CHAPTER 3

IDENTITY AND CONTROL

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the notion of organisational control and outlines the study of identity that shapes the study of identity regulation as organisational control as undertaken in this study. The study of identity in discourse, and the hegemonic objectives of organisational discourses are expounded to support the role of discourse and identity in enacting control. Studies on identity, organisational identity, organisational control, and power can provide a descriptive basis for a critical analysis of the regulation of identity as organisational control among the employees at KCUC.

3.2 Identity

Identity as a concept can be traced back to the early 1970s to Henri Tajfel. The concept of social identity indicates affiliation to a particular social group. Hogg and Terry (2000) expound what Tajfel meant: "Social identity is the individual's knowledge that he belongs to a certain social group together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Hogg and Terry, 2000 p. 122). A sense of identity can act as a guide to provide bearing, and instruction and help dispel uncertainty and

disintegration or fragmentation of a group of people (Hogg and Terry, 2000; Karreman and Alvesson, 2004). According to Hogg and Terry (2000):

> In addition to being motivated by self-enhancement, social identity processes are also motivated by a need to lessen and diminish uncertainty about one's feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours (p. 124).

The study of identity is complex. According to Zimmerman (1998), three main types of identity can be identified; transportable, situational and discourse identities. Transportable identity can be described as the fundamental nature of a human being which he carries, or 'transports' with him and is present everywhere; irrespective of the context. Situational identity emerges as a response to a specific situation and can change depending on the contexts. Discourse identity is constructed in both oral and written texts. It is this type of identity construction that is mostly the focus in linguistic or discourse analytical studies. Bauman (2000) describes it as follows:

> In this perspective identity is an emergent construction, the situated outcome of a rhetorical and interpretive process in which interactants make situationally motivated selections from socially constituted repertoires of identification and affiliational resources and craft these semiotic resources into identity claims for presentation to others (p. 1).

Social constructionism is among the approaches to study identity (Berger and Luckman, 1967; Kroskrity, 2000). The postulation of social constructionism is that identity is not a product but should be considered as a process. It is a process that occurs in concrete and specific interactional occasions, gives rise to multiple identities instead of individual monolithic identities and results from processes of negotiation and contextualisation. The construction of identity entails 'discursive work' (Bauman and Briggs, 2003) which means to say that it is constructed through discourse (both oral and written).

Identity can also be described as a process that is entrenched in social practices which can implicate the exercise of power (Foucault, 1979) and the construction of knowledge. Discourse practices (Fairclough, 1989) have a central role in these social practices. The social and discourse practices mutually frame, and can delineate the way individuals and groups present themselves to others, negotiate their roles, and create a concept about themselves.

Another approach to the study of identity is the analysis of the processes of *categorisation and membership definition*. Sacks study on category bound processes (1972, 1995), as well as scholars in the Membership Categorisation Analysis movement (Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998) have asserted that identity construction is related to the definition of categories or membership definition for inclusion or exclusion of self and others, and to their identification with typical activities and routines.

Studies on processes of categorisation have recently pointed out the limitations of this approach. Applying pre-established categorisations is rather limiting, as identity is increasingly being accepted as fluid and ever-changing. People create new definitions of who they are based on circumstances and so identity claims keep changing.

Another trend that has emerged in identity studies has been the development of an *anti-essentialist vision of the 'self'.* Studies on gender studies and psychology have been instrumental in this development. Gender studies, such as that conducted by Bucholtz et al. (1999), have resulted in the postmodern rejection of the 'self' as something that people possess and that represents some kind of core essence of a person. On the contrary, studies on gender have asserted that people are capable of displaying 'polyphonous' identities and can concurrently make a projection of themselves which is associated with different identity categories. They can also represent themselves as different from what their personal 'visible' characteristics would imply (Barrett, 1999).

Just as individuals garner a sense of self through language and social interaction, organisations acquire an identity via discursive practices. By participating in such practices, participants engage in sensemaking "identity work". As Brown (2006) explains, organisational collective identities are "multi-voiced, quasifictional, plurivocal and reflexive constructions that unfold over time and are embedded in broader discursive (cultural) practices" (p. 732). According to Brown, this gradual unfolding primarily takes place in narrative. Human beings belong to a variety of collectives, most

of which are held together by shared experiences mediated in language. Some of those identities operate and contend within the context of professional and organisational memberships.

