**TITLE: Managing dual identities in nonprofit rebranding: An exploratory study**


## Abstract

Nonprofit organizations that engage in rebranding strategies face challenges reconciling normative (social or mission driven) and utilitarian (business driven) identities of their organizations. This research examines the interplay between rebranding processes and dual identities of ten rebranded charitable organizations, in particular how these identities are reflected in managers' narratives and subsequently shape rebranding strategies. The study reveals four types of rebranding strategies and the potential drivers for their adoption. Pressure to secure resources can lead nonprofit organizations to emphasize utilitarian identities in rebranding, and so surface hidden tensions amongst stakeholders reluctant to relinquish established normative identities. In managing the process of rebranding, senior managers engage in practices of justifying, re-visioning, and influencing to reduce emerging tensions. The research suggests that both utilitarian and normative identity concerns need to be addressed during the process.



**Key words:**

Rebranding strategy, organizational identity, nonprofit brand, dual identities

## Introduction

There has been significant interest recently amongst academics and practitioners in understanding the value and meaning of corporate brands, which are recognized as strategic assets (Keller et al., 2010; Vallaster et al., 2012) for both profit and nonprofit organizations (Ewing & Napoli, 2005; Hankinson, 2001). Within a nonprofit context, research has focused on the effect of brands on organization performance, particularly in attracting donations and volunteers (Hankinson, 2002, Sargeant et al., 2008), and building employee commitment (Liu et al., 2015). This 'brand orientation' approach places the brand at the centre of the organization's decision-making in the pursuit of competitive advantage (Urde et al., 2011). Brand orientation is distinguished from market-orientation because it takes an inside-out perspective and connects the brand to the culture and identity of the organization (Baumgarth, 2009; Urde, 1994; Wong & Merrilees, 2005), and its adoption has been associated with positive performance outcomes (Ewing & Napoli, 2005; Gromack & Melin, 2011; Hankinson, 2001).

In order to leverage the added value from the brand, nonprofit brand managers must maintain brand image consistency and brand relevance, where stakeholder needs and demands are evolving (Michel & Rieunier, 2012). Restrictions in government funding following the global financial crisis means reduced statutory income and increased competition for government spend (Charity Commission, 2010), while corporate donors to nonprofits – particularly charities – are seeking fit between their Corporate Social Responsibility aims and those of the organizations they support. Meanwhile, nonprofits are becoming 'business-like' (Dart, 2004; Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner, 2016) and adopting commercial practices usually associated with for-profit organizations, such as direct sales, contract services and joint promotional campaigns with retailers and other corporates. In 2013, a survey (Social Enterprise UK, 2013) revealed that 92% of UK registered charities intended to increase their income from business activity, such as trading and government contracts, in the following three years, while 45% identified themselves as social enterprises. This illustrates the importance organizations place on generating income through trading as the risk of relying on donations and grants increases.

One consequence is that nonprofit organizations find they have to adapt their image in order to remain competitive. Oxfam International, for example, recently embarked on an organizational wide “global identity project” (Kylander & Stone, 2012) that aimed to create a consistent brand personality across all its local markets. Meanwhile, Prostate Cancer UK changed its name in 2013 to avoid a perceived association with ‘well-intentioned amateurs’, and estimates its income to have risen by 30 per cent in a year as a direct consequence (Third Sector, 2013). A brand orientation approach requires that nonprofits meet challenges presented by a changing environment and generate alternative incomes with associated changes in stakeholder relations. The approach emphasizes a direct connection between the brand and the organization’s core identity that, for nonprofits, is typically grounded in ideology, social concern and compassion (Lindgreen et al., 2009). The need to balance business and social needs leads to the development of ‘hybridity’ (Billis, 1993; Chenhall, Hall & Smith, 2015; Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005; Minkoff, 2002; Moss et al., 2011), and gives rise to dual organizational identities.

Organizational identity may be defined as members' shared beliefs concerning the question "who are we as an organization?", and involves characteristics that members believe to be central, distinctive and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Corley et al., 2006). The collective sentiment about identity is rooted in core values and beliefs (Corley & Gioia, 2004) and is expressed through symbolic representations. For nonprofits that have evolved into hybrid organizations, the answer to the question "who are we?" may not result in a single answer, as alternative conceptualizations of dual or multiple identities (Pratt & Foreman, 2000) emerge. Rebranding, therefore, is more than just a name change; its processes involve the accommodation of commercial 'utilitarian' identity (or identities) with its mission driven 'normative' identity. The process of rebranding may make explicit any identity conflict, apparent or latent, as stakeholders are forced to reassess the logic of dual identities.

