

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Negative publicity effects on students' perceived image, trust, and loyalty: South African universities' recovery perspectives

By

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, universities in South Africa have been subject to a significant amount of negative publicity. The two main types of negative publicity experienced by South African universities include an increase in student protests that have led to many staff members, students and recently members of the public sustaining injuries. There has also been a vast amount of negative publicity regarding crime in and around some universities, as many staff and students have been victims of various crimes in and around universities in South Africa.

In the contemporary marketplace, the multi-user two-way communication enabled by technological advancements such as social media, the availability of mobile devices and access to the internet encourages consumers to share and converse about issues such as negative publicity. Thus, students are exposed to this increased negative publicity regarding universities in South Africa.

The current study aims to determine if negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime negatively influences students' image of the university, students' trust towards the university as well as students' loyalty to the university. The current study also aims to determine the responses students believe a university should use to recover from the negative influence of both types of negative publicity. Lastly, the current study aims to determine which communication mediums students believe would be most effective in communicating a university's response to both types of negative publicity under investigation.

Using a qualitative approach, descriptive research was conducted to undertake the current study. The researcher used video interaction via WhatsApp video calls and Zoom meetings to conduct in-depth interviews with a sample size of 30 participants. Non-probability sampling in the form of convenience and snowball sampling was used and the researcher used a thematic analysis to analyse the data that was collected. The results of the current study indicated that both negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime would negatively influence most students' image of the university, trust towards the university and loyalty to the university. In terms of responses to the two types of negative publicity under investigation, the current study indicated that universities should respond either by apologising for the negative publicity and assuring students that the problem has been dealt with, denying the negative publicity, or redirecting the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university. Lastly, the current study has identified practical implications showing that communication mediums such as direct marketing, advertising and public relations are ideal communication mediums to

communicate a university's response to the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study. South African universities can use the findings of this study to understand which communication mediums would be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. This will enable them to effectively communicate their responses to these two types of negative publicity in the long term.

Keywords: Negative publicity, recovery, image, trust, loyalty

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

According to media reports, in recent years, universities in South Africa have been subject to a vast amount of negative publicity as a result of an increased number of student protests and crime in and around universities. For example, the media reported that numerous students were injured due to student protests at one of the universities in the Eastern Cape (Evans, 2019). An example to illustrate the presence of negative publicity regarding campus crime is that several media houses reported that a student was taken to a hospital in critical condition after being stabbed on campus in one of the universities in KwaZulu-Natal (Singh, 2019).

Literature indicates that negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between an organisation and its consumers by influencing several factors (Maslikhan, 2019). Meaning negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between universities and their students by negatively influencing several factors. However, the current study focuses on three factors, which are the students' image of a university, the level of students' trust towards a university and the students' loyalty to a university. It is important to research these factors because they contribute to the relationship between a university and its students. Previous research on these factors has shown that negative publicity can influence consumers' image of an organisation, level of trust towards an organisation and loyalty to an organisation (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). However, there is insufficient research that aims to understand the influence of negative publicity that results from student protests and campus crime on the image, trust and loyalty of university students as consumers of the university. This makes it important to research this topic in the context of universities in South Africa as these universities are constantly subject to these two types of negative publicity.

According to Maslikhan (2019), a consumer's image of an organisation refers to the consumer's perceptions of a given organisation. Consumer perceptions of an organisation play an important role in the consumers' willingness to build and maintain a relationship with a given organisation. Lin, Wang, Wang and Lu (2014) argue that a consumer's level of trust towards an organisation plays an important role in the consumers' belief that an organisation can meet the consumers' expectations. Thus, an organisation's ability to meet the consumers' expectations is an important determinant of the relationship between the organisation and its consumers. Shekhar, Acharya, Roy and Nguyen (2020) argue that a consumer's loyalty to a given organisation refers to the consumers' commitment to a given organisation. Therefore,

the level of commitment a consumer has towards a given organisation plays an important role in determining the relationship between an organisation and its consumers.

Since factors such as the consumers' image of the organisation, level of consumers' trust towards the organisation, and consumers' loyalty to an organisation play an important role in determining the relationship between an organisation and its consumers, the aim of the current study is three-fold; firstly, the current study aims to determine the extent to which negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences the students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to a university. Secondly, the current study aims to determine the responses students believe universities should use as means of achieving recovery from the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity. Lastly, the current study aims to determine which promotional tools students believe would be most effective in communicating the responses to these two types of negative publicity.

1.2. Background

There are about twenty-six universities in South Africa registered under the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2022). As indicated in the introduction, many of these universities have been subject to a vast amount of negative publicity. According to media reports, the two most common types of negative publicity that universities in South Africa have been subject to are negative publicity regarding student protests and negative publicity regarding campus crime. According to media reports, since the 'fees must fall' protests in 2015, there have been vast amounts of student protests that have destroyed university property and caused injuries to many staff and students. Similarly, media reports have indicated that since 2010, there has been an increase in criminal activities in and around universities. These events quickly translate to negative publicity due to the growth of media reporting (Kavoura and Sylaiou, 2019). Therefore, the current study focuses on these two types of negative publicity.

In terms of negative publicity regarding student protests, media reports have indicated that student protests have negatively influenced universities in South Africa in numerous ways. For example, student protests have led to university property such as buildings, vehicles and learning equipment being burned down by protesting students (Grobler, 2020). Student protests have led to numerous students being arrested due to their conduct during student protests (Dayimani, 2021). Several students and staff members have ended up sustaining injuries due to student protests (Evans, 2019). Student protests have also led to the extended suspension of

academic activities which negatively influences the university's plans to conduct teaching and learning during the expected times (Mitchley, 2020).

In the context of negative publicity regarding campus crime, media reports have indicated that universities in South Africa have been negatively influenced by negative publicity regarding campus crime. For example, the media reported that students continue to experience robberies in and around university properties (Canca, 2017). Students have been found dead in and around universities (Dayimani, 2021). There have also been numerous reports of an increase in gender-based violence in South African universities, these incidents of gender-based violence also include rape cases (van Diemen, 2019).

Literature indicates that organisations including universities cannot control the distribution of negative publicity, whether the negative publicity is true or not (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). Literature also indicates that different types of negative publicity regarding organisations such as universities, for example, can negatively influence numerous factors (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). The factors that the current study focuses on are the consumers' image of the organisation, the level of trust consumers have towards the organisation and the consumers' loyalty to the organisation. Understanding the influence of negative publicity on these factors is important due to the role that consumer image, trust and loyalty play in developing and maintaining the relationship between an organisation and its consumers.

Thus, understanding how the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study influence the students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university will benefit universities in South Africa as these universities are constantly subject to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. This will also help universities to develop appropriate measures to resolve any negative influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation on students' image of the university, level of trust towards a university and loyalty to a university.

According to Oladepo and Abimbola (2015), a positive image of an organisation such as a university for example plays an important role in consumers' preference for the organisation. Therefore, organisations must ensure that they maintain a positive image in the minds of consumers at all times. This means that organisations must make sure that they avoid situations whereby their consumers develop a negative image of the organisation. According to this argument, organisations need to understand what negatively influences the consumers' image of the organisation to avoid consumers developing a negative image of the organisation. It is

also important for organisations to develop effective recovery strategies if the consumers develop a negative image of the organisation as this would enable the organisation to maintain a positive image in the minds of the consumers. Recovery strategies refer to interventions that aim to repair any damage to the relationship between an organisation and its consumers (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018).

The level of trust consumers have towards an organisation is important in building and maintaining the relationship between an organisation and its consumers as trust results from the organisation's ability to meet the needs of the consumers and the consumers' belief that the organisation will conduct its activities in an honest, ethical and truthful manner (Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen, 2017). Therefore, it is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that they maintain the trust of their consumers to maintain the organisation's relationship with its consumers. Thus, if external influences such as negative publicity imply that the consumers cannot trust the organisation, the organisation must understand the nature of this external influence and implement strategies to ensure the consumers that they can trust the organisation.

Consumer loyalty to an organisation such as a university, for example, plays an important role in the consumers remaining with the organisation and not switching to alternative organisations even though other organisations may be more appealing (Shekhar, Acharya, Roy and Nguyen, 2020). Literature indicates that a consumer's loyalty to a given organisation results from the consumer's belief that the organisation can provide the expected products or services (Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea, 2006; Lalicic and Weismayer, 2018). Thus, if the consumers believe that the organisation can meet their expectations in terms of the products or services offered by the organisation, the consumers are likely to maintain their relationship with the organisation. Therefore, organisations such as universities need to ensure that they continuously meet their students' expectations such as maintaining a good image in the students' minds by ensuring that they provide quality services and they deal with any negative events that may negatively affect the students' image of the university (Alić, Činjurević, and Agić, 2020). This contributes to maintaining the consumers' loyalty to the organisation because the consumers' expectations are constantly met by the organisation (Shekhar, Acharya, Roy and Nguyen, 2020). Hence, organisations need to deal with any claims that may imply that the organisation is not meeting the consumers' expectations, a possible source of such a claim is negative publicity to name an example.

Therefore, the current study aims to determine and understand the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on students' image of a university, the level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university. Further, the current study aims to determine if the students indicate that any of the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study negatively influence their perception of the university in terms of image, trust and loyalty to the university. In addition, the current study aims to determine the responses that the students believe would be effective in achieving recovery from the negative influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study. The current study also aims to determine the promotional tools that the students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study.

Investigation of these factors is needed because understanding the influence of these factors on the relationship between a university and its students could help universities deal with the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on factors such as students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university. Universities who will adopt the findings of this study will gain benefits such as understanding how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences the relationship between the university and its students in terms of students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university.

This study will also equip universities with the responses required to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study if the students indicate that any of the two types of negative publicity under investigation negatively influence their image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university. This study will also inform universities of which promotional tools would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. This information will be beneficial to universities as media reports have indicated that universities have been constantly subject to the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study in the past.

1.3. Problem Statement

The key rationale for the researcher conducting the current study is that universities in South Africa are often subject to various types of negative publicity. Since it would be impractical for the current study to investigate the influence of all the types of negative publicity due to

time constraints, therefore, the current study will focus on negative publicity regarding student protests and negative publicity regarding campus crime. The specific problem that the current study aims to contribute to addressing is the need for universities in South Africa to understand how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences the relationship between the universities and their students in terms of image, trust and loyalty.

Understanding this influence is important since universities like many other organisations have very little or no control over being subject to negative publicity (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). For example, universities cannot control the distribution of negative publicity that claims that student protests have become violent and led to the destruction of university property. Or that teaching and learning have been suspended due to student protests. As another example, universities cannot control the distribution of negative publicity that claims that a student was killed by another student on university property or that there has been an increase in incidents of gender-based violence in and around South African universities.

Thus, if a given South African university is subject to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime, the problem that arises is that universities may not understand how exactly negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences the students. Thus, universities are unable to develop effective recovery strategies to deal with the influence of the negative publicity because the universities do not fully understand the nature and extent of the influence of these two types of negative publicity on the students. Research in the literature regarding effective recovery strategies for negative publicity suggests that organisations need to understand the influence of negative publicity before implementing any recovery strategies to avoid wasting resources (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). This applies to universities in that they must understand the influence of the negative publicity on the students before implementing any recovery strategies. For example, a given university can spend a lot of time and resources to recover from the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime, when these two types of negative publicity do not influence students in any way. This would result in wasted time and resources. Thus, the current study will contribute to ensuring that universities have adequate information regarding the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on the students.

Having adequate information regarding the negative influence of negative publicity will help universities to allocate the necessary resources and time to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity, in case of encountering negative publicity.

Research shows that organisations that understand the influence of negative publicity can achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of the negative publicity because they understand how the negative publicity has affected their consumers (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). Thus, they can allocate the necessary resources and time to implementing effective recovery strategies and no resources end up being misused.

Another problem that may arise, if universities are subject to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime, is that the universities would not know the responses that students believe would be effective in responding to the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study. Thus, the current study aims to contribute to solving this problem by determining the responses students believe would be effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. If the students indicate that the two types of negative publicity under investigation would negatively influence factors such as their perception of the university in terms of image, trust and loyalty. The current study would equip universities with information regarding the most effective responses that can be used to recover from the influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study if the influence is negative.

Research indicates that the most effective responses to negative publicity include ignoring the negative publicity, denying the negative publicity, redirecting the consumers' attention away from the negative publicity as well as taking responsibility for the negative publicity and apologising to the consumers (Xie and Peng, 2009). Therefore, universities that apply these recovery strategies can gain benefits such as repairing their relationship with the students if the relationship was damaged by negative publicity. As well as maintaining a good relationship with the students because their relationship with students would not be negatively influenced by negative publicity for a long time due to the implementation of effective responses to negative publicity.

Lastly, universities may be in a position whereby they wish to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. The current study would also assist universities by determining the promotional tools that students believe universities should use when communicating their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. Previous research indicates that promotional tools such as direct marketing, advertising, public relations and sales promotions are possible communication

mediums that can be used to communicate a response to negative publicity (Fikri and Lisdayanti, 2020). The information regarding the promotional tools will help universities to determine which of the promotional tools would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime.

Finding effective ways to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity such as student protests and campus crime as opposed to the positive influence of positive publicity such as staff achievements is important since the multi-user two-way communication enabled by technological advancements such as social media, the availability of mobile devices and access to wireless internet networks encourage consumers to share and converse about issues that are of importance to them, negative publicity is an example of such an issue (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro, 2012; Kavoura and Sylaiou, 2019). Word of mouth also plays a significant role in the unlimited dissemination of negative publicity (Babić Rosario, de Valck and Sotgiu, 2020). Other communication mediums such as broadcast and print media also contribute to the distribution of negative publicity (Monga and John, 2008). This means students are exposed to this increased negative publicity regarding universities in South Africa. Therefore, universities must understand how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences students' perceptions of the university in terms of image, trust and loyalty as well as how a university can recover from the influence of these two types of negative publicity if these two types of negative publicity negatively influence the students.

1.4. Significance of the study

1.4.1 Practical significance of the study

From a practical perspective, the results yielded by the current study would contribute to universities obtaining knowledge regarding negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime which is needed to assist universities in understanding the influence of these two types of negative publicity on students. In other words, the current study will contribute to universities' understanding of how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime affects the relationship between the university and its students. The current study will achieve this by investigating how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences students' perceived image of a university, the level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university.

It is important to know if the students indicate that negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime negatively influences factors such as their perceived image of the university, the students' level of trust towards the university and students' loyalty to the university. The

current study also aims to contribute to enabling universities to understand which responses would be ideal in responding to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. Furthermore, the current study aims to inform universities of the promotional tools that students believe would be effective in communicating a university's responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime.

While the current study uses a sample from one South African university, which is the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the results yielded by the current study can be used by other universities in other countries also experiencing negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime as one of their references when attempting to understand the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime as these types of negative publicity can affect universities all over the world. Once influenced by negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime, any university across the world would likely want to implement steps to recover from the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity. Thus, the current study can be used by these universities as one of their references in attempting to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity on students.

1.4.2. Theoretical significance of the study

In terms of a theoretical perspective, the results of the current study will contribute to literature regarding the influence of negative publicity on university students. Granted, the current study focuses on two types of negative publicity namely student protests and campus crime. However, scholars that aim to understand the influence of negative publicity regarding a university on students can use the results of the current study to contribute to their understanding.

The results of the current study can also be used by scholars that aim to study consumer behaviour in general, as the current study aims to investigate how negative publicity as an external influence affects the behaviour of students who are consumers of a university which is an organisation. The same applies to recovery as the current study can assist researchers that aim to determine how an organisation can respond to a given incident such as protests and crime as a means of achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of that given incident.

1.5. Research objectives and research questions

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the extent to which negative publicity regarding student protests influences the students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university.
2. To investigate the responses students believe a university should use as a means of achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding student protests.
3. To investigate which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.
4. To investigate the extent to which negative publicity regarding campus crime influences the students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university.
5. To investigate the responses students believe a university should use as a means of achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding campus crime.
6. To investigate which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

Research Questions

1. How does negative publicity regarding student protests influence students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university?
2. Which responses do students believe would be effective in achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding student protests in universities?
3. Which promotional tools do students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests?
4. How does negative publicity regarding campus crime influence students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university?

5. Which responses do students believe would be effective in achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding campus crime?
6. Which promotional tools do students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime?

1.6. Research methodology for the current study

The current study was conducted using a qualitative research design. The population for the current study included students from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. A sample of thirty students was selected to take part in the current study. Snowball sampling was used to form the sample that took part in the current study, data collection was conducted remotely using communication mediums such as Zoom meetings and WhatsApp video calls. A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data that was collected and software called Nvivo was used to facilitate the data analysis. The participants were required to give consent to taking part in the current study to maintain the required ethical standards.

1.7. Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation starts with chapter one, which introduces the study and discusses the research problem, research objectives and research questions. This is followed by chapter two, which discusses the literature that is relevant to the current study. Next is chapter three which discusses the methodology that was utilised in conducting the current study. This is followed by chapter four, which presents the findings obtained in the current study. Lastly, the discussion of the results and recommendations are discussed in chapters five and six.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has introduced the topic of the current study. In this chapter, the literature regarding all the variables of the current study will be discussed. This will be beneficial to the current study as it will enable the researcher to understand the relationships between each of the variables of the current study. Therefore, this chapter will begin with definitions of negative publicity, thereafter this chapter will discuss different consumer responses to negative publicity. Next, this chapter will discuss the negativity effect phenomenon. Thereafter, this chapter will discuss image trust and loyalty, these discussions will be followed by discussions of recovery and thereafter, discussions of the various promotional tools. Lastly, this chapter will provide a conceptual framework that was derived from the literature discussed in this chapter.

2.2. Definitions of negative publicity

Several scholars have developed definitions of negative publicity, Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) defined negative publicity as the non-compensated distribution of negative information regarding an organisation. On the other hand, Woo, Jung and Jin (2020), defined negative publicity as the public disclosure of a disturbing incident associated with an organisation. Maslikhan (2019) argues that negative publicity refers to the publication of negative information, which can harm the involved organisation's reputation. The disclosure of such negative information through mass media outlets has enormous power, which can maximise the harmful aftereffects of these negative incidents (Dean, 2004).

The constant theme in these definitions is that negative publicity is negative information regarding an organisation, which is likely to negatively influence the organisation's reputation. Thus, in the context of the current study, negative publicity refers to negative information regarding a university that is likely to negatively influence the university's reputation by negatively influencing factors such as the image, trust and loyalty of various university stakeholders. Meaning negative publicity can change how various stakeholders view a university. The stakeholders that the current study focuses on are university students.

Negative publicity can be accurate, however, in some cases, negative publicity is untrue, regardless of the level of truth, negative publicity can negatively influence or cause damage to the relationship between the organisation and consumers (Xie and Peng, 2009). Negative publicity has many possible sources, it can arise from an incident that took place, dissatisfied

consumers, industry experts, or it can be a result of corporate espionage where rival organisations disseminate untrue information about their competitors in an attempt to reduce their brand equity by damaging their reputation (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Negative publicity can be distributed via several mediums; these include social media, print media, broadcast media and word of mouth to name examples (Monga and John, 2008; Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). The current study focuses on negative publicity that results from student protests and negative publicity that results from crime in and around universities because of several instances whereby universities have been subject to these types of negative publicity during recent years.

