. These assumptions answer the questions: who we are, what is our purpose in the organisation and what is our belief system? These assumptions guide actions and interactions within the organisation, and therefore it is important to study them with the anticipation that they may help explain the dynamics of an advertising agency.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Before I discuss the focus of my thesis, it is important to provide a general mind map of what directions this thesis will take. For this purpose I provide a brief overview of all the chapters that follow.

The first chapter focuses on the theoretical foundations of the research. The literature review has been divided into three large sections which discuss relevant topics providing a framework to understand the dynamics of the organisation in study. This literature is also the main source for developing a research gap for this study. The first section in the review introduces advertising research literature and explores the professional tension and issues between management and creatives referred to in recent advertising literature. The second section of the literature review examines concepts from organisational studies, in particular, organisational culture. Here, the literature questions the role of culture as a form of conformity and harmony or control. The third and final section of the literature review provides literature on identity and how it can be understood in the context of an organisation. This literature also shows a connection between organisational culture and identity. The three broad sections of literature are connected to show a research gap which gives rise to critical questions.

The second chapter offers the methodological and epistemological approach of this research. The epistemological approach presents the nature of its reality; it introduces my role as a researcher and my research strategy and also mentions the type of data that has been collected for this research. The methodological perspective section of this chapter conveys the use of a case study approach and narratives to explain the role of organisational culture within the organisation in study. This perspective also

explains why the study is context sensitive and what the role of a meta-narrative is in this particular case.

The third chapter introduces Organisation B, the organisation under study. This chapter also unfolds the tools of data collection, in other words, methods used for the research. Towards the conclusion of the chapter limitations of the methods and research issues related with the study are discussed.

The fourth chapter focuses on the key findings of this research. It is from this chapter that I have attempted to introduce the findings and then the discussion in the form of a theatrical play. This data analysis chapter is extensive; therefore it has been divided into two sections: data analysis (stage setting) and data analysis – (the plot). The first part of data analysis (stage setting) introduces the participants of the research as characters sitting upstairs and downstairs. There is also a prologue, which addresses the professional tension within the agency in study. The final part of this section uses two models of culture to explain the cultural model within Organisation B. The second part of the data analysis (the plot) presents the key findings of this research in the form of a meta-narrative and by synthesising earlier analysis.

The fifth, one of the most important chapters of this thesis, is the discussion chapter which connects the theoretical framework with the key findings in this research. The discussion focuses on addressing, first, how we can understand the professional tension through the lens of organisational culture and identity. Secondly, it reveals how in Organisation B culture management techniques have helped the management to suppress resistance and that the culture of Organisation B is designed to suit the needs of an ambitious management. This discussion also provides my contribution to the study of organisational culture as well as two critical findings of this research as aspects of normative and bureaucratic controls operating within Organisation B. The discussion chapter concludes with the implications of the research for organisational studies literature and advertising literature, along with professionals in advertising.

The sixth chapter is the conclusion of this thesis. It provides a synopsis of the key findings along with limitations of this research. This chapter is brought to a close with the presentation of suggestions for potential future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

From the early 1980s researchers and scholars (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Ouchi 1981; Deal and Kennedy, 1988) have been occupied with defining and understanding the role of organisational culture in the success and failure of corporations. Organisational culture was widely regarded by authors (such as mentioned above) as a symbol of consensus and conformity, the glue that binds an organisation. The ideas of managerialism have dominated organisation studies. These views assign managers the exclusive power to control the organisations, define goals and the means to achieve them. In other words, this view suggests that everything can be managed efficiently as long as the 'right techniques' are implemented (Knights and Willmott, 2007). According to this perspective, organisation culture is treated as something an organisation has (Smircich, 1983) and can be manipulated as a variable by managers to provide better results for the organisation. Organisational culture is viewed as shared values, norms and beliefs. It provides commonsense to an organisation's members, which they draw upon when working their way around an organisation's various processes (Brewis, 2007).

Similar to organisational culture, identification is based on shared social processes and meanings, which we use to decipher the world around us and provide meaning to organisational dynamics (Alvesson, 2004; Batteau, 2000; Eisenberg & Riley, 2001; Martin, 1992; Parker, 2000). However, individual identities within an organisation do not always exist in harmony. Individuals remain in constant flux, for example, as an individual we may be a student, wife, daughter or friend, depending on the situation around us. People need to constantly switch roles and identify with different responsibilities and if our personal life is complex, it is hard to imagine how organisations and the individuals working within it maintain conformity. This view of

ambiguity and complexity is aptly described as the fragmentation perspective of culture by Martin (1992), where ambiguity and differences in views surrounding the organisation are considered to be its essence, and where no consensus exists. This view does not deny the existence of organisational culture but it perceives it as originating from a myriad of beliefs and assumptions. One way of viewing an organisation is as something consisting of different lights; where for certain issues a few lights come on while others remain off and unaware. Therefore, from an aerial view such an organisation will remain in a constant flux, where lights appear and disappear and where no one pattern is repeated.

Considering this view of organisational culture, I agree with the theorists such as those who propagate the understanding of culture as a contested terrain. There are multiple views and these are in constant tension and ambiguity. However, based on the roles that individuals play in an organisation there can be a formation of subcultures, such as a team leader and their team members, whom will operate according to their own values, or may resemble a kin group with specific rules and obligations for its members. Sometimes such conventions can also work as instruments of power, where those who identify with the positions, such as team managers or heads of family, possess the power and those less powerful, such as team members, are familiar with these distinctions. An example would be from the case study of Casey (1999), where patriarchal and normative controls of family values supercede hierarchical controls. Individuals co-perform (familial) monitoring and regulate behaviour within a unit. It can, therefore, be suggested that teams and similar ideologies tend to conceal power conflicts and display conformity which in turn reinforce the existing power structures (Casey, 1999; Fleming, 2005; Knights & Willmott, 1987; Sewell & Wilkinson, 1992; Sinclair, 1992). However, the existence of power structures does not indicate a total eradication of resistance. Individuals who do not wish to conform to the prevalent structures and values often develop their own means of coping with situations thus enacting a form of resistance which reject management ideologies.

Following the aim of critical management studies I wish to look beyond the functional aspects of organisations and its members. I have inferred that conventional studies of culture have regarded organisational culture as a symbol of conformity, thus underplaying the role of power and politics in its construction. The purpose of this research is therefore, to study the dynamics of ongoing professional tension within advertising agencies. To support my views I will present literature which highlights my area of study: issues pertaining to concepts of culture and identity as it relates to advertising professionals.

To do so the literature is divided into three broad sections. The first section looks at professional identities in advertising agencies and the literature here provides the foundation for this research. It exposes the professional tension in advertising agencies and brings forth the diverse views employees of an advertising agency hold about creativity and work. Towards the conclusion of this section I will propose how organisational studies can help us understand the dynamics within advertising agencies.

The second section of this literature is a discussion around organisational culture that briefly defines what organisational culture is from a managerial view of culture and where it is treated as a variable to provide organisational success. This section further examines organisational culture as a contested terrain, where culture in an organisation can be defined as “a constraint and as an everyday accomplishment” (Parker, 2000). Here, culture is discussed as an instrument of power, where in order to ‘make sense’ of their surroundings and situations individuals organise their own thoughts and beliefs, and those who have the power are able to dominate this reality. In other words, individuals who come into an organisation are usually instilled with a certain set of values and beliefs which define the standards and everyday functioning of the particular organisation. However, it is noteworthy that these beliefs and values dominated by those with the power to make decisions and define goals. This section also introduces culture as a form of normative control, where manifestations of culture maybe used to monitor the behaviour of individuals. This research is a critical study

into how these concepts manifest within the organisational culture of an advertising agency. Specifically, I focus on the power dynamic between different employees within an industry that is commonly perceived as creative.

The third and final section addresses identity as a social construction by contextualising individual identity formation within the influence of personal and organisational factors. This analysis is aimed at providing literature where organisational identity can also be used to instil values which may help maintain organisational solidarity. Therefore, an organisational identity can outline expected behaviour which can be used to scrutinize employees and work as an instrument of power. The literature here will show a relationship between identity and organisational culture and how identity is used by members of an organisation to make sense of ambiguous situations.

The three sections of literature provide a foundation of organisation studies which assists my study of the professional tension within advertising agencies to be recognised and documented in advertising literature. The two concepts from organisation studies act as lenses to observe the existing dynamics within one advertising agency based in Aotearoa New Zealand. In conclusion I present two guiding questions which will assist in the understanding of professional identities in a creative industry, such as advertising. The questions ask, first, whether the ongoing professional tension within advertising agencies be studied through the lens of organizational culture and identity. Second, if this professional does exist within the agency then how might the management handle it?

The introduction of this chapter discusses the literature of advertising research. This literature is built on a discussion around professional tension existing in advertising agencies. The literature suggests that there are largely two types of professionals who are involved in the process of making an advert. Their categorisation and identity lies in the type of work they carry out. Advertising literature strongly supports the two sides of work within an agency (Koslow, Sasser and Riordan, 2003). Here, one group of people possesses more project management skills with their goals directed towards sales and marketing (Kover, 1996). Conversely, another group of individuals are involved in the artistic and idea development processes behind advertisements (Kover et al., 1995). The literature suggests that a combination of the two - a creative person involved in project management and an accountant involved in creativity - is not possible. In this thesis the two sides are delineated as the 'creative' and 'management' or 'managers' respectively.

This section develops an indepth discussion around those who are defined as 'creative' and those, such as management, who are less creative, but are still involved in the management of the ideas produced. The literature on advertising suggests a strong dichotomy between creative and non-creative, and it is also the role of this literature, along with this research to challenge this concept. The following discussion also addresses the ongoing tension between 'creative' and 'management' in relation to the debate between creativity and effectiveness. The section concludes with a summary and leads into the following section that considers how this existing professional tension might be studied.

Florida (2002) views the creative class as one with an independent mind, who are devoted to art and creativity as a liberating outlet from bureaucratic control, such as a

boss or superior. According to Florida (2002), these creative peoples' values are embedded in individuality, meritocracy, diversity and openness. Individuality is described as nonconformity to organisational directives and norms. These individuals attempt to create an identity that reflects their creativity and poetic endeavours. It is the construction of this identity that is the subject of this discussion. A creative identity is so valued by creative professionals yet is a 'problem' for those who then *manage* this creativity. Hackley (2000) has elaborated this point in his discussion of the tacit means used by management to suppress conflict and reach agreements that legitimises the corporate. He asserts that a common source of instability in an advertising agency is the tension between creativity and corporate instrumentality. However, this has been effectively managed by implicit means of control, and the emphasis on the importance of managing and sales-strategy skills in daily communication, thereby overruling the importance of being a 'creative' and not involved in strategy development. Amabile (2001) however takes a different position, acknowledging that managers cannot ignore business imperatives and while working towards these goals unintentionally design organisations that stifle creativity.

Creative identity complements the definition of creativity which is the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns and relationships to create meaningful new ideas and interpretations (Anonymous, 2008). In Hartley's (2005) opinion workers in creative professions, such as a designer, writer or a producer, identify more with their skills rather than the industry as a whole. The working environment is just one component which can strongly influence this creativity. Components such as expertise, creative thinking skills, motivation, freedom and diversity of thought can also lead to creativity where individuals will be able to develop novel ideas to solve problems. This motivation is intrinsic, driven by an internal passion that allows the individual to provide far better creative solutions than through external incentives such as money (Amabile, 2001; Katz, 2003). Katz (2003), while exploring the various myths attached to creativity, suggests that it is not a solitary act, but rather a collaboration of various people with complementary skills. Nevertheless, such organisational imperatives, such as budgeting or increasing sales, may create difficulty for creative professionals to develop and maintain their creative identity in a commercial reality that is governed by

effective matching and a strategic fit. It is also difficult for managers to attribute the creative outcomes to one body, as creative campaigns are influenced by various embodiments of power, such as the account managers, clients, industrial regulators and media owners (Hackley & Kover, 2007). It is under such pressures of accountability and measurement that creative professionals experience a mounting pressure to act and talk in professional language, the very definition of which contradicts what their 'creative' identity (self) stands for (Steel, 2007). Speaking of identity, Mead (1934), Berger and Luckmann (1966) all suggested that the definition of self is always socially constructed. Similarly, recent work of Wijk and Leisink (2004) point out that creative professionals who work in organisations such as advertising or graphic designing may exist within two realities that construct their identities.

First is the 'unprofessional' identity, a liberal and artistic side of work which is aesthetic and driven by a much deeper purpose. This characteristic corresponds to a workforce which prefers to be principally casual or freelance, thereby working with a number of employers and companies (Mc Robbie, 2006; Wijk & Leisink, 2004). Kaslow, Sasser and Riordan (2003) believe that creative professionals' notions of appropriateness or originality of an advertisement are connected to their own aesthetic tastes. These authors also emphasise that there are strong differences in subjective perceptions within advertising agencies and roles influence these perceptions. The alternative side to this is the bureaucratic/scientific approach that characterises good management practice. This perception is largely governed by a research environment and the development of a customised solution which must 'formalize, solidify, ratify and crystallize how people respond to the advertising' (Kover, 1996).

The latter has become an important issue for the creative professionals. In El- Murad and West's view, account managers or client service agents see advertising as a means to achieve a specific objective and action (2004). Kaslow et.al (2003) affirm that creative executives do not appreciate the strategic boundaries imposed upon their work. In current management practices, where everything is meant to be done in a logical fashion, Steel (2007) believes there is not much space for imagination to run

free hence people are “becoming less interesting, less intelligent, less persuasive and less creative” (pg: 13).

Management practices tend to follow scientific approaches that encourage agencies to read, research, think and analyse. Organisation of thought is considered the only path to having a creative idea (Owen, 2007). Hackley (2000), while addressing the nature of work in advertising agencies, suggests that the corporate understanding of the world, where rational, strategic goals take precedence over the aesthetic and instinctual response to advertising is dominant, is also supported by the statistics provided by ‘judging creative ideas’ where only 13% of agencies supported radical work and none of the clients wanted anything to do with radical ideas (Smith, 2006). Kaslow et. al. (2003) suggest that occasionally account executives, due to their close contact with clients, suffer frustration with the advertisement when it is far from the strategic direction provided by the client, thereby tending to stereotype creatives as having inappropriate notions of work and advertising. This difference, which also stereotypes the roles played in an agency, can also reflect the pressure and influence key players in the agencies can have upon development of great ideas. Kover and Goldberg (1995) discuss in their study, the ‘games’ that copywriters in advertising agencies play in order to control their creative work. The authors suggest that these professionals consider their work almost an extension of them and hold notions of parenthood towards it. Therefore, when their work is controlled or manipulated by anyone, such as account managers or executives, creative professionals develop a feeling of resistance and contempt. The creative professionals feel that the formalised and bureaucratic pressure hinders their creative pursuits and therefore, they view themselves different from the managerial professionals and perceive the agency stifles their efficiency and creative ideas. Creative individuals view themselves as transcending the organisational bureaucracy and seek approval from artists and creative professionals outside their firm, rather than from the clients and consumers of their creativity (Hackley & Kover, 2007).

Such a response to the pressures of identity is explained by Leonard (1984) as an outlet which results in resistance. According to Leonard, individuals with an intention to overcome their alienating working conditions turn to activities that are of benefit for them rather than the organisation. These activities may be an attempt to improve their working conditions and an identity-enhancing use of their time. This may be relevant to advertising as 'creative' individuals may intend to build an identity which supports their rebellion against symbolic areas of corporate conformity (such as clothing) (Hackley and Kover, 2007). This resistance and rebellion may also be one of the many reasons behind advertising agencies falling below average on the 'challenging work scale', which is one of key elements which influence organisational creativity (T. M. Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996), according to a study by (Ensor, Pirrie, & Band, 2006). Wijk and Leisink (2004) believe that creative professionals are honest and open about the instrumentality of their job and that they view it as holding lower value than their own, original 'private' writing. To show this, the authors provide an account of freelance graphic designers, who seem to affirm the concept of multiplicity of identity as creative professionals in today's work context. The authors suggest a conflict between the identity of a graphic designer with a need for creative freedom against an identity as an employee within organisational structures. Depending on those structure's constraints and opportunities the professionals adapt various identities. However amidst all the ambiguities that come with this, professionals intend to choose freelancing over any other work choice, as it allows what they believe to be 'creative freedom'. Creative professionals also seem to place a deeper meaning and attachment to personal work which gives them approval from peers who share the same values. Peer regard is not only beneficial for identity formation but it serves as a strong indicator of what is successful creative work, and what the responses are to the constant changes in style of advertising or designing (Pratt, 2006).

This preceding discussion suggests that 'creative' professionals may at times choose to rebel against existing conditions as an expression of their individuality or as their search for an ideal creative self. Therefore it becomes crucial to think and ask whose interests are actually being marginalised? Are the creative professionals making a divide in order to further foster their identity construction and development? Or is this

resistance and rebellion towards symbolic areas of organisational structures and controls their way of seeking approval from those whose opinion they so value (such as peer approval)? Perhaps, this struggle is an outcome of their objection to being turned into information processing systems by corporate conformity. In turn, the creative professional may just be seeking downtime, which is actually free from organisational constraints and where their ideas would emerge intuitively rather than being processed via a rational scientific approach.

To provide further understanding of the debate between creativity and effectiveness, Hackley (2003), has attempted to provide an explanation based on the epistemological models/ understanding of team members in advertising agencies. The author believes that the way team members (account managers, account planners and creatives) perceive the consumers is based on their own world view. Account managers focus on effectiveness as they understand the world as rational where consumers respond to stimuli. Whereas, the creative professionals view the consumer as a being who engages with the advertising and makes sense according to his or her beliefs and senses. These different understandings between the 'creatives' and 'management' gives a different outlook in which to view the existing tension between the two groups. With the help of these perspectives we can at least attempt to unfold and expose one of the many aspects, that influence the tension between those who create and those who manage creativity.

This contest between the value of creativity over effectiveness and vice versa has been ongoing and is something discussed largely in research. The literature studied here does reflect this constant tensions and conflicts within the ownership of a creative piece and the processes by which this is achieved. Kover and Goldberg (1995) point out that 'advertising is a business known for stress and tension. Much of this tension derives from both the uncertainty of producing advertising and its approval' (pg: 52).

Nevertheless, some advertising literature has also acknowledged the need for planning within creative agencies. Thus within the realms of this tension one cannot ignore the importance of strategic planning and working within the organisation's structures. West and Ford's (2001) writing on risk taking and clear organisational philosophies within US based advertising agencies conclude that agencies with strong identities and employees who are aware of constraints and limitations tend to take more risks compared to those agencies without such identities. This risk taking attitude is considered beneficial for bold and creative advertising, and often creative directors and writers are hired for their abilities to define and negotiate risk. Koslow et al. (2003) in using the advances in creativity theory as a means to investigate different perceptions that effect strategies, originality and artistry, found that creative professionals associate originality within strict boundaries as something highly creative. Hackley and Kover (2007) see the role of organisational structure in the professional life of creatives as positive for it provides security and money. Nonetheless they emphasise that creatives need psychological 'space' to create and therefore will tend to resist any agency's structures and strictures.

Hackley (2000) suggests that in the duality between 'advertising is art' versus 'advertising is business', the latter discourse, which in this context are current management practices in advertising agencies, seems to dominate. Account managers control the activities of the agency and their approach is the strategic essence of advertising, where coming up with the best idea is the most important factor and one that requires research and a thorough action plan. Nevertheless, it cannot be assumed that agencies can rely solely on creativity or that the only way to survive in a creative industry is to develop rigorous and robust strategies to support creative ideas. The dominant discourse may indicate that power lies with the planning managers, yet it does not show creativity as suffering from this. In fact, as suggested by the discussion above it is this power conflict and friction between the interests of the 'creative' and the 'management' that leads to great advertising. Kaslow et al. (2003) studies further supports this by indicating that it is a combination of originality and strategy that provide great breakthroughs in creativity. Therefore it will be foolish to place the responsibility for creative advertising on either side of the industry, for in reality the

conflicting interests between effectiveness and creativity are mutually dependent (El-Murad & West, 2004).

In conclusion I would like to acknowledge the existence of tension between creatives and managers/executives and in turn this can result in both positive and negative outcomes. So the key question now is can organisational studies literature help us understand this tension? To answer this, the following section looks into one of the most influential and fundamental aspects of organisational studies – culture. In doing so I aim to explain some of the underlying assumptions and implications behind the existing tension within advertising agencies.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OR ORGANISATIONAL CONTROL?

Organisational culture has been a topic of discussion among many academics, researchers and management consultants for over twenty years. During this time, researchers have grappled with issues and various perspectives surrounding organisational culture. Defining what culture is has kept scholars occupied interpreting whether it is a source of harmony or if it is conflicting and inconsistent. Some critics have labelled studies of organisational culture to be a dead end, dominated by managerialism and not offering anything new (Martin, 1992b). However, before I get into the debate of whether organisational culture has anything new to offer or is it just a remedy to organisational problems; I will provide a discussion on what organisational culture is and some definitions of how theorists view this subject. In the concluding portion of this section I will relate the relevance of organisational culture to an understanding of the ongoing professional tension in advertising agencies.