Despite interest in the role of brands and branding in nonprofit organizations, researchers have been slow to explore nonprofit rebranding, with a focus on both social and economic performance, as distinct from corporate rebranding, with a focus largely on financial performance alone. Nonprofit rebranding offers an attractive context to investigate tensions that emerge from having to address both social impact and bottom lines. This paper addresses an important gap in research investigating the relationship between dual identities in rebranding. The goal of this inquiry is to explore patterns of dual identities that are exposed during rebranding processes, and the research questions that we seek to address are: what drives the adoption of various rebranding strategies (where one identity is emphasized over another); and what processes do nonprofit managers undertake?

## Theoretical background

The concept of rebranding an organization developed from the domain of 'corporate branding' where brands are regarded as strategic assets, linked to reputation and identity (Balmer, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). To stay competitive, corporate brands need to remain relevant for different stakeholders over time (Miller & Merrilees, 2013). However, intense competition and changing market dynamics force organizations periodically to adjust their image and identity through rebranding strategies (Lomax & Mador, 2006), defined as the means by which organizations change from one corporate brand formulation to another (Gotsi & Andriopoulos, 2007; Lee, 2013; Merrilees & Miller, 2008).

Past studies on organizational rebranding distinguish two streams of research: visual identity management and internal branding management. Visual identity management involves the creation of a new brand name (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2003; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006) and corporate identity with alterations to logo, color palette, symbol and others (Kalaignanam & Bahadir, 2013), along a continuum from simple revitalization to full name change (Daly & Moloney, 2004). The second stream of research is based on the assumption that organization brands consist of both the tangible, physical expression of the brand, and of intangible organizational values, image, and identity elements, and that rebranding may involve changing some or all of those elements. Corporate brands are targeted at multiple stakeholders including employees, customers, investors, suppliers, partners, and local communities (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). In the nonprofit domain, stakeholders may also include trustees, donors, beneficiaries and corporate partners (Ritchie et al., 1999). Studies tend to focus on achieving employee ‘buy in’ to the revised corporate brands and on managing multiple stakeholders’ expectations (Lomax & Mador, 2006; Miller & Merrilees, 2013; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Others argue that changes in the rebranding process cannot be rushed (Gotsi & Andriopoulos, 2007) and require changes in the attitude and behaviors of staff members (Hankinson, 2002).

Commercial corporate branding strategies may not simply transpose to nonprofit organizations accountable to the needs of multiple stakeholders. Moreover, nonprofits that have developed hybrid identities engender different expectations and perceptions for multiple stakeholders (Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Further, while rebrand activities typically have the goal of improving financial performance, this is not necessarily the case with nonprofit rebranding (Stride & Lee, 2007). Rebrands typically require nonprofits to reassess their mission, values and identity in the process of making sense of how they are positioned against and linked to other organizations. A new corporate brand name and new visual identity each plays a role in guiding the behavior and actions of organizational members, a task made more challenging because of the responsibility that nonprofits have in realizing both their social mission and the revenue that enables them to carry out their work.

**Dual identities in nonprofit organizations**

The corporate brand aims to link mission, purpose and identity, and to encapsulate these in symbolic representations. Identity is a key driver of an organization’s brand (Voss et al., 2006), arising out of its role, values and mission, actions and inactions. It is constructed by managers and stakeholders through an iterative process of negotiation (Scott & Lane, 2000) around ideas of what 'the organization' knows, what it does, how it is managed and what its culture is (Alvesson & Empson, 2008).

Albert and Whetten's (1985) characteristics of identity – central, distinctive and enduring – are widely adopted, although the extent to which identity can be said to be 'enduring' as it evolves through an organization's lifespan is contested (see for example: Corley et al., 2006; Gioia et al., 2010; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). Corley et al. (2006: 91) further explore the meaning of 'centrality' and extend Albert and Whetten's (1985) notion of hybrid or dual identities, categorizing them into those that are 'ideographic' – alternative identities held by subgroups but not widely shared – and those that are 'holographic', where hybrid or dual identities are held by all organizational members. Organizations may have multiple identities, which may not necessarily be in conflict and of which members may not be consciously aware. Such organizations may demonstrate greater flexibility, but dual identity may also be associated with greater conflict and inconsistent action, and where vacillating between competing demands can lead to paralysis (Pratt & Foreman, 2000).