For example, there has been negative publicity regarding student protests leading to the extended suspension of teaching and learning in various universities in South Africa (Mitchley, 2020). This negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between the university and students as it implies that the students would not receive the service that expect from the university during the expected time. Several universities have also been subject to negative publicity regarding the injuries of staff and students due to student protests (Singh, 2020). This negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between the university and its students as the students may fear going to the university as the protests may lead to the students sustaining injuries. Similarly, there has been a vast amount of negative publicity regarding the destruction of university property due to student protests (Grobler, 2020). This can negatively influence the relationship between a university and the students as the students may fear that the protests may damage important university infrastructure that is difficult to replace, thus, leaving students without this infrastructure which may be needed for the students' studies.

Due to the pattern of universities experiencing student protests at the beginning of every academic year and at various points throughout the year, universities will likely continue to be subject to student protests at the beginning of every year. Further, universities cannot control whether these protests take place and cannot control the negative publicity that results from these protests (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Therefore, universities must understand how the negative publicity that results from student protests influences the students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university as well as what students believe a university can do to recover from the negative influence of the negative publicity. This understanding is what the current study aims to achieve.

According to Forbes-Mewett, McCulloch, and Nyland (2015), university students are vulnerable to opportunistic crime because students tend to carry valuable items that tend to attract thieves. These items include cell phones, tablets and laptops, to name examples. University students cannot avoid carrying these items as they use these items for learning which means the students will continue to carry these items. Thus, the students will continue to be vulnerable and criminals are likely to continue robbing or attempting to rob students in and around universities as this is where the criminals have access to the students. This means that universities are likely to be subject to negative publicity regarding robberies in and around universities.

As a further example, in 2018, the City Press reported that a study conducted at one of the universities in Gauteng indicated that 26.9% of students, 17% of academic staff and 13.2% of administrative staff had experienced at least one incident of gender-based violence ranging from unwanted displays of sexual material to being forced to have sexual intercourse (van Diemen, 2019). Without interventions, crime in the form of gender-based violence is likely to continue affecting universities. Therefore, universities need to understand how negative publicity that results from various crimes in and around universities influences students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university, as crime negatively influences students' safety. Universities also need to understand what students believe a university can do to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding crime and safety concerns in and around universities. This understanding is what the current study aims to achieve.

2.3. Types of negative publicity

An organisation can be subject to two main types of negative publicity, namely performance-related negative publicity and value-related negative publicity (Matos and Veiga, 2005; Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). Performance-related negative publicity refers to negative information regarding the functional aspects of an organisation (Pullig, Netemeyer and Biswas, 2006; Kübler, Langmaack, Albers and Hoyer, 2020). An example of performance-related negative publicity is the negative that claims that a given university has shut down its campuses for extended periods. Such as in the case of one of the universities in the Eastern Cape which evacuated and shut down their campuses due to protests (Grobler, 2020). This negative publicity is performance-related since it implies that the university cannot perform its duties of teaching students due to the protests.

Value-related negative publicity, on the other hand, refers to negative information regarding how the organisation conducts its business or any ethical issues the organisation may face (Pullig, Netemeyer and Biswas, 2006; Kübler, Langmaack, Albers and Hoyer, 2020). An example of value-related negative publicity is negative publicity that claims that a given institution offers fake or unrecognised qualifications. According to a news article published on News24 (2013), many universities in South Africa were offering fake qualifications. This negative publicity is value-related as it refers to the ethical standard of these institutions. Literature indicates that consumers may have a stronger negative response to value-related negative publicity, as opposed to performance-related negative publicity as this type of negative publicity, includes moral aspects such as company values, which are important considerations for some types of consumers (Pullig, Netemeyer and Biswas, 2006; Liu and Sweeney, 2011). Therefore, consumers are likely to engage more with value-related negative publicity as opposed to product-related negative publicity.

2.4. Consumer response to negative publicity

Consumers regard publicity as a relatively credible source of information, which is more influential than organisation-driven communication (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnava, 2000; Zhu and Chang, 2013). As consumers may consider organisation-driven communication to be biased because this communication comes directly from the organisation, whereas publicity comes from outside an organisation; this makes publicity seem less biased and more objective. This leads to most consumers believing that publicity is true, especially when compared to organisation-driven information. Therefore, when faced with negative publicity regarding a given organisation, consumers go through a process by which they reflect on who exactly caused the negative publicity and decide whom to blame for the negative publicity (Rosenthal and Schlesinger, 2002; Whelan and Dawar, 2016). This is called the attribution process (Weiner, 1983).

The attribution process refers to the tendency to identify causal relationships; this process is mostly used to understand how consumers think about the causes of an event they may have experienced (Martinko and Mackey, 2019). Based on the attribution process, the causes of any outcome are internal attribution such as a person's characteristics and personality, or external attribution such as forces outside the person (Rosenthal and Schlesinger, 2002; Whelan and Dawar, 2016). In most cases, people tend to attribute good outcomes internally and people tend to attribute bad outcomes externally (Gardner, Karam, Tribble and Coglisier, 2019).

For example, if a university is subject to positive publicity such as a university in KwaZulu-Natal making it to the top of the young university rankings in South Africa (Sinkins 2021), then many students are most likely to think that they made a good decision by choosing to study at that particular university. Alternatively, if a university is subject to negative publicity such as a university in the Eastern Cape calling the police to assist in dealing with violent student protests that have resulted in damage to expensive infrastructure (Dayimani, 2021), then many students will most likely blame the university or their fellow students for their roles in the incident that caused the negative publicity.

Despite extant research, only a small amount of research has studied consumer attribution or blame in the context of negative publicity, the current study aims to contribute to filling this knowledge gap (Rosenthal and Schlesinger, 2002; Whelan and Dawar, 2016). The current study will achieve this by determining if negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences factors such as students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to the university. If the students indicate that any of the types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study negatively influence their image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university, it would mean that the students blame the university for the negative publicity regardless of the university's direct involvement. This will contribute to literature regarding consumer attribution or blame in the context of negative publicity as this would have determined if students as a consumer group blame the university for negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime.

2.4.1. Word of mouth

Word of mouth is defined as information that is distributed by an individual regarding a given organisation that is available to a multitude of people (Babić Rosario, de Valck and Sotgiu, 2020). According to Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018), the literature indicates that negative publicity negatively influences consumers' post-purchase evaluations and the word of mouth consumers spread regarding the organisation. Therefore, negative publicity regarding the products, services, or ethical behaviour of an organisation is attributed to the organisation because of the products, services, or ethical conduct of the organisation. Thus, consumers often disseminate negative word of mouth regarding the organisation after the organisation is subject to negative publicity.

2.4.2. Reputation

The reputation of an organisation is defined as the beliefs that the consumers have regarding the organisation (Maslikhan, 2019). The reputation of the organisation that is subject to negative publicity can influence the blame factor (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). That is to say, if a well-established organisation is subject to negative publicity, consumers tend to place the blame more on other consumers of the organisation. As some consumers may argue that their fellow consumers are exaggerating or dramatising the damage when they disseminate negative publicity. This is because the consumers may be familiar with the organisation, which has a good reputation for producing high-quality products or services.

Research shows that organisations that have a good reputation for producing high-quality products or services are likely to attract and maintain consumers (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). On the other hand, if the organisation is not well-established consumers tend to blame the organisation for the negative publicity as the organisation may not have a good reputation at that point and consumers may think that the organisation lacks the knowledge and experience to produce quality products or services.

According to the argument made above, if a well-established university is subject to negative publicity in the form of student protests, for example, students may blame their fellow students for constantly making unreasonable demands and causing the university to lose teaching and learning time due to lengthy protests. This would be because the students are familiar with the university which would have a good reputation for producing high-quality service to students. For example, a university in the Eastern Cape was forced to shut down its campuses due to violent student protests, this completely halted the academic program (Bhengu, 2021), however, after the issue was sorted scores of students came back to the university to study as they were most likely aware of the quality of the university's service regardless of the protests.

On the other hand, if the reputation of the university is not well-established, students blame the university for negative publicity regarding student protests as students may argue that the university is not meeting the needs and expectations of students as the university would not have established a good reputation for meeting the needs and expectations of students. For example, students from a college in KwaZulu-Natal halted the academic program by holding a protest to express their grievances as they felt that the college was not meeting their needs and they needed this issue to be rectified (Athman, 2021). Thus, no teaching and learning continued until the students' grievances were addressed.

2.4.3. Consumers' voice or exit behaviour

According to Solnick and Hemenway (1992), as cited by Woo, Jung and Jin (2020), consumers who are dissatisfied with a product or service offered by an organisation commonly choose between two options. The first option is that the consumers voice their grievances to someone. This is known as complaint behaviour. Dissatisfied consumers can complain to a representative of the organisation or anybody that the consumer would like to speak to. Research indicates that the increase in communication mediums has made it easier for consumers to share their grievances (Bala and Verma, 2018). Voicing complaints is a proactive approach that aims to rectify the problem, especially when consumers complain directly to representatives of the organisation. For example, students from a university in KwaZulu-Natal held a protest to voice their grievances regarding the university's online registration process and other issues that they were dissatisfied with (Athman 2021).

However, voicing complaints can cause further negative publicity regarding a particular incident as complaints can easily reach other consumers who were not exposed to the initial event that led to the negative publicity, especially if consumers complain publically using word of mouth or social media that has become prevalent in the contemporary marketplace (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020).

The second option for dissatisfied customers is exit behaviour which entails consumers voluntarily ending their relationship with an organisation after the organisation has been subject to negative publicity (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). The literature shows that consumers can end their relationship with an organisation by purchasing less, not purchasing at all, or switching to another organisation that provides similar products or services (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) argue that consumers tend to avoid organisations that are subject to negative publicity. This suggests that students as consumers of universities can also display a tendency to avoid universities that are constantly subject to negative publicity. As consumers do not want to be identified as consumers of an organisation that is known for constantly being subject to negative publicity.

2.4.4. Self-organisation connection

Self-organisation connection refers to the connection or relationship between a consumer and a given organisation (Cheng, White, and Chaplin, 2012). Literature indicates that self-organisation connection plays an important role in preserving the relationship between a consumer and an organisation when an organisation is subject to negative publicity (Cheng,

White, and Chaplin, 2012). Specifically, when an organisation that consumers identify with is threatened, the threat to the organisation elicits the same response as a threat to the consumers themselves (Cheng, White, and Chaplin, 2012). As consumers want to preserve the integrity of the self during times of crisis encountered by the organisation, they react to negative information regarding the organisation with a defence mechanism (Lisjak, Lee and Gardner, 2012).

Thus, when students who identify with the university are confronted by negative publicity regarding the university, the students are likely to attempt to preserve their relationship with the university by responding to the negative publicity with a defense mechanism. For example, a university in the Eastern Cape has been subject to a vast amount of negative publicity regarding the number of student deaths on the university's property in the last three years (Dayimani, 2021). However, a large number of students responded with a defense mechanism by coming back to the university as opposed to looking for another university, thus preserving their relationship with the university regardless of the negative publicity. This could be due to a high level of connection between the university and students.

2.4.5. Consumer commitment

Consumer commitment is defined as consumers' willingness to maintain a relationship with a given organisation (Um and Kim, 2016; Zheng, Ritchie, Benckendorff and Bao, 2019). A study conducted by Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnava (2000) indicated that highly committed consumers displayed a remarkable level of defense towards the organisation after the organisation is subject to negative publicity. The literature has shown that committed consumers defend the organisation by extensively counter-arguing the negative information and supporting positive information regarding the organisation (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnava, 2000). Thus, the counter-arguments generated by these consumers emerged as moderators of changes to factors such as image, trust and loyalty for highly committed consumers. Funk and Pritchard (2006) make a similar argument as these authors argue that commitment, a high level of consumer familiarity with an organisation and its offerings and consumers' goals have been identified as moderators of negative publicity.

In the context of consumer relationships, commitment is argued to reflect an enduring desire to continue an affiliation (Um and Kim, 2016; Zheng, Ritchie, Benckendorff and Bao, 2019). Hence, committed consumers process negative publicity in a biased manner, these consumers are expected to counter-argue negative publicity as opposed to accepting its validity which

means these consumers are unlikely to experience changes to factors such as image, trust and loyalty to an organisation due to negative publicity. For example, a student at one of the universities in the Eastern Cape was murdered on university property (Dayimani, 2021). This resulted in a vast amount of negative publicity. However, students continue to attend the university and make use of the residence where the incident occurred as opposed to leaving the university and attending another university due to the negative publicity. One of the reasons for this is that the students' commitment to the university is high. Thus, the students continue with their relationship regardless of the negative publicity.

Liu, Wang and Wu (2010) support the arguments made above as they argue that consumers who are highly committed to an organisation are not likely to be negatively influenced by negative publicity regarding their organisation of choice when negative publicity is moderate. This means these consumers continue to make use of the organisation's offerings and do not consider switching to alternatives. In the context of the current study, these arguments indicate that students who are highly committed to a university are not likely to be negatively influenced by certain types of negative publicity regarding the university. Meaning, that strong consumer-organisation commitment can immunise an organisation from moderate negative publicity, however, this effect would most likely disappear when the negative publicity is extreme or immoderate (Liu, Wang and Wu, 2010).

Liu, Wang and Wu (2010) argue that, if the negative publicity is immoderate or extreme even consumers with a high level of commitment can be negatively influenced by the negative publicity to the point that these consumers may consider switching to alternatives, as some forms of negative publicity are too severe and cannot be ignored even by the most committed consumers. For example, a mutilated human body was found on the property of one of the universities in KwaZulu-Natal, which led to a vast amount of negative publicity (Xulu, 2021). This can lead to many students leaving the university as this form of negative publicity is too severe and cannot be ignored even by the most committed students.

Um and Kim (2016) argue that consumers with weak consumer-organisation commitment will process all types of negative publicity objectively and reach unbiased conclusions. This means they are likely to switch organisations or reduce their purchases due to negative publicity, especially if the negative publicity is true. Thus, when exposed to negative publicity regarding a student being murdered on campus, such as in the case of one of the universities in the Eastern

Cape (Dayimani, 2021), many students with low commitment to the university are likely to enable the negative publicity to negatively influence their relationship with the university.

2.5. The negativity effect phenomenon

Literature indicates that several scholars have developed definitions of the negativity effect or negativity bias phenomenon. According to Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018), the negativity effect refers to the consumers' tendency to weigh negative information more than they weigh positive information when forming evaluations regarding people, objects and ideas. Mizerski (1982) makes a similar definition as this author defined the negativity effect as the phenomena by which people place more importance on negative information as opposed to positive information. A reason for this phenomenon is that people believe that negative information has a greater capacity to inform and guide comparisons when compared to positive information (Maheswaran, Mayers-levy, 1990; Maslikhan, 2019). Therefore, consumers are likely to display the negativity effect when evaluating information regarding different organisations.

Cho (2005) supports the arguments made above as this author argues that literature regarding consumer behaviour indicates that negatively framed information has a greater efficacy to change consumer-buying patterns when compared with positively framed information. Thus, based on the arguments above, empirical evidence shows that negative publicity has a greater ability to change consumer preferences and behaviour, when compared to positive publicity (Matos and Veiga, 2005). This justifies the argument that consumers are likely to display the negativity effect when evaluating negative publicity regarding an organisation as consumers are likely to give more weight to negative information than positive information (Reeder and Brewer, 1979). These arguments are further supported by Dean (2004), who argues that the negativity effect causes negative publicity to be more damaging to corporate image, as consumers tend to give more credibility to negative publicity as opposed to positive publicity.

According to the negativity effect, students are likely to give more weight to negative publicity such as a mutilated human body being found on one of the properties belonging to a university in KwaZulu-Natal (Xulu, 2021), as opposed to positive publicity such as the same university making it to the top of the young university rankings in South Africa (Sinkins, 2021). According to Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018), a reason for the negativity effect is that people hold the belief that negative information is more diagnostic and informative when compared to positive information. The reason for this belief is that all organisations have either positive or neutral information about them, whereas not all organisations have negative information about

them. Thus, negative information separates an organisation from others, which attracts and maintains the attention of consumers.

Zhu and Chang (2013) support the arguments made above, as these authors argue that positive information attracts less attention than negative information. As positive information often comes directly from the organisation or results from positive initiatives that the organisation takes part in to generate positive publicity. Whereas negative information usually comes from sources outside the organisation, such as the media, for example, some consumers tend to view this negative information as true because they believe that information regarding an organisation that comes from outside the organisation is often true even though this may not necessarily be the case. The likelihood of receiving negative publicity from the media is also much higher than the likelihood of receiving positive publicity as people have a preference for bad news (Renkema and Hoeken, 1998).

Therefore, the current study aims to determine if students are influenced more by negative publicity or positive publicity, as universities in South Africa constantly receive positive publicity such as staff and student achievements. If the students indicate that the two types of negative publicity under investigation negatively influence factors such as student image, trust and loyalty to a university, this would mean the students display the negativity effect.

2.6. The influence of negative publicity on students' image of a university

A consumer's image of an organisation refers to the consumer's overall subjective perceptions towards an organisation and how the organisation differs from other organisations in terms of its uniqueness (Faircloth, 2005; Maslikhan, 2019). Parent and Foreman (2007) defined consumer image as the manner in which consumers view a given organisation, that is to say, the image refers to the consumer's impression of an organisation. According to Keller (1993), as cited by Magnusson, Krishnan, Westjohn and Zdravkovic (2014), image refers to a consumer's perception of a specific organisation. For example, consumers may perceive the organisation as being innovative, stylish, or fashionable. The constant theme amongst the definitions above is that image refers to how consumers view an organisation. Reputation, on the other hand, is the accumulation of consumer images over time (Parent and Foreman, 2007). Studies in the literature have found that if consumers have a positive image of an organisation for a long time, those consumers will develop a positive reputation of the organisation (Parent and Foreman, 2007; Maslikhan, 2019).

A consumer's image of an organisation has perceptual and subjective traits, which are formed by a consumer's emotional or rational interpretation (Cho, 2005). Because of these traits, the image of an organisation is vulnerable to negative information regarding the organisation. Thus, when the consumer image of an organisation encounters negative information such as negative publicity regarding the organisation, it will most likely result in the consumer image becoming negative, which could lead to less consumer preference and purchase intention (Cho, 2005; Wichailert and Yousapornpaiboon, 2017).

DeCarlo, Lacznia, Motley, and Ramaswami (2007) and Raju, Unnava, and Montgomery (2009) made a similar argument to the previous research that indicates that previous research indicates that negative information regarding an organisation is likely to destroy a consumer's image of the organisation. There is now evidence in the literature showing that the negative influence of negative information on a consumer's image of an organisation is likely to negatively influence purchase intention (Wu, 2011; Tariq, Nawaz, Nawaz; Butt, 2013). However, different types of negative information influence an organisation's image in different ways.

According to a news article published on News24 (2020), a university in the Eastern Cape called the police and hired an independent security company as a means to contain student protests that were taking place at the time. Due to the violent nature of the protests, the police and security personnel claimed that they had to use force in the form of teargas and shoot the students with rubber bullets to disperse the crowd of protesting students. Eleven students ended up being arrested by the police and charged. This incident caused a large amount of negative publicity around the university as some of the student protesters said the police and security personnel used force to stop what the students called a 'peaceful protest'.

When the students got arrested, other students felt that this is unfair as the students were fighting for the rights of their fellow students, and by getting arrested these students will end up getting criminal records and thus, would find it difficult to get jobs. Since the pursuit of better jobs is why the students came to the university. Such negative publicity can negatively influence the image of a university as this type of negative publicity can make it seem as if the university does not care about the safety and futures of its students and the university is merely concerned with protecting its property even if this is not the case.