The study of organisational culture has been going on for sometime and theorists still debate what exactly organisational culture embraces and how it operates in providing effectiveness. It is not just the academics grappling with this problem; practitioners

also acknowledge the role of culture in their organisational processes, though remain uncertain about the exact role of culture. Riad (2005) quotes one of the merger-change managers “everyone knows that culture does something, somewhere, somehow...” (pp. 1531).

In the 1980s, studies of organisational culture were undertaken by researchers in an attempt to provide a *solution* to American managers strive to equal the economic boom of Japanese industries (Meek, 1988). Alongside this and the expansion of the service industry, several other reasons triggered off a myriad of work looking into organisational culture. Expansion of the service industry meant workers were demanding more autonomy as they became increasingly educated and skilled. Due to these changes, some organisations gave up various forms of traditional authoritarian controls and developed means by which the new workforce could be given more freedom. In doing so, they took on values which complemented and served the purposes for organisational productivity. Such values would work alongside system techniques such as ‘Just – in –time’ and ‘Total Quality Management’ as well as involving a highly committed workforce (Brewis, 2007). Following these developments, theorists provided studies that circulated the concepts of organisational culture, such as work of Ouchi, 1981, Peters and Waterman, 1982, Deal and Kennedy 1988. These studies suggested a managerial definition of developing organisational culture, as an organisation which has a culture that can be manipulated (Anthony, 1994). This kind of culture lay below the surface of the formal systems of an organisation and could support the managerial strategies in leading the organisation towards success (Smircich, 1983).

Several studies supported the idea that organisational culture had a unifying nature and was something that managers could shape and modify. Culture was considered to be created by the management who then instilled certain beliefs and values to ensure members behaved in an ‘appropriate’ manner. Studies of this type worked within the realms of a functional or mechanistic framework, where the organisation exists and

responds to its environment. Thus, culture is viewed as a variable that can be manipulated by managers for predictable results (Smircich, 1983; Brewis, 2007).

Anthony (1994) comments on the managerial perspective of organisational culture as a substitution of commitment for systems that are now deemed to be expensive, ineffective and outmoded, such as the JIT and TQM techniques. According to this perspective organisational culture can be deliberately shaped and maintained. This standpoint shows organisation as a social unit directed towards achieving goals and it is characterised by formal roles that *define and shape the behaviour* of its members (Robbins, 2003, *emphasis added*).

Based on this mainstream view, the following literature explains the role of organisational culture as something that an organisation *has*. Clark (1972) considers an *organisational saga* as a collection of values with a strong purpose that gives its members an identity and a source of pride. This ideology reflects extreme loyalty and 'give (s) the organisation a competitive edge.....The genesis and persistence of loyalty is a key organisational and analytical problem' (pp. 183). Ouchi and Jaeger (1978) in presenting their organisational ideal theory Z, attempt to provide an American solution; 'which allows individual freedom while using the work organisation to support and encourage the stability associational ties' (pp. 312). This theory places emphasises on the affiliation of the individual with his or her organisation and the authors claim that 'people employed in a Type Z organisation *should* be better able to deal with stress and *should* be happier than the population at large" (pg :312, *emphasis is added*). Writing on the causal relationship between organisational culture and effectiveness Kilmann, Saxton and Serpa (1985) discussed three impacts of organisational culture; - direction, pervasiveness and strength. These three interrelated aspects were treated as causes of various organisational performances. For instance, through direction, 'culture is causing the organisation to follow' (pp.4); pervasiveness 'is the degree to which the culture is widespread, or shared, among the members of the group' (pp. 4) and the strength of the cultural impact 'is the level of pressure that a culture exerts on members in the organisation, regardless of the

direction' (pp.4). Schein (1985) suggests a similar causal relationship of culture and notes that it is the 'embodiment of solutions to a wide range of problems' (pg: 20). Schein goes on to argue that strong cultures are more heavily linked to organisational effectiveness than weak cultures and a strong culture can be deliberately created. Sapienza (1985) illustrates the role of managers in not only shaping but being shaped by the organisational culture. Her study exemplifies the position of organisational culture as a set of shared beliefs that can determine the world view of managers while being a 'powerful shaper of organisational strategy' (pg: 68).

Meek (1988) provides a critique of the book *Gaining Control of the Corporate Culture* by claiming that the theories offered by authors rests on the foundation that shared values and beliefs create an organisation-wide consensus and predict behaviour. This claim is in line with my understanding of the conventional perspective of organisation culture. Here, culture is treated as a variable, one that encourages positive and 'right' behaviour and enhances organisational performance. Not only does culture bring about self esteem, pride and identity its to members it also seems to suggest that strong cultures can lead to increased effectiveness. Denison and Mishra (1995) claim that their study found organisational culture measurable and related to important organisational outcomes. Therefore drawing from the literature used in my reasearch, it can be assumed that a culture that encourages all to relate and associate strongly with organisational goals must also create a divide between those who are in and those who are outside of the culture. It is here that underlying conflicts within culture's meaning comes into play. The mainstream literature, which largely focuses on providing one best solution to organisational effectiveness, fails to cover aspects that represent distinctive understandings of culture and may not be so pervsuasive after all. There has been an attempt by theorists (see Barley, 1986, Young, 1991) to propose an existence of subcultures, which are considered to be 'islands of clarity in the sea of ambiguity'(Martin, 2002) (pg: 94). These subcultures may conflict with other existing subcultures in the organisation; however these theories also recognise their similarities and unities. These differentiation perspective theories, embody the works of Van Maanen 1991, Barley 1986, Mumby 1987, 1988, Trice and Beyer, 1993, some recognise the existence of subcultures at lower levels of the organisation, while others

acknowledge an assortment of cultures and stress the opposition by workers towards the management that they introduce and bring attention to the power issues and potential conflicts (Martin, 1992a). Therefore it also portrays culture's potent ability to be used as control, since it is through culture that we make sense of what our world is (Anthony, 1994).

It is this relationship of dominance and conflict that creates ambiguity in terms of culture in an organisation; it is this indefinite organisational culture which Martin (1992b) is referring to in the fragmentation view of culture. Such a culture results in subcultures having different meanings attached to them, signifying that a group may not have one uniform meaning attached to it. Indeed, there is a contestation of meaning, where individuals and groups may struggle to define the purpose of the organisation to coincide with their different understandings (Parker, 2000). Therefore such an organisation will represent its culture as something that it *is*. That is to say, an organisation's culture signifies the organisation as an expressive form, which speaks of its underlying values, norms and beliefs. Anthony (1994) likes to refer to this view as the anthropological definition of culture, where culture is embedded in the organisation's history and its structural relationships. Culture may also emerge organically in an organisation as its members attempt to cope with situations or display forms of resistance (Collinson, 1998; Ackroyd and Crowdy, 1990; Fleming and Sewell, 2002; Corley, 2004). It is from this view that organisational culture is turned into a study of social phenomenon, and a metaphor (Smircich, 1983) where the understanding of culture goes beyond its functional perspective to become a manifestation of symbols, plural meanings, power and knowledge. This research will focus on such a viewpoint, paying close attention to its expressive and symbolic aspects. My broad research agenda will focus on the individuals' experience of this organisational phenomenon, where local beliefs, values and meanings are embedded in the larger social, economical and historical context of the organisation. This context not only shapes the culture but also affects individuals' thoughts and actions to benefit the particular dominant groups within the organisation (Knights and Willmott, 1987; Parker, 2000; Alvesson, 2004). Literature on organisational culture, particularly mainstream studies, suggests that organisational culture is the glue that binds all in a

network of shared meanings and beliefs. What this literature ignores is that culture may also be an environment where there is organisational tension and politics. It can be an environment where culture management programs influence both the work and non work boundaries of employees. Recruitment, reward and training programs attempt to foster conformity, consensus and corporate values, while reducing boundaries between work and non work situations. Ross (2003) suggests in his study of media companies that these supposedly humane organisations provided no downtime to employees. Due to the instilled work values employees even agreed to work 70 hours a week, as if they are on a continuous 'high' of working. The employees take such things on as they consider the organisation their first home and their work as defining who they are. Thus it can be concluded that these values normatively control and align employees work behaviour towards maximum productivity and that the corporate values seep into life beyond work (Fleming and Spicer, 2004; Fleming, 2005).

The issue of controlling behaviour brings me to a key aspect of this research - the use of organisational culture as a form of normative control. Organisations cannot operate without controls, and control seems to be the central feature of many organisational functions as well as studies (Delbridge and Ezzamel, 2005). Earlier writings on organisational control focussed on output controls and examples of this include the work of Frederick Taylor, who designed efficient ways of controlling production. In this he took the control found on assembly lines and moderated to apply it to bureaucratic control associated with formal rules, hierarchies and career structures in organisations that required more discretion and autonomy. So in order to control their workforce managers had two choices, either the technical control of the assembly lines or the bureaucratic controls that involved employee vigilance.

The observations of Ouchi (1980) draw attention to values, beliefs and traditions and their potential use as control strategies. This view initiated a shift in conceptualisation of control from purely technical and formal to social characteristics. This led to an abundance of work on organisational culture. It introduced control in the form of a culture which targeted the values and beliefs of employees in an attempt to achieve

desired organisational outcomes. Here control was not overt, it was internalised by employees as a set of values that complied with their beliefs about the organisation.

In present-day research Robertson and Swan (2003) have discussed this as normative control in knowledge intensive firms (KIF). These firms are the new face of organisations in modern times, instead of assembly lines, people in organisations today work with ideas and provide services that cannot be imitated by machines. Therefore it has become critical for organisations to maintain normative and softer control, such as culture, rather than ones built around structure and hierarchy, which represent little autonomy and discretion. The authors here suggest that normative control in KFI's offers the best chance for management to maintain an expert workforce and resolve issues of control. Normative controls serve to self discipline and integrate employees through the development of a strong culture. However, a strong culture tends to produce homogeneous and consensual values which override the capacity of individuals to reflect critically on values or even choose alternative value systems (Willmott, 1993).

Through behavioural compliance to coercion, reward and constraint a strong culture is created which comes to reflect the values and beliefs of the organisation (Anthony, 1994). Such a culture is easily transmitted to new members of the organisation who adhere to their (management) control by alleging loyalties and commitments that are derived through the mechanisms of culture. This notion of strong cultural transmission is highly debated in critical organisation studies. Studies by Barker, 1993; Robertson and Swan, 2003; Alvesson and Robertson, 2006 illustrate how a strong culture that emphasises high identification with teams and with the organisation as a whole can serve as surveillance and disciplining mechanism for employees therefore leading themselves towards subjugation. As aptly stressed by Knights and Willmott (1987) "those who are relatively powerless have internalised the normative structures that sustain their subordination" (pg: 47). In broad terms, critique of the conventional view that originates from critical studies of culture suggests that culture is either used by those in power to brainwash or persuade employees to follow desired organisational

values. Second, that management assumes that culture management and control is unproblematic and uncomplicated.

As discussed at the start of the debate around organisational culture, the answer to all 'problems' seems to lie in the development of 'strong cultures' where high levels of commitment can lead to organisational success. Such commitment is targeted and manipulated by management. The authors of conventional perspectives suggest that culture serves as an integration process, where conflict can be eradicated if each individual develops similar work practices and identifies with the organisational goals. These perspectives 'exclude or channel ambiguity from the domain that is labelled culture, in effect excluding from analysis all that which cannot be explained' (Martin, 1992b pg: 140).

In my view, this sense of a strong culture leading to positive outcomes is a little presumptuous. The example of strong cultures leading to a disastrous outcome is observed in the case of the New Zealand Police. Due to the many complaints and cases filed against members or associates of the New Zealand Police, an investigation into the police attitudes was carried out. This report considered the attitude or "culture" of the New Zealand Police organisation and found one intrinsic attitude of police culture was the encouragement and development of a strong masculine culture. Employees having a strong bond with colleagues led to a negative impact on the standards of conduct within the Police in areas such as no 'whistle-blowing', ignoring inappropriate behaviour and attitudes towards alcohol (Bazley, 2007).

It is my belief that if we agree with the conservative view of culture as a set of embedded shared values and beliefs among employees, which in turn provides a strong sense of identity, we then accept subordination and the alleged 'easy control' that comes along with development of this culture. Therefore there is a need to challenge this simplistic and supposedly positive view of culture in which management is able to exercise control and transmit their values easily through validated

assumptions. This engineering of culture is encouraged by the management and caters to their belief that organisational culture can be managed and designer employees are a possibility (Casey, 1999; Parker, 2000).

This discussion around the use of culture as a form of control brings me to address how this organisational phenomenon will help me study the dynamics within advertising agencies. From the literature discussion I have come to see culture as being viewed under two perspectives. First from a managerial perspective and second through an anthropological perspective which recognises power and politics as part of culture. During my study I attempted to apply the concepts of organisational culture upon an understanding of how culture may or may not be used to control professional tension in advertising agencies. The two perspectives of culture helped me understand whether the tension between 'management' and 'creatives' was effectively managed by organisation-wide consensus or whether there room for members to develop and maintain subcultures? Lastly, I attempted to study whether an organisational culture influences the creativity of an advertising agency.

IDENTITY AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

Organisational culture and organisational identity are closely related. Organisational culture as a concept was introduced in the late 1970s when there was a general decline in religious beliefs and individuals searched for a purpose or a meaning in their work scenario. Identity at work is formed as a response to the alienation caused when a worker does not derive any meaning from their work, and it seems to be 'a means to an end, that are external to work' (Brewis, 2007pg: 344).

If organisational culture is understood as a reflection of 'how things are done around here', then our identity is usually an interpretation of what we do, and how others outside perceive / understand what we do. Mead (1934) suggested that the definition

of self is always socially constructed where the sense of self is mirrored through what others around us perceive us to be. Further definitions and a clearer understanding of identity as a social construction were provided through the work of Goffman (1971) and Gergen (1985). Batteau (2000) speaks of organisational culture as a long negotiation and he believes that there can be no single definition of culture, and that its meaning is open for reinterpretation. It is this nature of culture which produces choices and alternatives for the articulation of meaning and gives rise to the construction of identity. Shared historical events and experiences are also a source of social cohesion that helps us make sense of our organisational or social existence.

An individual's identity involves two notions. One where self-esteem and self concept plays a role in our identity formation. The second is the sociological notion, which includes reference groups and the roles that individuals are assigned to (Thompson and McHugh, 2002). Personal identity reflects our beliefs, experiences and images that we have identified as those that best describe us. In turn social identity defines our negotiation with social scenarios, where we can strike comparisons and adjust our behaviour according to the demands of our social structure. This process of negotiation between the individual and their social structure reflects the impact that the society at large can have on identity formation. Organisations which are also a part of this social structure will therefore play a critical role in influencing how an employee forms their identity. Gioia (1998) interestingly emphasised the features of individual identity and extended them to notions of organisational identity. Processes such as socialisation in an organisation, motivation and psychological conflicts can then be best explained through employee's identity formation. Our interaction with the external world imposes labels on us to which we react, renegotiate or resist (Hackley and Kover, 2007). It is this construction of an identity, situated within the larger social and economical context that has become a growing area of study amongst theorists and management scholars.

This organic construction of identity develops over a period of time in organisations and reflects how organisational identity is a production of the everyday negotiation

between working conditions and those who work. Pratt (1998) suggests that organisational identity comes about when 'one comes to integrate beliefs about one's organisation into one's identity' (pg: 172). He believes that in the act of identification, the individual either affiliates with an organisation, where they share similar values as the organisation or they attempt to change the concept of themselves that it becomes similar to the organisational values. For example, if I wish to be like my boss then I will try to incorporate his/her values and beliefs into my identity.

Since identity is largely governed by the beliefs that we either associate with or differ from, it can be understood as one's need to classify oneself or belong to a group with similar characteristics. Yet, the individual wishes to distinguish oneself from others. Maintaining this balance has come to be a challenging task for individuals, leading to ambiguity in actually defining identity (Gioia, 1998). However, it is believed that this ambiguity provides space for the individuals to adapt and change to social opinions and beliefs (Weick, 1995; Gioia, 1998). A study by Alvesson and Robertson (2006) supported the role of identity formation in highly ambiguous work contexts. In their research on consulting companies; they found that in an ambiguous environment individuals could draw on a multitude of resources to invent their own version of an 'elite' identity. This social elite identity allowed the members to generate self control and discipline which matched the interest of the firm and promoted the development of a secure identity that allowed them to work in a challenging and ambiguous work context. This identity also helped intensify the commitment to live up to the high standards of the organisational life and involved long working days to maintain the identity. However, these social values drawn upon were congruent with the type of people recruited by the firm, therefore simplifying "the self-categorisation process" (pg: 218). It is understood that perpetuating this form of superior identity regulates the discipline and behaviour of individuals, coaxing them into working hard just to maintain their sense of self. It also assists in integrating and intensifying the meaning of organisational life and selfhood (Courpasson, 2000; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004; Alvesson and Robertson, 2006).

Since it is a social product and comes about through social comparison, then identity can thus be understood within the context it is formed. Individuals may then develop their identities as a coping mechanism to organisational impediments and use it to resist inequalities or exploitation at work (Collinson, 1988; Ackroyd and Crowdy, 1990; Alvesson, 1998). Therefore, the construction and maintenance of identity can be understood within the organisational context as a means for individuals to feel secure and protect themselves from the uncertainties of organisational life.

A Foucauldian perspective of power and discipline can cast a different light on understanding identity formation as a result of insecurities. Foucault (1979) studied the effect of the panopticon to help understand prisoners' reactions to being watched or placed under surveillance all the time. This condition can be used to understand modern day organisations where individuals are self disciplining and direct control of supervisors and management is internalised (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992). This form of control is stronger and less liberating than previously assumed by mainstream theorists in their attempt to justify the development of a strong culture and identity. Team work and team identity provide a strong sense of meaning to team members undertaking tasks at an organisation, however, maintaining team standards and identity can be intensified to an extent where those governing maintain continuous surveillance over the actions of their members and themselves (Casey, 1999). Team-mate identity is further fostered by the enforcement of team values and norms through which individuals rationalise their actions and scrutinise those of others in order to maintain the solidarity of their team identity (Sinclair, 1992). This formation of identity is further illustrated in Barker's (1993) study of team work, where he introduces the idea of a concertive control operating within teams. The employees develop their own means of control by every day constructing what they stand for and who they are. The members of the team become a slave to their own identity construction, having to then maintain this identity or face expulsion. Though our identity is understood through our participation in social activities and can be constantly changed due to the social situations we may find ourselves in, there is also a sense of continuity in individuals and it is this which can give way to resistance and make individuals anxious and insecure. There is a sense of true self within each of us,

as humans we strive towards bettering ourselves and interact with circumstances in relation to a sense of 'what we really are', and 'what we want to be'. Yet, if inconsistencies arise in this narrative then we develop insecurities which may further lead to resistance and conflict (Ezzamel and Willmott, 1998).

One such dilemma professionals in advertising agencies seem to encounter is in the debate between those who are the 'creative' minds behind the work produced and those who manage this creative process. The preceding literature on identity construction and its dilemmas brings me to view the tension between advertising professionals as a form of continuous political contest. Identity formation is embedded in organisational culture as culture provides the social scenarios in which individuals negotiate and contest what their beliefs are and how they identify with the organisation. Identity provides a strong sense of self and sometimes works to benefit the employers by maintaining a certain meaning of identity among employees thereby channelling them towards higher commitments. Therefore, this study endeavours to investigate this connection between identity and its use as a mechanism of control in an advertising agency. Further, since identity is based within a social context my research will attempt to analyse the culture of an advertising agency to see whether identity may or may not serve as a way of displaying resistance and renegotiation.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this section has provided an overview of a wide range of literature on organisational culture while connecting it to identity construction and the role of identity within the context of creative industries. Researchers in the field of organisation studies have suggested that an individual's identity is a socially constructed. Similar to organisational culture, identification is based on shared social processes and meanings, which we use to decipher the world around us and provide meaning to organisational dynamics. Since identity and organisational culture are closely related, some researchers claim that organisational culture could be involved in

forming identities for the organisation's members. Towards the end of this chapter, the literature looked at presented topics around identity which will help in understanding issues prevalent in a creative industry, such as an advertising agency. Consequently, this literature has shown a gap for research that question and attempt to understand ongoing professional tension in an advertising agency. The questions this research will ask are; firstly, can the ongoing professional tension within advertising agencies be studied through the lens of organisational culture and identity? The second question is directed more specifically to the agency under study and asks, if this professional tension does exist then how might the management handle it, and does it attempt to suppress resistance and conflict of interests so as to maintain organisational harmony? Apart from the cultural aspect of control, this question also investigates how the organisation facilitates an identity to act as a disciplining mechanism in the agency.

METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The design of this study has been divided into two sections: methodology and methods. I have done so in order to distinctly outline my approach to the research. I understand methodology as the world view that guides the inquiry into the phenomenon in study, the data collection and consequent analysis. On the other hand, methods are simply tools of inquiry used to find what I believe to be the facts that relate to my study, such as interviews.