Ashforth and Humphrey (1997) claim that organisations are interpretive structures in which identity is socially constructed and symbolically mediated. Having reviewed the basic tenets of categorisation theory, semiotics, and labelling theory, Ashforth and Humphrey present a labelling framework for analysing various interactions at the individual, group, and organisational levels. The labelling framework can be applied to the organisational level of analysis because organisations are essentially viewed as social categories and labels embody what the organisation means or is hoped or intended to mean to individuals and groups (p. 53). A label, they explain, is a "signifier of a given object, and typically activates a set of cognitions (and related affect) about the object" (p. 43). In short, labels are a rhetorically constructed way of sorting organisational members into groups by assigning identity.

In the workplace, every member should ideally experience a sense of shared identity, or sameness, with the other team members. From management's perspective, it is beneficial to emphasise this collective identity. When the team's cooperative identity is more salient than competing identities, the organisation earns a competitive advantage. At the same time, individual motives remain as long as each employee protects his or her interests. Every membership is a function of rhetorical practices that delineate social connections and divisions.

3.3 Organisational Identity

The essence of an organisation is its identity. It is a source of stability, a definition for its members, and a basis for action (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1996). It answers questions such as "Who are we?", "What are we doing?" and "What do we want to be in the future?" Organisational identity is defined as "that which members believe to be central, enduring, and distinctive about their organisation" (Albert and Whetten, 1985, p. 264). It refers to something that sets an organisation apart from others suggesting "that by strengthening the organisation's identity – its distinctiveness, consistency and stability – it can be assumed that individuals' identities and identification will be strengthened with what they are supposed to be doing at their workplace (Alvesson, 1990, p. 374).

According to Ashforth and Mael (1996), identity is defined as "the core of what something *is*, what fundamentally defines that entity (p. 20)". The core is the central character of an organisation. The central character of an organisation is rooted in its system of beliefs, values, and norms, and is anchored in the organisational mission that informs sensemaking and action.

Argenti (2003) defines organisational identity as "the visual manifestation of the company's reality as conveyed through the organisation's name, logo, motto, products, services, buildings, uniforms, and all other tangible pieces of evidence created by the organisation and communicated to a variety of constituencies" (p.58). This visual

identity gives an image of the organisation to its members. If the identity and image are aligned, it will result in strong identification with the company.

Much of the research on organisational identity builds on the idea that identity is a relational construct formed in interaction with others (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). Albert and Whetten (1985, p. 273, citing Erickson, 1968) described the process of identity formation:

> … in terms of a series of comparisons: (1) outsiders compare the target individual with themselves; (2) information regarding this evaluation is conveyed through conversations between the parties ('polite boy', 'messy boy') and the individual takes this feedback into account by making personal comparisons with outsiders, which then; (3) affects how they define themselves.

Albert and Whetten (1985) concluded that "organisational identity is formed by a process of ordered inter-organisational comparisons and reflections over time" (p. 273). Realities such as globalisation has forced a rewriting and rethinking of the organisational landscape as management has had to deal with issues such as acquisitions, division sell-offs and budget cuts. As organisations strive to manage these changes, the question often raised is, "Who are we" (Albert & Whetten, 1985:264-265). According to Cheney and Christensen (2001) the primary reason for answering this question is "to control ... how the organisation is commonly represented" (p.248).

Research of organisational identity focuses on several dimensions, such as the formation of organisational identity, and its relationship to organisational culture and image (Ashfort & Mael, 1989; Gioia, Schultz, & Corley, 2000; Hatch & Schultz, 2002), multiple identities and identity management (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Pratt & Foreman, 2000), and identity and organisational change (Brown & Starkey, 2000; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991).

Other definitions of organisational identity state that it reflects an organisation's central and distinguishing attributes – including its core values, organisational culture, modes of performance, and products (Elsbach and Kramer, 1996), or that it refers to a collective, commonly shared understanding of the organisation's distinctive values and characteristics (Hatch and Schultz, 1997, p.357).