The extent to which multiple identities engender conflict will depend on factors such as their diversity and their congruence, and the passion for each identity held by organizational members and other stakeholders (Chenhall, Hall & Smith, 2015; Glynn, 2000; Hasenfeld & Gidron, 2005). Managers may attempt to manage multiple identities through: 'compartmentalization', the preservation and separation of multiple identities; 'deletion', the active shedding of one or more identities; 'integration', the combining of identities; and ‘aggregation’, the linking together of identities perhaps with an overarching ‘meta-identity’ (Pratt & Foreman 2000). Whetten (2006) identifies factors that might give rise to conflict over organizational identity. These include strategic opportunities and threats that require an identity shift, the loss of a relationship central to its mission and, in the case of hybrid organizations whose hybridity is both incongruent and indispensable, the state of being “perpetually one major decision away from provoking a massive identity crisis” (Whetten, 2006: 227).

Nonprofit organizations arguably experience more complex identity issues. While the purposes of commercial and public sector organizations are shaped by competitive or political forces respectively, there is a need for internal guidance regarding purpose in nonprofit organizations (Young, 2001). In commercial organizations, power tends to be concentrated in the hands of shareholders and managers, while for nonprofits power may also be distributed amongst volunteer, donor and user stakeholders. Furthermore, members of nonprofit organizations tend to identify strongly with their conceptualization of identity. Foreman and Whetten (2002) show that members’ emotional attachment and commitment to an organization is positively related to the extent to which their perceptions of its identity matches their ideal. Nonprofits, therefore, may embrace wider and more powerful stakeholder bases, some of which have emotional attachment to their core mission-based identities while others endorse and favor more pragmatic, commercial identities. This was illustrated in Glynn’s (2000) account of the tensions arising between normative and utilitarian identities where competing claims led to retrenchment between artists and managers.

Nonprofit organizations seeking either to extend their business-driven, utilitarian identity or their ideologically-driven normative identity may decide to rebrand (Lee, 2013; Lomax & Mador, 2006), a process that is particularly likely to surface tensions amongst members and which, according to Whetten (2006: 227), results in the associated decisions "being test cases of their allegiance to incompatible identity claims". In this study, we examine the drivers of competing pressures on identity and their related tensions and, more broadly, the rebranding process that managers experience.

## Methods

The approach taken in this research study was based upon qualitative interviews within case examples of nonprofits that had recently undertaken a rebrand (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2002). Our intention was to explore inductively the relationship between rebranding and identity through the accounts of those closely involved in the process and so acquire an understanding of case situations in order to build theory from data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We conducted semi-structured interviews with senior managers across ten carefully selected cases that were chosen specifically because they represented, within the charity sector, a variety of contexts and potential tensions.

Sampling for this study involved both organizational and individual criteria. Ten organizations from the UK top 100 Charity Index were selected based on the logic of purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of those most likely to provide data related to the subject matter. Sampling was facilitated by reviewing trade journals and third sector publications (e.g. Charitytimes, Charitycomms, Third Sector) for charities that had recently rebranded. Selection was based on four criteria: size – they should be relatively large and well established; cause – they should reflect a range of causes to highlight different issues faced; the degree of change – to facilitate comparison, we selected some cases where the rebrand involved a name change and others that simply refreshed the existing brand; and recency – all rebrands had occurred within the previous six years. To categorise the nature of the cause, we used the guidelines from the National Council for Voluntary Organization (NCVO) and Charities Aid Foundations (CAF). Two of the cases had rebranded as a result of a merger, which provided additional dimensions to the tensions encountered in managing the process. The final sample consisted of charitable organization with missions ranging from protecting children's welfare, aiding disability, medical research and overseas aid, and with income ranging from approximate £20 million to over £300 million per year, and which had rebranded between one and six years beforehand. **Table 1** provides an overview of each case.

Insert **Table 1** here.