Literature indicates that a negative consumer image of an organisation makes the organisation uncomfortable, which results in the organisation taking steps to recover the negative

consumers' image of an organisation (Parent and Foreman, 2007). An example to support this argument is that there has been an increase in incidents of gender-based violence in South African universities, this increase has generated a lot of negative publicity, which can negatively influence the image of South African universities (van Diemen, 2019). As a result in 2019, the minister of Higher Education and Training appointed a team to advise on matters regarding sexual harassment and gender-based violence in public universities in South Africa (van Diemen, 2019). This means that the negative publicity negatively influenced the image of universities in South Africa which made the Department of Higher Education and Training uncomfortable. Thus, the department decided to deal with the issue of gender-based violence in universities as this negatively influenced the image of universities in South Africa.

A positive consumer image of an organisation is an important asset to any organisation (Magnusson, Krishnan, Westjohn and Zdravkovic, 2014). A positive consumer image attracts and maintains consumers, which contributes to increased sales. Research indicates that organisations with positive images are also likely to attract quality employees, contracts and shareholders (Magnusson, Krishnan, Westjohn and Zdravkovic, 2014). This is due to organisational qualities such as trustworthiness, attractiveness and competence, which play an important role in developing a positive image of an organisation.

According to Oladepo and Abimbola (2015), a positive organisational image is argued as the most sustainable source of competitive advantage, this is because consumers who positively view an organisation will want to create a relationship with the organisation such a relationship leads to repeat purchases which equate to increased competitive advantage for the organisation. Alić, Činjurević, and Agić (2020) make a similar argument as they argue that a positive consumer image of an organisation plays an important role in achieving and maintaining consumer loyalty.

Therefore, organisations need to ensure that consumers have a positive image of their brands to achieve and maintain an advantage over other organisations, as research on the dimensions of branding shows that a positive image of an organisation positions a given organisation better than competitors in the consumers' minds (Alić, Činjurević, and Agić, 2020). By virtue of this argument, universities with a positive image have an advantage over universities with a negative image and universities need to ensure that they have a positive image as there are many institutions to choose from and students are unlikely to choose institutions with a negative image. Therefore, the current study aims to contribute to the literature by determining

how negative publicity in the form of student protests and campus crime influences students' image of a university.

2.7. The influence of negative publicity on students' trust towards a university

There is no universally accepted definition of trust, and there is no collective way to estimate the value of trust (Chang, Diaz, and Hung, 2015). Since trust has been studied and defined across several disciplines which include economic, social, psychological, organisational and technological (Oliveira, Alhinho, Rita and Dhillon, 2017). Lin, Wang, Wang and Lu (2014) make a similar argument as these authors argue that trust is a complex construct that has several definitions based on the various disciplines. The current study aims to discuss trust in an organisational context; within this context, several authors developed definitions of trust. Morgan and Hunt (1994) argue that trust is of importance to an organisation because it encourages organisations to (a) work on preserving relationships with current consumers, (b) resist attractive short-term opportunities for the expected long-term benefits of staying with existing consumers and (c) view potentially high-risk actions as wise due to the belief that their current consumers will not act opportunistically.

According to Lee (2009), as cited by Lin, Wang, Wang and Lu (2014) trust refers to a consumer's belief that an organisation will conduct its activities in a manner that displays qualities such as integrity and benevolence, even though the consumer cannot control whether the organisation conducts its activities in a manner that displays integrity and benevolence. Benson, Lavelle, Spence, Elliott, and Dean (2020) defined consumer trust as a consumer's attitude of confident expectation from an organisation which influences them to maintain their relationship with the organisation as they believe that the organisation will not exploit the consumer's vulnerability. Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea (2006) defined trust as a set of beliefs held by a consumer as to certain characteristics of an organisation as well as the possible behaviour of the organisation in the future. According to Ganesan and Hess (1997), consumer trust has been conceptualised as (a) an expectancy held by a consumer that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of an organisation can be relied on and (b) a consumer's confidence in the organisation in conditions involving risk or belief in the benevolent intentions of the organisation. Lastly, Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998), p. 395 argue that trust is defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviours of another".

The definitions of trust identified above consist of two parts. The first part is the expectation that an organisation will responsibly conduct business, in a manner that shows integrity and is not harmful to its consumers. The second part is the consumer's intention to rely on an organisation while accepting contextual vulnerability. Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen (2017) and AlHogail (2018) make a similar argument as these authors argue that consumer trust in an organisation is made up of two parts: firstly, a consumer's expectation that an organisation will conduct business in a responsible manner that displays integrity and does not pose the risk of possible injury to the consumers. Secondly, a consumer's intention to rely on an organisation to provide the expected products or services expectedly.

According to Lin, Wang, Wang and Lu (2014), researchers have identified two phases of trust: the first phase of trust is a pre-use trust which refers to trust before the use of a given organisation's goods or services. The second phase of trust is a post-use trust which refers to trust gained after the use of a given organisation's products or services. Although both phases of trust have positive effects on organisations, there is a significant difference between these two phases of trust as research indicates that consumers would not have experienced the products or services offered by the organisation in the pre-use trust phase (Lin, Wang, Wang and Lu, 2014). Whereas in the post-use trust phase the consumers would have experienced the use of the organisation's products or services and experienced the quality and value of the products or services (Lin, Wang, Wang and Lu, 2014). Therefore, the consumers' trust towards the organisation's products and services is justified by the consumers' experience.

It is becoming increasingly important for organisations to achieve and maintain consumer trust. This is due to a constant increase in the number of organisations that offer similar products or services (Flavián, Guinalíu and Gurrea, 2006). As trust is a key prerequisite for establishing a successful relationship between organisations and consumers (Janssen and Hamm, 2012; Noblet and Teisl, 2015). Trust, along with factors such as commitment, communication and satisfaction, is considered one of the fundamental pillars supporting the relationship marketing theory (Flavián, Guinalíu and Gurrea, 2006).

Numerous studies indicate that negative publicity can negatively influence the level of consumer trust towards a university (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). For example, a news article by Canca (2017) published on News24 reported that students from one of the universities in Gauteng were robbed at gunpoint inside a university laboratory. The robbery ended in a shootout between the robbers and university security. This incident generated a large

amount of negative publicity as it was reported in the news and discussed by people on social media. The negative publicity generated by incidents like this can negatively influence the level of students' trust towards a university as it can cause students to question the university's ability to keep the students safe. In other words, after being exposed to negative publicity regarding an incident like this students are unlikely to trust the university to keep them safe.

Other forms of negative publicity can also negatively influence the level of students' trust towards a university. For example, one of the universities in Gauteng had to suspend its academic activities for an extended period due to protests taking place at the university (Mitchley, 2020). This caused negative publicity as other students were complaining about losing teaching and learning time. This type of negative publicity can negatively influence the level of students' trust towards a university's ability to provide students with quality teaching and learning during the planned time as the timeframes were put in place to maximise teaching and learning. The examples above have shown that the two types of negative publicity under investigation can negatively influence students' trust toward the university.

Literature has identified various aspects of trust, of these aspects, perceived honesty and benevolence have emerged as the most important in achieving and maintaining consumer trust (Ganesan and Hess, 1997; Oliveira, Alinho, Rita and Dhillon, 2017). Honesty or credibility refers to the certainty the consumer has that the organisation's sincerity and ability to keep all promises made (Gundlach and Murphy, 1993). Benevolence refers to the consumer's belief that the organisations are interested in the consumer's well-being and that the organisation does not show opportunist behaviour (Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea, 2006).

Ozdemir and Sonmezay (2020) argue that competence, integrity and benevolence are important components of consumer trust in organisations. Competence refers to an organisation's ability to fulfil promises made to consumers (Oliveira, Alinho, Rita and Dhillon, 2017). Integrity refers to an organisation acting in a consistent, reliable and honest manner (Oliveira, Alinho, Rita and Dhillon, 2017). Benevolence refers to an organisation's ability to hold consumer interests ahead of their self-interest and indicates a sincere concern for the welfare of consumers (Oliveira, Alinho, Rita and Dhillon, 2017). The literature indicates that these three dimensions of trust discussed above influence the relationship between an organisation and its consumers as they contribute to the level of trust consumers have towards an organisation (Ozdemir and Sonmezay, 2020). Thus, universities that aim to gain the trust of students should display

competence, integrity, and benevolence in all academic, administrative, and extramural activities.

According to Ganesan and Hess (1997), trust enhances consumers commitment by (a) reducing the perceived risk associated with opportunist behaviours by the organisation (b) increasing the consumers' confidence that short-term inequalities will be resolved in the long run, and (c) reducing the consumers' transaction costs in an exchange relationship. In the context of universities, the argument made above by Ganesan and Hess (1997) indicates that trust enhances students' commitment to a university by (a) reducing the perceived risk associated with opportunist behaviours by the university (b) increasing the student's confidence that short-term inequalities will be resolved in the long run and (c) reducing the student's transaction costs in an exchange relationship with a university. Therefore, the current study aims to contribute to the literature by determining how negative publicity in the form of student protests and campus crime influences students' trust towards a university.

2.8. The influence of negative publicity on students' loyalty to a university.

Consumer loyalty refers to a psychological or emotional attachment to a specific brand or organisation (Shekhar, Acharya, Roy and Nguyen, 2020). Shamout (2016) on the other hand, defined loyalty as the preference for the offerings of a given organisation over alternatives; this preference causes consumers to continuously choose a specific organisation over other organisations that offer the same products or services. The theme amongst these definitions of consumer loyalty is consumers' willingness to preserve a relationship with a given organisation. In the context of universities, loyalty refers to the student's willingness to preserve a relationship with a university. In the past, consumer loyalty was viewed as simply repeat buying; however, consumer loyalty has become similar to a conceptualisation of commitment, as the field of consumer behaviour has matured (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnava, 2000).

Oliver (1999) as cited by East, Gendall, Hammond and Lomax (2005) defined consumer loyalty as a consumers commitment to make repeat purchases of a given organisations goods or services continuously thus, resulting in the same organisation purchasing despite any situational influences and marketing efforts from other organisations that may arise in the future. An example of a situational factor is negative publicity regarding an organisation. According to this definition of loyalty, consumers that are loyal to a given organisation are

unlikely to enable negative publicity regarding an organisation to negatively influence the relationship between the consumer and the organisation that they are loyal to.

According to Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea (2006), the reason for consumer loyalty to a specific organisation is to achieve risk reduction. This means consumers become loyal to a specific organisation because they would have experienced the products or services offered by the organisation, this experience is most likely positive, which means that the consumers would be satisfied with the organisation's products or services. Studies in the literature indicate that when consumers are satisfied, they are likely to continue consuming the organisation's goods or services to reduce the risk of purchasing other products or services from other organisations which may not provide the same level of satisfaction (Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea, 2006).

Ganesan and Hess (1997) argue that consumer loyalty to an organisation entails a desire to develop a stable relationship with the organisation. As a means of maintaining this relationship, consumers are willing to make short-term sacrifices and have confidence in the stability of the relationship. Consumer loyalty to a given organisation goes beyond the simple evaluation of costs and benefits; it implies the consumers' willingness to make short-term sacrifices to realise long-term benefits.

According to Liu, Wang and Wu (2010), from a behavioural aspect, a consumer's loyalty to an organisation is divided into three parts, namely, primary behaviour which refers to a consumer's repeat purchasing an organisation's product or services. Secondary level behaviour goes further than consumers re-purchasing an organisation's products or services, consumers display other behaviours such as word-of-mouth and advocating for an organisation's products or services. Lastly, rebuy intention refers to consumers' desire to continue purchasing the organisation's products or services in the future.

Marketers believe organisational loyalty plays an important role in the success of any organisation as organisational loyalty indicates the consumers' willingness and commitment to purchasing or prioritising a specific organisation, product or service regularly over a long period (Oliver, 1999; Liu, Wang and Wu, 2010). Therefore, organisational loyalty leads to consumers constantly making purchases from the organisation that they are loyal to.

For several years, a consumer's loyalty to a given organisation has been regarded as an important indicator of the success of an organisation's marketing activities as the role of marketing activities is to attach consumers to the organisation with the hope that the consumers will experience the products or services offered by the organisation (Yoo and Bai, 2012).

Experiencing a given organisation's products or services enables the consumers to experience the quality and the value of the goods or services offered by the organisation, and experiencing an organisation's goods and services also enables the consumers to determine if the products or services satisfy their needs or wants. According to So, King, Sparks and Wang (2016), the quality, value and the ability of an organisation's goods or services to satisfy the needs or wants of consumers play an important role in determining the consumers' loyalty to a given organisations products and services.

External factors such as negative publicity can negatively influence consumers' loyalty to an organisation by increasing the risk of being loyal to an organisation (Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea, 2006). Meaning negative publicity can negatively influence students' loyalty to a university. For example one of the universities in the Eastern Cape evacuated all their campuses due to violent student protests, the students were given short notice to evacuate all residences and university leased accommodation, even though the university was attempting to limit the damage that would be caused by the protests, the decision to evacuate all the university campuses and accommodation caused a large amount of negative publicity, as many students used social media to complain about not been given enough time to leave university accommodation (Grobler, 2020).

Many students complained that they were not able to leave their residences on such short notice due to several issues that include money and the time it would take for the students who come from far away to reach their homes. The negative publicity that was caused by the university's decision to evacuate all university accommodations can negatively influence students' loyalty to a university as a lot of students were not satisfied with this decision. According to Flavián, Guinalú and Gurrea (2006), satisfaction is important in maintaining loyalty. Even students that were not directly affected by the university's decision to evacuate all university property may be dissatisfied with this decision based on negative publicity in the form of the complaints of their fellow students.

Thus, even students that were not directly affected by the incident but received negative publicity regarding the incident can also become less loyal to the university due to the negative influence of the negative publicity they received. Therefore, the current study aims to contribute to the literature by determining how negative publicity in the form of student protests and campus crime influences students' loyalty to a university.

2.9. Recovery from negative publicity

Recovery refers to rectifying or repairing the relationship between an organisation and its consumers after the relationship had been negatively influenced by external factors such as negative publicity to name an example (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar 2018). According to Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018), preventing negative publicity is ideal, however, once an organisation is subject to negative publicity organisations should attempt to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity. Chung and Lee (2019) make a similar argument as these authors argue that once an organisation is subject to negative publicity, the organisation must implement the necessary recovery strategies to lessen the negative influence of the negative publicity on consumer perceptions of an organisation. Organisations can attempt to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity by posting positive information regarding the organisation online to minimise further damage such as consumers spreading the negative publicity further by complaining using mediums such as word of mouth or social media to name examples.

Meaning, when an organisation is subject to negative publicity, it is essential that the organisation allocates resources to the communication mediums such as public relations, advertising, direct marketing and sales promotion that can communicate recovery strategies effectively (Todorova, 2015; Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). Fairley, Lovegrove, Newland and Green (2016) make a similar argument as these authors argue that, once an organisation finds itself amid a crisis, it is important for the organisation to determine the nature of the crisis and how the organisation can communicate with their consumers to influence the consumers towards not enabling the negative influence of the crisis to negatively influence their relationship with the organisation.

For example, the vice-chancellor of a university in the Free State used public relations in the form of a virtual briefing to address the issue of crime in and around the university as the increase in crime had caused a large amount of negative publicity (Maphanga, 2021). This can be considered as a recovery strategy as the vice-chancellor discussed various ways in which the university and the police are addressing the issue of the increased crime rate. The vice-chancellor also expressed that he has had enough of in terms of crime. This statement can be considered as a recovery strategy as it shows that the vice-chancellor is against crime and he would take the necessary actions to decrease crime in and around the university.

2.9.1. Recovery strategies

Recovery strategies refer to the strategies or techniques used by an organisation to repair its relationship with consumers after the relationship had been negatively influenced by external factors (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). Affective recovery refers to the organisation offering an apology to consumers and the public as well as expressing the organisation's remorse about the negative incident that has been publicised (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, and Dirks, 2004; Xie and Peng, 2009). An organisation can apologise by offering a public statement acknowledging the organisation's responsibility for the incident that led to the negative publicity and expressing regret to consumers who may have been affected by the event that led to negative publicity (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, and Dirks, 2004; Xie and Peng, 2009). According to Kim, Ferrin, Cooper and Dirks (2004), in case, negative events cause damage to the relationship between a consumer and organisation, if the organisation takes responsibility and apologises for the negative event. The possibility of rectifying the damaged relationship increases.

Several organisations offer apologies for their transgressions because apologising properly reduces the consequences of their transgressions. Apologising and providing consumers with all the information relating to the event that caused the negative publicity displays a high level of competence, benevolence and integrity, which plays an important role in recovering factors such as the image, trust and loyalty of consumers (Kim, Dirks, and Cooper, 2009; Xie and Peng, 2009).

Functional recovery is a more practical recovery strategy as functional recovery entails an organisation offering monetary compensations to the consumers who were directly affected by the incident that led to the negative publicity (Xie and Peng, 2009). The literature indicates that compensation can be in the form of refunds during a recall, free aftercare to address the harm caused by the product, and special incentives such as sales, promotions, and customer rewards to name examples (Xie and Peng, 2009). However, Xie and Peng, (2009) argue that functional recovery strategies may be moderately effective as functional strategies mostly compensate consumers who were directly affected by the event that led to the negative publicity and the consumers who received the negative publicity via word of mouth or other mediums are not compensated. Thus, the negative publicity remains with them, unless the consumers who were compensated spread positive word of mouth regarding the functional recovery strategy used by the organisation.

Informational recovery refers to overcoming the negative influence of negative publicity through communicative efforts (Xie and Peng, 2009). These efforts include holding a press conference or open discussion addressing the situation, clarifying facts, and disclosing updates regarding solutions. An example of this would be an organisation's management team holding a press conference explaining the cause of the event that led to the negative publicity, the results of the incident, and solutions implemented to recover from the negative publicity generated by the event. Organisations can also do this by providing a 24/7 customer call centre.

According to Yousafzai, Pallister and Foxall (2005), after an organisation is subject to a negative event such as negative publicity. Research that examined recovery strategies emphasises that communication between an organisation and consumers can be effective in achieving recovery from a negative event, as timely communication from an organisation removes suspicion from the consumers and ensures that the consumers have the correct information regarding the negative event (Xie and Peng, 2009). Communication between an organisation and consumers after the organisation is subject to a negative event also shows a sense of transparency by the organisation, this shows consumers that the organisation has nothing to hide.

A possible recovery strategy for an organisation that has been subject to negative publicity is not responding to the negative publicity, meaning the organisation would continue to operate as usual and not pay attention to the negative publicity (Xie and Peng, 2009; Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). According to Xie and Peng (2009) not responding to negative publicity is not an effective recovery strategy as it does not give an organisation a chance to respond to the negative publicity and address the consumers' concerns regarding the negative publicity. An example of this recovery strategy is a university that has been subject to negative publicity ignoring the negative publicity and continuing with its daily operations.

Another recovery strategy is an organisation denying the negative publicity claims, meaning an organisation's representative going on record denying the organisation's involvement in the event that caused the negative publicity (Henard, 2002; Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Research indicates that denying the negative publicity can be an effective recovery strategy especially if the organisation is can prove that the negative publicity is untrue (Xie and Peng, 2009). An example of this recovery strategy is a university that has been subject to negative publicity, denying the negative publicity.

An organisation can also redirect the consumers' attention to positive aspects of the organisation, with the hope that the consumers will focus on the positive aspects and forget about the negative publicity (Xie and Peng, 2009; Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Literature indicates that redirecting the consumers' attention from the negative publicity to the positive aspects of the organisation can be an effective recovery strategy as it makes the consumers focus on the positive aspects of the organisation and not on the negative publicity (Xie and Peng, 2009). An example of this strategy is a university directing the students' and publics' attention from negative publicity to the positive aspects of the university, such as student and staff achievements in terms of academics and sport. This will highlight the positive aspects of the university and possibly repair factors such as students' image, trust and loyalty to a university.