3.3.1 Studies related to organisational identity

A great deal of literature on organisational identity exists that is theoretical (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Hatch & Schultz, 2002). However, there is a limited but growing body of research on organisational identity (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Gioia & Thomas, 1996, cited in Margolis & Hansen, 2002).

In a broad sense, the literature on organisational identity can be classified into at least three different perspectives (Gioa, 1998, p. 25). *Functionalist* or *social realist* studies for example, (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996), are grounded in realist ontological assumptions that take 'identity' as an essential object or asset that is deductively understood through hypothesis testing by objective observers. *Interpretative* or *constructionist* studies (e.g Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997) are inductive and involve participant observation, often presenting informant accounts in narrative form. *Post-modern* or *semiotic* studies (e.g. Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003) are grounded in poststructuralist assumptions, considering identity to be an ever-changing phenomenon created by the party in power, with scholarship typically proceeding through critical deconstruction or discourse analysis.

The study of narrative has been one of the major areas of research within discourse analysis. Studies have explored the formal structure of narrative, the morphological and syntactic structure, the use of narrative in the presentation of self, and the work of narrative in small group interactions.

Linde (1996) in her study of narratives proposes that there are two basic approaches to the study of narrative. The first approach is the study of how narrative is used to carry out the daily work of the institution. This can include both the use of narrative by members of the institution to do the daily work of the institution, as well as the attempts of non-members to use narrative in professional settings such as legal or medical situations, where professionals require the use of specialised, privileged forms of

discourse. The second approach is "the study of the work that narrative performs in institutions to reproduce the institution, reproduce or challenge the power structures of the institution, induct new members, create the identity of the institution and its members, adapt to change, and deal with contested or contradictory versions of the past" (Linde, 1996, p. 1).

Ran and Duimering (2007) studied the relationship between identity and categorisation processes. In their study of a hundred corporate mission statements, they explored the cognitive linguistic processes involved in organisational identity construction through language-based identity claims. The organisational imaging process constructs an organisation's identity.

Organisational identity is frequently confused with the similar but separate notion of 'image', which is the "set of views on the organisation held by those who act as the organisation's 'others'" (Hatch & Schultz, 2002, p. 995). While organisational identity refers to what people see as their organisation's distinctive attributes, image refers to that which people believe others see as distinctive about their organisation (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991, p. 550). Other studies have focused on the close and reciprocal relationship between identity and image (Gioia & Thomas, 1996, p. 394, cited in Oliver & Roos, 2003).

Oliver and Roos (2003) argued that not many empirical studies of organisational identity and identity categories have been carried out. They selected eleven scholarly journals in which the authors made an explicit attempt to study organisational identity directly in real organisations. In selecting these articles, they eliminated those that contained highly perfunctory descriptions of organisational identity such as ‘illustrative case studies’ (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) or general references to well-known cases such as the Body Shop or Royal Dutch Shell (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). An extract of the summary of the studies they included in their review is encapsulated in Table 3.1. The studies included a range of different empirical methods, including large-scale quantitative surveys, longitudinal case studies, action research, content analysis, studies of archival data, and a variety of multi-method approaches.

Table 3.1
Empirical Studies of Organisational Identity in Scholarly Journals

Authors	Organisations Studied	Methodological Approach	Method of Data Collection	Method of Analysis	Identity Descriptions
Dutton & Dukerich, 1991	Port Authority of New York and New Jersey	Longitudinal Case Study	Interviews, Reports, Memos, Speeches, Articles	Construction of issue history and theme analysis, development of "identity attributes"	Six attributes- 'professionalism', 'ethical/scandal-free-altruistic', 'committed to quality', 'committed to region's welfare', 'employees as family', 'can-do mentality'
Elsbach & Kramer, 1996	Eight 'top-20' US business schools	'Iterative' qualitative data analysis	Interviews, analysis of school catalogues and biographies	Collection of 844 'identity statements', developed 'identity dimensions'	'Participatory culture', 'diverse students', 'small/friendly culture', 'rigorous/technical' 'quantitative programme, 'academy values' 'teaching values', 'friendly culture', etc.
Pratt & Rafaeli, 1997	A large hospital rehabilitation unit	Action research	Participation, observation, interviews, free associations and formal documents	Search for dominant themes, coding and clustering	Two identities described: 'rehabilitation identity' and 'acute care identity' distinguished partly by dress codes
Gioia & Thomas, 1996	372 colleges & universities in the United States	Quantitative study of issues	Large-scale survey	Measurement of identity along 2 dimensions- 'utilitarian' or 'normative'	Two identities – 'utilitarian' and 'normative' - measured through 9 questions