This chapter provides the readers an understanding of what my relationship with the participants of research was and how I went about finding what I thought could be known about the participants and their organisation. It is a critical aspect of the research process as it connects the theoretical paradigm with inquiry methods as well as the researcher who can be located in the empirical world and in a specific context. The design outlines how the researcher investigates reality and understands the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The research design serves as a guide for carrying out the study and research. I have chosen an approach which is suitable to the nature of the research questions. This thesis is a case study through which I investigate the complex phenomenon of organisational culture and uncover narratives which are the representation of deep rooted values. To support my approach I refer to words of O'Leary (2004) "there is no 'best type' of research. There are only good questions matched with appropriate procedures of inquiry, and this is always driven by the researcher, not the method" (pg: 9), and this is what I have attempted to achieve throughout this study.

The structure of this chapter largely focuses on my research approach, which informs the study of the epistemological (what is my relationship with the object of inquiry?) and the methodological (how I would go about finding what I believe can be known?) (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) questions. Secondly it explains what kind of texts were analysed for this research. These texts are analysed through critical tradition where broader social and organisational processes are taken into account. As stated by Grant et. al (2004) where “historical and social factors that reside beyond the text under scrutiny, factors which are adjudged to influence and shape the way text is produced, disseminated and consumed” (pg.10). This approach deciphers multiple meanings behind the text and applies it to understand a variety of organisational phenomena, such as those in this study and analysis of organisational culture in an advertising agency.

If we believe that organisational culture is built on shared assumptions, values and artefacts (Schein, 1992) then these beliefs which are taken for granted need to be deciphered, and interpreted to see how these meanings have come about and who controls the dissemination of these meanings in the organisation. Myths, stories, tales and symbols which form the core of this organisational culture are all largely conveyed through language, therefore analysis of interviews, stories lying therein and pictures which convey a meaning all help shed light on the construction of these basic assumptions which reside almost in the sub-conscious of organisational members (Alvesson, 2004).

EPISTEMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

NATURE OF REALITY

The nature of reality is assumed to be socially constructed. The research explores the phenomenon which is based on a world which is also 'constructed', where people are creative agents in building a social world. In saying that, in relation to this research, the phenomenon in study is the organisational culture of an advertising agency, thus this research tries to understand and study the construction of its culture through people. It is assumed that these individuals build their social world in the organisation in order to create some meaning and sense to its organisational dynamics. Constructions are attempts to make sense of experiences; therefore these constructions are self-sustaining and self-renewing. This understanding of reality is based on 'intersubjectivity' and the creation of our reality as we experience the world with and through others (O' Leary, 2004). Therefore this research assumes that powerful management attempts to construct a certain type of culture, in other words a reality for those within the organisation. Nevertheless, there are some employees who disagree with current values, therefore resist conforming to desired beliefs. My research will attempt to present constructions of reality for all groups, those who believe in the designer culture, those who resist such culture, and some who may find themselves in a dilemma between the two.

In Schwandt's (1994) words:

"Constructivists are deeply committed to the contrary view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective"

Hence, these realities can have multiple meanings, though constructions are shared yet some of these could be used to gain a consensus or a collective agreement on meaning about a state of affairs, such as science (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Such meanings come to dominate the society and are thus taken as 'accepted truth' or

'common sense' which become the focus of sociology of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Similarly this research investigates the dominant view of culture within the advertising agency, and explores how a dominant group may come to achieve a consensus within the organisation.

It is when new information is introduced into the society that the existing constructions get challenged. However, interpretations to understand new information lack sophistication, thus individuals face difficulty when confronted with a new situation which requires a different interpretation. It is here that critical social research brings into focus the existing social arrangements and tries to scrutinise them so as to recognise ways of releasing individuals from these readily assumed situations (Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, & Wodak, 2004). In terms of this research, the aim of this approach is to bring to the foreground the existing tension between creatives and commercial imperatives. In doing so, I attempt to examine the tension through the lenses of organisational culture and identity work. By encouraging a different point of view in individuals they can reflect on professional tensions. Thus, the research can help to challenge and scrutinise the existing social arrangements which can increase awareness of diverse and multiple ways in which this organisation, or its tensions, can be conceived.

ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

The nature of reality as discussed above is what constrains the relationship between researcher and the researched. The paradigm of the research establishes the role of the researcher, therefore my role as a researcher was to investigate human constructions of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My approach could not be objective as my beliefs and feelings about the world guide the way I understand multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For example, I have developed my beliefs about organisations and their processes through literature and media. It would have been impossible to block all that prior information while doing data analysis, though I do attempt to stay completely neutral towards the participants' accounts. Despite that, my understanding of their accounts will be through my knowledge and application of literature, which in turn has been influenced by the choice of specific literature that supports my points of view.

Arguments made by me as the researcher are constructions based on my opinions and those of the respondents, thus a reader may not agree with them or accept my analysis. My attempt is to provide an analysis that is persuasive and can provide a framework which can be applied to different settings. Therefore, this research will aim to provide a study of the existing tension between the creative professionals and commercial imperatives in advertising agencies, but under a framework of organisational culture and identity work. Consequently, it attempts to present sound arguments that can facilitate further research to understand some of the main causes of this tension.

My voice in the research is one of a "passionate participant" trying to effectively engage in and mirror the multiple voices of the participants through my reconstruction (Lincoln, 1991). Subjective qualitative research accepts involvement and bias as inevitable and it works towards developing meaning via close relationships with its

participants (Toma, 2000). However the time constraints on this research have not allowed me to develop a close relationship with my participants, or carry out any form of ethnography. Therefore, in order to overcome biases other research techniques have been used, such as rich pictures and observation. Rich pictures are pictorial representations of work and work values from the participants of this research (further discussed under methods chapter).

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Strategies of approaching the research will again be largely guided by methodological and epistemological stands taken by the researcher. I believe that multiple realities exist and as the researcher I reconstruct them. Multiple realities here can be understood as different perceptions and experiences of both creative professionals and management in regards to the organisational culture. For instance, management may view culture as what is created by them in order to provide a work life balance for employees and also increase productivity. On the other hand creative professionals may understand culture as the foundation over which they build personal and professional relationships with each other.

My beliefs; values and feelings have an impact on my understanding of these realities. As discussed under the role of the researcher, I have not distanced myself from my participants; in fact I built significant connections with participants with the aim of collecting good data (Toma, 2000). There are no right or wrong answers to my research questions rather the right answers are what I felt were appropriate responses to the research questions. This perspective relates back to the nature of reality and paradigms approached for this research. The principles behind the way I view the world guide the research throughout the collection, analysis and interpretation of data, as well as the way others evaluate my work. Considering these outlines of my approach, my inquiry strategy for studying the phenomenon is dialectical. Interaction between those inquired and the researcher is a dialogue since two-way interaction

removes misapprehensions and ignorance about the phenomenon in study. The dialogue helps refine information and moves towards a “consensus construction that is more informed and sophisticated” than prior understandings of those constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

NATURE OF THE DATA

The nature of my research as well as the world view guiding this research forces me to collect qualitative data. Qualitative data can be understood as data in the form of words, images and information that cannot be numerically coded (O’Leary, 2004). However, in the past qualitative methods have been used by positivist researchers, who believe that the world is knowable and predictable, these methods assist in testing theory. On the contrary, post positivist approaches, containing the work of those researchers and scholars who question positivist assumptions, view the world as complex, open to interpretation and having multiple realities. Here qualitative data is collected to inform the study of imagery and verbal interpretations which explain how the participants’ social worlds are constructed, produced and experienced. Therefore, approaches that are followed in qualitative work focus on social meanings, discourses, practices and interpretations (Mason, 2002). This qualitative data will provide a valuable awareness that contributes towards social change and knowledge (O’Leary, 2004).

Based on the type of data to be collected in this research, organisational culture and identity are being studied as concepts that are socially constructed; this claim has been supported by various contemporary researches (see Alvesson, 2004; Batteau, 2000; Eisenberg & Riley, 2001; Martin, 1992; Parker, 2000). Since they are formed and experienced via interaction and social relationships, to study them one requires a similar approach.

METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

So far I have discussed the epistemological perspective that describes my relationship with the object of inquiry, from this section on I will now explain how I intend to go about inquiring what I believe can be known. In order to do so I followed a case study approach that looks at a specific advertising agency and how I used narratives and stories to study organisational culture within this agency.

CASE STUDY APPROACH

Case study has been a difficult approach to classify into a category of research methods. It is considered to be based more on choice of object to study, rather than a choice of methodology (Stake, 1994; O'Leary, 2004). However, the case study approach provides a good foundation for this study as by definition case study is a "method of studying elements of the social through comprehensive description and analysis of a single situation or case or any other unit of social life organisation. Emphasis is often placed on understanding the unity and wholeness of the particular case" (O'Leary, 2004 pg: 115). This research is focusing on one advertising agency to understand organisational dynamics.

This particular case has been selected as it represents a small yet progressive advertising agency in New Zealand, and is an instrumental case study (Stake, 1994) which will be examined to provide an insight into, as well as, refine particular issues addressed in advertising and media research literature.

The main interest of this research lies in understanding the role of organisational culture and identity in the facilitation and suppression of professional tensions existing in advertising agencies. Thereby this case study will help advance my understanding of the tension, as well as propose a different overview of the tension for practical and academic interests. The reason for choosing to study a single case in depth has been made based on pragmatic aspects, such as the organisation's proximity to my university and the opportunity available. The organisation was selected based on access gained through the willingness on the part of organisation's management to be part of the study.

The purpose of a case study is not usually for generalisation, which makes it more applicable to this research. Yin (2003) believes that case studies are not generalisable in relation to populations; rather this (generalisation) is aimed towards theoretical propositions. This case study approach answers the how and why questions that cover contextual situations. In this study the research questions investigate the phenomenon of professional tension between management and creatives however this cannot be studied without delving into wider organisational processes, such as (organisational) culture or economic situations. Case studies attempt to be more holistic as they provide an in depth analysis of a single case and presents an examination of its intricacies and issues that are unique to it (O' Leary, 2004). While differentiating case study approach from historical research Yin (2003) emphasises that a case studie's strength lies in its ability to work with a variety of evidence such as interviews, documents, observations. This characteristic strength also makes case studies a legitimate approach in comparison with any other research strategy, such as surveys. Richness of data, as well as validity for the case study approach, can be achieved via data triangulation (Stake, 1994). Triangulation is a process of using multiple techniques or methods to clarify meaning and interpretations made by the researcher (Flick, 1992). In this research I will use three methods of collecting data; my primary data will be collected through semi structured interviews but these interviews and their interpretation will be further enhanced with the use of observation and rich pictures (discussed under methods, chapter 3). These methods along with providing rich data will present the phenomenon in different forms.

As mentioned in the overview of this chapter, my case study will focus on the narratives and stories which are told and emerge in this particular organisation as representative of the culture in this organisation. These narratives will add to the uniqueness and authenticity of this case, as the stories will be specific to the organisation and will reveal complexity of the case which lies within its various contexts, such as different departments, historical, economical and political factors. For this reason, the following section introduces narratives and stories as the texts which are to be analysed in this study.

NARRATIVES AND STORIES

Narratives are a series of events linked together to provide action for the characters, they are linkages of occurrences which require verbs to explain the course of events. Narratives serve as a particular type of text, however if one progresses from a narrative to a story, there is a need to add a *plot* where events and characters are knit together, allowing a deeper understanding and opportunity to attach meaning to a particular event “in the light of others” (Gabriel, 2004).

The purpose of narratives and stories is similar, they provide sense and meaning to facts, whether they be social or organisational. Speaking of stories, Salzer- Morling (1998), in his saga of *Ikea* provides an interesting account of how an organisational tale comes about and provides “meaning and purpose to an otherwise incomprehensible world.....the telling of a saga is a never-ending story about accomplishments and achievements. ‘It explains why certain things are done here - it gives a basic understanding”. Since stories offer a sense making device to the way things are done around ‘here’ they can be easily related to organisational culture. I believe that when individuals in the organisation interpret symbols, myths, stories and rituals in an organisation, they do so in their own unique way which gives rise to a myriad of meanings for the organisational culture. As Martin (1992) illustrates, “when cultural

members interpret the meanings of these manifestations, their perceptions, memories, beliefs, experiences and values will vary, so interpretations will differ.....and the ways they are enacted, constitute culture”(pg.3). These definitions make organisational culture appear in a constant flux, meaning that a simplistic and superficial analysis is not sufficient.

At this point I would like to emphasise that story telling is not considered the only way of making sense, in fact in today's organisations story telling is seldom applied (Brown, Denning, Groh and Prusak, 2005). The authors also believe that in the age of superior technology and high rationality of interaction, stories and myths maybe considered a thing of the past. They suggest that business schools, training and development classes have least to do with what actually occurs in organisations. They suppose that how people act in organisations can be largely studied through stories, these stories persuade people and that is what is involved in much of the economic activity. However, among numerous communication devices and standard models, stories as a device of sense making do not cease to exist. They exist in what Gabriel (1995) calls the unmanaged organisation space, and what Wallemacq and Sims (1998) call nonsense. In other words, these stories exist in a space which may not be controlled and where individuals interact on their presumptions and priorities. These authors are of the view that we never stop making sense, we do it without being aware of it. These spaces provide us with an outlet for emotions, anxieties and desires (Gabriel, 1995). Such spaces cannot be controlled via any management and when individuals participate in these spaces they provide a sense not only to themselves, but construct sense for others and consequently pass on the authorship to some one else. In the words of Wallemacq and Sims (1998 pg: 129): “Story telling is the ongoing reassessment of organisational life, the ongoing elaboration of what is happening, and the permanent re-elaboration of our identities”.

Stories can provide a good sense of who we are and what our purpose is in the organisation. Focusing on this view Helmer (1993 pg: 34) conducted a field study where he described the use of story telling at a harness racetrack as a way for the

organisational members 'to define themselves as individuals or sub-group members and to differentiate themselves from others'. This differentiation from others can also serve as a way of telling the tale of oppression, emancipation and exploitation (Collinson, 1988; Gabriel, 2004) or as a way of representing the interests of a particular group / person (as in saga of *Ikea*) (Boje, 1995; Salzer- Morling 1998).

Though organisational culture is widely considered as the glue that binds all in a network of shared meanings and beliefs, this view ignores the existence of organisational tension and politics, where power and its application produces discordant elements. The literature presented in the prior chapter provided a critical view of culture and its potent ability to be used as control. It is here that discourse in the form of story telling can 'enact significant tensions and cultural stratification' (Helmer, 1993 pg: 35). Even though organisations are pre-occupied with rationality, statistics and reports and may inhibit story telling processes, these stories cannot be assumed to be all fictional, rather they are "poetic elaborations on facts which reveal much about unconscious wishes and desires" (Gabriel, 2004 pg: 75).

In the context of the views presented above, this research uses narratives and stories to represent how individuals in this particular organisation define themselves and also bring attention to how members position themselves, and others, in this organisation. On the whole, these stories are socially constructed, usually in a space not controlled by management, such as social spaces in the organisation. These spaces can be scenarios such as parties, brainstorming sessions or when the employee participates in an informal interview with the researcher. My attempt as the researcher will be to provide accounts which involve the plots, characters and emotions behind these scenarios. Based on my interpretations of the narrative material my analysis contributed to present the scenarios in which the storytellers operate, as this study may also help individuals understand and reflect on their present situation. The interpretations helped participants to look at some dilemmas and underlying beliefs that guide their behaviour. At this point I must also emphasise that my interpretations were not much different from those of the storytellers, the only difference being that

my interpretations had the advantage of analysing and uncovering deeper meanings in the stories (Gabriel, 2004). Considering this, I was able to connect the stories with underlying assumptions, offering an analysis different from that of those within the organisation.

In conclusion I would like to state that interpretations of the organisational stories and narratives reflect my understanding and re-construction of those stories. Thereby I can only be a co-author of such narratives, adding my analysis to their accounts and serving as a “fellow- traveller in a fantasy, sharing its emotional tone, seeking to expand it, enrich it, and ultimately sustaining its disengaged, wish-fulfilling qualities” (Gabriel, 1995 pg: 481). The implication of this for my research method is that the stories participants shared were used to place them within a larger social and political context. They were used in this research to offer an insight into the underlying structures of power and domination that operate in the construction of organisational culture.

CONTEXT SENSITIVE

According to Stake (2000) a case study approach usually represents something that is unique; here uniqueness is defined as encompassing various aspects such as the nature of the case, its historical background, its physical setting, individual informants that make up the case, as well as other relevant contexts, such as political, economic, and legal. Context is considered critical in the case study and therefore it is relevant here to discuss why this research will be context sensitive.

Various approaches have been taken to the study of organisations, in fact few researchers are concerned with the language in use, the analysis revolves around the way people use words and speech to instigate actions (Such researchers are Boden, 1994; Fairhurst and Cooren, 2004). Meanwhile other researchers are engaged in

studying the use of language in context, thereby taking into account the broader sociological, historical and organisational processes (Examples of such researchers would be Fairclough, 1995; Mumby and Clair, 1997; Wodak, 1997; Boje, 1991, 1995). For the purpose of this study, I took the approach of the researchers involved in understanding language in context and looking beyond the text. For example, if we are purchasing goods, we are actually carrying out two activities; one is the conversation with the salesperson and second is the economic transaction. Considering this, the conversation or language used in this situation is in fact embedded in the larger economic context. Similarly in an organisation's culture, (whether it is team work or Friday night drinks) what comes about organically is set in larger social and political scenarios. Thus, this research will try to understand the influence of those historical and social factors on the way the texts (in this case, narratives and stories) are created, disseminated and received by the members of the organisation.

To achieve this purpose the research uses meta-narrative as an expression of the context within which organisational culture is created and disseminated. Meta-narrative is an overarching story which encompasses multiple stories, in this case within an organisation. Dunford and Jones (2000) believe that during strategic change, narratives in organisations can be directive and persuade others towards certain actions. Therefore a grand narrative or a meta-narrative could also represent a synopsis of stories which represent the history and rationale behind why an organisation approaches situations in a particular way. However, in hindsight this collective system of storytelling can be unfair as it collapses all other narratives originating in different localities and from different characters into one story (Boje, 1995).

I have introduced the idea of the 'grand story' in the data analysis as the undercurrent for the rationale behind the development of a particular organisational culture in the chosen advertising agency. This narrative tells a story of the control mechanisms operating within the organisation and why have they come about. I have used different stories told by individuals in various roles to create a theme which I call the

meta-narrative. This symbolises how via their storytelling, people in the organisation stratify and operate controls. Helmer (1993) in his study also spoke of the use of organisational storytelling as a way of maintaining opposition between horsemen and administrators which in turn gave them a sense of meaning to their experiences and also an explanation for the reason for their failures. Therefore this research's meta-narrative provides a perspective similar to the one mentioned by Helmer, its overarching story tells a tale of a company seeking to understand its failures and success via what they assume to be one grand narrative.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has revealed two vital questions which drive any social research: the methodological and epistemological ones that attempt to answer the how and why of any research approach. This research is founded on a critical tradition of organisational studies, which focuses on power relations and their role in creating organisational culture and stories about this culture. Furthermore, this research uses a case study approach to delve deeper into a holistic analysis of culture. This case study, like other case studies, is context sensitive; it considers the broader economical, political and social aspects within which the specific organisation lies. Therefore it introduces a meta-narrative of the studied organisation which encompasses the organisation's history. The case study approach along with the narratives and stories provide it with a uniqueness and authenticity which is further validated through data triangulation. The next chapter on methods discusses three data gathering techniques as well the triangulation techniques that will be used in this research.

METHODS

OVERVIEW

Based on the methodological and epistemological approaches introduced in the previous chapter, this chapter outlines the methods or tools that will assist in collecting a context sensitive story about the chosen advertising agency's culture.

The structure of the chapter first and foremost introduces you to Organisation B (pseudonym), a New Zealand based advertising agency. Having introduced the organisation the chapter reveals the three important methods of data collection- semi structured interviews, participant observations and rich pictures. These three methods of data collection helped me understand the concepts of culture and identity, and their construction in Organisation B. The interviews provide a detailed description of organisational culture as well as some of an insight into the values held by participants, whereas the observations helped me to analyse the physical as well as the abstract ideas in their belief systems. The rich pictures provided a good source for the collection of rich data, as they offered a chance for participants to express their thoughts beyond words and further, therefore represent some aspects of their resistance and conflicts.

Finally, I will sum up by identifying the approach towards the interpretation of this data. I then conclude this chapter with a discussion on the limitations involved in the the implementation of the research methods, and the relevant research issues of confidentiality and ethical approval.

INTRODUCTION TO ORGANISATION B

Organisation B (pseudonym) was established in 1996 however its recent take over and revamp in 2000 has not left much to remind an onlooker of its past. Instead B nowadays is an accomplished design and advertising agency. Based in Wellington, New Zealand it is managed by four ambitious directors who once were employees of Organisation B. It is a recognised creative agency delivering strategy, brand, advertising, graphic design, web, multimedia, audio and media solutions from one source. When the organisation was taken over by the current directors they employed 12-15 young skilled designers, account managers and administrative staff to cater to the needs of the expanding art, media and advertising sectors in New Zealand’s culture capital. Organisation B has been involved in projects both for leading government and private agencies² and the owners of this business appreciate the work their employees put in, which they believe has led to the success of this small organisation. Below I have presented an organisation structure, as described by the directors, which represents the people involved in creating and delivering worthy adverts for the clients. The chart also represents the divisions and reporting structures within the organisation.