Lastly, an organisation can take full responsibility for the event that caused the negative publicity and offer an apology to all stakeholders involved and assure them that the event will not happen again (Chung and Lee, 2019). An organisation can assure the consumers that the issue has been dealt with by making changes that will ensure that the organisation is not subject to the same negative publicity (Okhmatovskiy and Shin, 2019). Research indicates that this is the most favourable recovery strategy as the organisation appears to be honest which is an important trait the consumers expect from any organisation they work with, most importantly this response entails making the necessary changes to ensure that the issue that caused the negative publicity has been dealt with (Okhmatovskiy and Shin, 2019). An example of this recovery strategy is a university that has been subject to negative publicity taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologising and assuring all the relevant stakeholders that the cause of the negative publicity has been dealt with.

According to Woo, Jung and Jin (2020), before implementing any strategy that aims to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity, organisations should understand how negative publicity has influenced various consumer groups as negative publicity influences different consumer groups in different ways. For example, marketers do not have to spend a lot of time developing counter-arguments to negative publicity for consumers who are highly committed to the organisation, as these consumers are likely to develop their own counter-arguments due to their high level of commitment to the organisation (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant and Unnava, 2000). However, when dealing with consumers who are not committed to the organisation, marketers should focus on developing counter argumentation strategies to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity on consumers with low commitment

to the organisation as these consumers are negatively influenced by negative publicity (Um and Kim, 2016).

2.9.2. Recovery strategies used by universities in South Africa

Universities in South Africa have implemented numerous strategies to deal with the negative influence of the increased number of student protests with the aim that dealing with these negative incidents will reduce the amount of negative publicity generated by these incidents. During the ‘fees must fall’ protests in 2016 one of the universities in Gauteng consistently communicated with the students using communiques that aimed to ensure that the students were aware of the causes of the protests and the steps that would be taken by the university to attempt to end the protests (Cerimaj, 2018).

In March 2020 one of the universities in the Eastern Cape evacuated all their campuses to ensure that students stop protesting on campus as this led to the destruction of university property and injuries to staff and students (Grobler, 2020). As a means of controlling protesting students that were damaging university property, one of the universities in KwaZulu-Natal procured the services of a private security company to aid the police in neutralising the situation (Singh, 2020).

In a study conducted by Ross and Rasool (2019) on safety in and around university campuses, students from one of the universities in Gauteng had the following recommendations of how universities can deal with the increased crime in and around university campuses and thus, reduce or recover from negative publicity regarding crime and safety in universities. a) Universities should hire additional security personnel to conduct 24- hour foot patrols in and around university campuses. b) Universities must install and maintain cameras to ensure they have CCTV footage of the entire university and surrounding areas. c) Universities should ensure that security escort services are available for students that live off-campus, especially at night.

As a means of recovering from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding gender-based violence in South African universities, the minister of Higher Education and Training appointed a team to advise on matters regarding sexual harassment and gender-based violence in public universities in South Africa (van Diemen, 2019). In terms of negative publicity regarding violent student protests, the minister of Higher Education and Training called on vice-chancellors to tighten security and implement all necessary measures to ensure that there is no damage to university property and no injuries to staff and students. Furthermore, the

minister asked universities to ensure that students that are involved in the destruction of university property, as well as the intimidation and injury of staff and students, face the full might of the law (Karrim, 2020).

Thus, the current study aims to contribute to literature regarding recovery from negative publicity by determining how current university students believe universities should deal with negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. As effectively dealing with these issues and avoiding incidents that led to these issues is likely to reduce negative publicity regarding these issues and assure the students as consumers of the university that the university has dealt with these issues. Thus, avoiding negative publicity.

2.10. The use of promotional tools as communication mediums

Todorova (2015) defined promotional tools as the mechanisms used by organisations to attempt to inform, persuade and remind their consumers both directly or indirectly of the products and services the organisation offers. Abimbola, Adekunle and Oluremi (2020) on the other hand, define the promotional mix as the method used by organisations to move consumers from a state of relative unawares regarding a given product or service to a state whereby consumers actively consider purchasing the product or service.

For an organisation to generate sales and thereafter profit, the organisation must communicate the benefits of their products or services to their consumers as a means of motivating consumers to purchase the products and services, in marketing, this is known as promotion (Fikri and Lisdayanti, 2020). Recently, the promotion part of the marketing mix has increased in importance to marketers as the promotions part of the marketing mix plays an important role in an organisation achieving its goals (Adesoga, 2016). As a result, any sale made or consumer gained by an organisation is likely due to effective management of the promotion part of the marketing mix, as promotion plays a vital role in attracting and maintaining consumers.

According to Bala and Verma (2018), and Petrovici (2014) in the contemporary marketplace, technological advancements such as the emergence of Web 2.0 have led to the internet becoming the most utilised platform for promotional activities. As research indicates that consumers are spending more time online, especially due to the increased availability of wireless internet networks and the use of mobile devices, which enable consumers to receive promotional communication where ever they are (Berthon, Pitt, Plangger and Shapiro, 2012).

Effective promotional strategies can create a positive image of an organisation or the products or services offered by an organisation (Fikri and Lisdayanti, 2020). In other words, an effective

promotional activity can change a negative consumer image of an organisation to a positive image. Negative publicity is commonly known to change a consumer's positive image of an organisation to a negative image (Wichailert and Yousapornpaiboon, 2017). Hence, research indicates that the effective use of promotional strategies such as advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations can reverse the damage caused by negative publicity to factors such as consumers' image, trust and loyalty to an organisation (Fikri and Lisdayanti, 2020).

2.10. 1. The use of advertising as a communication tool

Sunday and Bayode (2011) defined advertising as the process of communicating persuasive information regarding a particular organisation's offerings to current and potential consumers using spoken or written word. Oktari, Wahab and Widiyanti (2020) on the other hand, defined advertising as the act of an organisation paying to distribute non-personal, persuasive information regarding their products or services to the mass market using mass media communication such as television radio, magazines and newspapers to name examples. Both these definitions include the word persuade, which means to induce someone to do something. Hence, a study done by Todorova (2015) indicated that an organisation is in trouble such as being subject to negative publicity, an organisation can use advertising to persuade consumers to continue purchasing the organisation's goods or services despite the trouble that the organisation faces. Thus, achieving recovery from the negative influence of the negative publicity.

According to Kumar and Patra (2017), advertising in the business context is a form of marketing communication that aims to motivate or in some cases manipulate consumers to take any action that is desired by the organisation responsible for the advertisement, such as purchasing a given product, for example. A study done by Todorova (2015) also argues that advertising adds value to risky or expensive products, in other words, effective advertising can persuade consumers to purchase expensive or high-risk products or services. This is achieved by highlighting the positive characteristics of the product or service in such a way that the positive characteristics outweigh the high risk and price. Based on this argument an effective advert can persuade students as consumers to attend a university that has a high risk of student protests and campus crime by highlighting the positive aspects such as the university's academic capabilities or the university's facilities to name examples, the current study aims to determine if this is true.

According to Oladepo and Abimbola (2015), different consumers react differently to the same advertisement. Thus, different consumers make different purchase decisions after being exposed to the same advertisement. This can be attributed to factors such as preferences, background and gender to name examples. Thus, organisations must ensure that they have significant information regarding their consumers to develop holistic advertisements that cater to all the consumers targeted by the organisation. A study conducted by Pawar (2014) indicated that 37% of consumers trust search engine adverts and 24% of consumers trust online banner adverts. This study indicated that most consumers trust word of mouth from their friends and family when searching for brand recommendations.

In the contemporary marketplace, the advancement of technology has enabled companies to develop advertisements that are tailored to specific consumer groups (Tucker, 2014; Segijn and van Ooijen, 2021). This is achieved using internet firms, which collect large volumes of data from their users and make this data available to organisations, which use this data to develop advertisements that are customised to different consumer groups (Lambrecht and Tucker, 2013; Li, 2019). According to Tucker (2014), some consumers find customised advertisements more appealing as these focus on the consumer's specific needs and wants. However, other consumers may feel that customised advertisements are off-putting if the consumers believe that the organisation has violated their privacy in getting the information they used to tailor the advertisement.

Several universities in South Africa have been using advertising to communicate different types of information to current and prospective students. Universities and other organisations often use advertising mediums that include broadcast media, print media and social media to name examples. Thus, the current study aims to determine if current university students believe that advertising would be effective in communicating a university's responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime as a means of achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity.

2.10.2. The use of sales promotion as a communication tool

Over the years, many other academics have also provided definitions of sales promotion. For example, Oktari, Wahab and Widiyanti (2020), defined sales promotion as the use of an incentive by an organisation to encourage a retailer to sell a given brand or persuade consumers to purchase a given brand. On the other hand, Shimp (2003) defined sales promotion as different kinds of incentives used by organisations to encourage immediate or short-term sales.

According to a study by Ehrenberg, Hammond and Goodhardt (1994), sales promotion leads to a short-term increase in sales because most of the purchases are made by occasional consumers who are reacting to the incentives introduced by the organisation as opposed to new consumers. Therefore, once these occasional consumers have taken advantage of the incentives offered by the organisation, the occasional consumers are likely to return to their preferred brands, as these consumers are unlikely to pay the full price for the brand that was on promotion.

According to Shamout (2016), sales promotion is a strategy that is mostly used temporarily by organisations to encourage consumers to purchase certain products and services during a specific time by ensuring that consumers receive more benefits from purchasing the goods and services. According to this definition, organisations can use sales promotion during a time whereby the organisation is subject to negative publicity, to encourage consumers to continue purchasing the organisation's products and services regardless of the negative publicity by ensuring that consumers receive more benefits from purchasing the organisation's products or services during this time.

According to Idris, Asokere, Ajemunigbohun, Oreshile, and Olutade (2012), sales promotion refers to a marketing strategy that aims to achieve a temporary boost in sales. There are many reasons an organisation may require a temporary boost in sales; an example of such a reason is negative publicity. When an organisation is subject to negative publicity, sales are likely to decrease; thus, research indicates that sales promotion strategies may be effective in boosting sales after an organisation is subject to negative publicity (Shamout, 2016).

A study by Oladepo and Abimbola (2015) indicated that sales promotion significantly influences consumer buying behaviour. Another study by Muthukrishnaveni and Muruganandam (2013) as cited by Brata, Husani and Ali (2017) also indicated that sales promotion plays an important role in influencing consumer-buying decisions. In other words, the results of these two studies indicate that sales promotion can influence or change a consumer's decision to purchase a given organisation's offering. This means that sales promotion can change the way a consumer views a product or service. Thus, sales promotion can influence a consumer's image of a certain product or service.

According to Shamout (2016), sales promotion has the quickest consumer response rate, meaning consumers react to sales promotions activities much faster than the other promotional tools as sales promotion directly influence a consumer to make a quick decision to complete

the purchase. For example, a consumer may decide that they will no longer purchase a given service because the organisation that provides the service has been subject to negative publicity.

2.10.3. The use of public relations as a communication tool

Attia, Chepyator-Thomson, Sonkeng and el Azim (2018) defined public relations as planned communication activities used by organisations to generate positive consumer attitudes and opinions regarding an organisation and its products or services. According to Petrovici (2014), public relations refer to the management of communication between an organisation and its consumers and other stakeholders. The aim of an organisation managing communication between itself and its stakeholders is to create and maintain a good relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders, especially its consumers (Petrovici, 2014).

Previous studies have found that public relations aim to create a positive consumer image of the entire organisation, public relations achieves this objective by creating positive publicity regarding the organisation (Attia, Chepyator-Thomson, Sonkeng and el Azim, 2018). Thus, when the organisation is subject to negative publicity, effective public relations strategies can be used to generate positive publicity to contend with the negative publicity. Public relations also enable organisations to create and maintain communication and corporation between themselves and their consumers as public relations inform the organisation of the publics' opinion of the organisation and emphasises the organisation's responsibility to serve the public from which the organisation draws its consumer group.

According to Kumar and Patra (2017), when an organisation manages public relations effectively, the organisation can achieve the following objectives: Public relations can attract the attention of current and future consumers as the public relations activities can generate positive publicity regarding the organisation. Public relations can ensure that the organisation remains visible to consumers, and thus, the organisations remain in the mind of consumers. Public relations provides consumers with information regarding the organisation. Such information can be the additions of new products or services, price changes, or meeting new staff members to name examples.

Sunday and Bayode (2011) identified examples of public relations activities as sponsorships, where an organisation sponsors a particular event community project. Public relations activities also include press releases, where an organisation communicates information, mostly positive to the public using media channels. According to Rim and Song (2016), Corporate Social

Responsibility (CSR) initiatives can also be considered as a public relations activity as CSR aims to create a better relationship between an organisation and the public from which an organisation draws its consumers, which is the role of public relations. CSR is a concept whereby organisations address social and environmental issues as part of their business operations to assist their stakeholders, which are mostly the organisation's consumers (Laasch and Conaway, 2017).

However, a study done by Vanhamme and Grobben (2009) using public relations strategies such as CSR initiatives only when an organisation is subject to negative publicity may not be successful as consumers may feel that the organisation is using these initiatives to remove attention from the negative publicity. Thus, this strategy might not work as the organisation intended. Public relations strategies only insulate an organisation from negative publicity only if the organisation has a good history of public relations strategies (Vanhamme and Grobben, 2009).

In the contemporary marketplace, the internet has changed how various organisations communicate with their consumers as the internet has emerged as the primary communication medium for a large number of organisations, as several studies have indicated that the internet is very important to many people and as a result, many people spend a lot of their online (Petrovici, 2014), this suggests that several organisations use the internet to conduct their public relations activities due to the internet's ability to reach significantly higher consumer numbers.

The internet also enables interaction between the organisation and its consumers. Another reason for organisations using the internet to conduct their public relations is that the internet is very competitive, and as a result of this competitiveness any organisation that does not use the internet to conduct its public relations activities is at risk of no longer being able to use public relations to achieve and maintain the desired public image. Therefore, universities as organisations can use the internet to conduct some of their public relations activities, as this will enable them to reach a larger number of students as most students commonly use the internet daily.

Universities often use public relations to deal with issues such as negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. For example, the vice-chancellor of a university in the Free State used online public relations in the form of a virtual briefing to address the issue of crime in and around the university (Maphanga, 2021). Especially since the increased crime was causing a significant amount of negative publicity as the incidents of crime were reported by

numerous media houses. Thus, the current study aims to determine if current university students believe that public relations strategies would be effective in communicating a universities responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime as a means crime of achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity.

2.10.4. The use of direct marketing and as a communication tool

According to Perčić and Perić (2021), direct marketing can be defined as personalised communication between an organisation and a consumer to persuade the consumer to take the action desired by the organisation. According to Chiang, Chhajed and Hess (2003), direct marketing refers to marketing activities that aim to receive a measurable response from the consumer. According to Risselada, Verhoef and Bijmolt (2014), the effectiveness of traditional marketing mediums has seen a significant decrease in recent years and marketing activities such as direct marketing have emerged as the most used marketing activities in the contemporary marketplace.

Technological advancements such as the development of the internet have made it easier for organisations to conduct direct marketing activities (Chiang, Chhajed and Hess, 2003; Kavoura and Sylaiou, 2019). Several studies have found that the increasing use of social media mediums such as LinkedIn and Facebook to name examples have emerged as the most effective communication mediums for organisations to communicate with their consumers as these enable direct communication between organisations and consumers (Risselada, Verhoef and Bijmolt, 2014). Thus, universities can use mediums such as their Facebook pages to distribute information to students. For example, one of the universities in Gauteng used direct marketing in the form of emails to inform the students of how the university was addressing the ‘fees must fall’ protests (Cerimaj, 2018). This shows that numerous universities can use direct marketing to communicate with their students. Since direct marketing enables universities to distribute information to the students and also enables the students to respond if they have questions or wish to comment on the information presented. This is ideal as the use of direct communication between organisations and their consumer is becoming more prevalent in the contemporary marketplace as technological advancements have made it easier for an organisation to communicate directly with large groups of consumers (Kavoura and Sylaiou, 2019).

According to Perčić and Perić (2021), direct marketing can be used to create consumer interest in a given organisation’s offering or direct marketing can be used to persuade consumers to

continue making use of a given organisation's offering. Thus, in the context of the current study, direct marketing can be used to persuade students to continue attending a given university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity on factors such as students' image of a university, level of student trust towards a university and students loyalty to a university.

According to Risselada, Verhoef and Bijmolt (2014), when using direct marketing, organisations should make sure that the correct information reaches the correct consumer, as the success of direct marketing as a communication medium rests solely on each consumer receiving information that is tailored for that specific consumer. Thus, when universities use direct marketing to communicate their responses to negative publicity, the university must make sure that the correct message reaches the correct student for direct marketing to be effective and achieve the desired outcome.

2.11. Conceptual Framework

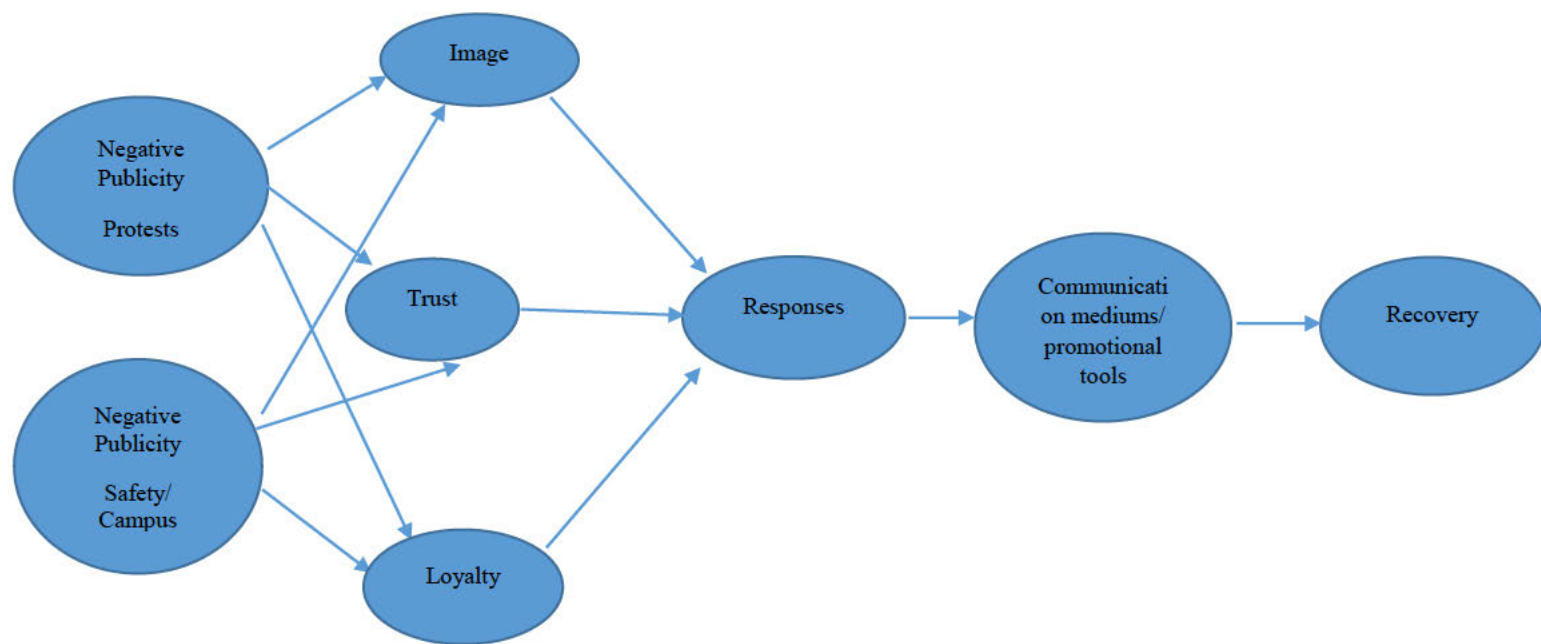
The literature discussed above helps to guide the development of the conceptual model in this study which investigates the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on students' image of a university, level of trust towards a university and loyalty to a university. In the context of universities, the findings will help the management of universities to understand the influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation on the relationship between universities and their students. The findings will also equip universities with information as to how universities can recover from the negative influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation if any of these two types of negative publicity negatively influence factors such as students' image of a university, level of trust towards a university and loyalty to a university. The findings of the current study will also contribute to the literature regarding the influence of negative publicity regarding a university on the university's students as well as the possible recovery strategies that can be used to lessen the negative influence of negative publicity regarding universities.