Source: Adapted from Oliver and Roos, 2003, p. 10

According to Oliver and Roos' (2003) observation of these studies, the vast majority of scholarly work on identity has been conducted in non-business organisations. Except for the study that was conducted by Gioia and Thomas (1996) on 372 colleges and universities in the United States to measure identity along two dimensions; 'utilitarian' or 'normative' (refer to Table 3.1), there appears to be none other on educational institutions.

The present research endeavours to investigate how the identity of the employees in an educational institution is influenced by organisational change initiatives. Although it does not study its core attributes as espoused by Albert and Whetten (1985) who define the three essential criteria for organisational identity: *central character*, *distinctiveness*, and *temporal continuity*, it does however study how management tries to influence members' identity.

3.4 Discourse perspective of identity

This section begins with an overview of the basic principles of the discourse perspective of identity. Next a discussion on a general framework for the linguistic analysis of identity is presented.

3.4.1 Overview

The discourse perspective asserts the role of language in the construction of identities. The basis of this tenet is that the act of constructing an identity is a social process that is carried out through linguistic means, and therefore can be studied or revealed through analysis of language (Fairclough, 2004). Text and talk are not seen as external reality, but rather that they constitute social reality (Fairclough, 1995; 2001). Thus, discourse analysis aims to reveal the subjective processes of how discourse constitutes identity.

The discourse approach places emphasis on language as an object of enquiry. Identities are produced through linguistic means and therefore a linguistically based framework needs to be developed to study identities in discourse. Fairclough (2004) asserts, "no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write" (p. 3).

A major assumption of the discourse perspective is that the expression of identity can be found in every instance of language use. Discourse analysis adopts a multifunctional view of language as proposed by Halliday (in Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), who views language as having three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. In any instance of communication, language expresses the three metafunctions of representing reality, expressing social relations and coherence in texts. The identity function is subsumed within the interpersonal function in Halliday's model.

Fairclough (2004) reformulated Halliday's three metafunctions as the three types of meanings in texts: "representation", "action" and "identification" (p. 27). The three types of meaning overlap and are interrelated in real life communication. There is a dialectical relationship between the three types of meaning.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) note that "identity is discursively produced even in the most mundane and unremarkable situations" (p. 589), thus acknowledging the pervasiveness of identity in everyday life. Since identity cannot be separated from discourse, a discourse analytical approach as the method to study the construction of identity is established.

3.4.2 General framework for linguistic analysis of identity

Various fields of study have used discourse analysis as a methodology to study identity. Such studies encompass fields such as sociolinguistics, communication, and psychology among others. The work of Bucholtz and Hall (2005) is invaluable in the study of identity using a discourse analytical approach. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) broadly defined identity as "the social positioning of self and other". They propose a framework for the analysis of identity as produced in linguistic interaction which is an offshoot of a wide variety of research in several fields

The framework synthesises key work on identity and offers a general sociocultural linguistic perspective on identity. It encompasses five principles as fundamental to the study of identity and therefore provides a general framework for the understanding of what identity means in discourse analysis. The five principles of identity proposed are: "emergence, positionality, indexicality, relationality and partialness" (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005, p. 607).

3.4.2.1 The emergence principle

This refers to the view of identity as being primarily in the mind of an individual. The only possible relationship "between identity and language use is for language to reflect an individual's internal mental state" (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). It is constituted through "social action, and especially through language" (p.588). They argue that:

> Identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon (p.588).

The only way that such self-conceptions enter the social world is via some form of discourse. The principle of emergence was first promoted by Dell Hymes whose view "of artful linguistic performance as dialogic rather than monologic" led him to propose for an understanding of "structure as sometimes emergent in action" (Hymes, 1975:71).

Thus Bucholtz and Hall maintain that identity emerges from the specific conditions of linguistic interaction.

Antaki and Widdicombe's (1998) elaboration of identity as an interactional accomplishment, also relates to the emergent principle. According to them, identity emerges as the interaction unfolds and therefore is not a predetermined category.