² Organization B has also been awarded two awards in the past year for creative designs and for its commendable work in advertising and media. (Due to confidentiality issues the names of the awards cannot be mentioned)

Diagram 1: Organisational Chart of Organisation B

This chart is helpful as it briefly introduces the structure of the organisation, along with the groups of individuals involved in the entire processes of developing an advert. It is also the foundation for understanding the roles and duties of the participants, or as I have called them, the characters, of this research.

Having now introduced Organisation B, in the following section I will describe further the methods by which I gathered rich data from Organisation B for this research.

SEMI-STRUCTURED, IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Interviews as a way of collecting qualitative data has been widely used in various fields of social research, such as psychology, sociology and management studies. The goal of qualitative research interviews is to understand the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee (King, 1994). However, interviewing is no easy process as it involves the complexities of people and communication, and it is the task of the interviewer to maintain a high level of dignity, respect and confidence in order to receive honest and reliable responses. The main complexity of communication is in fact that an interview is aligned with communication and the researcher needs to be aware of the chances for miscommunication as information or question are transferred from the interviewer to the respondent (O'Leary, 2004).

However, amidst these complexities, one cannot help but consider the influence of the research question on the type of interview that is given. King (1994) emphasises the role of a research question. He believes that qualitative research interviews are most appropriate when either the study focuses on the meaning of a particular phenomenon to participants or the research aims to study perceptions of processes in a social unit, such as a work group. This research focuses on understanding advertising employees' perceptions of culture and identity thus interviews were qualitative and open ended. Such interviews provide participants the leverage to reflect and communicate their assumptions and insights about the phenomenon in study (organisational culture). At the same time, the dialogue between the participant and researcher was not free of biases; my rapport with the participant had built a relationship of trust where he or she felt free to speak, so in the process we shared common purposes and values. The common purpose was to correspond over and reflect on questions about the research topic and the values about maintaining a bond of trust and confidence. However, I need to be cautious of the impact of such biases on

the interview processes to make ensure that they do not hinder my research objectives (Wadsworth, 1997).

Holstein and Gubrium (2004) argue that in the past interviews have been treated as a one way process, where the questions are asked by the interviewer and it is only the subjective reality that is recorded. However, if we are guided by the constructivist paradigm, I as researcher have performed interviews as a dialogue between those seeking knowledge and those that hold it. Thus my research interviews become more active, where the individual participants and interpreter (interviewer) articulate their understanding via their own orientations and a reality that is continually under construction (Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). Such interviews allow the relationship between the two parties to develop further and the two-way relationship is a large part of constructing a meaning of the social phenomenon. This is a dialectical interaction where I clarify my understanding of the phenomenon with the participant. My questions remain flexible in order to lead the dialogue into the deeper areas of an issue. The semi-structured, open-ended questions provide a chance for the interviewee to make implicit assumptions more explicit (Flick, 2006). For example one of the interview questions asks the participant to reflect on their identity and such a question has the potential to originate a response that will also reveal organisational identity and work values. Therefore this open ended question unfolds a number of aspects that relate to culture, identity and resistance.

For the reasons discussed above, this research used semi- structured interviews which remained flexible, as the name suggests. This type of interview starts with a loose, yet, open-ended questioning plan. It attempts to maintain more of a conversational style of dialogue allowing the interviewer to pursue more interesting topics that may arise during the course of the interview (O'Leary, 2004). This research is investigating underlying assumptions of culture and identity work that may not be as evident as organisational structure, yet they operate and influence everyday work operations and behaviour. Therefore, it is critical that the data collection method is one such which

permits the investigator to develop and manoeuvre the questions towards building richer data.

In order to attain rich data I conducted eight semi-structured interviews, due to their unavailability and involvement in crucial projects it was not possible to interview any other staff members. The interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. In this process I interviewed two directors and owners of B, four designers and two account managers. The interviews schedule had six primary questions; the first four questions attempted to generate views around organisational culture and identity. The last two questions investigated the importance of creativity and effective strategic management and how participants might perceive these aspects in Organisation B (see appendix, interview schedule).

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Anthropological investigators try to understand various cultures in society by becoming 'one of them' or being an active participant in the social activities of those they observed. Likewise over the years researchers have adopted similar frameworks for understanding complex social phenomenon in other disciplines, in such fields as management. Observations are made by all of us everyday, however, what makes these observations different, from a researcher's point of view is that the latter is purposive and seeks to answer theoretical questions (Adler and Adler, 1994). Likewise, research involved unstructured candid observation (O'Leary, 2004) of the daily activities within the organisation, reporting experiences and studying them as my reconstructions of those activities. Such observations are usually done to interpret actions and reactions of individuals. Consequently, my observations were non participatory, I observed unobtrusively and recorded observations that were relevant for my study and later attempted to reveal emerging patterns. In the words of Adler and Adler (1994) I played a role of the 'objective' observer, as I did not have extensive observations nor did I develop close bonds with my participants. My purpose was to

gather data and candid observation was used to view the settings and my subjects over a short period of time. Organisation B is a small organisation therefore every time I went in for interviews with participants I could easily observe the settings and behaviour around the organisation. Afterwards, I made notes about the observations of the various physical and behavioural manifestations of culture. However, at this point it is critical to mention that I was unable to gain permission to observe meetings and strategic planning sessions due to confidentiality issues related with advertising agency's projects. However, I did get one opportunity to observe group dynamics and relationship patterns within B when I was invited to attend a birthday party of one of the directors. This event allowed me to make informal observations as well as communicate with my participants in a different setting away from work. Notes were taken down for each of these informal and candid situations and were later incorporated in data analysis.

If we take into account past cultural studies methods that have been used, observation has played a major role in data collection (e.g. Kunda, 1992; Casey, 1999; Fleming, 2005). Organisational culture has its root in community values and beliefs; therefore it is difficult to study organisational culture just through simple interviews, as it requires a much deeper understanding. Schein (1985) points out three layers of culture: artefacts, values and basic assumptions. These three levels are not easily accessible unless one observes and interprets what certain artefacts, use of language and metaphors mean in the context of a particular organisational culture. Another justification for using observation as a tool for studying organisational culture is that realities or truth for one person or cultural group may not be the truth for another, making it important to validate interviews with observation.

RICH PICTURES

As mentioned earlier this research is driven by an interpretative perspective where individuals' social construction of multiple realities is recognised as a way to

understand social practices and norms. Thus this approach (rich pictures) to understand the phenomenon in study allows the researcher to cross-check with participants whether the analysts' understanding of the 'problem' matches with their perception (Bakehouse, Wakefield, Doyle, Barnes and Jones, 2007). Other reasons to support the use of rich pictures include the fact that they allow culture, role and power relations in an organisation to become apparent, things which otherwise are difficult to describe in text (Lewis, 1994). Flood and Jackson (1991) are of the view that rich pictures can accentuate issues, conflicts, and other problematic, yet interesting, features of a situation. Rich pictures in a true sense are representations of the 'climate of the situation' (pg.173). Since organisational culture and identity are the key aspects of study for this research, the purpose of rich pictures matches that of the research. Lastly rich pictures assist in bringing to the surface the actual problem rather than simply treating symptoms. For example, employees may resist a change to new emailing system, and through the use of rich pictures one can get a glance of few of the core reasons that may have led to this resistance in the first place. In this instance this might indicate that they may not have received enough training for the new system, or they prefer face-to-face or telephonic interaction rather than emailing. Through the use of rich pictures it may become evident that the resistance to change of email system is a symptom rather than the cause of the problem.

Rich Pictures as a tool originates from aspects of a field of study or methodology which was introduced in order to understand complexities of organisations by applying engineering concepts. Metaphors such as organisations as machines, as an organism and or as prisons were/are used to decipher and solve organisational problems (Jackson, 2003). Hard systems methodology or rational models of understanding organisations depend highly on the machine metaphors where the functioning of the whole is dependent on the interaction between parts. However, another branch of systems studies, Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) rejects the machine metaphor and instead focuses on political and cultural foundations in organisations. Rather, Soft systems methods are built on interpretive paradigm. It assumes that organisations are constructed around the purposes people have and these purposes originate from their interpretations of situations (Jackson, 2003). This approach aims to understand the

different meanings people bring to form a collaborative action and it is for this reason that this tool was used for data collection in this research. However, due to the limited research time frame I used only one aspect of soft systems methodology which was the use of rich pictures for problem expression (Bakehouse, Wakefield, Doyle, Barnes, & Jones, 2007).

SSM was developed in 1960s by Peter Checkland and arose due to limitations of applying systems engineering to human problems in organisations. He found that organisational goals were often contested and not everyone in the organisation shared similar goals. He also noticed that in order to solve problems methods began with problem statements thus blocking out avenues to some basic deep rooted problems (Underwood, 1996). SSM regards the process as more important than the outcome. Checkland believes that using SSM will bring about changes in the organisations and opinions about the problems. One such method of expressing a problem situation is through the use of rich pictures. Checkland defined the systems in study via diagrams and figures known as “rich pictures”. Such a picture is a figure without rules; they are usually cartoon-like expressions which represent problems or issues in study (Flood and Jackson, 1991). They show people their purposes, fears, desires and such emotions with the use of think bubbles. Environmental details can be clearly sketched out in rich pictures which are otherwise not possible in other scientific problem solving methods. Rich pictures can be cartoons that are happy, sad, political or in conflict. Expressing a problem through this means of drawing is one mode of making a situation summary and provides a view into the complexity of the situation through a pictorial form and is similar to brain-storming, except that ideas are captured in diagrams and figures (Checkland, 2003).

The reason(s) why this problem expression is being used in for this research is because of its role in benefiting validation and appreciation of multiple perspectives. In conclusion, it can be assumed that the use of rich pictures as a method of data collection provides a better understanding and analysis of the informal organisation.

Aspects such as culture, norms, values, roles and power relations that exists in the organisation can easily be depicted in a simple pictorial, and often humorous, manner.

After each interview the participants were asked to draw a rich picture, they were given a sample of what rich pictures look like and a handout listing the purpose and description of rich pictures. The sample provided was unrelated to their work scenario (see appendix, illustration 1 and 2) therefore eliminating any chance of imitating the sample picture. Each participant was given a week to draw and illustrate their perception of Organisation B and the work that goes on within it. . Participants chose their own expression and means of illustration. However, for data analysis the rich pictures used are the ones which were relevant and appropriate for discussion, as some of the pictures were incomprehensible with little relevance to the participants' perceptions of the organisation and their role within it.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

So far I have described how my process of data collecting and what I believed could be inquired from this. Before I get into describing what I found, it is important to explain how I went about analysing the data. Unlike positivist or experimental studies, my research does not offer statistical analysis to prove the reliability of my findings, but presents robust data as a means of qualitative research.

I collected data through the three tools of data collection. These methods provided me with some wideranging and valuable interviews as well as pictorial representations of some of the implicit assumptions and dilemmas among the participants. Following this I transcribed the interviews and carried out thematic analysis. Moving from rich and abundant raw data to a finding a meaningful understanding of that data is a tedious

process which required careful analysis and reflection. In order to be fair to my findings and conclusions drawn from them, I engaged in thematic coding of my interviews, since they formed the primary source of information from the participants in this research.

Thematic analysis is an exploration of relevant themes emerging from the data (O'Leary, 2004). One example of such a theme is the clear divide between management and creatives in regards to the perception of work of high value for creativity or strategic planning (also see questionnaire in appendix). This question was an important one to investigate if the tension mentioned in advertising literature does exist in this agency.

The process of thematic analysis for this research involved reading, overviewing and making notes of the relevant and interesting texts. I followed the interview schedule for most of the interviews, however, due to the nature of the questions there were also many opportunities for participants to narrate incidents and issues which they felt were relevant. Due to this I was able to generate a body of text that provided diverse concepts in relation to issues of identity, organisational culture and resistance. My textual engagement (O'Leary, 2004) with the data involved exploring concepts within the text in relation to the preconceived themes generated in the literature. The data brought up many themes around aspects of organisational culture, such as the values within the organisation and the social relationships among employees. Other themes that emerge from the data were that of resistance against some management initiatives and client demands. Examples of such themes are the high accountability and expectations that came about due to a senior position at work, or no creative satisfaction due to excessive administrative and budgeting demands.

Thematic coding is an interesting method to conduct qualitative data analysis; however it runs the risk of searching for concepts only within rigid preconceived notions therefore eliminating any alternative explanation (O' Leary, 2004). In turn,

this approach can be subject to biases on the behalf of the researcher. Being aware of this trap, my data analysis has followed data triangulation (Stake, 1994) and a constant comparison approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Data triangulation involved using three tools of data collection to verify my understanding of the concepts found, this saw the data from interviews compared with rich pictures and a constant comparison was then applied. I compared and contrasted the emerging themes and concepts with formerly analysed texts to thematically code the data. The comparisons involved rigorous reading and reviewing of the texts in order to find similarities and inconsistencies between any two themes. These themes were then connected across the three types of data gathered-interviews, rich pictures and observation notes. The relation between the relevant themes or concepts provided me with reliable data which could represent the different categories of analysed data, such as the three levels of culture based on Schein's model, and the characteristics of normative and bureaucratic controls operating with Organisation B.

This process of data analysis enabled me to present an analysis and discussion that is thorough and verified. However, as mentioned earlier in the methodology chapter, it is impossible to eliminate all sources of biases and subjective interpretations from a qualitative study. While my experiences, views and beliefs did have an impact on my understanding of the data, this thesis has gone through careful analysis and represents what I assume is appropriate to answer the research questions. With these assumptions in mind, the following section describes some of the limitations and difficulties experienced during the process of data collection.

LIMITATIONS OF METHODS

This research has followed qualitative research methods to understand the organisational culture and identity scenarios in an advertising agency. The methods provide a lot of depth to the data collected and addressed fair and relevant questions for the topic of study.

However, it should not go without saying that these methods have certain limitations which at times hinder the otherwise smooth process of data collection. The in-depth semi-structured interviews are time consuming and come with the difficulty of recruiting appropriate participants. This process was time consuming as participants were occupied with work demands, therefore finding time for an hour long interview not easy. Another time consuming process in this method was the transcribing of all the interviews, which required great amount of commitment in both resources and time.

Similar to semi-structured interviews, participant observation was also a difficult task, involving a lot of negotiation with Organisation B's management to be allowed to attend their business meetings and regular employee briefing sessions. Issues of confidentiality and secrecy were also involved in observation of these meetings. Since the company provides creative ideas and works on brand identities for corporate customers it was difficult to gain the trust needed of this agency to allow an outsider to witness the agency's processes.

Rich pictures, a pictorial method of collecting data was something I was not trained for. It involved the extra effort of reading literature about rich pictures as well as explaining to participants the purpose of the exercise in simple terms. The participants

found it difficult to draw their perception of the organisation’s dynamics. Due to these factors the feedback for the rich pictures was not very fast and efficient, and required constant persuasion.

In the process of analysing my data I had a difficult time deciphering what would form the narrative and what needed to be excluded. As stated beautifully by Riessman (1993) “Nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do. Interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations” (pg: 2). Thus, hopefully if not all but many of the recurrent themes in the narrative accounts have been presented.

RESEARCH ISSUES

ETHICAL ISSUES

This study’s data collection involves human subjects therefore it is important to respect their contribution. The Human Ethics Committee contract reassured the participants that their basic rights of anonymity would be honoured. The participants were provided with an information handout about the research and a research contract was signed by them seeking consent for participation in the interviews and observations. On request, transcripts of the interview were made available to the interviewees. Confidentiality was assured for both the interviews and observations, while participants were provided with the choice of withdrawing from the research participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

The permission for contacting the participants had been provided by the Account Director, but at no time of the research did the director know participants' details or any other information. I spoke to all participants' individually in confidence and their names have been represented with pseudonyms instead.

The data was stored in a place where only I, as the researcher, had access. The name of the organisation and its member's identity was not be disclosed, and participants had the right to read my findings and provide feedback on the information representing their thoughts.

DATA ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

This chapter will unfold as a story, since as a major part of this analysis is based on the stories behind what Organisation B's conditions were like before the take over and what has changed since to give it a competitive edge. Due to extensive data analysis I have chosen to break this chapter down in to two parts. The first part of the data analysis is the stage setting, which introduces characters and culture analysis through models. The second part of the data analysis- the plot, discusses the professional tension and its relation to organisational culture.

I will begin the following section by providing a diagram that will offer a synopsis of the activities which are embedded in the culture at Organisation B. This synopsis will be followed by a detailed introduction to the characters of this story, who, in other words, are the participants of my research. This introduction will lead to a prologue that introduces the professional tension, recognised in advertising research literature, and will assess whether this tension exists in Organisation B. This is followed by an analysis of organisational culture at B via Schein's model and Deal and Kennedy's 'work hard/play hard' culture analysis. My justifications for including these models are firstly, that Schein's model, in particular, is a classical model for assessing culture in distinctive levels therefore it makes for a clear analysis. Secondly, Deal and Kennedy have provided a framework based on the nature of work and people in organisations, therefore their model helps me to distinguish and analyse culture through the nature of work. These models provide a backdrop or environment in which the stories of Organisation B unfold and characters play their part.

The next portion of data analysis- ‘the plot’ is essentially the core of this narrative and discusses the existing culture model at B and how it is maintained. The last section is critical to this analysis as it provides the meta-narrative which exposes the rationale behind the development of a certain type of culture at B and this helps manage professional tensions. I will conclude by pulling all the stories together and offering my understanding of the management of culture at Organisation B.

STAGE SETTING

LET’S GET OUR STORY RIGHT³

In this chapter I will identify two stories that have come to dominate Organisation B and seem to be consistent with the professional divide and tension written about in literature on advertising. As mentioned in the first chapter, literature on advertising agencies suggests an ongoing tension between creative professionals within the industry and those who are in management. Therefore this data analysis addresses how the professional tension is played out in Organisation B, a medium sized, New Zealand based advertising agency.

My research seeks to address two main questions of inquiry. First, to understand how organisational culture can manage the tension between ‘management’ and ‘creatives’ in an advertising agency as illustrated in the literature studied. I would like to decipher the role of organisational culture in suppressing or enhancing the tension, via conformity or mutual consensus to maintain subcultures. Secondly, I wish to understand how this is done through culture management within organisation B. That is, what techniques maybe used by management to design a culture that suits the

³ The titles of each section are derived from themes developed during the analysis of interviews.

conformity and quality production requirements of this organisation. These culture management techniques also include the manipulation and use of professional identities to suppress resistance and conflicts among employees.

The following diagram (2) is a concise form of what this chapter will contain. It also unfolds the answers to the above mentioned key questions.

Diagram 2: Overview of people and controls involved in developing an advert at Organisation B

The diagram overleaf addresses the question: How does the organisational culture at B manage the professional tension?

It shows that there are various techniques for culture management used at organisation B, which help the managers/ directors in maintaining control over their workforce, such as recruitment and redundancy. This is the reason these strategies of control have been considered the *plot* of this narrative. On the other hand, the diagram displays certain direct controls from management; these are the normative and bureaucratic controls. These have been discussed as the *meta-narrative*, which is the all-encompassing story of all the accounts. Besides these two main aspects of data analysis, I have provided an introduction to the research participants, who in this account are the characters of the narrative. In turn a prologue has been provided, in order to prepare the reader for the story of organisation B that is about to be played out. Apart from the purpose of data analysis this diagram also creates an awareness of the process involved in the creation of an advert and shows the roles of influential individuals and groups.

At this juncture it is important to state that the themes developed, as well as the interpretation of the stories provided, are completely formed upon my understanding of them. I agree with Riessman (1993) again when she confirms that each account when analysed has values, politics and theoretical commitments pasted on it which inevitably shape what gets written down as a dissertation or an article. In order to provide more validation for my arguments and interpretations I have supported interview accounts with 'rich pictures' which were drawn by the participants. The interpretation of these pictures is based on what they represent; therefore there is only one possible interpretation which participants convey through think bubbles and emotions. Therefore I will be presenting my understanding of those rich pictures to support my analysis.

CHARACTERS SITTING UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS

Like any other story the plot revolves around a few characters that bring to life the scenes played out on stage. The story of Organisation B is similar to those stories the only difference being the characters reside at different levels thus they narrate their story from their positions. To support this outlook of position and power differences, I have chosen to comprise the introduction of my characters in two settings: upstairs and downstairs. Those involved in management of the organisation and major decision making represent the upstairs characters. Whereas employees involved in creation of advertisements and campaigns are the ones who belong downstairs.

The first sets of characters that introduced are the ones sitting upstairs behind large computer monitors and with ambitious strategies for Organisation B. The characters mentioned below belong to management positions and are listed in order of their positions of power. Pseudonyms are used for names of all characters.

Mark – Director: Is one of the four directors involved in the take-over of Organisation B from the previous management. He comes from a marketing background in art and media. He has a major interest in developing a strong organisational culture and how to market organisations and businesses.