At the individual level, we interviewed the manager responsible for the rebrand within each of the ten charities. We also conducted four interviews with consultants who are experts in facilitating rebranding processes within the charity sector. Interviews were conducted at the headquarters of each organization. The interview involved questions on each organization's mission, positioning, communication and fundraising practices as well as competitive pressures. Informants were asked to describe areas of difficulty in managing rebranding and to describe 'who they thought the organization was trying to be', expressed to external stakeholders. The interviews ranged from 60-90 minutes in length and were recorded and transcribed.

Analysis of the interviews followed the principles of coding set out by Strauss and Corbin (1998) for deriving concepts and theory inductively from data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that inductive data analysis has the property of permitting theory to emerge from data that is contextual and not bound by a priori generalisation. In this research, we are exploring complex phenomena within a sector where we anticipate a difference in, for example, the intensity of emotions related to identity and brand that are not adequately explained in existing literature. An inductive approach to analysis holds the promise developing concepts and theory that other approaches are not suited to (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In the first instance, we analysed within-case interview data by labelling and categorising concepts in seemingly appropriate ways. Initially labels were derived from the transcripts from concepts observed in the data so phenomena such as 'orientation', 'process', 'motives' 'conflicts', 'stakeholders' and so on developed into categories into which sub-properties and dimensions were added. As the analysis proceeded, some categories were redefined so that, for example, process subdivided into pre-process, early process, mid- and late- process and, with each, subcategories such as 'players', 'actions', 'resistance', 'drivers' and 'engagement' emerged. Labels and categories were refined through an iterative interplay between data and codes within and across case interviews as we identified tentative themes and patterns. The form of interplay extended to the authors independently analysing case data then comparing findings, writing interpretive themes, and cross-checking the other's analysis.  Through this process we at times returned to original data, revising and refining initial open and axial codes as themes as we moved from descriptive to analytical levels of analysis.  Over a number of iterations, propositional concepts around identity (*see Figure 1*) and process (*see Figure 2*) became more prominent and these were tested and refined by returning to the data to test for consistency.  In the later stages, as the propositions coalesced around principal narratives, we compared our findings with the extant literature on rebranding and organizational identity.

## Findings

We structured our findings around first, drivers leading towards normative and utilitarian identity and second, common themes in the rebranding process; and finally practices that nonprofit managers experienced to manage tensions and conflicts that may surface at different points in the process.

Across the ten cases, the trigger for the process that led to a rebranding varied.  Some had a clear reason to rebrand, as in Case 10, a merger between two charities that work in the same area with a similar ethos but with sufficient difference for the question 'who are we?' to need revisiting.  In this case, an intention to rebrand was established early, but for others rebranding only emerged as the preferred course of action as a result of other work.  A majority of rebranding processes were activated by external forces, particularly in perceived discrepancies between charities' external image and the core activities that make them distinctive.  Moreover, many indicated that low brand awareness was restricting their ability to reach the people they need to help.

In two cases, reduced statutory and voluntary income triggered the need to align the brand more closely to actual or potential commercial and service provider partners. Case 6, for example, rebranded to help further its partnering ambitions with the UK National Health Service, while Case 10 engaged in several partnerships to develop areas of the business: "growth has got to be driven through partnership".

Brand managers in nonprofit organizations often have to overcome resistance by stakeholders to the perceived extravagance of rebranding (Kylander & Stone, 2012). Triggers, therefore, tended to motivate brand managers to build a business case for rebranding, and so initiated the process.

**Towards Utilitarian and Normative identity in the rebranding process**

We found charities began a period of reassessing identity by evaluating old and new identity claims and their relevance to various stakeholders. This can be particularly challenging as different stakeholders have different ideas about what should be the new identity for their charity and hence the 'new' brand. We found that while the need to be commercially viable was universally important, some charities use rebranding as an opportunity to return to their roots, perhaps to clarify a core mission that had become fuzzy over the years (Case 7), or to unite parts of the organizations that had prioritized different aspects of the service provision (Case 6), or following a merger as in Case 10, where there was a perceived need to emphasize a Christian identity. This is where we found different patterns in terms of degree of emphasis on either utilitarian or normative identity drivers (see **Table 2**).

Insert **Table 2** here.