Thus, the objective of this conceptual model is to examine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on students' image of a university, level of trust towards a university and loyalty to a university. Furthermore, this conceptual model aims to understand how students believe a university should respond to these two types of negative publicity to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of the two types of

negative publicity under investigation in the current study as well as which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating these responses or recovery strategies.

2.11.1. Conceptual Model

Figure 2-1. Conceptual Model



Source: Compiled by author

2.12. Summary

This chapter has discussed the variables in the conceptual model of the current study as well as the relationships between these variables. Based on the discussions made in this chapter, negative publicity has numerous sources and can negatively influence factors such as consumers' image of an organisation, level of consumers' trust towards an organisation and consumers' loyalty to an organisation. Therefore, in the context of universities as organisations, negative publicity can negatively influence factors such as the image, trust and loyalty of students as consumers of universities. However, organisations can recover from the negative influence of negative publicity by implementing effective recovery strategies as responses to the negative publicity. It is also very important to select the most suitable communication medium to communicate an organisation's response to negative publicity, as a communication medium plays an important role in the effectiveness of any response to negative publicity as a means of achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of the negative publicity. The next chapter will discuss the methodology that was used in conducting the current study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the literature regarding the variables of the current study. This chapter discusses the methodology that was implemented in completing the current study. This chapter will discuss the research approach that was used in conducting the current study, the research paradigm used in conducting the current study, the population of the current study, the sampling techniques that were used, the data collection methods, measures to ensure data quality, ethical considerations and lastly, how the data obtained was analysed.

3.2. Research design

According to Mohajan (2018), all research studies must have an explicit, disciplined, systematic approach to generate appropriate results. Therefore, based on the objectives of the current study the researcher approached the current study using an in-depth qualitative design. The researcher implemented this approach by conducting in-depth interviews with members of the population to achieve the objectives of the current study. This approach was selected for this study because it enabled the researcher to explore and understand the target populations' beliefs, experiences, behaviour, emotions, attitudes, perspectives and experiences, which is what the researcher aimed to achieve in the current study (Haven and Van Grootel, 2019). For example, the current study explores and understands the target populations' beliefs, experiences, behaviour, emotions, attitudes, perspectives and experiences with regard to the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study. Thus, the use of a qualitative research design is appropriate.

Qualitative research is usually inductive, meaning the researcher usually examines the meanings and insights in a given situation (Strauss and Corbin, 2008; Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow and Ponterotto, 2017). Thus, the use of a qualitative research approach was appropriate in undertaking the current study as the researcher aimed to examine the meaning that students attach to negative publicity regarding their university by determining how exposure to negative publicity regarding the university influences the students' image of the university, the level of trust students have towards the university and students' loyalty to the university. The current study also aimed to gain the insights of students regarding methods that can be used by universities to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity.

Qualitative research is a type of social sciences research that collects and explores non-numerical data and aims to extract meaning from the data thus, enabling the researcher to

understand the opinions and perceptions of the target population (Punch, 2013). Therefore, qualitative studies enable the target population to explain the reasons for their answers which gave the researchers more information on the reasons behind the target population's opinions and perceptions (Walia, 2015).

Quantitative research differs from qualitative research because quantitative research focuses on collecting numerical data and is generally used to identify numerical patterns and averages (Boeren, 2018). The use of non-numerical data in the form of words in conducting the current study enabled the respondents to go into detail when explaining their opinions and perceptions of negative publicity by indicating exactly how and why negative publicity regarding the university influences the students' image of the university, the level of trust students have towards the university and students loyalty to the university (Haven and Van Grootel, 2019). The use of a quantitative design that makes use of numerical data would have made it difficult for the respondents to express their feelings regarding the influence of negative publicity regarding the university and possible recovery methods that can be implemented by the university as numerical data usually restricts the possible responses from the respondents.

Qualitative research investigates the target populations' experiences, meanings and relationships, and social processes (Mohajan, 2018). Meaning, the use of a qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to study and understand the students' experiences concerning negative publicity, the meaning that students attach to negative publicity, the relationship students have with negative publicity and the social proceeds involved with the students' reactions to negative publicity. Understanding the variables mentioned above enabled the researcher to have a better understanding of the influence of negative publicity regarding the university on the students' image of the university, the level of trust students have towards the university and students' loyalty to the university. This understanding also aided the researcher in determining possible recovery strategies that can be used by the university to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity.

The current study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research refers to a research method that aims to understand a given event or phenomenon that takes place at a particular time due to a particular reason (Atmowardoyo, 2018). This is what the current study aims to achieve as the current study aims to understand how students respond to the negative publicity that results from student protests and campus crime.

3.2.1. Strengths of qualitative research

Qualitative research emphasises less on determining the number of people who think and behave in the same way and emphasises more on determining and explaining why the population under investigation thinks and behaves in a certain way (Corbin and Strauss, 2014). This is what the current study aimed to achieve as the current study aimed to determine and explain why students respond the way they do to negative publicity. Qualitative research also enables the researcher to simplify and manage data without destroying the context and complexity (Mohajan, 2018). The following are some strengths of qualitative research (Yauch and Steudel, 2003; Creswell and Poth, 2016):

- The use of in-depth interview questions in qualitative research can reveal new and unexpected phenomenon and raises more issues or theories through a broad and in-depth manner of inquiry.
- Qualitative research provides detailed information regarding the population under investigation.
- Qualitative research can play an important role in suggesting new possible relationships, causes and effects

3.3. Research paradigm

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), a research paradigm is defined as the way in which the researcher views research and the world. In other words, a research paradigm refers to the beliefs and principles that shape or contribute to how the researcher views the world and subsequently conducts research. Researchers use research paradigms to select the research methodologies used in conducting research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The main research paradigms groups include positivist, interpretivist and critical paradigms, however, further research alludes to the presence of a fourth research paradigm group which is known a pragmatic research paradigm (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017).

In undertaking the current study, the researcher used an interpretivist research paradigm. An interpretivist paradigm refers to a research paradigm that originated from the fact that research methods used to understand knowledge relating to human social sciences differ from research methods used to understand physical sciences as humans create their own interpretations of the world and act on those interpretations while the world does not (Pham, 2018). Thus, based on the interpretivist paradigm humans may have different interpretations of a single phenomenon

as opposed to having one truth that is determined by a measurement process. For example, several participants indicated that negative publicity would influence their image of the university, but they gave different reasons for this influence. This shows that the participants interpret the influence on their image of the university in different ways.

This paradigm was ideal for the current study as the population was humans thus, the population had different interpretations of the influences on the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study as well as the possible recovery strategies. An interpretivist paradigm enabled the researcher to obtain the different interpretations of the entire sample, this contributed to the depth of the research. For example, several participants indicated that negative publicity would influence their trust towards the university, but they gave different reasons for this influence. This shows that the participants interpret the influence on their trust towards the university in different ways.

As Pham (2018) argues that an interpretivist paradigm enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of a given phenomenon and its complexity as opposed to trying to generalise an understanding for the entire population. Similarly, Hammersley (2013), argues that since humans interpret a single phenomenon in multiple ways, researchers should use an interpretivist research paradigm to understand the different ways in which humans see and experience the world. However, when using an interpretivist research paradigm, researchers should try to avoid bias in studying the responses of people using their own interpretation. Thus, the researcher ensured that his analysis of the different interpretations of the sample that took part in the current study was not influenced by the researchers own interpretations of the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study as well as the possible recovery strategies.

3.4. Research population

A research population is defined as a group of individuals that have similar characteristics which are of interest to a researcher (Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie, 2017). Therefore, the population for the current study is students from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. This population was selected because the researcher is a student at the UKZN Pietermaritzburg Campus thus, the researcher was able to recruit students from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus to take part in the current study.

In terms of the age of the population, participants of all ages could take part in the current study as long as the participants were registered students at the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus.

Both male and female students from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus formed part of the population for the current study. Lastly, students from all disciplines and years of study within the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus formed part of the population of the current study.

3.5. Research sample and sampling

A research sample is defined as selecting a subset of a given population, sampling is used when the population under study is too large for each element of the population to take part in the study (Cash, Isaksson, Maier and Summers, 2022). The use of sampling in the current study is justified as the population which is made up of students from the UKZN is too large for all the elements of the population to take part in the study. Thus, the researcher selected a minimum sample size of thirty (30) students to take part in the current study. This sample size was chosen because the current study took a qualitative approach whereby the respondents answered in-depth questions during the in-depth interviews. This research approach was selected because it enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of samples' responses as qualitative research enables the respondents to go into detail when answering the research questions (Haven and Van Grootel, 2019).

The researcher used snowball sampling when recruiting a sample to take part in the current study. Snowball sampling is a form of non-probability sampling that entails asking the respondents that have already taken part in the study to refer to other possible respondents who are eligible for taking part in the current study and would be interested in taking part in the current study (Naderifar, Goli and Ghaljaie, 2017). Snowball sampling is usually used when it is difficult for the researcher to recruit respondents, such as in the case of the current study (Naderifar, Goli and Ghaljaie, 2017). Since it was difficult for the researcher to recruit respondents due to the closure of the university due to COVID-19, the use of snowball sampling was justified in the current study. Therefore, once the researcher had interviewed the respondents, the researcher asked the respondents that have been interviewed to refer the researcher to other students who would be interested in taking part in the current study.

3.6. Data collection method

A data collection method is defined as the procedure that is followed by a researcher to collect data for a given study (Zheng, Tao, Maier, See, Savic, Zhang, Chen, Assumpção, Yang, Heidari and Rieckermann, 2018). Qualitative research includes the following methods; logic, ethnography, discourse analysis, case study, in-depth interviews, participant observation, counseling, therapy, grounded theory, biography, comparative method, introspection,

casuistry, focus group, literary criticism, meditation practice and historical research, to name examples (Mohajan, 2018). The method that was used by the researcher to undertake the current study was in-depth interviews. Due to the closure of the university as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher conducted these interviews remotely using online interviews enabled by video interaction platforms such as Zoom meetings and the video call function on WhatsApp. To ensure that all the students that formed part of the sample for the current study were able to take part in the study using one of the platforms identified above.

In-depth interviews allowed the respondents to go into detail in answering the research questions and give reasons for their answers (Punch, 2013; Walia, 2015). This gave the researcher more information regarding the target populations' opinions, feelings and perceptions regarding negative publicity as well as identifying methods that can be used by universities to respond to the negative publicity to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of the negative publicity. In other words, the use of in-depth interviews enabled the students to give detailed responses regarding the influence of negative publicity regarding the university on the students' image of the university, the level of trust students have towards the university and students' loyalty to the university as well as the possible responses from the university to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity.

3.7. Data quality control

Data quality control in qualitative research refers to ensuring the rigour of research by making sure that the data that is collected is credible and trustworthy (Patton, 2001; Creswell and Poth, 2016). Without a certain degree of rigour, research can become fiction which could make it lose its worth, one way to ensure rigor in any study is to consider the quality of the data that is collected (Yin, 2009; Daniel, 2019). To ensure that the data collected was of high quality the researcher ensured that the data was credible and trustworthy, the researcher ensured the credibility and trustworthiness of the data by doing the following:

- The researcher ensured that all the constructs of the study are included in the research questions.
- The researcher worded the questions in such a way that ensured that the respondents understood the questions.

- The researcher used enough questions; this ensured that all the needed information was collected. The researcher studied several qualitative research questions from various past qualitative studies to ensure that he knew the number of questions that enabled the researcher to collect all the required data.
- Before conducting the interviews, the researcher conducted a pre-test whereby the researcher interviewed a mini sample of three respondents to ensure that the interview questions collected the required information.

3.8. Ethical considerations

In terms of obtaining consent for the participant's participation in the current study, the researcher contacted the participants using the contact details obtained from using snowball sampling. The researcher then asked the potential participants if they would be willing to take part in the current study. If the potential participants indicated that they were not willing to take part in the current study, the researcher excluded them from the list of potential participants. If the potential participants indicated that they were interested in taking part in the current study, the researcher and participant agreed on a date and time for the interview. Thereafter, the researcher asked the participants to indicate their preferred video interaction medium. The participants could choose between a Zoom meeting and a WhatsApp video call. Before conducting the interview, the researcher asked the participant to give verbal consent to take part in the current study via a Zoom meeting or a WhatsApp video call.

After obtaining consent from the participants, the researcher used a Zoom meeting or WhatsApp video call to inform the participants that there were no right or wrong answers. The researcher also informed the participants that they could withdraw their participation from the study at any time if they wish to do so. Lastly, the researcher assured the participants that the data they provided will remain confidential and will only be used for conducting the current study.

3.9. Data Analysis

A data analysis method refers to the procedure followed when analysing data that was obtained from a given study (Mohajan, 2018). For the current study, the researcher used a thematic analysis since this study was a qualitative study and the data was in the form of words. A thematic analysis refers to a method for analysing qualitative data that entails exploring a given data set to identify repeated patterns (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). Braun and Clarke (2019) provide a similar definition as these authors argue that a thematic analysis refers to a data

analysis method that aims to generate patterns or themes from data that is in the form of words, such as in the case of the current study which is qualitative.

Analysing qualitative data is complicated as the researcher must conduct an in-depth analysis of a high volume of collected non-numerical data and present the findings in a concise logical manner (Mohajan, 2018). Therefore, during the interviews, the researcher wrote the participants' responses on paper using a pen. The reason for this is that it was easier for the researcher to keep up with the participants' responses if the researcher was writing the participants' responses using a pen and paper as opposed to typing out the participant's responses as the participants were speaking. After each interview, the researcher typed the participants' responses into an individual word document for each participant. During this process, the researcher edited any errors that were made when the researcher was writing out the participants' responses using pen and paper. After all the participants' responses were typed into a word document and edited. The researcher imported all 30 participants' interview answers as word documents into an analysis software called Nvivo, which is commonly used for the analysis of qualitative data.

Once imported into Nvivo the researcher created parent nodes for each other the research questions. Nodes refer to categories in Nvivo.

Research objective 1.1.

To achieve research objective 1.1. Which was to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image of a university, the researcher created the main/parent node and named it 'the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image of the university'

The researcher then created sub-nodes under this main node. The first of these two sub-nodes was named 'would not influence students' image'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their image of the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence students' image of a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their image of the university in any way.

The second sub-node was named 'influences students' image'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their image of the university into this node. The theme that

emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence students' image of a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their image of the university.

These two nodes represented the two main themes obtained from the data.

Since the researcher probed more into the participants that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their image of the university, the researcher created two sub-nodes under the 'influences students' image' node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'negatively influences image' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'positively influences image'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence students' image of the university as well as the reasons for the negative influence into the 'negatively influences image' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests negatively influences students' image of a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence their image of the university. The researcher then deleted the 'positively influences image' as none of the participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests positively influences their image of the university.

Lastly, the researcher created two more sub-nodes under the 'negatively influences image' sub-node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'remain at the university' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'leave the university'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated the participants would remain students of the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their image of the university as well as the reasons for these responses into the 'remain at the university' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that students would remain at the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their image of the university. This group of students indicated that they would not leave the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their image of the university. The researcher then deleted the 'leave the university' sub-node as none of the students indicated that they would leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their image of the university.

Research objective 1.2.

To achieve research objective 1.2. Which was to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' trust towards a university, the researcher created the main/parent node and named it 'the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' trust towards the university'

The researcher then created sub-nodes under this main node, the first of these two sub-nodes was named 'would not influence students' trust'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their trust towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence students' trust towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their trust towards the university in any way.

The second sub-node was named 'influences students' trust'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their trust towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence students' trust towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their trust towards the university.

These two nodes represented the two main themes obtained from the data.

Since the researcher probed more into the participants that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their trust towards the university, the researcher created two sub-node under the 'influences students' trust' node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'negatively influences trust' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'positively influences trust'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence students' trust towards the university as well as the reasons for the negative influence into the 'negatively influences trust' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests negatively influences students' trust towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence their trust towards the university. The researcher then deleted the 'positively influences trust' as none of the participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests positively influences

their trust towards the university. Lastly, the researcher created two more sub-nodes under the ‘negatively influences trust’ sub-node. The researcher named the first sub-node ‘remain at the university’ and the researcher named the second sub-node ‘leave the university’.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated the participants would remain students of the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their trust towards the university as well as the reasons for these responses into the ‘remain at the university’ node. The theme that emerged from this node is that students would remain at the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their trust towards the university. This group of students indicated that they would not leave the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their trust towards the university. The researcher then deleted the ‘leave the university’ sub-node as none of the students indicated that they would leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their trust towards the university.

Research objective 1.3.

To achieve research objective 1.3. Which was to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students’ loyalty towards a university. The researcher created the main/parent node and named it ‘the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students’ loyalty towards the university’

The researcher then created sub-nodes under this main node, the first of these two sub-nodes was named ‘would not influence students’ loyalty’. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their loyalty towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence students’ loyalty towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their loyalty towards the university in any way.

The second sub-node was named ‘influences students’ loyalty’. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their loyalty towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence students’ loyalty towards a university. This group of participants indicated that

negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their loyalty towards the university.

These two nodes represented the two main themes obtained from the data.

Since the researcher probed more into the participants that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their loyalty towards the university, the researcher created two sub-nodes under the 'influences students' loyalty' node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'negatively influences loyalty' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'positively influences loyalty'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence students' loyalty towards the university as well as the reasons for the negative influence into the 'negatively influences loyalty' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding student protests negatively influences students' loyalty towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence their loyalty towards the university. The researcher then deleted the 'positively influences loyalty' as none of the participants indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests positively influences their loyalty towards the university. Lastly, the researcher created two more sub-nodes under the 'negatively influences loyalty' sub-node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'remain at the university' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'leave the university'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated the participants would remain students of the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their loyalty towards the university as well as the reasons for these responses into the 'remain at the university' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that students would remain at the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their loyalty towards the university. This group of students indicated that they would not leave the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their loyalty towards the university. The researcher then deleted the 'leave the university' sub-node as none of the students indicated that they would leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their loyalty towards the university.

Research objective 2

The researcher created nodes for each of the possible responses a university can use to achieve recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests. Meaning the researcher created a node for taking responsibility and apologizing, denying, redirecting students' attention and lastly ignoring the negative publicity.