Clayton – Interactive Director: He is also one of the four directors and similar to Mark, was involved in the take-over of the company. His role as an interactive director means he is in charge of or heads the web design team. He holds a Master's degree and has background and experience in the design field. He prefers to be known as the carer in the organisation and views himself first as a designer then a manager.

Richard – Business Development Manager: He has, as much as everyone else at B, a diverse background. Richard has a good knowledge of photography and used to run his own publishing company before joining B. The thing he enjoys most about his job is client relationships and the thrill of bringing new people on board. He sees himself belonging on the client side of things that is he represents the organisation by managing business rather than being creative.

Fiona –Account Manager: She has no real background in management or a design to support her official positions. However, her explorative and creative mind has got her to where she is today. She loves dealing with people and has sound graphic design experience. Though a manager she believes that she does not have power over anyone and prefers to keep a balance between work and good relationships with her workers. While she is getting her work done she also likes to put a smile on her colleagues' faces.

The second set of characters are based downstairs - those who belong to the 'shop floor'. They are involved in the actual advert creation and development; most of them have arts degrees and enjoy every aspect of creative work. The characters mentioned below are in alphabetical order and have also been given pseudonyms.

Jack – Senior Graphic Designer: He comes from United Kingdom and has a Bachelors in graphic design. For him, art and design are in his blood having grown up in a family of designers and artists. He sees himself more as an 'ideas-driven' person rather than someone involved in strategy development. He believes himself to be a creator of amazing ideas and reckons that creativity and planning are mutually dependent and one cannot exist without the other.

Jay – Graphic Designer: At the time of the interview Jay had been in Organisation B for only a month. Previously he worked four other jobs similar to his current job. He joined

B due to its good client base, the people and their laid back approach to things. He believes that he can contribute greatly to and improve the web design aspect of Organisation B. He believes that creativity and strategic planning are mutually dependent, but sometimes creativity can go too far. In other words, he thinks that some highly creative work tends to lack a utility. His thinking strategy is based around the debate of form versus function, for an idea to sell it needs to be original as well as purposeful.

Nathan – Graphic Designer: Is European and sees a connection between his love for photography and design as having led to his career in graphic design. He loves to create and believes in pushing radical design ideas. Nathan enjoys being in a multi cultural, young and proactive organisation like B. While he believes that strategic planning is important for the development of an advert he does not wish to be concerned about it. He values representing the client by being creative rather than by planning.

Serena – Graphic Designer: After completing her advanced diploma in advertising and graphic design more than two years ago, Serena shifted from Australia to New Zealand. She joined Organisation B because she liked their attitude, its people seemed friendly and they had a good design studio and clients. She likes the casual atmosphere of the organisation, but she experiences the pressure and high demands of administrative work due to which she is unable to devote more time towards design work.

THE PROLOGUE

I have chosen to call this section a prologue as I am about to introduce the tension that I have discussed earlier in the literature review. It is important to keep coming back to the tension as it is not only the original backbone of this thesis but also serves as the underlying and initial driver behind the design this project. The knowledge of professional tension in Organisation B will help me to understand better the issues acknowledged in the advertising literature.

I will not go into further detail about the tension as it has been dealt with already in the literature review of this research. Although I will discuss this tension through my interpretation of the data gathered. Despite the open, trusting and nurturing environment of Organisation B, there exists a gap between those who create and those who manage this creativity. From my understanding the management, which includes the founding directors of B, maintain a flat structure and as explained by Mark, “they live a flat structure”. They have created a place where the employee does not wait until the end of a tiresome day to enjoy themselves, as every day at work is fun.

“Staff have got more of a reason to come to work than just collect the pay cheque. They enjoy interaction with other staff, interaction with clients, having fun and having a laugh while they are working and consistently trying to just push the boundaries in the creative space....just really to enjoy their time at work so that we are not hanging on for the weekend, so everyday is a good day” (Richard)

According to Clayton, communication is kept open and there are no strong hierarchical differences. However, this aspect of living a flat structure appeared to me as a bit misleading, since the management body indicated to me that they make it very clear

who is 'boss' around the place. Indeed, there are times when decisions are made within the 'board room' of which the employees no idea or say in.

"We try and not to have 'directors' and 'staff' but it does exist and you have to accept that. There are certain decisions which are made at a director's level which the staff will never know about. But in the main you try and be as inclusive as possible."
(Clayton)

The organisational structure chart (see diagram 1), represents the organisational structure as described by the directors. The top level of the structure is occupied by the four directors who, as a whole, have control over all activities and members of the organisation. The other sections within the organisation comprise of designers, sales and marketing, along with web integrators. These levels interact with each other but they all report and are responsible to the owners and managers of the business. The business does run on an open door policy, yet the control of the organisational structure does not provide much space for individual initiatives or risk taking, aspects considered important for creativity.

Rich pictures drawn by those in managerial positions support my interpretation of the divide between management and designers. The pictures clearly show two different levels of management and designers. Management is shown as having total control of almost all processes in the organisation and there is more interaction of management with the client side than those of designers. In the picture by Clayton (Fig.1), each department is headed by a manager or director, whose main care is for the benefit of the business. There is hardly any interaction between different teams or departments, in fact there is a 'wall' drawn which suggests the differences between integrators and designers.

Mark's picture (Fig.2) is a bit different as it shows one section headed by him and his account team dominating the organisation. His team of managers is also involved in ensuring a happy client who will return to the agency. Thus his pictures downplay the role of any other group as vital for successful business. He believes that the creative team should be consulted in discussions and agreements over ideas, however there is not a large emphasis on what their role maybe.

Figure 1: Clayton's Rich Picture showing management controls in Org. B

Figure 2: Mark's rich picture showing the domination of one department in Org.B

On the creative side, the people who are the designers and web integrators, their story is a bit different. They see themselves belonging to a cool, fun and laid-back place of work. Most of them chose B as their workplace largely because of its culture and its people. Although they accept the culture of B, such as the values of hard work and particularly the laid back environment, there are times when they feel that their creative contributions get weighed down by budgeting and client demands. The designers are aware of how the culture and identity of B is created, thus they feel highly accountable towards contributing and meeting expectations. They place more responsibilities on the shoulders of the directors as they believe that they are the ones who control the business and decide where it is heading. This came across clearly in the words of Jay, who, while newly employed, knows who is responsible for identity creation of the organization.

“The directors, they built the company, they chose what work they are going to do and the staff as well because the staff is going to be creative. We can also relate it back to Organisation B trying to get bigger contracts so that is the role of the directors as well in forming the image”.

My understanding of the interview extracts also leads me to conclude that designers see themselves as secluded from the managerial side. They feel the need for more interesting and challenging jobs where their ideas are not produced under pressure of time and interference. Serena, one of the graphic designers, found it difficult to deal with the demands of multitasking when trying to put out quality work.

“I have to put out good quality work, high standard and meet deadlines....when I change gears and have to do design work which I don’t get to do as often as I like, I find that really stressful because you want to do a good job and it takes a lot more effort to do the thinking and work behind it. We have got time constraints on the jobs so that can cause pressure I guess”.

The interview extracts below explains the assumptions of one of the designers to the current work and planning situation within B. The corresponding rich picture (Fig.3) is also drawn by the same participant. The picture illustrates the actual divide and its pressure upon those who are involved in creating an advert. The picture portrays the accounts team as involved with the client and their requirements and the creative team involved in developing a good idea. However, as the creative team works under immense time and budget pressures they are unable to produce a great, unique idea for the client. The picture also shows a constant interference by the accounts team into the work of the creative team due to monetary and time demands.

“I suppose accounts are coming from the client’s point of view and they have to represent the client.our time is being assessed while they are out talking to the

clients, having lunches, they do all the nice things; they have all the praise”
(Jack)

Figure 3: Jack's rich picture showing the constraints over creative teams

Figure 4: Rich picture by Nathan portraying the development and acceptance of an idea

The rich picture above, by Nathan (Fig.4) tells a similar story. He views the situation based more on the preferences and choices of those responsible for making decisions. His ideas are shown as going through an idea machine which then, like wine, goes into a tasting room, where the managers and directors decide the fate of the idea. He believes that if the idea or 'the suit' does not fit the client it is sent else where.

SETTING THE STAGE

The stage in a theatre performance provides a backdrop for all that is going to be played out. A stage set up provides an environment and gives the audience a sense of the time period the play is based in, the situation it is about to reveal as well as building an expectation of what is to happen. A background includes the social, economic and historical aspects from which the performance draws from and that the characters will be a part of. Similarly in this research I have called the framework of culture at Organisation B as my stage backdrop, it is the environment in which the characters play out their daily activities and the roles provided to them.

At Organisation B, I will analyse the culture through two frameworks of culture: Schien's model of culture (1992) (see. Figure 5) and Deal and Kennedy's 'work hard/play hard' culture (1988). Both these frameworks provide a typical understanding of organisational culture where culture can be located simply by looking at the processes and working style of the organisation. I have made an attempt to recognise the culture of B through the three distinct levels given by Schien, then, based on the working style and nature of the firm, I have used the 'work hard/play hard' framework to describe the culture.

Figure 5: Schien's model of the three layers of culture.

According to Schien's model the first level of culture is cultural artefacts which are objects within the organisation that may be representative of the culture. In B these can include the paintings and artwork adorning the walls, the type of clothing worn by employees, the office layout, as well as the type of people employed (senior to intermediate level of designers).

The paintings in Organisation B are abstract, futuristic and they can be interpreted by different individuals in a variety of ways. There is also some artwork featuring previous award-winning work done by B. The office layout seems to represent their open door policy, there are no cubicles with everyone working in an open space. The manager's work stations are beside their employees and there are no closed doors, except for the meeting room. The employees form a multi-cultural workforce and the clothing worn

by everyone represents an easy and casual style. There is no pressure on wearing formal clothing, unless one has an appointment with a client.

The second level is the values and beliefs that represent the culture of the organisation; these values exist in people's mind and cannot be represented in a physical form. For employees, these values define who they are, what they are doing in the organisation and why are they doing it. This has come across in the interviews where most employees described their identity in terms of the type of work that Organisation B produces, along with the characteristics of their individual work. Most employees see their work as contributing towards the growth and success of B. This suggests that over a period of time the employees are instilled with the organisational values and have coupled them with their own work values, so that there is no longer a clear difference between values of the organisation and those which belong to the individuals. The laid back environment, flat structure and family atmosphere at B are also a representation of work values in a contemporary workplace.

The third level is the most important level in Schien's model. It represents the basic assumptions of employees, that is, the unconscious view of the world around them. These assumptions are also the source of both the organisations' culture, values and artefacts. These assumptions are abstract, and hard to decipher yet they are collectively shared by most of the employees. At B this assumption is still made in regards to their market image and the expectation of work quality from each other. This is shown in their identity as an organisation; perceiving themselves to be highly competent, providing an efficient and quality service. For Organisation B, represented by its employees, the spiral of good work – i.e. continuing to do right work attracts the right clients- is an essential aspect to their organisation's purpose. This is shared largely by all employees and individuals who are fully committed to their tasks in order to maintain the spiral.

In turn, all employees expect others to help out when there is time pressure or a critical piece of work. There is high level of trust vested in the employees for the quality of ideas by managers. The distinguished nature of their clients brings in a demand, which requires good quality work. Based on these demands the management places not only a lot of expectations but confidence upon the designers, who are responsible for the creative work. As stated by Clayton, a manager and director, if a designer goes above budget or the time scheduled they are not reprimanded, but instead guided on how to manage time and money better next time. The team environment sees everyone, including administrative staff, being allowed to contribute and comment on the development of the advertisement, as the belief is that every person's opinion can improve the quality of work. Due to this empowering relationship, employees at B multi-task and provide support to each other in difficult times thus representing the basic assumption about the long term benefit for every employee and the organisation.

I have discussed the three levels from which culture can be scrutinised in Organisation B. Now I will use the 'work hard/play hard' framework by Deal and Kennedy (1988) to discuss the nature of work at B and the way it represents the 'work culture' at B. 'Work hard/play hard' culture is used largely by software companies who wish to push major sales and where competition is appreciated within the organisation as a way to develop creative ideas. In such a culture, performance is measured by results and one can have fun and play as long as targets are achieved. At B, this culture is evident, as the organisation is driven by a sound marketing policy and the directors emphasise the importance of clients returning. Since B is growing rapidly, its work is directed at achieving attaining strong monetary returns, as well as securing influential clients who will elevate B's image in advertising industry.

This analysis completes the stage setting for Organisation B and leads me to the plot which will unfold Organisation B's story, which involves its people, history and most importantly its culture.

DATA ANALYSIS- THE PLOT

Based on the prologue and literature, tension between those involved in creative work and the ones managing it seems to exist. However, in Organisation B the tension was not particularly evident or clearly stated by participants. It surfaced when questions and interviews were led towards the challenges faced during the development of an advert. The questions and answers below are an example of how the employees perceive the tension as a form of issues around the development of an advert.

Question (to Serena): “Why do you feel that time is slipping away from you?”

Answer: “I just can’t spend as much time on the design work as I would like to because I have all these other deadlines that I need to do”.

Question (to Jack): “After listening to your views on advertising and media I want to ask you, do you see any differences between your views on this and any other member in the organisation?”

Answer: Yeah, I think most creatives will have a different view of things...well accounts people have to present what a creative has done so they do have an input in the creative. I suppose the accounts are coming from the client’s point of view and they have to represent the client. Whereas creatives go woohoo and all over the place and make it look a pretty kind of thing”.

In this reply, there is also a hint of the perceived professional identity difference, Jack seems to suggest that creative people identify more closely to the nature of art work and design, whereas account managers value client relationship more than a good piece of work. Serena’s interview extract below also suggests and tends to generalise

creative people as more arrogant and different from any other group. She believes that the reason for this is it develops more confidence to sell an idea or design.

“There are just a lot of people in this industry who are really full of themselves. Possibly you need to be arrogant to have the confidence to sell stuff. That to me personally, I think, that’s a trait within anyone in the creative industry. We think a lot of our own worth maybe. You have to have a kind of strong sense of self confidence in yourself, the strength sometimes to sell what you have designed”.

Nevertheless it was intriguing to note that on a couple of occasions participants found it difficult to describe their roles and identity within the organisation. I agree that these questions are not asked everyday, however there was a unique pattern noticed across responses of all participants. Each response to questions of identity brought out a description of the type of work the organisation does and what their purpose is. The description of the organisation was largely on the diversity in the type of work it produces, along with the number of high-profile clients they have which indicates the growth and success of B. The number values of ‘work hard/play hard’ seemed to be instilled in all employees as they assume their ideas will make money for the company. This pattern was backed by Mark, who was confident that his employees have the same feedback about the culture and identity of organisation B as the management does.

“.....it’s about that, employing people that understand this aspect. I would be very surprised if the feedback that you got from our designers was far off track. Because if it is, they are either lying to you or they are very good at not letting it onto me”. (Mark)

This analysis leads me to the next level of interpretation. As evident from the situation above, it leads me to conclude that the management at organisation B have maintained a strong hold on the development as well as maintenance of the culture.

This is evident from Jack's words, which while describing the culture of the organisation he acknowledges, that there is a need for right kind of people. He also emphasises that it is the director's choice to develop the culture and maintain it as it is today.

"It is obviously ambition on the management's part. The directors have gone through a transition period. They have had few clients, but now they want to step up again. I think it's also the staff, you can't make or do anything without staff, if you have got really good people on board. It is not formed organically but everything happens later organically if you get the right people on board and it happens naturally for you".

Organisation B seems to operate around the principle of three main forces mentioned by Robbins and Judge (2008), of *selection practices*, *actions from top management* and *socialization process*. These supposedly essential elements allow Organisation B to maintain a workforce that is aligned with the desired organisational purpose.

The management has been able to recruit people who suit, or rather 'fit', the ideological demands of Organisation B. The management consciously selects professionals who have reached a certain level in the workforce. An example for this would be, designers selected for any position at Organisation B are either senior or intermediate designers, which means there is no chance for a novice or a fresh graduate to enter the realms of Organisation B. This selection criterion has been adopted in order to control any risk of inexperience and irresponsible behaviour at work. The management believes that they do not provide any chances to the new recruit to blame their inefficiency on inexperience or confusion. By employing senior or intermediate designers chances for irresponsible work are lessened and maintenance of self image acts as a higher internal institutionalised control. This mechanism is also closely related to identity, which is created by the organisation as one's self image. High expectations and accountability are placed upon designers due to their backgrounds and previous experience.

The extracts below explain in a participant's words what the expectations are from an employee at Organisation B.

"... we made a conscious decision a few years ago not to employ too many juniors so we actually only employ intermediate and seniors. So these are big people, these are grown ups, they are all thirty, so we have an expectation of them as grown ups to act in a certain way and take responsibility on and make decisions. The right decisions for the business, the right decisions for the clients". (Mark, speaking from the perspective of a recruiter)

"As an experienced designer...I will be expected to perform at certain levels and expected to do certain things. If I don't then it's not going to reflect very well on me and I'm not going to be able to get another job. It's that kind of motivation really". (Jack, speaking about maintenance of self image as an employee)

These extracts also bring into focus the cultivation of a particular culture in the organisation. It represents a conventional and causal view which focuses on the development of a culture that matches strategic directions of the firm. Here, the directors have recruited people who will quickly accept values of B as they seek to maintain and improve their self-image. This serves the purpose of B in maintaining a workforce which conforms to organisational values and culture, and is controlled through an internal locus which is characterised by the expectations of the employees and their motivation to perform their best. Anyone new who enters this organisation will be implanted with similar values. A socialisation process is strongly followed in Organisation B too, new employees are warmly welcomed, and plenty of time is spent training them, while everyone 'pitches in' to help in times of crisis. Serena's words illustrate how members recognise the underlying agreements of socialising and helping out.

"I think B is (pause) a small organisation so everyone kind of pitches in and I know in other agencies it's a bit different but I think all of us try and help each other out and - kind of - just so that everyone knows what is going on".

"We do have Friday night drinks and occasionally we *have* to go for work functions with clients and things like that".

The above extract also suggests that apart from recruitment and socialisation Organisation B has effectively managed the symbols that represent the culture in a way that reminds employees of the values of B. Organisation B has maintained practices including introductory morning tea for new employees, in-office birthday parties and Friday night drinks to enable new employees to be brought into the culture of B, while also bringing together older employees to be part of these rituals which reinforce their loyalty to the organisation.

Though the selection criterion is based on the level of experience and attitude towards work, it is interesting to notice how messages about work responsibilities and expectations are conveyed throughout Organisation B. The management leads by trust and relaxed leadership style. They leave enough leverage for the employees to disagree and comment on different levels of decision making and open communication is encouraged. As termed by one of the directors, Organisation B has an open dialogue leadership.

"The leadership style is quite relaxed in terms of its level of showing trust. Leadership in terms of if there is work that needs to be done the directors are doing it. They also do the long hours, it's also in terms of [if] people are given a project then they are expected to do it and they are also expected that when they have a problem with it to come and talk about it. So, its that leadership style that lets us do that rather than telling them you will do that , we are letting them do that, take this job and run [with] it, talk to the client, resolve issues...."

Fiona, who is one of the account managers, likes to operate in a similar manner. She avoids putting pressure on staff yet tries to get her work done on time.

“That’s the way to be, just as long as you meet the deadlines and stuff, that’s what its about, keeping your client happy and also keeping you staff happy, because you have to deal with them all day long, you know, you are sitting with them, you are working with them.....”

The employees are encouraged to discuss their problems at an early stage. At present the management are planning a revamp of the organisation, where employees are encouraged to provide feedback to external consultants in regards to new strategic directions.

The owners of the business assume that staff share similar opinions with regards to design and creativity. However, there is a clear divide between the professional values and identification with work when it comes to designers and management. The designers identify with their work as an extension of themselves; they perceive work as part of their identity. On the other hand, those in management do not identify with art work as strongly as the ‘creative’, for them it is more of a means to an end. This professional divide sometimes leads to dissatisfaction and resistance against professional values. Due to these differences it becomes critical for the management to foster an organisational environment that is personal, and has somewhat of a family atmosphere, where people get along well enough that rarely clash over differences in opinion. Attitude is considered as the key to having a happy work force. Though the words of Richard, shows that picking the right people can nurture the right environment and maintain good communication.

“...it’s very easy to have one staff member who can have a detrimental effect on the group around them, so it is very important to pick the right person...” (Richard).

While I am on the topic of management's intention of picking the right people to foster the existing culture, it is important to turn my attention towards the opposite of recruitment - redundancy. Selecting the right people may not always be easy and this can result in key decision makers 'letting go' of some people who may not meet the desired outcomes. Organisation B has gone through a lot of transitions and it seems to have come a long way to achieve its current success. In this journey of last five years, those in charge of B had to lay off an entire management's layer along with some employees who did not identify with the new directions. These extracts also indicate the attempts on management's part to avoid any resistance and identity conflicts. They aim to increase professional harmony via cultural fit and reducing the importance of identification with skills and values different from the organisation.