We examined the drivers for utilitarian and normative identity in the rebranding process. Utilitarian identity claims emphasize drivers around market position and awareness, income generation, and acceptability with potential partners. In these examples, object stakeholders (funders, influencers, and customers) are prioritized and the underlying purpose appears to be in enhancing the commercial aspects of the charity's identity. Normative identity claims, on the other hand, emphasize drivers around heritage, purpose, core values and beliefs, and subject stakeholders (members, volunteers and users) are prioritized.

Building on exemplar comments in Table 2, we derived a 2x2 matrix (see **Figure 1**). The ten nonprofit organizations are categorised into four quadrants in a two-dimensional matrix according to their emphasis on either utilitarian or normative identity. Case 3 and 4 are categorised in ***Quadrant I*** which emphasizes both utilitarian and normative identities in the rebranding process. Here, rebranding was not driven by crisis, and a more measured approach allowed consideration for both income growth and reinforcement of mission across all stakeholders. In this small sample, they stood out as being well-established, large and relatively stable. In ***Quadrant II***, we identified further two organizations where the rebranding was clearly driven by the desire to reinforce normative identity concerns. So, Case 7 was struggling to reconnect to its original mission through a change of name and corporate identity, and Case 10 was concerned to ensure that the identity communicated core elements of the organization's religious ethos. In both cases, the restatement of normative identity claims was essential in communicating purpose to all stakeholders both within and outside the organization.

Four of the ten organizations clearly emphasized utilitarian identity concerns in their rebranding, as shown in ***Quadrant IV***, where the process was driven by falling income and the perceived need to meet partner or statutory funder requirements. For example, the Senior Designer at Case 9 described how a major retailer told them "We need a new logo because we are going into a corporate partnership", giving the charity no choice because, "We did have a huge fundraising need … [the retailer] is like gold dust in the charity sector and they're very prescriptive about what they want." Another organization made a small but significant change to its name by adding the suffix 'UK' to communicate more clearly its scope.

In ***Quadrant III*** that expressed both utilitarian and normative identities in their rebrand, but neither was emphasized strongly. The nature of the rebrand in these organizations was of a smaller scale and less contentious. Rebranding strategies were designed to help align their image with identity and culture within the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). As one brand manager illustrates, "we are now the only charity that deals solely with [this condition] […] We don't really have any competitors as such, so our brand needs to reflect that" (Brand Manager, Case 8).

Insert **Figure 1** here.

**Tensions and managerial responses in the rebranding process**

Whetten's (2006: 227) observation that hybrid or dual-identity organizations are "one major decision away from provoking a massive identity crisis" was partially evident in this exploratory study, where reports of tension and conflict were commonly stated in the interviews. Building on the previous matrix, we offer a stage process (see **Figure 2**) that highlights the key stages that managers followed in implementing the rebranding strategy, and in particular practices that were used to manage these tensions. In Figure 2, the boxes in the middle represent sequential phases and the ovals represent approaches that managers use to deal with dual identity tensions. The dotted-line arrows show the influence of these approaches in recurring phases. The top and bottom boxes reflect the normative and utilitarian identity drivers that continuously influence the rebranding phases. This process model encapsulates our understanding of managers' experience of the rebranding process, and the pressure arising from dual identities. The model helps, more broadly, to extend our understanding of the dynamic relationship between dual identities and rebrand.

Insert **Figure 2** here.

Unlike Miller and Merrilees' (2013) account of nonprofit rebranding that began with the CEO developing a rebranding brief, our study suggests that middle managers (brand managers) play a key role in initiating the process (**Initiation**). Then, a **Steering Group**, including their CEOs, to carry out a full **Brand Review.** The review also involved a wide consultation with staff at different levels and the public – an important step in reassessing old and identity claims and how these might influence new brand features. Some informants claimed that external brand consultants are useful at this stage in facilitating this process with key stakeholders.