The researcher then entered the participants' responses that indicated that a university should take responsibility and apologize into the take responsibility and apologies node. Thus, taking responsibility and apologizing emerged as a theme in achieving recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests. This group of participants indicated that taking responsibility for the negative publicity and apologizing would be an ideal recovery strategy.

The researcher then entered the participants' responses that indicated that a university should deny negative publicity regarding student protests and their reasons for denying the negative publicity into the deny node. Thus, denying the negative publicity emerged as a theme in achieving recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests. This group of participants indicated that denying the negative publicity regarding student protests would be an ideal recovery strategy.

Thereafter, the researcher entered the participants' responses that indicated that the university must redirect the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university as well their reasons for this response into the redirect student's attention node. Thus, redirecting students' attention emerged as a theme in achieving recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests. This group of participants indicated that redirecting the student's attention from the negative publicity regarding student protests would be an ideal recovery strategy.

The researcher then deleted the ignore node as none of the participants indicated that a university must respond to negative publicity regarding student protests by ignoring the negative publicity.

Researcher objective 3

The researcher created a node for each of the promotional tools students can use to communicate their response to negative publicity regarding student protests to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of this negative publicity. Meaning the

researcher created individual nodes for advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that universities should use advertising to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and the reasons for these responses into the advertising node. Thus, the use of advertising as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests emerged as a theme. This group of participants indicated that advertising would be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that universities should use direct marketing to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and the reasons for these responses into the direct marketing node. Thus, the use of direct marketing as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests emerged as a theme. This group of participants indicated that direct marketing would be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that universities should use public relations to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and the reasons for these responses into the public relations node. Thus, the use of public relations as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests emerged as a theme. This group of participants indicated that public relations would be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

The researcher then deleted the sales promotion node as none of the participants indicated that sales promotion should be used as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

Research objective 4.1.

To achieve research objective 4.1. Which was to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image of a university, the researcher created the main/parent node and named it 'the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image of the university'

The researcher then created sub-nodes under this main node, the first of these two sub-nodes was named 'would not influence students' image'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence their image of the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' image of a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence their image of the university in any way.

The second sub-node was named 'influences students' image'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their image of the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' image of a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their image of the university.

These two nodes represented the two main themes obtained from the data.

Since the researcher probed more into the participants that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their image of the university, the researcher created two sub-nodes under the 'influences students' image' node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'negatively influences image' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'positively influences image'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' image of the university as well as the reasons for the negative influence into the 'negatively influences image' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' image of a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence their image of the university. The researcher then deleted the 'positively influences image' as none of the participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would positively influence their image of the university.

Lastly, the researcher created two more sub-nodes under the 'negatively influences image' sub-node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'remain at the university' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'leave the university'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated the participants would remain students of the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their image of the university as well as the reasons for these responses into the 'remain at the university' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that students would remain at the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their image of the university. This group of students indicated that they would not leave the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their image of the university. The researcher then deleted the 'leave the university' sub-node as none of the students indicated that they would leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their image of the university.

Research objective 4.2.

In order to achieve research objective 4.2. Which was to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' trust towards a university, the researcher created the main/parent node and named it 'the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' trust towards the university'

The researcher then created sub-nodes under this main node, the first of these two sub-nodes was named 'would not influence students' trust'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence their trust towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' trust towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence their trust towards the university in any way.

The second sub-node was named 'influences students' trust'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their trust towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' trust towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their trust towards the university.

These two nodes represented the two main themes obtained from the data.

Since the researcher probed more into the participants that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their trust towards the university, the researcher

created two sub-nodes under the ‘influences students’ trust’ node. The researcher named the first sub-node ‘negatively influences trust’ and the researcher named the second sub-node ‘positively influences trust’.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' trust towards the university as well as the reasons for the negative influence into the ‘negatively influences trust’ node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime negatively influences students’ trust towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence their trust towards the university. The researcher then deleted the ‘positively influences trust’ as none of the participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would positively influence their trust towards the university. Lastly, the researcher created two more sub-nodes under the ‘negatively influences trust’ sub-node. The researcher named the first sub-node ‘remain at the university’ and the researcher named the second sub-node ‘leave the university’.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated the participants would remain students of the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their trust towards the university as well as the reasons for these responses into the ‘remain at the university’ node. The theme that emerged from this node is that students would remain at the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their trust towards the university. This group of students indicated that they would not leave the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their trust towards the university. The researcher then deleted the ‘leave the university’ sub-node as none of the students indicated that they would leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their trust towards the university.

Research objective 4.3.

To achieve research objective 4.3. Which was to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students’ loyalty towards a university, the researcher created the main/parent node and named it ‘the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students’ loyalty towards the university’

The researcher then created sub-nodes under this main node, the first of these two sub-nodes was named ‘would not influence students’ loyalty’. The researcher then entered all the

responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence their loyalty towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' loyalty towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence their loyalty towards the university in any way.

The second sub-node was named 'influences students' loyalty'. The researcher then entered all the responses obtained from the participants who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their loyalty towards the university into this node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' loyalty towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their loyalty towards the university.

These two nodes represented the two main themes obtained from the data.

Since the researcher probed more into the participants that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their loyalty towards the university, the researcher created two sub-node under the 'influences students' loyalty' node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'negatively influences loyalty' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'positively influences loyalty'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' loyalty towards the university as well as the reasons for the negative influence into the 'negatively influences loyalty' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that negative publicity regarding campus crime negatively influences students' loyalty towards a university. This group of participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence their loyalty towards the university. The researcher then deleted the 'positively influences loyalty' as none of the participants indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would positively influence their loyalty towards the university. Lastly, the researcher created two more sub-nodes under the 'negatively influences loyalty' sub-node. The researcher named the first sub-node 'remain at the university' and the researcher named the second sub-node 'leave the university'.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated the participants would remain students of the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity

regarding campus crime on their loyalty towards the university as well as the reasons for these responses into the 'remain at the university' node. The theme that emerged from this node is that students would remain at the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their loyalty towards the university. This group of students indicated that they would not leave the university regardless of the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their loyalty towards the university. The researcher then deleted the 'leave the university' sub-node as none of the students indicated that they would leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on their loyalty towards the university.

Research objective 5

The researcher created nodes for each of the possible responses a university can use to achieve recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime. Meaning the researcher created a node for taking responsibility and apologizing, denying, redirecting students' attention and lastly ignoring the negative publicity.

The researcher then entered the participants' responses that indicated that a university should take responsibility and apologize into the take responsibility and apologies node. Thus, taking responsibility and apologizing emerged as a theme in achieving recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime. This group of participants indicated that taking responsibility for the negative publicity and apologizing would be an ideal recovery strategy.

The researcher then entered the participants' responses that indicated that a university should deny negative publicity regarding campus crime and their reasons for denying the negative publicity into the deny node. Thus, denying the negative publicity emerged as a theme in achieving recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime. This group of participants indicated that denying the negative publicity regarding campus crime would be an ideal recovery strategy.

The researcher then deleted the redirect students' attention and ignore nodes as none of the participants indicated that a university must respond to negative publicity regarding campus crime by redirecting students' attention and ignoring the negative publicity.

Researcher objective 6

The researcher created a node for each of the promotional tools students can use to communicate their response to negative publicity regarding campus crime to achieve a

successful recovery from the negative influence of this negative publicity. Meaning the researcher created individual nodes for advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that universities should use advertising to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding campus crime and the reasons for these responses into the advertising node. Thus, the use of advertising as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime emerged as a theme. This group of participants indicated that advertising would be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that universities should use direct marketing to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding campus crime and the reasons for these responses into the direct marketing node. Thus, the use of direct marketing as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime emerged as a theme. This group of participants indicated that direct marketing would be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

The researcher then entered all the participants' responses that indicated that universities should use public relations to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding campus crime and the reasons for these responses into the public relations node. Thus, the use of public relations as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime emerged as a theme. This group of participants indicated that public relations would be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

The researcher then deleted the sales promotion node as none of the participants indicated that sales promotion should be used as a medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

3.10. Measures to avoid biased results

According to Greene (2014), insider research can be defined as research that studies the researcher's own group or society, the current study can be considered as insider research because the population for the study is university students and the researcher is also a university student from the same university where the research sample is drawn. Insider research is often accused of being biased because the researcher is often too close to the population that is under

investigation (Greene, 2014). Therefore, there should be certain measures that are taken to avoid biased results. Thus, the following steps were implemented to avoid bias in the current study:

- The researcher reminded the respondents that it was okay to answer in a way that is not socially desirable.
- The researcher spoke with other researchers who were not part of the population for the current study about the study and received advice regarding the data collection and data analysis as the researcher is too close to the study.
- The researcher gave the interview questions to his supervisor and other researchers to make sure that the questions were not leading the respondents to answer in a certain way.

3.11. Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed the research methodology that was used in conducting the current study. The discussions made in this chapter include the research approach that was used in conducting the current study. This chapter has also discussed the research paradigm that was used in the current study as the current study used an interpretivist paradigm. The population of the current study was also discussed in this chapter. This chapter includes a discussion of the sampling techniques that were used in the current study. This also chapter discusses the data collection methods, measures to ensure data quality and ethical considerations. Lastly, this chapter discusses how the data collected in the current study was analysed. The next chapter presents the findings obtained by the current study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed the methodology that was used in conducting the current study. This chapter aims to present the findings obtained by the current study. These findings are in the form of themes as the current study is a qualitative study and the results obtained are in the form of words. Therefore, a thematic analysis was used to analyse the data obtained by the current study. As discussed in the previous chapter a thematic analysis refers to a data analysis method that identifies patterns or themes from a specific data set (Braun and Clarke, 2019). According to Bree and Gallagher (2016), many researchers use thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data, when conducting this analysis many researchers use an inductive approach. An inductive approach to conducting a thematic analysis refers to developing themes from the originally collected data which has not been changed or altered in any way (Kiger and Varpio, 2020). The researcher also used an inactive approach in conducting the thematic analysis for the current study as the themes presented in this chapter were drawn from the data that was originally collected by the researcher.

4.2. Results

Table 4-1. Objective 1.1. To determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image of a university.

Theme 1. Negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence students' image of a university.
Theme 2. Negative publicity regarding student protests would influence students' image of a university.
Theme 2.1. Negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence students' image of a university.
Theme 2.1.1. Despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on the students' image of a university, the students would not consider leaving the university.

Table 4-2. Objective 1.2. To determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' trust towards a university.

Theme 1. Negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence students' trust towards a university.
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Theme 2. Negative publicity regarding student protests would influence students' trust towards a university.
Theme 2.1. Negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence students' trust towards a university.
Theme 2.1.1. Despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on the students' trust towards a university, the students would not consider leaving the university.

Table 4-3. Objective 1.3. To determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' loyalty to a university.

Theme 1. Negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence students' loyalty to a university.
Theme 2. Negative publicity regarding student protests would influence students' loyalty to a university.
Theme 2.1. Negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence students' loyalty to a university.
Theme 2.1.1. Despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on the students' loyalty to a university, the students would not consider leaving the university.

Table 4-4. Objective 2. To determine the responses students believe would be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

Theme 1. Taking responsibility apologising and assuring the students that the issue has been dealt with is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university.
Theme 2. Denying the negative publicity is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university.

Theme 3. Redirecting the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university.

Table 4-5. Objective 3. To determine the promotional tools students' believe would be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

Theme 1. Direct marketing would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.
Theme 2. Advertising would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.
Theme 3. Public relations would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

Table 4-6. Objective 4. 1. To determine the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image of a university.

Theme 1. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' image of a university.
Theme 2. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' image of a university.
Theme 2.1. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' image of a university.
Theme 2.1.1. Despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on the students' image of a university, the students would not leave the university.

Table 4-7. Objective 4.2. To determine the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' trust towards a university.

Theme 1. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' trust towards a university.
Theme 2. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' trust towards a university.

Theme 2.1. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' trust towards a university.
Theme 2.1.1. Despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on the students' trust towards a university, the students would not leave the university.

Table 4-8. Objective 4.3. To determine the influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' loyalty to a university.

Theme 1. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' loyalty to a university.
Theme 2. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' loyalty to a university.
Theme 2.1. Negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' loyalty to a university.
Theme 2.1.1. Despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on the students' loyalty to a university, the students would not leave the university.

Table 4-9. Objective 5. To determine the responses students believe would be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

Theme 1. Taking responsibility apologising and assuring the students that the issue has been dealt with is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university.
Theme 2. Denying the negative publicity is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university.

Table 4-10. Objective 6. To determine the promotional tools students' believe would be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

Theme 1. Direct marketing would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

Theme 2. Advertising would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.
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Theme 3. Public relations would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

4.8. Summary

This chapter has presented the findings obtained by the current study using the research methodology discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter has presented how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime would influence factors such as students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university. This chapter has also presented the responses students believe would be most effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of the two types of negative publicity under investigation by the current study. Lastly, this chapter has presented the communication mediums students believe would be most effective in communicating a university's response to the types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings obtained by the current study. This chapter aims to discuss the findings obtained by the current study. As the findings indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime would negatively influence some students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university and these students would respond to the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity in different ways. The findings have also highlighted the responses students think would be ideal in responding to both types of negative publicity as well as the communications students believe would be effective in communicating the university's responses to the negative publicity.

5.2.1. The influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image of a university.

The first main theme that emerged from the findings of the current study is that negative publicity regarding student protests would not have any influence on students' image of the university. This is a theme because a large group of students who took part in the current study indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not affect their image of the university in any way. The second main theme was that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence the students' image of the university as another large group of students indicated that this type of negative publicity would influence their image of the university.

All the students that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protest would influence their image of the university indicated that this influence would be negative. This led to the sub-theme that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence the students' image of the university. The most common reasons for this finding are that the negative publicity would be making negative claims regarding the university. While student protests are political events that the university cannot control, they do bring the university's name into disrepute. Thus, negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence the students' image university. This result confirms the findings by Woo, Jung and Jin (2020), which show that organisational image can be negatively influenced by negative publicity in some cases as negative publicity can bring the organisation's name into disrepute.

The last sub-theme that emerged from the findings is that the students would not leave the university due to the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests. This finding supports the literature showing that consumers would not end their relationship with an organisation due to negative publicity alone as negative publicity is not always true (Maslikhan, 2019). This emerged as a sub-theme because a group of students indicated that the negative influence of this type of negative publicity would not make them consider leaving the university. The most common reasons for this theme are that switching from one university to another is a complicated process that cannot be undertaken due to negative publicity regarding student protests. Other students indicated that this type of negative publicity is not enough for them to consider leaving the university as this type of negative publicity does not reflect the academic capabilities of the university, as academic capability is the main reason they chose that university.

5.2.2. The influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' trust towards a university.

The first main theme that emerged from the findings was that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence the students' trust towards the university in any way. This result is similar to the findings of Maslikhan (2019) that show that negative publicity regarding an organisation would not influence consumers' trust towards an organisation because negative publicity is not necessarily true. This emerged as a theme because a bigger group of students indicated that this type of negative publicity would not influence their trust towards the university. Another theme that emerged was that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence the student's trust towards a university. This emerged as a main theme because many students indicated that this type of negative publicity would influence their level of trust towards a university. Other studies have indicated that negative publicity could negatively influence consumers' trust towards an organisation because negative publicity can be true (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018).

A sub-theme that emerged from this main theme is that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence the level of students' trust towards a university. This emerged as a sub-theme because the students that indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their level of trust towards the university, indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would have a negative influence on their trust towards a university. This sub-theme is supported by an argument made by Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) who argue that negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship

between an organisation and its consumers as negative publicity distributes negative information regarding the organisation.

The students indicated that they would no longer fully trust the university to keep them safe because safety cannot be guaranteed during protests. The students also indicated they would not fully trust the university to provide the expected services due to the extended suspension of academic programs due to protests, as most student protests take up a lot of valuable teaching time which is difficult for the university to recover. Another sub-theme that emerged from the sub-theme that was discussed above is that despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on the level of students' trust towards a university, the students would not consider leaving the university. This emerged as a sub-theme because a group of students indicated that the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on their trust towards the university would not make them consider leaving the university. This result supports the finding by Maslikhan (2019) that show that negative publicity alone is not enough to warrant consumers ending their relationship with an organisation that is subject to negative publicity as negative publicity is not always true.

Negative publicity regarding student protests implies that there are protests at a particular university. Student protests are likely to affect the university's plans and processes such as teaching and learning, for example. If teaching and learning is affected then the university's unlikely to meet the students' expectations of being taught during a particular time. Therefore, the university would be unable to meet the students' expectations. Thus, negative publicity regarding campus crime is likely to negatively influence students' trust towards a university as trust entails the students' belief that the university will conduct its activities in the manner that is expected by the students. This result is similar to the findings of AlHogail (2018) showing that an organisation's inability to meet the consumers' expectations is likely to negatively influence the consumers' trust towards the organisation as consumers are unlikely to trust an organisation that does not meet their expectations.

5.2.3. The influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' loyalty to a university.

One of the main themes that emerged from the results obtained by the current study is that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence the students' loyalty to the university in any way. Previous studies have shown that negative publicity would not always influence the consumers' loyalty to an organisation because negative publicity is not

necessarily true (Maslikhan, 2019). This emerged as a main theme because a large group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not influence their loyalty to the university. Another main theme that emerged from the results is that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence the students' loyalty to the university. A study done by AlHogail (2018) also found that negative publicity could negatively influence consumers' loyalty to an organisation because the negative publicity could imply that the organisation is not meeting the consumers' expectations. This emerged as a main theme because a large group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would influence their loyalty to the university.

A sub-theme that emerged from the second main theme is that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence the students' loyalty to the university. This emerged as a sub-theme because a group of students indicated that negative publicity would negatively influence their loyalty to the university. This confirms the finding of a study by Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) that show that negative publicity could negatively influence consumer loyalty to an organisation as negative publicity distributes negative information regarding the organisation. The students indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would negatively influence the students' loyalty to the university because student protests are usually due to students believing that the university is not meeting the students' needs. Thus, the students indicated that they would not feel loyal to a university that is constantly subject to negative publicity that implies that the university is not meeting the students' needs and expectations.

Another sub-theme that emerged from the sub-theme identified above is that despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests, the students would remain at the university and not consider leaving the university. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests is not enough to make the students consider leaving the university. This supports the literature that indicates that negative publicity could negatively influence the relationship between an organisation and its consumers as negative publicity can create negative perceptions of the organisation (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Shekhar, Acharya, Roy and Nguyen (2020) argue that consumer loyalty to an organisation entails a desire to develop a stable relationship with the organisation. As a means of maintaining this relationship, consumers are willing to make short-term sacrifices and have confidence in the stability of the relationship.

This argument supports the findings of the current study because some students indicated that negative publicity regarding constant student protests would negatively influence their loyalty to the university. However, despite the negative influence of the negative publicity, these students indicated that they would not consider leaving the university, but they would remain loyal to the university. This shows that these students would have a desire to maintain their relationship with the university despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding constant student protests on their loyalty to the university. To maintain this relationship, the students would be willing to sacrifice attending an institution that is not constantly subject to negative publicity regarding student protests to maintain their relationship with the current university.

5.3. To determine the responses students believe a university should use as a means of achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding student protests.

According to Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018), avoiding negative publicity is ideal. However, in some cases, organisations do not have any control over being subject to negative publicity (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). Therefore, once an organisation is subject to negative publicity, the organisation must implement various recovery strategies to lessen or avoid the negative influence of the negative publicity on its relationship with its consumers (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018).