"There was another level of management at that time at B whom we fired. The difference between now and then is chalk and cheese! The management structure then was managers, they knew very, very little about the industry that they were operating in.

"So we have learnt to place way more importance on cultural fit when it comes to HR and reduce the importance that we have on technical ability, creative ability or skills".
(Mark)

"We had to get rid off the production mindset and get people whose mindset was strategic design and use that to move forward". (Clayton)

As Organisation B is growing and improving its management is beginning to realise the need for change, therefore they are setting up new strategic directions. In order to do so they require full support of the staff, yet they themselves are not ready to sacrifice their culture for any staff member. Mark, who is heavily involved in strategic changes, does not hesitate in verbalising his thoughts on allowing people to leave the organisation in case of differences.

“They might disagree with some of the directions we are going in, but at the end of the day we are the directors, we are the owners and it’s our job to set goals and make sure that the business gets there. But, they might disagree with some of that, but at the end of the day they will appreciate the fact that they are being brought in and made to feel a part of what we are trying to achieve.....”

The fact that Mark mentions disagreements by employees in regards to some goals, and that he has involved an external agency to deal with issues of organisational change indicates that within Organisation B there is an ongoing resistance towards the desired organisational goals. However, the managers do seem to acknowledge the resistance but refuse to see it as ‘un-manageable’.

Employees that are recruited or retained need to work in an environment that facilitates not only their creativity but also allows them to build the business for Organisation B. Thus, I assume that Organisation B develops and manages a space that allows employees to identify with and feel a part of. This is done through symbol management where dress code, office interiors of the organisation and the paintings on the wall are managed and maintained in line with the company objectives. As mentioned earlier Organisation B has an open culture hence the open-plan office space. The office is well lit with work stations placed close to each other and there appears to be no hierarchical divisions or closed doors. However, an alternative view of an open plan office with ‘the bosses’ working close to the employees can be seen as a mechanism of surveillance. This open office culture can allow managers to maintain a constant watch over their subordinates.

The office walls are adorned with huge still-life paintings and posters of the company’s past work. Employees have a casual to semi-casual dress code, according to Clayton; “in B there is no place for a black suit”. There is usually some music on and people are allowed to play music of their choice. The office has a kitchen with a variety of tea and

coffee and there is always food in the fridge, along with a shower for those who usually work late. According to the designers working late seems to come as a part and parcel of being in the industry, therefore my assumption is that maintaining a kitchen and a bathroom in the office's premises becomes a necessity. Clayton, who also considers himself one of the caregivers, plays a nurturing role in maintaining a family atmosphere. He is usually the one who will get takeaway food for the late night workers and allows them to take a break.

"To make sure they (designers) have the best, they might have to work very, very long hours and it does happen occasionally and if that's the case then you need to be around. I keep calling them to check how they are doing and make decisions with them so that they do not feel they are being abused".

This way Clayton is able to represent a nurturing environment within the organisation as well as appease employees who may be dissatisfied with such situations. For example, Serena in her interviews already seems to regret and resist having to work long hours, while other employees go out and have 'fun'. She feels that there is an inconsistency between the laid-back, relaxed atmosphere of the organisation and the number of extra hours they have to work to produce quality work.

"The culture here is pretty relaxed and kind of laid back. But when I feel I am working a lot I guess it clashes for me if people are out for Friday night drinks and I am here still working".

I am wary of the 'family' metaphor as also being hierarchical, repressive and paternalistic alongside its representation of kinship bonds and shared goals. Casey (1999) reveals in her study the discordant and unintended outcomes of promoting a family culture. She presents the conflicts, pressures and discomfort involved in being part of a family and winning approval.

META-NARRATIVE

Another way in which organisations are able to transmit culture and values are through encapsulated stories. The meta-narrative is an over arching story of the entire plot and runs through the entire version of the narratives discussed above. Meta-narrative also attempts to answer the key research question of how the culture at Organisation B manages the professional tension between management and creative. So far, the narratives have portrayed two aspects; one suggests a tension between creative and management. In that there is a professional tension between management who are responsible for key decisions and those who work on creative ideas and offer their expertise to develop an advert to please the client. Though the tension does exist it has not affected Organisation B adversely and that may be due to a strong culture that binds the organisation together. It is culture that is managed by a small, powerful group of directors who make sure that employees are selected and operate in a manner that represents their (managers) values, and those of the organisation at large. For the owners of the business developing a strong culture is a goal and they realise by generating one they can easily manipulate their workforce. Therefore this aspect of the narrative forms the plot which allows the organisation to be managed and run in their desired direction. The purpose of the underlying meta-narrative is to bring forth some of the reasons and justifications for the existence of a strong culture.

For the last five years Organisation B has achieved what no other medium sized advertising agency in Wellington has, working with renowned and reputable clients, both from government as well as private sectors. They have won awards for their advertising and are well known in the artistic circle of advertising. Organisation B has not achieved all this easily; rather they went through a period of great transition and change.

The narrative of the 'now' cannot be understood without looking at the history of Organisation B, therefore it was important that this section be included as a meta-narrative. As it is only when one understands what happened in the past will the present situation make sense. The stories that follow have been told by the directors who were interviewed for this research. Therefore, these accounts are from their particular perspective of how the organisation was before the take-over and what it has become in the past five years.

B AS IT WAS

Five years ago Organisation B existed under different management and was not climbing the ladder of success. The business was running at a loss and, according to Clayton, the management back then did not care what became of the organisation as long as they were taking home a good salary. Clayton describes the situation as:

"This person tended to sit there and wanted everybody to do things and only wanted to be involved in the client side when it was for lunch or coffee. They added no value, they brought in no clients, they didn't do any day-to-day work, so it was actually always the time and always the money and it was a big salary".

The four directors currently at B were employed at various levels in the older version of B. They were not happy with the state of affairs in the organisation. The account of that period that I received from the current directors portrays the older organisation as a bureaucratic one doing no good creative work. There were layers of management which did not even have the knowledge or experience in the art sector of the industry. The leadership style lacked motivation for employees, the managers were not the right age to connect with the employees and lacked the ability to see trends in advertising and or go after them. The biggest asset they lacked as management was the ability to communicate. As described by Mark, "the difference between now and then is chalk and cheese...they were selling widgets not service".

For those under such management, the organisation's chances of success looked bleak. It came to a point that frustrated employees, including the four new directors of Organisation B, planned to take over the company. The four ambitious employees felt that once they had full control they could improve the organisation and overcome the losses. So the four employees proposed a conditional take-over offer in front of the former bureaucratic management. The condition under which the organisation was taken over was that the entire old management was laid off, total control was given to the four newly appointed directors, and the payment for the take over was to take the organisation being worked out of debt. The company was brought down to 25% of its current size and then began the hard work of repaying debts.

B AS IT IS

This is the 'now' narrative which describes where Organisation B is today and where it is heading. Within this account lie the reasons for developing of the particular culture at Organisation B.

Organisation B today may have come through tough times but the four ambitious directors made a great effort in developing a place where work was appreciated and made into a business. The organisation today is under the full control of four directors who are well aware of what the business is doing at a particular time and where it is heading. The organisation today runs under an open leadership style where employees can get involved at any level of decision making. The culture of this organisation is a key element and reflects trust and openness. The management is involved in all sorts of decisions and almost all work goes through the four directors before being presented to the clients. The spiral of good work - continuing to do right work attracts the right clients- is followed strongly by the current staff and management.

“In a business like this you are only as good as the client who wants you and who will hold onto you. You don’t have a product that people want, you really are on a very, very fine line between continuing on the track with right plans, therefore continuing to do the right work which in turn attracts the right clients and this spiral can go down really fast...”

The philosophies of the directors are followed strongly in the organisation as a way of marketing themselves. Mark plays a very important role in this and believes that it is largely his own belief system on which the organisation operates. He sees his forceful personality and his strategies as driving the business forward. To quote an extract from one of his interviews:

“It’s my business; I set it up all these years and have driven it forward with passion since then. And it’s my belief system of how an agency should be run”.

It is not only Mark who feels this way about the organisation; the other three directors seem to share the same thoughts. The directors have the control over the organisation and that was what they desired in order to make it what it is today. Clayton speaks of this with a sense of pride in his voice:

“...we thought we could do a lot better and if we had full control and we were fortunate enough to get full control and we *have obviously* turned it into what it is today”. (Emphasis added)

Over the years they claim to have created an identity for the organisation which every employee working there comes to associate with. They allege to have actively selected and employed those who they believe fit the culture of B. Therefore, creating a group

of people who specifically are set out to achieve, add, develop and grow the core culture of the business.

The business is created to facilitate growth so the underlying business aims are to make money and develop. Everything that is done in the organisation is measured against the progress made in terms of dollars. This aspect of money making for the business and growth of the organisation has trickled down from the managers to the staff, in particular the designers. The rich pictures suggest that the designers are well aware of the budget demands and they know the value of making money for the business and keeping the clients happy. Serena, in her rich picture (Fig.6), shows a positive connection between producing interesting work and being able to make more money for the company. She relates getting good clients who pay good money for work, as well as achieving awards, to the improvement of staff conditions, making employees more happy and satisfied.

However, it is noteworthy that Serena is one of the designers who is not satisfied with the amount of time she gets to design, something for which she was recruited for and perceives as being part of her identity. The illustration below, somewhat represents how she has attempted to instil organisational values as a part her identity, however based on her interview (see. pg. 65 and pg. 72) it can be concluded that there are some forms of resistance and conflict between the two narratives of her ideal self and her present situation. Her picture is crowded with the statement, 'finding interesting and challenging work' and this was what Serena mentioned in her interview when asked if she felt that the organisation supported her needs, something she believes that it could do better in regards to her creativity.

Figure 6: Serena's rich picture showing a connection between interesting work and money

After considering the meta-narrative about the culture of Organisation B, the picture becomes much clearer in terms of why there is a culture that is open, trusting and easy going. This culture has served management's objectives of money making and controlling the valuable expertise and knowledge within their organisation. Some of the stories from the past are used as cultural artefacts with the employees to support the current management practices. The culture has the ability to suppress obvious

resistance as well as prevent professional conflicts via the threat of job loss. But what this culture cannot overshadow are the identities which individuals relate to strongly and what they aspire to achieve.

If viewed on the surface, the culture of Organisation B can be described as strong and interconnecting between everyone in the organisation. Therefore, every member is able to relate and identify with where the organisation is going. The employees feel involved in decision making as they can comment and disagree with management's views. The organisation is viewed as a family and employees are taken care of as the management understands the demands of a creative job. However, the purpose of this study is to look beyond the obvious manifestations of the culture and present a view that exposes softer control mechanisms of this culture. Therefore the next section explains how we can interpret the darker side of organisational culture.

PULLING THE STORIES TOGETHER

The preceding accounts gave a glimpse of why the management developed what is termed by Deal and Kennedy (1988) a 'work hard/play hard' culture, or a culture that is liberal. Now I present my interpretation of the rationale behind management's decision to develop this culture.

At a glance this strong and conducive culture may appear fantastic for the organisation and to a certain extent it is. However, the role of culture that is overlooked in a scenario like this is its role as a softer form of control or normative control. Here, the two stories described as meta-narrative will help me. The story narrated about the previous management's style tells a tale of bureaucracy and a controlled organisation of creative work. Several layers of that management hindered the progress of creative work and so the new management and leadership style aims to surpass a controlling style of working environment. The new management started off with a flat structure

which they believe assists in the healthy development of staff. The Organisation is modern and believes in providing a relaxed and fun environment for employees. Considering the nature of creative work and the demands of clients placed on this organisation, it makes one wonder how are targets reached or deadlines met?

The answer to that question lies in the organisation itself, it is through the culture of this Organisation that the management is able to control employees as well as earn profits. Management at B operates with two types of control: bureaucratic and cultural, or normative control. Bureaucratic control is evident in the planning and budgeting that surrounds the development of any advert. On the other hand, cultural or normative control surfaces in the recruitment, socialisation and family metaphor used within the organisation. I will start by outlining a few aspects which represent bureaucratic control followed by my interpretation of cultural controls.

This culture is created on the belief system of the management. The management, particularly the directors, keep a strong control over the organisation's work output as well as the employees. This sort of control is not evident as it comes embedded in the assumptions and embedded in various processes of Organisation B, for example, each team is headed by one of the directors who watch and control over the performance of team members. Clayton claims to be checking on his team on a daily basis.

"... I have team members so I am checking in on what they are doing, talking to them about their work. I sit down with them at least 10-15 minutes each day and talk to them everyday, my team has work everyday so we know what we are doing and when we are doing it".

This form of bureaucratic control, such as timely progress meetings each day, attempts to keep designers on track, as they are believed to be all over the place and work at their own pace - which is not always profitable. The work of the designers goes

through lengthy scrutiny by the management before reaching the clients. There are times when the designers do not feel they are able to reach their full potential of creativity as the choice of client is an influence and usually the management works on the side of the client. Management's involvement in various administrative tasks also allows them to monitor the time spent designing.

On the matter of cultural or normative control I suggest that if we read into the accounts of the work culture in B we will realise that the new management selects and chooses those who will work to their defined principles. Starting with the recruitment and selection process, they hire only a certain strata of the creative professionals - those they feel are responsible and efficient. Once such experienced staff is selected they get introduced into an environment where a sense of family and corporation is fundamental. The size of the organisation plays a role in molding new employees into individuals who will then work together and contribute in all aspects of the organisation, irrespective of their qualification or experience. An example of this can be seen when the receptionist at B is not around, the clients and the phone calls are received by another member of the organisation whether that be a director or a designer. The caring atmosphere of the organisation also provides a space for employees where they can work longer hours, yet not feel exploited.

The identity of the organisation is strongly defined in terms of the type of work they do and their achievements in comparison to any other advertising agencies. This identity is greatly controlled by the directors, who then decide along with the business developer the clients they wish to work with and how they will monitor trends. Likewise, creativity seems to be controlled through budgeting and client briefs, as depicted in Jack's rich picture (Fig.3) and there are occasions when the information is lost or the budgeting is too tight meaning designers are unable to produce a piece that is aesthetic.

The other intriguing form of normative control that I noticed in the accounts of the designers was the expectations that they all spoke of in terms of work. As discussed earlier, the designers are selected on their level of experience in the industry; an aspect that brings a certain amount of responsibility with it. The designers feel they are all responsible and mature therefore they need to take a high level of accountability for their work, and produce results that match their position in the industry. This self-image management is a convenient means for management to control a diverse workforce. Expectations are placed on the employee as soon as they are forced to maintain this image and standard to avoid their reputation being marred.

CONCLUSION

“The bottom line is to return benefits to the owners of the business. It is not rocket science it is the bottom line where every business should be founded on. If we hadn’t made the money I will not be turning up for the long hours that I am because I love design and I love pretty pictures, stuff that, we are here to make money. Everything we do is measured against whether it is driving the business forward from a success perspective and success is measured absolutely and other things such as recognition and stuff. But at the end of the day it is dollars and we have bought the business and we are running the business and investing time. We are doing this because at the end of the day we want to make money”.

This quote is from of one of the directors who strongly depict the purpose of Organisation B. In conclusion it seems that no matter what they do or say at the end of the day it is about making money and being profitable. This extract shows entirely what B is driven by and what their culture is meant to support.

This clearly sums up all that has been discussed in this chapter, and my interpretation of this is that even though there exists a strong culture in B, it exists so as to support the development of the business. The culture may allow designers to feel happy, but the directors do not want them to be comfortable, as Mark points out:

“We want them to be happy, I don’t want them to be comfortable. This is not a comfortable company. Comfortableness is stopping, it is slowing down, being happy is about being personally fulfilled, challenged, growth progression. Those are the sort of things business wants to achieve. So those are the sort of things people such as designers and people working in business are suppose to have those personal traits

and want to have that. If you don't, we are really happy to help you move to another place, we are not going to kick you out of the door, we would love to work with people who identify with the kind of people we are, we will help them progress, we will help them step up. It's not 'our way or the highway' type of scenario but if you want to look at it, at the end of the day it has to be our way or the highway".

This account also supports this chapter's discussion on the way Organisation B exhibits and proposes to be a 'fun' place to work where individuality and empowerment are promoted. However, the management influences both culturally and bureaucratically in order to run the organisation by a single purpose, thus overriding diverse perspectives and shadowing the development of any identity which does not correspond to the values of the organisation.

DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

This thesis began by presenting a question addressed by Parker (2000) “Do organisations shape the identities of their members? And if they do, can (and should) managers seek to influence these identities in order to manage more *effectively*? (pg: 1 emphasises added). This question not only created curiosity to study organisational culture and identity but also served as the source for key questions asked in this research: firstly, can we study the ongoing professional tension in an advertising agency through the lens of organisational culture and identity? The second question was more specific to the agency under study. That is, if this professional tension exists then how might it be controlled by the management who may attempt to suppress resistance and conflict of interests in order to maintain organisational harmony?

This chapter will address the research questions and provide a discussion on how they have unfolded in the context of organisation B. This chapter will pull together the analysed data and literature which is the foundation of this research. The primary purpose is to generate a dialogue between the data that was gathered and the literature which may inform the findings. Second it is to suggest a contribution to the organisational culture as well as advertising research literature.

I will attempt to address two key questions, presented above, that surround the tension between creative professionals and management in advertising agencies. In providing a discussion to the mentioned questions I will use the theoretical perspectives used in this thesis.

The beginning of this chapter focuses on understanding the tension via the theoretical frameworks of organisational culture and identity. So far studies in advertising literature such as Kover (1995 and 1996), El-Murad and West (2004) and Hackley (2007) have covered and provided 'solutions' to solve this existing tension between creative professionals and commercial imperatives. These 'solutions' provide fix- it remedies to overcome the divide between creatives and management, with Kover and Goldberg (1995) suggesting an increase in the separation between the two groups to allow management and creative people to work separately with less interference from each other. Kover (1995) advised people in business to listen and interact more carefully with copywriters in order to measure advertising response; while El-Murad and West (2004) believe organisations should build a more risk taking environment to enhance creativity. But what all these solutions fail to address are issues such as how divergent views affect the overall creativity of an agency or ways in which creatives relate to current organisational structures and what is it that they really seek from their work. These assumptions in fact, may be more deep-rooted than those that appear as a symptom. Therefore, it becomes critical to deeply analyse the tension bring to the surface issues that underly these assumptions and identity work on individuals in advertising. For this reason, the first part of my discussion has been divided into two sections: one discusses Scheins' model (1992) used in the analysis to expose these assumptions, while the second focuses on the tension through the framework of organisational culture and identity. I will also mention literature that supports and confirms the role of organisational culture and identity in fostering this tension. I will then draw from my data analysis to discuss how the tension is played out in Organisation B.

The second part of the discussion more specifically relates to Organisation B and its management style. This discussion focuses on how within Organisation B cultural controls are maintained to uphold organisational harmony and possibly suppress professional tensions or conflicts. A similar opinion is expressed in an article on knowledge management by De Long and Fahey (2004) who attempt to provide managers a framework by which they can assess existing culture and the desired behaviour fit in relation to knowledge generation. They advise managers to assess

behaviour that maybe a barrier for the desired new behaviour to see if these can be changed to support new knowledge strategies. Reviewing the strong culture within Organisation B brings out aspects behind the management of culture to control the workforce, along with stories which form the meta-narrative and also provide the rationale behind strong, normative and bureaucratic controls within the organisation.

Both my discussion and analysis contributes to the critical literature on organisational culture by bringing to the forefront the use of organisational culture as a form of normative control. It is argued that strong and fun cultures, alongside family and team metaphors are used to enhance the roles of power within a so called free thinking organisation such as an advertising agency. Such manifestations of culture may use the metaphors to maintain a stronger hold over the workforce and make a high commitment to the organisation a necessity to be part of the family, fun and team culture. The founding story, which is the story of the take over and the re-emergence from the ashes due to a dramatic change to current practices, values and beliefs, makes it a compulsion for all to accept and work along the values of this culture. My research also contributes to literature on advertising and media, which to my knowledge has never considered the role or responsibility of organisational culture and identity in the conflict between creative and commercial imperatives.

Finally, this chapter will cover the implications of this research. It will also suggest a number of practical implications which could assist advertising professionals, such as account managers, designers and creative managers, who have to deal with the dynamics of their organisations. These implications will provide an insight into aspects from the present literature on organisational culture and identity that needs further consideration. The views discussed in this section can also be applied to the advertising and media industry at large and I will conclude this chapter by pointing out some of the limitations of this research as well as possibilities for future research.

Denison and Mishra (1995) suggested that a causal relationship between organisational efficiency and culture is important to organisational outcomes, such as the return on assets and sales growth that can be achieved through culture management. Schein (1985) also argued that culture could be the answer to a wide range of problems within organisations and that strong culture which support productivity can be created deliberately. This simple view of culture was, and still is, adopted in a wide range of organisations. In a study of mergers by Riad (2005), one merger manager views culture as having an impact on the organisation and it is this role and impact that I am trying to investigate. The question that I am attempting to develop here is what does organisational culture do in Organisation B?