Typically, business cases were proposed and tested with focus groups prior to the development of new brand platforms, marking the transition to **Multiple Stakeholder Influencing**. Our informants identified instances of passion and anger amongst some stakeholders when reflecting and debating about the new identity during the internal launch. In Case 2, our informant reported resistance from staff and volunteers who "take it very personally … they feel like they own the brand [that] you are messing with", an observation also made by the Senior Marketing Officer in Case 7, "Staff were the hardest […] we had people threatening to resign if we went ahead with [the name change]". The strength of feeling surprised some. In Case 5, the Brand Manager estimated few stakeholders to be resistant to the rebrand, but "those that were negative were very negative and very vocal", and in another, (Case 3), members invoked their heritage in saying the rebrand "felt that we were going against what our founder would have wanted". Our data also shows that a strong internal communication is crucial in bridging the gap between the new brand identity and stakeholder's concerns. The **Brand Review** and **Multiple Stakeholder Influencing** phases represent an iterative process in which outcomes of debates were reconsidered and adjustments made to the eventual version of the new visual identity and name of the brand which expressed the intended 'new' identity. Managers were aware of the importance of giving stakeholders sufficient time in this step so that they could absorb and reconcile themselves to changes before an official public launch.

In managing identity tensions surfaced during the rebranding process, we identified three key management practices, which we labelled: '**Justifying**', which focused on rational reasoning; '**Re-visioning'**, which emphasized emotive reasoning; and

‘**Influencing**’ where managers engage with particular stakeholder concerns. We consider each of these in turn.

***Justifying.*** We observed managers actively using rational justification to create a sense of urgency for a rebrand. Justifying may be from utilitarian perspective, emphasising income and survival concerns, or from a normative perspective, emphasising core mission and purpose failures. Managers in Case 8, for example, justified from the utilitarian perspective in pointing out that for a charity that aimed to support the “third biggest killer, we were coming 67th in the top 125”, while those in Case 5, argued that unprompted brand awareness had “stayed at 1% for about ten years”. In another case, a children’s charity that had formerly relied on statutory funding, normative justifying was employed in presenting the rebrand as a means to “articulate who we were and what we stood for, and what our values/missions were, and then making sure that led all the different areas of work that we do”.

Under conditions of reduced income and financial pressure, the response by internal staff to a rebrand is typically sceptical and often hostile. As one Marketing manager commented, “the National Health Service is cutting the money wherever it can, so we are actually losing some services … people are saying, ‘why is this money being spent on the brand when it could be helping [our users]’”. Where stakeholders see the brand as just a logo and a label, the value of aligning brands is often overlooked, so managers are required to engage in justifying rebrands to create a change in mindset towards the notion of ‘living the brand’ (Ind, 2001; Liu et al., 2015).

***Re-visioning.*** A second practice that we observed in the nonprofit rebranding process, which we term ‘re-visioning’, is characterised by managers evoking ideal outcomes and connecting stakeholders to the core mission. The new identity claim is then expressed and communicated either as a minor change that updates a brand image, or as a complete change which typically involved a name change (Daly & Moloney, 2004). Although radical rebranding is viewed as risky (Merrilees & Miller, 2008), nonprofit managers rationalize the chances of another rebrand decision being approved as rare, and hence this is a good opportunity to do it. In Case 7, where the rebrand involved abandoning some aspects of its heritage that did not appeal to many stakeholders, managers re-visioned new and bigger possibilities for its mission to be realised – through championing prevention measures and reaching new users – which had been constrained by the previous brand name. For charities who relied on voluntary income (majority of Quadrant IV), the re-visioning phase is particularly important in ensuring the new brand and its new name would meet the need to generate extra income by creating a more donor-focused identity and eventually, in Case 5, a new partnership with a multinational corporation. Here, the brand manager claimed that the new name helped them to form a corporate partnership with a multinational corporation:

> "We're coming out of our adolescence now. [The old name] was a child, our adolescence phase is our rebrand, and we're getting ready to be a grown adult, a proper charity, so investing in our work with major donors and trusts, so people who have got a lot of money, who can give us a lot of money… [Partnership Company] never spoke and wouldn't speak to us when we were [old name]" (Case 5)

CEO leadership and brand championship are seen by several managers as key to re-visioning process as illustrated in Case 2: "the current and previous CEO both absolutely get brand and get marketing, and they've led it from the front". Trustee support is also seen as important, although it can be difficult to obtain, and in the example of Case 8 only occurred because "we've got new trustees who are much more open to the idea of us looking different". Brand champions outside the communication team are particularly valuable as advocates to re-inforce brand activities: "We didn't use marketing communications [staff]; we used spokespeople and brand champions. I think that made a massive difference" (Senior Marketing Officer, Case 3).