The first theme that emerged from the findings indicated that taking responsibility, apologising and assuring the students that the issue has been dealt with is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university. This result supports a finding by Chung and Lee (2019) that indicates that taking responsibility for the negative publicity and apologising could lessen the negative influence of negative publicity on consumers. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this would be an ideal response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

The literature indicates that assuring the consumers that the issue that caused the negative publicity has been dealt with by making the relevant changes could be effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity on factors such as consumers' image, trust and loyalty to an organisation as this shows that the organisation has taken the necessary steps to remedy the situation (Okhmatovskiy and Shin, 2019). The students indicated that the reason they believe that this response would be effective is that the negative

publicity would be mentioning that particular university's name and stating that the protests are happening on that particular university's property, that university's students would most likely be protesting and the protests are likely due to the student's dissatisfaction with that particular university.

Therefore, regardless of whether the negative publicity is true or not, it is the university's responsibility to deal with the negative effects of negative publicity as the negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between the students and the university. Woo, Jung and Jin (2020), make a similar argument as these authors argue that negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between an organisation and its consumers whether or not the negative publicity is true. The students also indicated that this response shows a sense of honesty and transparency from the university and it also shows the students and other stakeholders that the university is committed to rectifying any issues that the university is facing. Previous research has indicated that responses that show a sense of honesty and transparency are effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity (Oliveira, Alinho, Rita and Dhillon, 2017).

The second theme that emerged from the results is that denying the negative publicity is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university. The literature has indicated that denying the negative publicity can be an effective recovery strategy in some cases (Xie and Peng, 2009). This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this would be the best response to negative publicity regarding student protests. The students indicated that this response would be ideal if the negative publicity is false. According to the students, the university should be able to confirm that the negative publicity regarding student protests is false before the university can deny the negative publicity. In other words, the students indicated that this response to negative publicity would not be effective if the negative publicity is true because denying something that is true means the university is distributing inaccurate information. This could lead to more negative publicity for the university.

The third theme that emerged from the results is that redirecting the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university. Literature indicates that redirecting the consumers' attention to

the positive aspects of an organisation can be an effective recovery strategy as this moves the consumer attention away from the negative publicity to the positive aspects of an organisation (Xie and Peng, 2009). This emerged as a theme because some students indicated that this would be the best response to negative publicity regarding student protests. The students indicated that universities can be subject to negative publicity. However, universities can create positive publicity amid the negative publicity by redirecting the students' and publics' attention to the positive aspects of a university. This shows that when an organisation chooses to distribute positive news regarding the organisation, such as the organisation's CSR initiatives, for example, it can lessen the influence of negative publicity regarding the organisation (Chung and Lee, 2019). Thus, a university can choose from distributing positive news such as the achievements of the university's staff or students, to name examples. Based on this theme, the positive news regarding the university can be used to counteract the negative publicity regarding student protests.

5.4. To determine which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

Once an organisation is subject to negative publicity, the organisation must ensure that it allocates resources to the communication mediums that can communicate recovery strategies effectively (Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar, 2018). Thus, the first theme that emerged from the results obtained by the current study is that direct marketing would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this medium is ideal. This finding supports the literature that indicates that direct marketing would be an effective medium for an organisation to communicate with its consumers (Perčić and Perić, 2021).

In the contemporary marketplace, technological advancements such as the emergence of Web 2.0 have led to the internet becoming the most utilised platform for promotional activities (Kavoura and Sylaiou, 2019). Thus, making it easier for organisations to communicate directly with large groups of people. The increased availability of wireless internet networks and the use of mobile devices enable consumers to receive communication from organisations regardless of their location (Alshabeb and Almaqrn, 2018). Thus, the students would receive direct communication from the university regardless of their location. The students indicated that direct marketing in the form of emails and communiques would be an ideal communication tool because it would ensure that all students get the correct response or message directly from the university and no information would be distorted. This supports the finding by Perčić and

Perić (2021) that indicates that direct marketing in the form of emails and communiques, to name examples, would be an ideal communication tool because it ensures that all the consumers get the correct response or message directly from the organisation.

The students indicated that direct marketing would also enable the students to ask questions and get answers directly from the university, without having to ask the questions in public. Perčić and Perić (2021), support this finding as these authors argue that direct marketing enables organisations to obtain measurable feedback from the people whom they are communicating with. Thus, the use of direct marketing would enable a university to obtain feedback from the students regarding the effectiveness of their recovery strategy, especially if the university requests that students respond to the communication. This feedback would enable a university to determine the effectiveness of its recovery strategy.

The second theme that emerged from the results obtained by the current study is that advertising would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests. This result confirms the findings by Oktari, Wahab and Widiyanti (2020) who argue that advertising is an effective communication medium to communicate with consumers. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this communication medium would be ideal. Todorova (2015) argues that advertising adds value to risky or expensive products, in other words, effective advertising can persuade consumers to purchase expensive or high-risk products or services. This is achieved by highlighting the positive characteristics of the product or service in such a way that the positive characteristics outweigh the high risk or price. Thus, advertising may be ideal for communicating a university's response to negative publicity as negative publicity can make affiliation with a given university risky. If advertising is used to communicate the university's response to the negative publicity, this may add value to the university which may lead to the students disregarding the risk that resulted from the negative publicity (Todorova, 2015). Therefore, effective advertising can be used by a university to communicate its recovery strategy after the university is subject to negative publicity regarding student protests.

In the contemporary marketplace, the advancement of technology has enabled companies to develop advertisements that are tailored to specific consumer groups (Segijn and van Ooijen, 2021). This is achieved using internet firms, which collect large volumes of data from their users and make this data available to organisations, which use this data to develop advertisements that are customised to different consumer groups (Li, 2019). Therefore, a

university can tailor specific adverts to specific student groups which may increase the effectiveness of the adverts, making advertising an effective medium of communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

The students indicated that advertising would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests as advertising would ensure that the university's response to the negative publicity is not only limited to students. Members of the community would also receive the response as the community would have also received the negative publicity, as advertising can distribute non-personal, persuasive information regarding an organisation to the mass market using mass media communication such as social media, television, radio, magazines and newspapers to name examples (Oktari, Wahab and Widiyanti, 2020).

The last theme that emerged from the results obtained by the current study is that public relations would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests. This finding supports the findings of a study by Petrovici (2014) that indicates that public relations are an ideal communication medium for an organisation to communicate with its consumers. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this medium would be ideal.

Similar to the research conducted by Attia, Chepyator-Thomson, Sonkeng and el Azim (2018) which found that public relations contribute to a positive consumer image of an organisation, the current study confirms that the use of public relations can contribute to a positive consumer image of an organisation. Therefore, public relations can be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity. The students indicated that the role of public relations is to create good relationships between a university and its students and would be ideal for communicating with large groups of students at one time. The students also indicated that public relations strategies such as CSR, concerts and giveaways to name examples provide incentives for students to attend and listen to the communication from the university as these public relations strategies entail some sort of benefit for the students and community. Thus, the students believe public relations is an effective communication medium.

5.5.1. The influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image of a university.

Two main themes emerged from the results of the current study. The first main theme was that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' image of a university.

This emerged as a theme because a slightly larger group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests would not affect their image of a university. The results indicating that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence the students' image of a university are similar to those of a study by Maslikhan (2019) that found that it is possible for negative publicity to not influence the image of consumers as negative publicity is not necessarily true. The second main theme that emerged from the results is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' image of a university. This finding supports the findings of a study by Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) that indicates that negative publicity could negatively influence the consumers' image of an organisation as negative publicity distributes negative information regarding the organisation. This emerged as a main theme because a group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would affect their image of the university.

A sub-theme that emerged from the second main theme is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' image of a university. This emerged as a sub-theme because the students that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' image of a university also indicated that this influence would be negative. The students indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime is very severe and it threatens the students' safety. Thus, the students indicated that they would not be able to focus on their studies if they are worried about their safety. This finding is supported by the argument by Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) that negative information regarding an organisation is likely to damage the consumer's image of the organisation.

A sub-theme that emerged from the sub-theme that is discussed above is that despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on the students' image of a university, the students would not leave the university. This confirms the literature showing that negative publicity alone is not enough for consumers to end their relationship with an organisation (Woo, Jung and Jin, 2020). This emerged as a sub-theme because the students who indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence their image of a university also indicated that they would remain at the university despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime.

However, the students indicated that they would consider leaving the university due to the server nature of negative publicity regarding campus crime but they would not end up leaving the university based on the negative publicity alone. This result is similar to an argument by

Wichailert and Yousapornpaiboon (2017) who argue that the negative influence of negative information regarding an organisation is likely to make consumers reconsider their preference for an organisation.

5.5.2. The influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' trust towards a university.

Two main themes emerged from the results obtained by the current study. The first main theme is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' trust towards a university. The results showing that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' trust towards a university support the findings of a study by Maslikhan (2019) who found that negative publicity does not necessarily influence consumers' trust towards an organisation because negative publicity is not always true. This emerged as a main theme because a slightly larger group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not affect their trust towards a university in any way.

The second main theme that emerged from the results is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' trust towards a university. The results showing that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' trust in a university support the findings of a study by Woo, Jung and Jin (2020) who found that negative publicity could influence consumers' trust towards an organisation as some forms of negative publicity can change the way consumers view the organisation. This emerged as a main theme because a slightly larger group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would affect their trust towards a university.

A sub-theme that emerged from this main theme is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' trust towards a university. The results showing that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' trust in a university support the findings of a study by Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) that found that negative publicity could negatively influence consumers' trust towards an organisation as negative publicity distributes negative information regarding an organisation. This emerged as a sub-theme because the students that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their trust towards a university also indicated that this influence would be negative. The students indicated that the reason for their responses is that negative publicity regarding campus crime is serious as it implies that the students are not safe when in or around the university. Some of the students indicated that the negative publicity must be due to

incidents that occurred, which means they can no longer trust the university to keep them safe if they are constantly exposed to negative publicity regarding incidents of crime in and around the university.

According to Benson, Lavelle, Spence, Elliott, and Dean (2020), trust entails a belief that a given organisation will conduct business in a certain manner and meet the expectations of the consumers. These results indicate that the severe nature of negative publicity regarding campus crime negatively influences some students' belief that the university will keep them safe. Once this belief has been negatively influenced, the students no longer fully trust the university to keep them safe, as the students expect the university to keep them safe and the negative publicity would be implying that the university cannot meet this expectation.

A sub-theme that emerged from the sub-theme that was discussed above is that despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on the students' trust towards a university, the students would not leave the university. The results showing that the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime is not enough to make the students leave the university is similar to the results of a study by Maslikhan (2019) that found that negative publicity alone is not always enough for consumers to end their relationship with an organisation as negative publicity is not always true. This emerged as a sub-theme because the students that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence their trust towards a university indicated that this negative influence alone would not make them leave a university.

5.5.3. The influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' loyalty to a university.

Two main themes emerged from the results obtained in the current study. The first main was that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not influence students' loyalty to a university. This finding is similar to the findings of a study by Woo, Jung and Jin (2020) that showed that negative publicity does not always negatively influence the relationship between an organisation and its consumers because the level of consumer commitment to an organisation can also moderate the influence of negative publicity on the relationship between an organisation and its consumers. This emerged as a main theme because a slightly larger group of students indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would not affect their loyalty to a university in any way.

The second main theme that emerged from the results is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence students' loyalty to a university. This emerged as a main theme because a larger group of students indicated that negative publicity would influence their loyalty to a university. A study by Yu, Liu, Lee and Soutar (2018) supports this result as this study found that negative publicity can negatively influence the relationship between an organisation and its consumers regardless of whether or not the negative publicity is true as negative publicity distributes negative information regarding the organisation.

A sub-theme that emerged from this main theme is that negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence students' loyalty to a university. This emerged as a sub-theme because the students that indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime would influence their image of a university also indicated that this influence would be negative. The students indicated that they would not be able to immerse themselves in their studies when there is constant negative publicity regarding campus crime. While another group of students indicated that they need to carry expensive learning equipment needed for their studies. Thus, they would not feel comfortable carrying their equipment in a university that is constantly subject to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

According to Lalicic and Weismayer (2018), the reason for consumer loyalty to a specific organisation is to achieve risk reduction. By virtue of this argument, students become loyal to a university because they would have experienced the services offered by the university and are satisfied with these services, which reduces the risk of attending another university that they do not know. However, once the university is constantly subject to negative publicity regarding campus crime which threatens the students' safety some students may no longer feel loyal to the university and would consider leaving the university.

A sub-theme that emerged from the sub-theme discussed above is that despite the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on the students' loyalty to a university, the students would not leave the university. This emerged as a sub-theme because the students that indicated that the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime would negatively influence their loyalty to a university also indicated that this negative influence alone would not make them leave a university. This finding is supported by the finding of a study by Maslikhan (2019) that indicated that in many cases negative publicity alone is not enough to make consumers end their relationship with the organisation because negative publicity is not always true.

5.6. To determine the responses students believe a university should use as a means of achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding campus crime.

According to Fairley, Lovegrove, Newland and Green (2016), once an organisation is faced with a crisis such as negative publicity to name an example. The organisation must find ways to lessen the negative influence of the crisis on its consumers. Thus, the first theme that emerged from the results is that once a university is subject to negative publicity regarding campus crime. Taking responsibility, apologising and assuring the students that the issue has been dealt with is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this would be the best response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. Studies done by Chung and Lee (2019) as well as Okhmatovskiy and Shin (2019) show that taking responsibility, apologising and assuring the consumers that the issue has been dealt with by making the necessary changes can be an ideal response to achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity.

According to the students, this response would be effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime as regardless of the level of truth to the negative publicity, as the negative publicity would be mentioning that particular university's name and stating that the campus crime is happening on or around that particular university's property and that university's students are likely victims of the crime. Therefore, it is the university's responsibility to deal with this negative publicity and assure the students that everything is in order.

The students also indicated that this response is ideal as it shows a sense of honesty and transparency from the university, especially if there is some truth to the negative publicity. This finding is supported by a study by Alinho, Rita and Dhillon (2017), which indicated that factors such as transparency and perceived honesty play an important role in achieving consumer trust. Thus, these factors can also play an important role in recovering factors such as the image, trust and loyalty of students after a university is subject to negative publicity. This response also highlights the university's commitment to rectifying any issues that make students uncomfortable, negative publicity is an example of such an issue.

Another theme that emerged from the results is that denying the negative publicity is an ideal response to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity

regarding campus crime on students' image, trust and loyalty to the university. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this is the best response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. This finding is supported by the findings of a study by Xie and Peng (2009) that indicated denying the negative can be an effective response to negative publicity if the organisation can prove that the negative publicity is not true.

The students indicated that denying the negative publicity would reassure the students that there is no truth to the negative publicity. Thus, the students should not allow the negative publicity to negatively influence factors such as their image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university. This finding supports the results of a study by Woo, Jung and Jin (2020) which shows that this recovery strategy would be most effective if the organisation can provide evidence that it is not responsible for the event that led to negative publicity or that the negative publicity is not true. Thus, a university should only use this response if has evidence that the negative publicity is untrue.

5.7. To determine which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

The first theme that emerged from the results is that direct marketing would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this would be the best communication medium. Perčić and Perić (2021) found that direct marketing can be used to create consumer interest in a given organisation or direct marketing can be used to persuade consumers to continue making use of a given organisation regardless of any external influences, negative publicity is an example of such an influence. Thus, direct marketing can be effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity as universities can use direct marketing to persuade the students not to enable negative publicity to negatively influence factors such as students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to a university.

As discussed in the previous objective, technological advancements have seen it become easier for organisations to use direct marketing (Bala and Verma, 2018). Perčić and Perić (2021) support this argument as these authors found that the increased use of social media mediums such as LinkedIn and Facebook to name examples have emerged as the most effective communication mediums for organisations to communicate with their consumers as these enable direct communication between organisations and consumers. Research done by Kazhan,

Hamaniuk, Amelina, Tarasenko, and Tolmachev (2020) indicates that the availability of mobile devices and wireless internet networks also enables students to receive direct communication from the university regardless of their location.

The students indicated that direct marketing in the form of emails and communiques would be an ideal communication tool because it would ensure that all students get the correct response or message directly from the university and no information would be distorted. The students also indicated that direct marketing would also enable the students to ask questions and get answers directly from the university, without having to ask the questions in public. The interactive nature of direct marketing makes it an ideal communication medium for universities to communicate their response to negative publicity (Perčić and Perić, 2021).

Another theme that emerged is that advertising would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this would be the best medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. This finding is supported by the findings of a study by Oktari, Wahab and Widiyanti (2020) which indicated that advertising is an effective medium for organisations to communicate with their consumers. The students indicated that advertising would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime as advertising would ensure that the university's response to the negative publicity is not only limited to students, but the entire community would also receive the response as the community would have also received the negative publicity. This is due to the non-personal nature of advertising (Oktari, Wahab and Widiyanti, 2020).

The last theme that emerged from the results is that public relations would be an ideal medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. This emerged as a theme because a group of students indicated that this was the best medium to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime. This finding is supported by the findings of a study by Attia, Chepyator-Thomson, Sonkeng and el Azim (2018) who argue that public relations activities are responsible for creating a good reputation for the organisation as public relations highlight the positive aspects of an organisation. Therefore, universities can use public relations to create a good reputation for the university after the university is subject to negative publicity. The students indicated that the

role of public relations is to create good relationships between a university and its students and would be ideal for communicating with large groups of students at one time.

According to Kavoura and Sylaiou (2019), in the contemporary marketplace, the internet has emerged as the main facilitator of communication between organisations and their consumers. Therefore, several organisations use the internet to conduct their public relations activities due to the internet's ability to reach significantly higher consumer numbers. The internet also enables interaction between the organisation and its consumers. Another reason for organisations using the internet to conduct their public relations is that the internet is very competitive and as a result of this competitiveness, any organisation that does not use the internet to conduct its public relations activities is at risk of no longer being able to use public relations to achieve and maintain the desired public image. Therefore, universities as organisations can use the internet to conduct some of their public relations activities as this will enable them to reach a larger number of students as most students commonly use the internet daily. Thus, universities can use the internet to conduct their public relations activities in response to negative publicity to recover from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime.

5.8. Summary

Based on the discussions made in this chapter, the students indicated that negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime negatively influences most students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to the university. In terms of negative publicity regarding student protests, the students indicated that the best responses from a university were to take responsibility for the negative publicity, apologise and assure the students that the issue that led to the negative publicity has been dealt with, redirect the students' attention to positive aspects and to deny the negative publicity. Whereas in terms of negative publicity regarding campus crime, the students indicated that a university must respond by taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologise and assure the students that the issue that led to the negative publicity has been dealt with while another group of students indicated that denying the negative publicity would be a good response. Lastly, the students indicated that communication mediums such as direct marketing, advertising and public relations would be ideal for communicating a university's response to both types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed the findings obtained by the current study. These findings have determined the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university students' loyalty to a university. The findings have also highlighted the responses students believe would be ideal in responding to both types of negative publicity under investigation in the current as well as the communication mediums students believe would be effective in communicating the university's responses to the negative publicity. Thus, this chapter aims to conclude the current study as well as to provide recommendations and advice for future research based on the findings. This chapter also aims to highlight the limitations of the current study.

6.2. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, the current study used a qualitative approach to determine the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on factors such as students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university. Furthermore, the current study aimed to determine the responses students believe would be most effective in responding to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime as a means of achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity. Lastly, the current study aimed to determine the communication mediums students believe would be most effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime to achieve a successful recovery from the negative influence of both types of negative publicity.