Advertising literature perceives a professional divide and misinterpretation between the purpose of the work done by management, those involved in planning and controlling the advertising business, and the creatives, those who are develop the adverts that will bring new projects for the organisation. If the literature on advertising agencies suggests that there is a tension between the two distinct professional groupings within an agency then how can organisation studies help us to understand it?

I have chosen two concepts from organisation studies: organisational culture and identity. These two aspects encompass a lot that is ‘done’ in organisations. As mentioned in the theoretical framework of this thesis, the connection between culture and identity is strong. If we understand culture as ‘how things are done around here’, then identity is an interpretation of what we do, and in addition, how others perceive what we do. Both these concepts are socially constructed and provide meaning and purpose to the work individuals do in organisations. By this I mean, culture and identity are strongly related to how we interact and react in social circumstances. Culture can be studied as a manifestation of aspects within the organisation, such as the office floor plan, clothing worn by employees and the organisational values and relationships people in the organisation share. However, underneath these surfaces

lies a deeper meaning that connects all these manifestations, a meaning that defines what the organisation stands for and how employees relate to their organisation (Martin, 2002). Eisenberg and Riley (2001) stress that the make up of self-identity is largely constructed from the meanings, images and work that is available in the culture surrounding us. These are the meanings and purposes that my research is interested in investigating.

Earlier studies, such as Peters and Waterman, 1982, and, Deal and Kennedy, 1988, on culture have encompassed views that treat culture as a variable that can be manipulated in isolation to achieve organisational goals without any other organisational variables affecting it. However these views are no longer just accepted. Indeed, culture can be studied beyond a functional view where organisation wide consensus overrides plural meanings, to a view of organisational culture in relation to power and domination. Knights and Wilmott (1987) aptly point out that cultural studies have regarded culture as the product of organisation wide consensus rather than a result of a continuous struggle to interpret organisational meanings and images. In other terms, cultural manifestations that symbolise power, such as teams and family provide a strong sense of identity to individuals working in the organisation, but may also allow management to exercise control by validating these assumptions (Casey 1999, Fleming 2005).

In this research I came across issues within Organisation B which can further our understanding of various cultural and identity representations. Organisation B can be simply looked at using Schien's (1992) model of culture, where organisational culture falls into three distinct levels. This model was outlined and analysed earlier and here I relate the meaning of these three levels to my theoretical framework of culture.

The first level is of cultural artefacts; things within the organisation which are tangible and are a strong representation of its culture. At the same time these artefacts can symbolise the values of an organisation that are meant to be followed. This can be

referred to as the representation of the broader historical and economical context in which this organisation is situated. Such expressions affect individual thought and actions and benefit the goals of a particular dominant group (Knights and Wilmott, 1987; Parker, 2000; Alvesson, 2004).

The second and third levels suggested by Schien are values and beliefs. It is here that the core of the culture lies and defines what its members are doing and why they are doing it. I want to emphasise that the mechanism of controlling a workforce lies within these values, beliefs and questioning of purpose, which the management cultivates through expectations of employees to perform the 'right behaviour' and 'cultural fit'. In Organisation B, Schien's second level is represented by the employees' belief that they are part of a leading advertising agency in Wellington, New Zealand and it is the goal of this organisation to maintain a high standard of work. The organisation is largely run on the belief system of its four directors who define and select the quantity and type of work the organisation is involved in. The laid back environment, flat structure and family atmosphere may represent a contemporary organisation, but such organisations have been shown by Cassey (1999), as well as Fleming and Spicer (2004) as being controlling through culture management techniques which blur the boundaries between work and non-work. This is also achieved through metaphors such as 'the family', where individuals become highly committed and at times even maintain surveillance over those who are not following work and team values. Values become the easiest control mechanism, as they are a conceptualisation of control having social characteristics (Ouchi, 1980). It is by such values that employees internalise and comply with this form of control, thus risking their autonomy. Here, in the case of B, values of hard work and a strong commitment to growing the business, operate as a surveillance tool over those who do not commit fully to the cause. The management instills the 'family' values within its workforce, in turn ensuring that maintaining the image and reputation of the organisation becomes critical for those who are part of the family. Consequently employees agree to work on projects day and night, and sometimes even prioritising their work over their social life, as was evident from Serena's account of the times when she needed to work while other colleagues socialised.

The third and most important level of Schein's culture model are the basic assumptions - the source of both values and artefacts in an organisation's culture. Examples of basic assumptions include whether employees are to be trusted, and should the organisations' well-being be long or short term (Martin, 2002). The spiral of good work, is a philosophy intrinsic to Organisation B and followed by its management, but also comes across in some rich pictures by the designer's (such as Serena's). In interviews the designers emphasised the importance of producing quality work, and Nathan seems to suggest this through his picture's wine tasting metaphor. This underlying assumption that an immense amount of work is needed to meet the high level of expectations brings me to focus on the stress involved in the demands of this contemporary organisation. Recent work by Ross (2003) in Media Company studied the costs involved in working for an apparently humane workplace. He suggested that even after being in a fun environment employees were putting in extra hours of work in order to produce work that was valuable and appreciated. The consequence of valuing hard work is that too much work and corporate values infiltrate the personal lives of employees, who then find it difficult to identify with anything else but their work.

Based on Schein's model I have been able to recognise the core values, assumptions and beliefs which are representative of Organisation B's culture and the identity of its employees. However, the intriguing question that arises by studying culture via this model is how are these artefacts, values and assumptions defined? Would we consider them to be a true representation of the organisational culture at B? Can these values, beliefs and assumptions not be challenged based on the background, experience and identities of various employees? Is it possible that what we see or hear as the core values of the organisation; are not what other employees or groups identify with? These few key questions allow me to reflect critically on the existing culture of Organisation B.

As suggested through the title of this section, 'a very, very flat structure' was the perception provided by Clayton, one of the directors, of the organisation. The

questions mentioned above will help me analyse and challenge such assumptions and gauge if they clearly represent the diverse workforce at Organisation B. The purpose of the preceding discussion on Schein's model, was also to lay the foundation of culture at B, which in turn helped me answer the first research question on what the role of organisational culture is in this ongoing professional tension. The peripheral questions generated above will also look into the culture management techniques used to achieve desired behaviour.

"A VERY DISTINCTIVE CULTURE AND WE BUILT THAT CULTURE"

The reason I have emphasised 'we' in the title is to highlight how power comes into play while defining the values, culture or identity of an organisation. The culture at B is created and disseminated from the top, where management expects employees to follow and identify with their constructed beliefs. Management at B considers organisational culture as a key ingredient in their success, therefore they clearly emphasise and seek a 'cultural fit' for all employees. This stands true in the one sided, top-down, view of cultivating a culture that supports the strategies of the organisation (Sapienza, 1985) and this is largely shaped by the managers who dominate the decision making processes (Jackson and Carter, 2000). Also evident from the data collected is that organisation B, views culture as functional, and there is a perception of a direct relationship between organisational culture and effectiveness. The directors have created this culture and awareness among staff that such a culture needs to be 'followed' in order to develop appropriate behaviour and values. Mark and Clayton, along with a few designers at B, agree that this culture is an aspiration of the management, and its maintenance leads to quality service and products. Here, we can see that culture can be manipulated to suit the needs of the environment to provide predictable results (Smircich 1983, Brewis, 2007).

These views represent the scientific approach to the study of culture, where it is introduced as a variable, and one of the major concerns is how to mould, shape and

change culture so that it aligns with values and behaviours to suit managerial purposes. Many organisations do follow this line of thought, where shared values and beliefs create an organisation wide consensus and predict behaviour. This however does not consider the multiplicity of views within organisations and that culture can also comprise of conflict, confusion and politics. The fragmentation view of culture (Martin, 1992) accepts ambiguity and dominance within a culture. Organisations such as B need to become conscious that organisational culture may have different meaning for individuals and considering the diverse background and experiences of employees at B, there may well be subcultures, groups or individuals who do not see the purpose of the organisation coinciding with their understanding (Parker, 2000).

The discussion of multiple and diverse perceptions brings me to address the tension that has been discussed throughout this thesis. This tension is between creative professionals and commercial imperatives represented by the management, or in the case of B, the four directors. This tension has surfaced in many advertising agencies and literature focuses on it as a problem within media agencies. The purpose of this thesis was to explore and understand the tension by examining the processes of identification and organisational culture. In order to do so, it was important to consider how the tension is played out in Organisation B and what critical literature can help us understand the dynamics.

Tension is prevalent in Organisation B in subtle forms; and was most evident when participants were asked to draw rich pictures of their perception of B. In turn, participants drew pictures and diagrams that represented a divide between management and designers. Pictures produced by the management were in the form of organisational charts and showed different sections and groups that work to provide the service. Whereas designers or the creative professionals drew ways that different individuals and groups influence their creative work, and how they sense the pressures and divisions. This influence and segregation of those who 'create' and those who 'plan' has often been cited and argued in literature on advertising research (Hackley and Kover, 2007; Kover and Goldberg, 1995). Creative individuals within organisation B

understand the pressures of time, budgets and other administrative demands. This, according to them, results in less time to be creative or design in a way that compliments their creative self. This again brings me back to the ideas that were discussed in the literature, on the organisation of thought and strategic fit for all ideas along with the way work has taken precedence over creative pursuits (Owen, 2007; Hackley, 2000). Therefore, we can clearly see the role of power and domination over the development of creative work, yet on the surface the organisation promotes equality of opinions, a very flat structure and a family atmosphere where each member contributes greatly. However, power underlies this blanket of relaxed, family culture and seems to trigger conflicts between the two groups over the way they think about the development of a creative piece of work.

It is here that the tension can be understood through the critical framework of organisational culture and identity. All along in advertising and media research literature this tension has been witnessed as a problem for which solutions can be provided. Yet, the literature has failed to incorporate how this tension can be understood as a continuous struggle between two groups attempting to define their identities as well as the values and beliefs that make up their advertising work. A functional or scientific view of culture and identity would present the tension as something that is undesirable in an organisation and that managers must control this tension in order to maintain harmony and reach the desired outcomes. De Long and Fahey (2004) emphasise that culture can be manipulated to achieve effective knowledge management, but this cannot be done without recognising and eliminating elements that are barriers to new behaviours. They further stress that managers need to question basic assumptions about the culture and organisational strategies used to create a framework to support their new objectives.

However if we view the culture of organisation B as an amalgamation of plural meanings and a manifestation of symbols, power and knowledge (Smircich 1983) we will be able to recognize that this culture does display forms of resistance (e.g. the designers wanting less administrative work) and expressions of power relations (e.g.

the dominant values of the directors that run the organisation) thus representing all the interests of various groups. These groups and their members attempt to cope with the situations and display resistance that thereby contributes towards both the development of the culture as well as the tension (Collinson, 1988; Ackroyd and Crowdy, 1990; Corley, 2004; Brewis, 2007).

Even though this tension can be studied via the framework of organisational culture and identity, it is important to also reflect on how notions of culture and identity can be dominated by those who hold positions of power in the organisation. The tension surely exists, but it is highly controlled and monitored by the management at Organisation B. The management maintains its authority over the quality and quantity of work that comes in or goes out and overlooks the recruitment of new talent into the organisation all of which emphasises the role of organisational and cultural fit. This control creates a conscious divide between those who belong to the culture and those who do not identify with it. Since construction of identity is situated in the wider social and economical context, organisations such as B influence the individual by integrating the organisational beliefs into their identity. Pratt (1998) believes that in the act of identifying, the individual either affiliates with an organisation or attempts to change their concept of self to make them similar to organisational values. My concluding argument here is that manifestations of culture, which provide a strong sense of identity, can also suppress and marginalise conflicting views.

In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss how Organisation B is able to control, monitor and suppress multiple and conflicting views in its workforce. The mechanism of control used by the management at B not only provides them with power but also defines 'how things are done around here' for all those who are part of the agency.

The above title is derived from an interview with Mark, one of the agency’s directors and a manager highly involved in both the day-to-day as well and long term strategic actions of the company. His belief system seems to dominate the values of the organisation and he is the catalyst for the culture at Organisation B. This section will discuss aspects around the normative and bureaucratic control mechanisms that operate within B. The discussion will put forward points that highlight the use of softer control in the form of organisational culture, along with the formal actions which represent bureaucratic control. My arguments will be supported by literature on critical management studies and will highlight the importance of understanding the controls that may affect the professional tension.

I will start by noting that Hackley (2000) in his work suggested that the dual themes of ‘advertising as art’ versus ‘advertising is business’ exist in the activities of advertising agencies. He further claimed that the latter theme has come to dominate the advertising world as managers control almost all activities within an agency. This claim seems to stand true in the case of Organisation B, where the directors do control all the activities within the agency from Human Resources to strategic planning. Their beliefs and directions have become the working style of as well as forming the identity of the organisation. Management of culture in Organisation B starts from the moment a new employee is hired or sometimes even before that- job interviews.

Speaking on Human Resource Management (HRM) and the management of culture, Thompson and McHugh (2002) argue that the strategic character of HRM assists in the development of strong cultures. In HRM practice this is done through recruitment, reward and retention plans. Such practices and their extent and impact on building strong culture are debatable. For example, at Organisation B Mark, one of the four directors controls all HR practices. Mark decides the type of employees who are recruited and what behaviour is expected of them. His views seem to dominate the

company's directions and therefore the strong culture is not a true and equal representation of views. In fact it is those who hold the power to change strategic directions and pick employees that suit the organisational values that build it. It can also be argued that a strong culture does not always lead to positive outcomes. Strong cultures can facilitate co-ordination, effective decision-making and stability, yet may also promote complacency; inflexibility and group think (Brewis, 2007).

Factors such as complacency, group think can also result in harming the creative performance at Organisation B. It is evident from the data that the directors at B control the output and quality of advertising work, and instil heavy budgeting and time demands on the creative development of an advert. These factors may impact the creativity as well as the flexibility for employees to act and make decisions freely. The 'play hard and work hard' culture at Organisation B, may suggest a strong culture and provide employees a strong identity in the advertising world, however the impacts of this culture cannot be ignored. These include the limitation on creativity, the dual demands of the culture i.e. fun versus long hours of hard work, and lastly the normative controls over work and staff.

The operation of normative and bureaucratic controls within B have been the key findings of this study and can be seen as having allowed the management to control the tension through instalment of cultural techniques. These techniques can be viewed as the normative cultural control mechanisms. Therefore I have dedicated a section discussing these aspects in this agency and this analysis will also highlight my contribution to the study of organisational culture as a form of control in advertising agencies. Moreover, it will also help answer how these normative and bureaucratic mechanisms may have controlled the professional tension so far.

This analysis is my contribution towards organisational culture literature as I attempt to reveal the control mechanisms in an advertising agency that represents a unique service organisation known for its liberal thoughts and creativity. The first section will focus on the normative control aspects prevailing in Organisation B, these include the selection, socialization and expectations that create an environment where employees feel integrated and encourages self-discipline. The second section centres on bureaucratic controls that help management implement rules and regulations that *organise* and align employees with the organisation strategy and values.

NORMATIVE CONTROL

In the hands of management, organisational culture at B is treated as a variable where changes are made in order to direct employees towards increased productivity and excellence. I say this based on my understanding of the way the directors of B manage culture as a way to control the type of people who work within B and ensure they fit within the 'checklist' for appropriate behaviour. According to literature by authors such as Elkin, Jackson and Inkson (2004) and Robbins and Judge (2008) Organisation B can be understood to have developed a culture that will enable higher organisational performance via recruitment and socialisation processes. These are *essential* means of maintaining organisational culture is backed by Elkin et. al who place emphasis on the crucial actions of senior people in an organisation as having a definite effect on the culture. This line of thought exists among the management of B, who feel highly responsible for developing, maintaining and evolving organisational culture. Strong importance is laid on the company's hiring process and selection is based on experience and previous positions to make sure those recruited are responsible and increase the productivity of Organisation B. It was also mentioned by Mark, that those individuals who did not fit the culture of B were expelled. This action resembles the suggestion made and supported by Robbins and Judge (2008) that senior people who

care about the experience of culture will 'penalize (and even expel) those who challenge it' (pg: 253). Anthony (1994) suggests that dismissal of those who do not share the cultural requirements seems to be a 'sovereign remedy' (pg: 42) in the management of culture. This is because it is easier to have access to those who have served for a longer period of time than employees selected freshly.

Socialization is a prominent feature at Organisation B. It is interesting to note how Robbins and Judge (2008) describe the socialisation process, as they believe that since new employees are unfamiliar with the culture they are therefore likely to disturb prevailing beliefs and values. In turn, the organisation must *help* employees to adapt to the new culture. This belief seems to dominate organisations, where challenging and contesting the prevailing values and beliefs are not appreciated and are seen as something to be suppressed. Another view of organisational culture under this socialisation situation can be of culture as an instrument of power (Parker, 2000). Here individuals try to make sense of their existence in the organisation while those who have power are able to dominate and create experiences for those without. Speaking of influence and power, Anthony (1994) believes that development of culture is a natural process that involves the sharing of meaning as the central process for the evolution and identity of it. However, this evolution of culture can be influenced by those in power and in the case of Organisation B, the four directors have come to dominate the values and direction of the company, thereby are able to socialise individuals into an engineered culture.

Symbol management at Organisation B can be seen in the form of paintings of past successful work, birthday parties and other such occasions. Such symbols were labelled by Schein (1985) as artefacts and Elkin et al. (2004) have described them as the rituals, stories and heroes in organisations. Clayton, the design director, admits to have taken his design team for dinner and lunches after they have completed a good job on a project. This ritual suggests that reinforcements are given to individuals when a desired outcome is reached or desired behaviour is displayed. Through these incentives in the form of rituals the organisation is trying to develop an internal locus

of controls within its individuals. Elkin et.al (2004) suggested appropriate rewards can help people to develop a greater internal locus of control.

However these rituals and incentives can also be viewed in the light of control, and may represent normative control, since employees do not choose these events out of 'free will' (Knights and Willmott, 2007). Indeed, they can represent that both the company values of rewards for hard work and long nights to complete tasks, or a reflection of the company's 'fun' environment. Here symbolism is used not only as a medium to project culture but also manufacture and sustain the desired corporate culture (Anthony, 1994). This way individual value can be easily overwhelmed by corporate values and rituals that will foster cohesive behaviour thereby controlling competing values and choices.

Organisation B is in the business of producing short stories for an audience, likewise stories form a rich part of their culture too. Stories contain the narratives of their past, how it rose from rags to riches, its heroic founders, the reductions in workforce, past mistakes and how the organisation has coped through difficult times (Robbins and Judge, 2008). Similar stories are circulated in Organisation B. These stories help them connect the past with the present, as well as provide a rationale for current practices. These stories have been introduced in the data analysis as the meta-narrative -an overarching story that encompasses all the reasons why the 'way things are done' in Organisation B. The two stories are about the past and the present of Organisation B and inform us, through the words of the participants, of the inefficient and obsolete management style of the previous board of directors. At the same time these stories contrast with Organisation B's present management style and purpose. The stories suggest anew objectives, culture and flexible management style of the new B and this identity is formed on the grounds of openness, shared decision making and a strong organisational culture. In turn, the directors claim that they provide enough leverage to employees in relation to the production of their work.

However in contrast to this empowering relationship, the directors do not feel comfortable in allowing employees to make critical decisions. Managers hold a strong control over the work that is produced by the firm as well as all the time and money budgeting. Cultural philosophies at B are those of management and in particular those of Mark, who played a critical role in the takeover process of B. Over the years the new management at B claims to have created a new identity for the organisation. Yet, how is one to believe whether this identity represents the whole organisation? Anthony (1994) discusses how management understands that they should create a corporate culture in a simplified way so that it mirrors the complex organisation and unitary view provided by managers. Secondly, management, as evident in the case of directors at B, has a strong missionary zeal and belief that complex structures can be led by a single purpose. Both these perspectives override and supersede fractional and diverse interests. Therefore such views see cultural diversity as problematic for the organisation.

Another question that arises in relation to the rationale behind cultivating a strong culture at B is that of control. The new B may have given up direct controls of employees but alternatively it exercises control through normative forms such as the ones discussed earlier -expectation, self discipline and socialisation. These are also responsible for creating a strong culture. This form of control results in lesser resistance and conflict as the strong culture binds the loyalties of employees and unites with shared values. Batteau (2000) is of the view that the greater the homogeneity and shared values among employees, the more subtle are the mechanisms of control.

Another interesting form of normative control operating within Organisation B is its expectations. Mead (1934) describes the definition of self as always socially constructed, where the sense of self is mirrored through what others around us perceive us to be. The management of self-image is a convenient way to control a diverse workforce. Some authors also suggest that by perpetuating a form of superior identity, in this case the identity of a responsible senior designer, regulates the

discipline and behaviour of individuals, coaxing them to work harder to maintain their sense of self (Courpasson 2000; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004; Alvesson and Robertson, 2006). Since social identity, that is our comparisons with others around us, also makes us adjust our behaviour according to the demands of the social structure, it is most likely that management makes use of this as a control (Gioia, 1998; Thompson and McHugh, 2002). However, it is important to question whether organisation or management is attempting to change behaviour, or is it simply the organisations core values and beliefs? Anthony (1994) emphasises that for most organisations change in behaviour is sufficient for organisational purposes, since changes in values and culture are difficult to achieve. The examples provided by him is that of getting airline or supermarket staff to smile as a form of behavioural change that is easy to achieve and is not only done for operational purposes but also increases profit and customer flow. A similar case study by Ogbonna and Harris (1998) indicated that behavioural compliance on the part of supermarket employees did not necessarily mean an authentic willingness to change, and usually it was nothing more than just 'acting' to achieve a desired career progression.