***Influencing***. The third practice that we observed managers engage in, is to influence key stakeholders and to bring everyone on the 'same journey'. This is important so that members 'live' the new identity regardless of what their domains are in the organization. Frequently at internal launches for rebrands, differences between staff can surface within organizations. In Case 7, those concerned with fundraising and income generation were enthusiastic about the new name, while those caring for users were more negative, considering their users would "hate it". This division reflects the different emphases that organizational members might place identity according to their role, where those with income generation responsibility favouring utilitarian identity claims, and those with core mission responsibility favouring normative identity claims.

A common approach that managers used to minimise the tensions is the active engagement of staff through various organizational practices, including roadshows, open consultation days, presentations, and the production of videos and leaflets. Through these practices, managers and brand champions extensively seek to influence staff about the new identity claims. This process is similar to Gioia et al.'s (2010) work on forming identity between insiders and outsiders, where intense negotiation is expected before the arrival of some level of consensus about the new identity claim. Hence, we viewed that organizational members are not merely passive receivers of identity claims, rather, they actively construct and experience meanings of these identity claims through their brands.

## Discussion and conclusions

Our findings make some important contributions to the nonprofit rebranding literature. To date, literature around nonprofit rebranding tend to focus at the individual level, including multiple stakeholders' expectation and 'buy in' (Lomax & Mador, 2006), weak re-visioning (Miller & Merrilees, 2013) and the implementation of rebranding process (Gotsi & Andriopoulos, 2007). Our investigation adds to this research stream by examining the interplay between dual identities, their alignment with the new branding decisions and the reactions of inside and outside stakeholders. Equally, the tension between identities in hybrid organizations is well documented (Billis, 1993; Chenhall, Hall & Smith, 2015; Kreutzer & Jager, 2011; Young, 1991), but its relationship with branding decisions and intended image in a change context is largely overlooked.

The study of ten cases reveals four rebranding strategies; and extends our understanding of the dynamics of dual identities in the rebrand process. We showed some charities deliberately aligning the new brand decision to fit with their customers' needs in order to be more 'likable'. The clear aim was utilitarian – to increase financial rewards and attract new corporate partners, and it was done at some expense to its mission and service orientation. A common characteristic of these 'utilitarian identity dominant' charities (Quadrant IV) is that they were heavily dependent upon voluntary income. Consequently, they were motivated to be more attuned to customer needs and their managers exhibited greater brand orientation (Urde et al., 2011) favouring ambitious visual elements and radical new names to develop strong brand differentiation and the ability to cultivate emotional engagement with new supporters or funders (Sargeant, Ford & Hudson, 2008; Napoli & Ewing, 2006).

This type of rebrand expresses 'business-like' situations (Dart, 2004; Maier, Meyer & Steinbereithner, 2016), seen by some stakeholders as over-commercialization (Guo, 2006; Kreutzer & Jager, 2011) and by others as pragmatic responses to survival threats. An emphasis on utilitarian identity may result in the deliberate promotion of selected services to particular segments of the population or the integration of profit oriented projects (Schmid, 2013). Such actions contradict the ideological role of charities as social buffers, balancing differences between population groups (Corbin, 1999; Stater, 2010), and hence risk creating 'identity drift'.

We also observed that charities whose income is based primarily on statutory funding are more likely to reinforce their normative identity and remain true to their roots. In these situations, there is less pressure to adapt to external stakeholder demand during the rebranding process as communication with statutory funders is likely to be more personal and less image dependant. Consequently, such charities are better able to limit the degree of change to their brand name (see Quadrant III). They may be influenced by elder trustees who favour the ‘old’ identity and expect the organization to do likewise, a position that ultimately may be difficult to maintain in the face of reducing statutory incomes.

There was little observable difference in ways that large and smaller charities deal with dual identity tensions. All acknowledged that rebranding is an organizational-wide process that requires commitment of resources over time, and that extends far beyond a simple communication process. We observed similar phases through the process, and similar patterns of justifying, re-visioning and influencing, each involving senior managers and extending to both internal and external stakeholders. We did, however, observe that that smaller charities tended to limit the use external service providers to cover selected parts of the rebranding process, with the greater part carried out in-house. This is more likely to be due to limited budgets.