The results obtained by the current study have achieved to objectives of the current study as the current study has shown that both negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime would negatively influence factors such as students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to a university for most but not all students. In terms of the students who indicated that the two types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study would negatively influence factors such as their image of the university, trust towards the university and loyalty to the university, the current study was able to determine the responses that students believe would be most effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of both types of negative publicity under investigation. As the students indicated that apologising, taking responsibility for the negative publicity and assuring students that the issue has been dealt with would be most effective in

achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. Whereas some students indicated that denying the negative publicity would be effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime. While a small group of students indicated that redirecting the students' attention to positive aspects of the university would be an effective response to negative publicity regarding student protests.

Lastly, the current study concluded that most students believe that the best communication medium to communicate a university's response to both negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime is direct marking. Whereas smaller groups of students indicated that advertising and public relations would be effective in communicating a university's response to the types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study as a means of achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime.

6.3. Recommendations

6.3.1. Managerial recommendations - responses to negative publicity

According to the results obtained in the current study, once a university is subject to negative publicity regarding student protests or campus crime, the university should respond to these two types of negative publicity as a means of achieving successful recovery from the negative influence of these two types of negative publicity on the students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to the university. In the case of negative publicity regarding student protests, universities can respond by taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologising and assuring the students that the issue(s) that led to the negative publicity has been dealt with. For example, in case of student protests, the university can assure the students that the issue has been dealt with by agreeing to meet with the student leaders and discuss the issues that the students are striking for. Or, if it is possible, the university can agree to the students' demands as a means of putting an end to the protests.

Another response that universities can use as a means of achieving recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests is redirecting the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university. A university can do this by highlighting the positive aspects of the university when the university is subject to negative publicity regarding student protests. Examples of these positive aspects include students' academic achievements, staff achievements, sporting achievements, facility upgrades, etc. Lastly, universities can respond to negative publicity regarding student protests by denying the negative publicity. In other words,

the university can respond by saying that the negative publicity is untrue. However, this response is ideal if the negative publicity regarding student protests is untrue and there are no student protests taking place in and around the university.

In the case of negative publicity regarding campus crime, universities can respond by taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologising and assuring the students that the issue(s) that led to the negative publicity has been dealt with. For example, universities can assure the students that they have upgraded security by adding more security guards, more security patrols, student escorts and security cameras. The university can also assure the students that the university will restrict the entrance of non-students into the university as these are usually among the people who are involved in crime in and around the university. Another way in which universities can respond to negative publicity regarding campus crime is to deny the negative publicity. Meaning, that the university can reply by saying there is no truth to the negative publicity. As discussed in the case of negative publicity regarding student protests, this response is only ideal if the negative publicity is untrue and there have not been any reports of crime in and around the university.

6.3.2. Managerial recommendations - communication mediums

According to the results obtained by the current study, universities should use direct marketing to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. As discussed in the literature review chapter, direct marketing is a communication medium that enables direct communication between an organisation and its consumers (Risselada, Verhoef and Bijmolt, 2014). Direct marketing also enables the consumers to respond to the communication. Thus, the organisation receives feedback from the consumers (Perčić and Perić, 2021). Technological advancements such as the development of Web 2.0., mobile devices and internet networks have enabled organisations such as universities to communicate directly with large numbers of students at the same time via direct marketing platforms such as emails and SMS's to name examples (Kazhan, Hamaniuk, Amelina, Tarasenko, and Tolmachev, 2020). Thus, direct marketing would be an ideal communication medium for universities to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime.

Another communication medium that universities can use to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime is advertising. As discussed in the literature review chapter advertising refers to a communication medium that enables organisations such as universities to distribute the same message to a large group of people via

mass media communication mediums such as television, radio, newspaper and social media to name examples (Pawar, 2014). Advertising would be an ideal communication medium for universities to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime because it would enable the university to distribute the same responses to a large number of students. Advertising is also ideal because it is not only limited to the students of that particular university but can also be seen by community members which include parents and potential students to name examples as the negative publicity is not only limited to students of that particular university.

Lastly, another communication medium that universities can use to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime is public relations. The role of public relations is to create and maintain a good relationship between an organisation and its consumers (Todorova, 2015). Public relations includes press releases and media briefings, concerts, and CSR initiatives to name examples. The use of public relations to communicate a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime is ideal because public relations, like advertising, is not only limited to the current university students. The entire community can receive communication distributed via public relations, this is ideal because the entire community would have received the negative publicity.

6.3.3. Theoretical implications

Previous research has indicated that different types of negative publicity influence people in different ways. The current study has contributed to the literature regarding negative publicity as the current study has determined that negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime can negatively influence some students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university. The current study has also discovered that negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime does not always negatively influence students' image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university. As the current study has found that negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime does not influence some students in any way.

The current study has also contributed to the literature regarding recovery from negative publicity as the current study has determined the responses that university students believe would be most effective in achieving a successful recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. These responses include denying the negative publicity, redirecting the students' attention away from the negative

publicity as well as taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologising and assuring the student that the issue has been dealt with. Lastly, the current study has contributed to the literature regarding the use of promotional tools to communicate with consumers as the current study has determined that promotional tools such as advertising, direct marketing and public relations would be effective in communicating a university's response to both negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime.

6.4. Advice for future research

Negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime has been a problem for many universities in South Africa as many universities have been subject to at least one or both of these types of negative publicity recently. Based on the current South African trends, more universities in South Africa are likely to be subject to either one or both of these types of negative publicity in the near future. Therefore, researchers need to understand how both these types of negative publicity influence the relationship between students and universities.

Researchers should conduct more studies that are similar to the current study with larger student groups at more universities in South Africa to develop a sound and holistic understanding of the influence of negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime on factors such as students' image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university. Researchers should also study how negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime influences other factors apart from students' image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to a university.

Researchers must gain more insight from both current, future and present university students in terms of the responses universities can use to recover from the negative influence of both the types of negative publicity under investigation in the current study. For universities to be in a position whereby they know how to recover from the negative influence of both these types of negative publicity. It is also important that researchers gain more insight from both current, future and present university students in terms of the communication mediums students believe would be most effective in communicating a university's response to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. As the current study has determined that the choice of communication medium plays an important role in the effectiveness of a university's response to negative publicity.

Researchers should also study and understand possible strategies that universities in South Africa can use to avoid being subject to negative publicity regarding student protests and campus crime. This would be beneficial to universities as they would be able to avoid being subject to these two types of negative publicity, which can negatively influence the relationship between the universities and their students.

6.5. Limitations of the study

The current study was conducted using a sample of 30 students. All the data was collected remotely using video interaction platforms such as Zoom meetings and WhatsApp video calls. The current study is also limited to a small group of students from the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. Therefore, the results of the current study come from a small group of students of the UKZN Pietermaritzburg campus. Non-probability sampling in the form of snowball sampling was used when conducting the current study. Thus, the results could not be generalised for the entire population.

APPENDICIES

Appendix 1: Research Schedule

Scenario 1

Hypothetically speaking, as a current student of the university, you receive negative publicity in the form of claims that the university is constantly subject to student protest action. These protests cause the university to suspend the academic program for extended periods and the protesting students end up damaging university property and as a result, some of the students end up being injured or arrested. With this in mind, please answer the following questions.

Research Objective 1.1.

To determine the extent to which negative publicity regarding student protests influences the student's image of a university, level of students' trust towards a university and students' loyalty to a university.

In order to achieve this research objective the researcher will ask the following questions based on the scenario above:

1. Would the negative publicity regarding constant student protests influence your image of the university (would negative publicity regarding student protests affect the way you view the university)?

2. If you indicated that negative publicity negatively influences your image of the university, how and why does this type of negative publicity influence your image of the university?

Probing questions

- Does your image of the university remain mostly positive and you remain a student of the university for your current and future studies?
- Does your image of the university remain mostly positive and you remain a student of the university for your current studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative but you remain a student of the university for your current and future studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative and you remain a student of the university for your current studies and switch to another university for future studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative and you remain a student of the university while you are looking for another university in which to complete your studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative and you decided to deregister and leave the university immediately?

Can you briefly explain why negative publicity regarding student protests influence your image of the university in the way you have identified above and why you would react in the way you have identified above?

3. Would negative publicity regarding constant student protests influence your level of trust towards the university?

4. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding constant student protests influences your trust towards the university, how and why is your trust towards the university affected by this type of negative publicity?

Probing questions

- Do you and remain a student at the university still trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?
- Do you and remain a student at the university but not trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?
- Do you start looking for another university while you are still a student of the current university because you no longer trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?
- Do you de-register and leave the university immediately because you no longer trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?

Can you briefly explain why negative publicity regarding student protests influence your trust towards the university in the way you have identified above and why you would react in the way you have identified above?

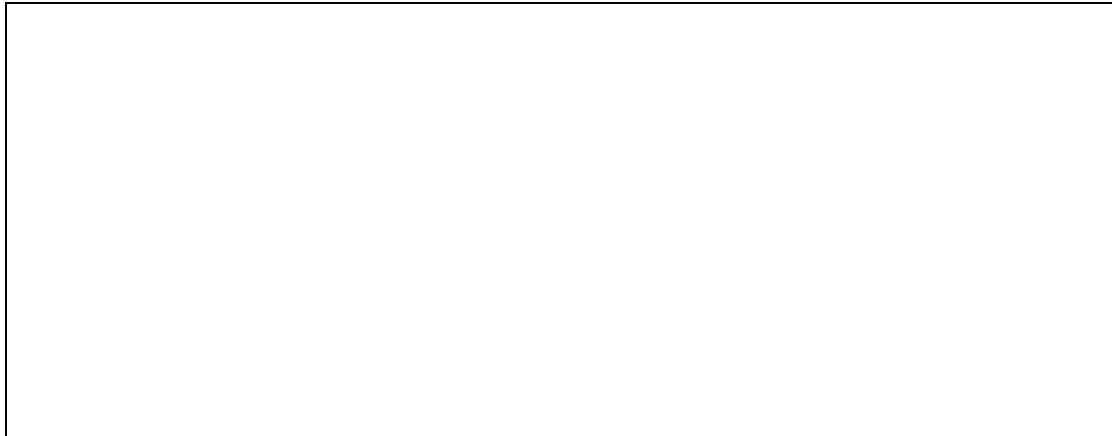
5. Would negative publicity regarding constant student protests influence your loyalty to the university?

6. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding constant student protests influences your loyalty to the university, how and why is your loyalty to the university affected by this type of negative publicity?

Probing questions

- Do you still feel loyal to the university and will stay at the university for the duration of your current studies and future studies?
- Do you still feel loyal to the university and will stay at the university for the duration of your current studies?
- Do you no longer feel loyal to the university but will stay at the university for the duration of your current studies and not future studies?
- Do you no longer feel loyal to the university and look for another university to complete your studies while you are still a student of the university?
- Do you no longer feel loyal to the university and will leave the university immediately?

Can you briefly explain why negative publicity regarding student protests influences your loyalty to the university in the way you have identified above and why you would react in the way you have identified above?



Research Objective 1.2.

To determine the responses students believe a university should use as a means of achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding violent student protests.

In order to achieve this research objective the researcher will ask the following question based on the scenario above:

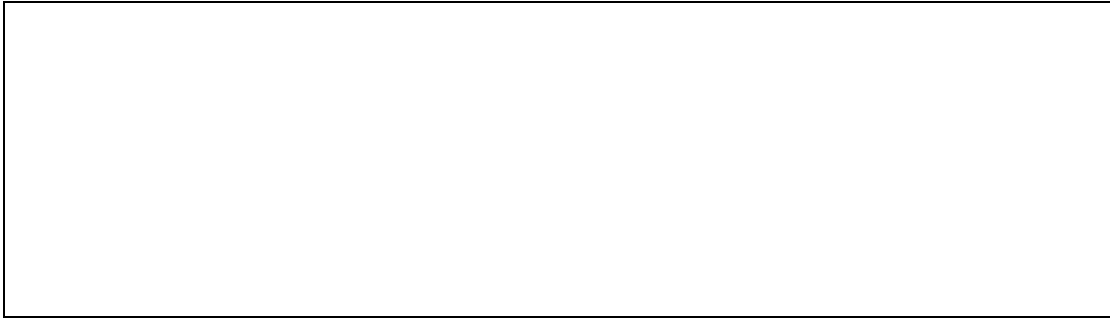
7. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding constant student protests negatively influences your image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty. How do you believe a university should respond to negative publicity regarding constant student protests to ensure effective recovery from the negative influence of this type of negative publicity on your image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university?

Probing questions

- Should the university ignore the negative publicity and continue with its daily operations?
- Should the university respond to the negative publicity by denying its involvement in the event that caused the negative publicity (say the university is not responsible for the negative publicity)?
- Should the university respond to the negative publicity by taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologising and assuring students that the university will address the event that caused the negative publicity?
- Should the university respond to the negative publicity by redirecting the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university?



Why do you believe that the response you have selected is effective in recovering from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding violent student protests on issues like student image of the university, student trust towards the university and students loyalty to the university?



Research Objective 1.3.

To determine which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding violent student protests.

In order to achieve this research objective the researcher will ask the following question based on the scenario above:

8. How do you believe the university should communicate its response to negative publicity regarding constant student protests to ensure effective recovery from the negative influence of this type of negative publicity on your image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university? In other words, what is the best way (promotional tool) do you think the university should use when communicating their response to negative publicity regarding constant student protests?
 - Direct Marketing (direct communication between the university and students) e.g. The university responding to negative publicity by sending notices and communiques that the students can reply to should they require more information from the university.
 - Sales Promotion e.g. The university offering incentives in order to achieve recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity. These incentives can range from fee deductions, university branded gifts etc.
 - Public relations e.g. The university hosting events and concerts where they would communicate the responses to the negative publicity.
 - Advertising e.g. The university communicating their responses to negative publicity by placing adverts of broadcast, print and social media

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Why do you think the communication medium (promotional tool) that you have selected is the best communication medium for universities to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding violent student protests as a means of achieving recovery from the negative influence of the negative publicity on issues like student image of the university, student trust towards the university and students loyalty to the university?

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Scenario 2

Hypothetically speaking, as current students of the university, you receive negative publicity in the form of claims that the university has been subject to a significant increase in crime and other safety issues on or around the university campus. These include claims of you students being robbed of their possessions as well as claims of physical or sexual assault to students on and around university property. With this in mind, please answer the following questions.

Research Objective 2.1.

To determine the extent to which negative publicity regarding campus crime influences the student's image of the university, level of students' trust towards the university and students' loyalty to a university.

In order to achieve this research objective the researcher will ask the following questions based on the scenario above:

9. Would the negative publicity regarding campus crime influence your image of the university (would negative publicity regarding campus crime affect the way you view the university)?

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10. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime negatively influences your image of the university, how and why does this type of negative publicity influence your image of the university?

Probing questions

- Does your image of the university remain mostly positive and you remain a student of the university for your current and future studies?
- Does your image of the university remain mostly positive and you remain a student of the university for your current studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative but you remain a student of the university for your current and future studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative and you remain a student of the university for your current studies and switch to another university for future studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative and you remain a student of the university while you are looking for another university in which to complete your studies?
- Does your image of the university become mostly negative and you decided to deregister and leave the university immediately?

Can you briefly explain why negative publicity regarding campus crime influences your image of the university in the way you have identified above and why you would react in the way you have identified above?

11. Would negative publicity regarding campus crime influence your level of trust towards the university?

12. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime influences your trust towards the university, how and why is your trust towards the university affected by this type of negative publicity?

Probing questions

- Do you and remain a student at the university still trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?
- Do you and remain a student at the university but not trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?
- Do you start looking for another university while you are still a student of the current university because you no longer trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?
- Do you de-register and leave the university immediately because you no longer trust the university to keep you safe and provide the expected services?

Can you briefly explain why negative publicity regarding campus crime influences your trust towards the university in the way you have identified above and why you would react in the way you have identified above?

13. Would negative publicity regarding campus crime influence your loyalty to the university?

14. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime influences your loyalty to the university, how and why is your loyalty to the university affected by this type of negative publicity?

Probing questions

- Do you still feel loyal to the university and will stay at the university for the duration of your current studies and future studies?
- Do you still feel loyal to the university and will stay at the university for the duration of your current studies?

- Do you no longer feel loyal to the university but will stay at the university for the duration of your current studies and not future studies?
- Do you no longer feel loyal to the university and look for another university to complete your studies while you are still a student of the university?
- Do you no longer feel loyal to the university and will leave the university immediately?

Can you briefly explain why negative publicity regarding campus crime influences your loyalty to the university in the way you have identified above and why you would react in the way you have identified above?

Research Objective 2.2.

To determine the responses students believe a university should use as a means of achieving a successful recovery from negative publicity regarding campus crime.

In order to achieve this research objective the researcher will ask the following question based on the scenario above:

15. If you indicated that negative publicity regarding campus crime negatively influences your image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty. How do you believe a university should respond to negative publicity regarding campus crime to ensure effective recovery from the negative influence of this type of negative publicity on your image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university?

Probing questions

- Should the university ignore the negative publicity and continue with its daily operations?

- Should the university respond to the negative publicity by denying its involvement in the event that caused the negative publicity (say the university is not responsible for the negative publicity)?
- Should the university respond to the negative publicity by taking responsibility for the negative publicity, apologising and assuring students that the university will address the event that caused the negative publicity?
- Should the university respond to the negative publicity by redirecting the students' attention to the positive aspects of the university?

Why do you believe that the response you have selected is effective in recovering from the negative influence of negative publicity regarding campus crime on issues like student image of the university, student trust towards the university and students loyalty to the university?

Research Objective 2.3.

To determine which promotional tools students believe would be effective in communicating the university's response to negative publicity regarding campus crime.

In order to achieve this research objective the researcher will ask the following question based on the scenario above:

16. How do you believe the university should communicate their response to negative publicity regarding campus crime to ensure effective recovery from the negative influence of this type of negative publicity on your image of the university, level of trust towards the university and loyalty to the university? In other words, what is the best way (promotional tool) do you think the university should use when communicating their response to negative publicity regarding campus crime?

- Direct Marketing (direct communication between the university and students) e.g. The university responding to negative publicity by sending notices and communiques that the students can reply to should they require more information from the university.
- Sales Promotion e.g. The university offering incentives in order to achieve recovery from the negative influence of negative publicity. These incentives can range from fee deductions, university branded gifts etc.
- Public relations e.g. The university hosting events and concerts where they would communicate the responses to the negative publicity.
- Advertising e.g. The university communicating their responses to negative publicity by placing adverts of broadcast, print and social media

Why do you think the communication medium (promotional tool) that you have selected is the best communication medium for universities to communicate their responses to negative publicity regarding campus crime as a means of achieving recovery from the negative influence of the negative publicity on issues like student image of the university, student trust towards the university and students loyalty to the university?

Thank the participants for their participation in this study.

Appendix 2: Ethical clearance confirmation



12 March 2021

Mr Bazi William Dladla (213527522)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002550/2021

Project title: Negative publicity regarding universities in South Africa: A study of influence and recovery

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 25 February 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 12 March 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 3: Permission to change the title



19 November 2021

Bazi William Dladla (213527522)
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear BW Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002550/2021

Project title: Negative publicity regarding universities in South Africa: A study of influence and recovery

Amended title: Negative publicity effects on students' perceived image, trust, and loyalty: South African universities recovery perspectives

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 16 November 2021 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

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