Nevertheless, it is also intriguing to note the effects when behavioural compliance is mistaken, by management, as an agreement and commitment to all values. Behavioural compliance maybe considered an agreement to all values and over a period of time come to represent the culture of the organisation. Thus bringing us back to the argument that strong cultures are created, and values, norms and beliefs of this culture are easier to transmit to anyone new entering this culture. With the help of rewards, coercions, constraints and hierarchical control, management creates the appropriate behaviour that will suppress any form of disagreement with the prevailing values.

In Organisation B creatives have been taught the cultural values, norms and beliefs set up by the new management at B. Every new employee is forced into this behavioural compliance, thereby creating a place that resonates unity and loyalty among its employees striving towards the corporate goals. However this behavioural change

must not be mistaken as a shift in core values of the creatives, as a resistance may subside in a homogenous environment and surfaces in language and expressions, as seen in the rich pictures and interviews gathered during this research. Resistance creates a greater distance between the creatives and the management, resulting in an ongoing professional tension that is largely triggered by what Batteau (2000) calls a culture of inclusion that attempts to unite its members and gain their loyalty. The unique thing though about inclusion culture is that it is normally established on the founder's values or a dramatic event in the history of the organisation. Both aspects of inclusion culture were evident in Organisation B and they do not seem to represent diverse interests, rather they attempt to normatively control its members who may be drifting away from its cultural values.

BUREAUCRATIC CONTROL

Any organising involves control and authority, and without some form of control organising may become impossible (Delbridge and Ezzamel, 2005). This view brings to light notions of 'job design', 'structuring' and 'performance appraisals', all of which are representations of control.

In this section, I will discuss some of the bureaucratic controls within B which work alongside normative cultural controls. These two aspects of control help create a strong culture with defined boundaries. My contribution will be towards understanding how professional tensions between 'creatives' and 'management' is controlled and how it may suppress creative outputs.

Schein (1985) suggested that there is a causal relationship between culture and organisational effectiveness. He saw this as an 'embodiment of solutions to a wide range of problems' (pg: 20) and claimed that strong cultures can be created deliberately. Anthony (1994) gives that view a different interpretation by suggesting

that cultures in organisations are definitely created while being deliberately shaped and maintained in a similar fashion to the way knowledge has been controlled by society and religion. Taking into consideration this control of culture, I wish to discuss the evident bureaucratic control in Organisation B which maintains the values of its employees. The data analysis put across a number of bureaucratic controls operating within B. To start with, each team within B is headed by one director who controls and manages the activities of their team. As discussed in the data analysis, directors conduct short meetings during the day and keep a watch on the progress of their teams. The identity and market image of the organisation is decided by the management and this is one of a talented agency providing a great service to its clients and making good business/ money. This is an image created by the directors and its impact has been passed onto the creative professionals. This image and philosophy seems to support the views of Hackley (2000) about the domination of a corporate understanding of the world. All the work produced by the designers goes through the intensive scrutiny of the four directors, who decide upon the appeal of each creative piece much before the client does. This form of control makes me question the effect of commercial imperatives upon creativity. Amabile (2000) acknowledges that managers cannot ignore business imperatives and while working towards them, may design organisations that stifle creativity. As suggested in the interviews as well as in the illustrations (rich pictures) there exists a divide between the imperatives of creativity and of those of budgeting and profit-loss analysis. Kover and Goldberg (1995) also acknowledge this sort of tension and classify advertising as a business of stress and tension, where most of this is derived from the uncertainties of producing advertising and gaining approval. However, in this organisation these tensions are to a greater extent controlled via normative as well as the strict structural and bureaucratic controls.

It is interesting to note that the strong culture upheld at B is no different from the 'work hard/ play hard' culture suggested by Deal and Kennedy (1988), and is one that responds to the environment and where performance is measured by results. Fun is guaranteed at the organisation as long as targets are met and sales are generated. This kind of culture is driven by strong a commercial perspective, and controls of all forms

are implemented to achieve the desired level of profits. Objectives of openness, empowerment and responsibility are floated around the organisation but they may hardly be met. Anthony (1994) supports this view by emphasising that the purpose for which culture is pursued maybe in fact be defeated, as openness, empowerment and responsibility are suppressed as power, authority and control takes over any intrusion and individuality. So Organisation B may display norms of openness and empowerment that lead to creativity yet the diversity of employees' ideas may not truly be accepted as they are ignored in the interest of organisational success.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The implications for this research are simply divided on the two leading questions asked at the start of this discussion. First, the implications are useful for the study of organisation culture and identity. In turn, the implications provide food for thought for practitioners of the advertising agency in study. These particular implications for this agency can be also addressed in the broader advertising world where a similar tension exists.

FOR LITERATURE ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND IDENTITY

My research is yet another contribution towards critical studies of organisational culture and identity. The concepts of identity and culture played out in the advertising world have not been addressed widely in critical management literature. Therefore, my research offers an interesting analysis of the dynamics behind an advertising agency, which intends to offer creative solutions for organisations, and how its employees are persuaded to provide those solutions. My research brings to the forefront the use of power and normative or softer control mechanisms operating in an organisation that claims to be liberal, democratic and open. It shows how ambitious management is able to manipulate their workforce by selecting and then socialising those who identify with their objectives. Culture in the organisation was deliberately created in order to foster unity and restrain challenging views. However, there are instances, such as Serena's wish to go freelancing or Jack's pictures indicating his disapproval of management interference, when the staff does manage to resist the dominating views of management.

The conclusions drawn from this research suggest that theorists and authors who write on the creation of a collegial environment and the increase in productivity due to this

culture must be aware of the perspective they are representing. It is easy for organisations to be represented by its leaders as they influence the values of the organisations and in turn its culture. Therefore a corporate culture comes to be described as the overall culture which is the case in Organisation B. Corporate culture becomes the organisation, thus the view of powerful leaders is transposed on all (Anthony, 1994). Similarly this advertising agency is driven on the values of a few powerful individuals. Due to this unitary view the power sharing environment was unable to address multiple views which led to subtle resistance and there is a possibility that as the organisation grows this resistance may increase and become more evident. Resistance does not need to be obvious but can be displayed in simple forms such as arriving late to work, missing out on activities conducted within the organisation or simply forming groups that together may resist certain policies or values being set by the management. From the case of B it can be implied that resistance exists amongst designers who feel they belong to a different group that does not associate with strategic or rational ways of approaching art and design.

Literature on the creative identity is challenged in this case study. This study presented an interesting outcome which challenges how we understand creative identity. The employees at B, particularly those involved in creative jobs such as designing, found it very difficult to, or were unable, to differentiate their identity from that of the organisation. Despite their resistance to certain values of the organisation their description of what it means to be working at B was no different from those of their leaders. From this interpretation I can ascertain that a creative identity may represent an ideal that is something to aspire to, yet may never be realised or achieved. Evidence from this research that supports this claim is the designers' desire to go freelancing, though despite this they continue to work at Organisation B. Wijk and Leisink (2004) have labelled such dilemmas as an 'illusion' of creative freedom.

The creative professionals at this agency seem to succumb to certain controls put in place by management and have adjusted their identity. In relation to these creative professionals, like those mentioned in the work by Pratt (1998), they have come to

negotiate their identity to match that of the organisation. They have come to associate with some of the organisation's values, but still keep elements, such as their concept of a creative or an aesthetic view of work, that sets them apart from the management. However, since they strive towards a creative self, as an ideal or true self, when inconsistencies arise in this process they develop insecurities which lead to further resistance and conflicts (Ezzamel and Willmott, 1998).

FOR LITERATURE ON ADVERTISING

Literature on advertising has contributed a great deal to this study. Right from the beginning I suggested that literature and research on the advertising industry needed to focus beyond a simple analysis of the existing tension between management and creative individuals. This study infers that up till now research about this tension has focused on the symptoms, so it will be useful to look beyond the tension and understand some of the likely causes of this professional tension. The research on advertising needs to involve concepts of organisation studies, in particular, organisational behaviour to further an understanding of the professional tensions. Identity studies in particular can help explain the reasons behind the resistance displayed by those in the creative field, it can also explain how their ideal creative self is more part of their individual identity, and how an organisation can foster and develop that identity.

FOR PROFESSIONALS IN ADVERTISING

Firstly, I would like to begin by acknowledging that the tension between creative professionals and management does exist in Organisation B despite the importance placed on teamwork, organisational family and any other manifestations of culture. Though it is hard to generalise with one case study management at advertising agencies need to realise that there is bound to be a diversity of opinions within an

organisation, regardless of its size. Similar to any media industry, change is inevitable in an advertising agency as it must fit with the modern demands of society. As managers prepare their employees for organisational change they need to be aware of diverse opinions and resistance that may surface.

Secondly, having a unanimous culture, such as a strong 'work and play hard' culture, will not help suppress a variety of views. As mentioned in the discussion, a change in behaviour or behavioural compliance does not always suggest an acceptance of the required corporate values and any form of cultural control that ignores this will "misunderstand the true complexity and variety of culture the raw material upon which it works" (Anthony, 1994, Pg: 95). In other words those in charge of managing an advertising workforce must not assume an acceptance or compliance with change in culture or introduction of management culture techniques will be unproblematic. Individuals may display behavioural compliance, but there is a possibility of resistance, as the anthropological view of culture is formed on a variety of values, beliefs and structural relationships therefore no management techniques could easily control these complexities.

If diversity of opinion is accepted and true evolution of culture is permitted and founded on history of the organisation and its structural relationship, then this multiplicity of views may lead to more authentic and valuable advertising. As suggested by El- Murad and West (2004) it will be foolish to rest responsibility for creative advertising on either management or creative people. In reality they are mutually dependent to produce great advertising together, so for advertising agencies similar to B it is important to consider the variety of views. Progressive agencies wishing to expand and grow cannot assume that cultural change would occur in isolation. The management needs to consider the organisations structure and the fractional views embedded in those structures. In saying this, organisations also need to realise how designers and other creative staff position themselves in the organisation, and whether their opinions are similar to the desired ones.

On the issues of the two sides of an agency working together, I wish to emphasise a point about measures of productivity. One question in the interviews was directed towards addressing whether an advert is dependent solely on creativity or strategic planning. Surprisingly a lot of the participants including the creatives, emphasise the need for creativity to be measured in terms of successful planning and market outcomes. This brings me to conclude that maybe after all this measurement is essential to the creative aspects, since art itself is immaterial and immeasurable. Considering that advertising is about selling products this measurability or value of an advert may well depend on its sales increase. Therefore, again there is a need for balance between creativity and strategic planning further highlighting their mutual dependence.

Another interesting question asked during the analysis and writing stages of this research was; will notions of creativity change as organisational structure changes? This query came up during interviews with the designers who claimed to derive greater satisfaction when freelancing. It is important for agencies to consider how they will to maintain their workforce, and they need to build an organisational structure and culture that meets flexibility, autonomy, and empowerment needs of their creative force. Cultural terms are powerful as well as ambiguous which makes it difficult to control their meaning and interpretation. Words such as participation, teamwork and hierarchies can be misleading and their true interpretation can only be understood by those who carry out these values - the subordinates (Anthony, 1994). For example, flat hierarchy is recognised by many organisations including B, but the true differences between management and subordinates is overshadowed by such language as 'our' goals and 'we'. The real differences can only be recognised by subordinates for whom things remain unchanged and find themselves in a situation where management remains upstairs doing the strategic planning, while they are downstairs producing creative ideas to bring profits and growth for the organisation. So, in order to achieve real harmony within the organisation the management must change the situation.

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I will conclude my research by presenting a synopsis of my findings, along with the limitations of my research and recommendations for further research.

SYNOPSIS OF FINDINGS

This case study has provided some interesting and intriguing outcomes which contribute to organisation studies on culture, and research as well as practitioners and agencies working in advertising. These implications have been classified into two categories, one that challenges the more functional organizational culture literature but supports the more critical organisational literature. Secondly it informs practitioners, particularly the management, about the risks involved in deliberately creating such a culture.

First, my study challenges the assumption that a strong culture creates an effective work force. It proposes that culture can be used as a control mechanism with more social characteristics. Here values and beliefs are used to manipulate employees and suppress views that may contradict the values of the system. In the context of advertising agencies a unified culture is used to control the professional tensions which exist between the designers (creatives) and the account managers and directors (management). Overall this view shows that creative employees may succumb to managerial controls due to their search for an ideal creative self. However, there is still an emergence of resistance which cannot be controlled by culture management techniques.

The implications of these findings for practitioners warn them of the risks involved in fostering a purposefully created strong culture. It can suggest that management needs to consider organisational structures and the diversity of views that are embedded within those relations. This research does not deny that creativity and strategic planning are mutually dependent; nevertheless it is important to maintain a balance between planning and the creation of ideas in order to achieve authenticity within them. Finally the study questions the possibility of a change in creativity as the organisation changes. This proposition and case study leads me to warn practitioners about the need to offer creatives flexibility and autonomy. Thus, in order to maintain a good workforce, management needs to understand and acknowledge the meaning of their employees' work life.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The goal of the study was to understand the role of culture and identity in the dynamics of an advertising agency. The case study provided some interesting outcomes and has served as an exploration into issues which can help explain the ongoing professional tension within the advertising industry. On the other hand the use of only a single case does not make this study suitable for generalisation. However, the research and its methodology were not aimed towards a generalisation rather it attempted to look into a single case's uniqueness and thereby make theoretical propositions based on it.

This research studied organisational culture and as stated by Anthony (1994), culture is evolutionary and tends to change over time and place. Therefore this study only offers a limited look into the organisation and its people. In saying this it is impossible for a researcher working within time and monetary constraints to access all complexities and forms of culture. This organisation was chosen because of pragmatic reasons; however the result was that I was unable to conduct any comparative case studies of advertising agencies, which would have led to richer data and a larger representation.

There is another limitation in this research due to the size of the organisation. B was a small-sized organisation which meant its cultural management strategies may have been more evident. Since Organisation B has fewer members compared to other agencies, the culture management techniques may well be more overt than if it was in a larger organisation where greater sub-cultures could make the understanding of culture more complex. It would therefore be interesting to see the role of culture as a control in larger, global advertising agencies.

The conclusions and implications of this research were largely based on my interpretation of data which can result in more disagreement with my understanding of the phenomenon. However, this fits with the purpose of this research to generate further questions and debate in order to develop further research.

FUTURE RESEARCH

My research has been more of an exploration into understanding the ongoing professional tension in advertising agencies through organisational culture and identity. Therefore it is important to suggest and encourage further research into the topic with the help of other aspects of organisation studies and different methodologies.

I believe that this research could be furthered with the use of ethnographic approaches. By using ethnographic approaches over a considerable period of time, researchers could develop wider descriptions of symbols, values and beliefs and also could lead to development of a new theory (O'Leary, 2004) which was not feasible due to time and access constraints.

As mentioned in the limitations of this research, a comparison study with a larger organisation would be another interesting approach. This could generate arguments on how organisational culture and perceptions of the professional tension may differ due to the organisation's size as well as the frequency of contact with management.

Another further possibility for research in this topic is to study the sub cultures in larger advertising agencies and their role in fostering the divide between management and the creatives. This kind of study would provide another dimension to understanding the tension by exploring how the sub cultures are maintained and if this has any effect on ideal creative identities and the quality of work produced.

Finally, considering the role of broader social culture, for example, the particular country's culture in which the advertising agency is based, would also influence the

professional tension in study. This type of research would challenge the existence of this believed tension and could potentially provide interesting findings that would further research in advertising and the general study of organisational culture.

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APPENDIX

Illustration 1: Sample Rich picture provided to participants

Illustration 2: Samples of symbols provided to participants

INFORMATION HANDOUT

Organisational culture in an Advertising agency

What is the project about?

Overview

The project looks at the organisational culture of a leading media and advertising agency. In order to do so I would require participation from individuals working in such an organisation. Participants would specifically be individuals involved in the creative side of the agency as well as those involved in managing and client servicing. I would look at individuals in the positions of account managers, creative directors, designers and business developers. This project would look at their perceptions of organisational culture as well as how these assumptions surface in daily activities within the organisation and with those they have a contact with, such as the clients. The project is a master's thesis, a requirement for a final year student of Masters in Management Studies. I will be writing up a report for this project which would be shared with my supervisor. The final write up would be made available to you by providing you a copy of it on completion. Organization B is the only media communication firm where I will work in depth, talking to range of individuals in the positions mentioned above.

How will you be affected?

- I will be looking for a range of views, experiences and opinions on organisational culture from individuals in positions of managers, creative directors and designers who agree to be part of the research.
- I will talk to people individually in confidence. Your name will not be used.
- All participants will sign an agreement where they can say how they want the information collected from them to be handled.

- I will be asking you about your experience of the organisational culture in this firm and how you perceive the culture in relation to the nature of your work and whether this culture enhances your performance as a designer, director or manager.

What do I want from the organisation as a whole?

- My research approach is ethnographic in nature where the importance is given to being part of the phenomenon and participant observation takes precedence over the other methodologies. However this ethnographic approach would be a combination of various techniques of data collection.
- In addition to the interviews with the individuals in particular roles, my research would involve observation of various organisational activities, such as being a silent observer of dynamics in brainstorming meetings and discussions on strategies for developing an event or advert. I would report these experiences and studying them as my reconstructions of the activities.
- Since I am interested in the organisational culture in this organisation, and culture can be understood to have three levels: artefacts, espoused values and basic assumptions (Schein, 1985). Documents created by the organisation can be understood as the artefacts which represent values of the organisation. Hence, these artefacts represent the reality for that organisation and embody actions, experiences and accounts of individuals. To be able to understand few of such artefacts available in your organisation, I would require documents and publications of the organisation which are available to the public.
- Confidentiality of all the data provided to me is assured. The data will be accessed only by me and stored in a place where only I as the researcher can have access. Names of the organisation and its members identity will not to be disclosed, and you have the right as a participant to read my findings and provide feedback on the information I have represents your thoughts.

The researcher: Saumya Pant, is a student of Victoria Management School, and is currently pursuing her Masters in Management Studies.

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RESEARCH AGREEMENT

Organisational culture in an Advertising agency

- This is a research agreement with you personally
- You can decide if you want the interview to be taped or if you prefer me to take notes. You can see the notes or any transcripts if you want to.
- No-one will have access to the tapes or notes except the researcher and the supervisor.

Participant's Statement:

I am satisfied with the information that I have about the project. I realise I can decide not to be involved at any time without having to say why.

Participant:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher:

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Contact Information:

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INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: FOR LONG SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Organisational Culture in an Advertising Agency

Interview Format

Warm-up/ background: about 10-15 minutes

Ask about their career:

- What education/ training have you had?
- What was your first job?
- How and why did you get into current job?
- How long have you been in it?

1. What is your role in this organisation?

- Describe your job.
- What are your key official responsibilities?
- Do you have any social/ informal responsibilities?

2. What in your view is the identity of this organisation?

- Who has defined this identity?
- Does the culture of this organisation complement this identity construction?
- What is your role in this identity formation?

3. What are your views on advertising?

- Who would you describe as the 'customer' of your work?
- How would you engage with this customer?

- What is the difference between you and any other organisational member's perception of advertising?

4. Could you broadly describe your role in advertising and media?

- Do you belong to any specific group in the field?
- What might be the characteristics of members of this group?
- How does this group differentiate you from others in a similar field?
- Who do you think is largely responsible for the production of media communication?

5. In your view what stands as more important in the developmental process of an advert or media piece? Why?

- Creativity.
- Effective means/ strategic planning.
- Do you think it is possible that these concepts are mutually dependent?

6. Does the culture of your organisation support your views on creativity and effectiveness?

7. Who do you think should be held accountable for the success or failure of a campaign?

INFORMATION HANDOUT FOR RICH PICTURES

- This concept is used in Soft Systems Methodology; this methodology was developed in order to apply engineering principles to understand business problems.
- Rich pictures are part of problem expression. Rich pictures are diagrams which participants in the organization draw to comment or reflect on the “problems” in varying levels of details.
- Rich pictures are a diagram without rules.
- They show people involved in the organization, their stated purposes, and their desires and fears (usually in think bubbles).
- These pictures show more environmental details than any other diagrams (human activities and organizational processes).
- They can also show different interests agreeing or disagreeing.
- Rich pictures are cartoons- they can be sad, happy, funny, political, preferably all at once!
- Development of a rich picture requires you to draw with a free mind, without any presumed structure of a typical problem.

- Try to add as much as possible to your picture, in terms of emotions, friendship, power, egos etc.
- Have fun drawing them and express yourself.
- Please be assured that confidentiality of your Rich picture is guaranteed. I will be analysing them for the purpose of my research and only I will have access to them.

In case you require any further explanation please feel free to contact me. I have provided my contact information below.

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