Research suggests one key failure of rebranding is the lack of robust re-visioning (Gotsi & Andriopoulos, 2007; Miller & Merrilees, 2013). However, in our research we find that both small and large charities were willing to carry out open and comprehensive reviews of their different identities, and were prepared to take more risks. This may have in part been because of help commissioned from external agencies, experienced in managing rebrands, to provide external opinion about the current state of their brand, and in giving them confidence to develop a better and more engaging brands.  This raises the question of whether ambitious rebranding with radical changes would be more advantageous in the long term for nonprofit organizations in achieving both social and commercial goals.

The research here indicates that the presence of dual identities in rebranded nonprofit organizations adds greater complexity than is acknowledged in the broader corporate and nonprofit rebranding literature. There are few studies that view nonprofit rebranding as more than just a design and communication problems, with the notable exception of Miller & Merrilees (2013), whose study is somewhat limited by its focus on a single case study and a particular type of community organization.  Our research indicates that provided 'buy-in' is achieved amongst senior management team, trustees, staffs, volunteers and supporters, rebranding can act as a positive influence in changing mindsets and beliefs in relation to both identity and brand. Here, the role of rebranding is not merely that of distinguishing the organization from other nonprofits and delivering the brand promise; it holds the promise of clarifying the organizations' new aspiration. Karreman & Rylander (2008) illustrates that brand is important as it contributes to the attractiveness of belonging to a particular organisation and thus supports the process of identification and thus the strength of its identity.

This research suggests that both identities are part of nonprofit organizations (Dart, 2004) and hence the extent to which utilitarian and normative identity are addressed during the rebranding process can be driven by different contexts. In this way, it is consistent with Moss et al.'s (2011) study, which notes some organizations operate with multiple identities (Foreman & Whetten, 2002) because they adapt better to diverse environmental conditions (Voss et al., 2006). Moreover, it reflects Pratt and Foreman's (2000), and Chenhall et al.'s (2015) accounts of managerial responses to identity conflict through integration, compartmentalization, and aggregation. Questions around utilitarian and normative identity require managers to be more flexible and adaptive in reconstructing and renegotiating identity elements.

**Managerial implications**

There are a number of implications that arise from this exploratory study for managers of nonprofit organizations considering a rebrand. The first is that because rebranding extends deep into organizational identity in nonprofit organizations, managers should not undertake it lightly; it is likely to be a long and difficult process. Managers should reinterpret the identity disagreement as a powerful resource to understand what the organization actual identity; and how it can be aligned with member's belief and aspiration with current market opportunities.

Beyond that, we might sum up the views of those interviewed as: engage with stakeholders early, openly and honestly. Early engagement allows both for tensions to be surfaced explicitly so they can be discussed openly, and also for stakeholders to become used to the fact that there will be changes. Several managers reported that early engagement was both emotionally distressing because of the strength of feeling expressed towards the name and organization, and ultimately worthwhile because the debate helped to explore core identity issues. Moreover, honest engagement helps to develop campaigns that appeal to supporters and corporate partners (Michel &

Rieunier, 2012), and so aid the sustainability and survival of their organizations. A related implication is that nonprofit managers should consider carefully the resources required to carry out a rebranding. Indications from this research are that larger teams have the greater capability of carrying out the engagement work with all stakeholders.

**Limitations and future research**

This exploratory study has several limitations that should be recognized. First, our findings are based on detailed exploratory analysis from ten cases, and the findings presented remain primarily descriptive rather than representative. Moreover, interviews were with the key managers responsible for the rebranding strategy, and consequently neglected first-hand views from other stakeholders. Future research may want to extend this study to explore the view of other stakeholders' perception and experience of organizational identity in the rebranding process. A second limitation is that all cases were historical accounts of rebrands that had largely met their objectives, and a future study might identify and explore those which failed. Furthermore, we have not explored governance and organizational structures in detail. We expect that some charities may go through minor restructuring post-rebrand, and it would be interesting to follow this up. It will be useful to understand the types of governance and structures that are effective in managing the dual identity expectations. Although the ten case studies examined here offer an initial understanding of how dual identities shape rebranding strategies, it may be informative to evaluate changes in normative and utilitarian identity over time. Longitudinal research may reveal patterns of identity drift after a rebranding is completed.

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