3.4.2.2 The positionality principle

Identity emerges in discourse through the temporary roles and orientations assumed by participants. According to Bucholtz and Hall (p. 592), identities encompass:

a. macro-level demographic categories
b. local, ethnographically specific cultural positions; and
c. temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles.

Apart from the broad sociological categories such as age, gender and social class, there are also micro level details of identity which are temporary such as "joke-teller" or "engaged listener" (p. 591).

The positionality principle is similar to the distinctions discourse analysts make between fleeting discourse identities, situated, and transportable identities (Zimmerman, 1998).

Zimmerman explains “discourse identities” (p. 92) as momentary roles adopted by participants in conversation. Such identities are not fixed, and may vary as the interaction progresses. While discourse identities may vary in the course of a conversation, situated identities remain fixed. “Situated identities” (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 94) remain rather constant in a conversation. For example, in an emergency call situation, the situated identities of participants are the emergency call-taker and the citizen caller (p. 94). However, their discourse identities can vary in the interaction, such as narrator/listener, interrogator/interrogatee, and so on. So, different kinds of positions can occur simultaneously in a single interaction.

Transportable identities are “identities that travel with the individuals across situations and are potentially relevant in and for any situation and for any spate of interaction” (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 90). Examples of this type of identities are those which are visibly identifiable such as age, gender, marital status, occupations and so on.

3.4.2.3 The indexicality principle

> Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one’s own or other’s identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of

> linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups (p. 594).

Indexicality is referred to as "the mechanism whereby identity is constituted" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 593). This principle is fundamental to the way in which linguistic forms are used to construct identity positions. An index is a linguistic form that depends on the interactional context for its meaning, such as the first-person pronoun *I*.

The most obvious means of identity construction is the overt reference to identity categories (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Other means are through pragmatic processes such as implicature and presuppositions. Stance or evaluation that relates to the expression of values, judgements and emotions through language also constructs identities. This is elaborated by Du Bois (quoted in Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) who characterise stance as social action, "I evaluate something, and thereby position myself, and align [or disalign] with you" (p. 595).

These insights are important in the study of identity "because they show how even in the most fleeting of interactional moves, speakers position themselves and others as particular kinds of people. Moreover, stances can build up into larger identity categories" (p. 595). This larger identity can be related to ways of being and acting (Fairclough, 2004) that identify particular subjects.

Indexicality is comparable to "occasionedness" (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998, p.4). The linguistic expression of category can only be understood within the context of the utterance. The meaning of the utterance "is to be found in the occasion of its production" where the occasion is the local environment in which the utterance is embedded at the particular moment of interaction (p.4).

3.4.2.4 The relationality principle

The relationality principle according to Bucholtz and Hall addresses the fact that identities are never autonomous or independent of other identities but always acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and cannot revolve around a single axis of sameness and difference. Thus, this principle can be summarised as follows:

> Identities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarity/difference (*adequation and distinction),* genuineness/artifice *(authentication and denaturalisation),* and authority/delegitimacy *(authorisation and illegitimation)* (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 598).

The words in italics in the quotation are the descriptions given by Bucholtz and Hall. To align or disalign a subject from a particular identity group, the subject's similarities with (adequation) or differences (distinction) from the target identity group have to be constructed. The genuineness/artifice pair is the process in which the speaker makes claims about the authenticity and fakeness of identities. Authentication is a strategy which is used to legitimise identities while denaturalisation calls attention to false assumptions. Finally, authority/delegitimacy is related to institutional structures and ideologies that give power to subjects.

3.4.2.5 The partialness principle

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) encapsulate this principle as follows:

> Any given construction of identity may be in part deliberate and intentional, in part habitual and hence less than fully conscious, in part an outcome of interactional negotiation and contestation, in part an outcome of other's perceptions and representations, and in part an effect of larger ideological processes and material structures that may become relevant to interaction. It is therefore constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse contexts (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606).

Since identity is relational, it will always be partial "produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other" (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605). The partialness principle proposes that identity construction is a partially conscious process and that it is shaped by the social and material world. It therefore shifts within the progress of an interaction and changing contexts and so is never complete.

3.4.2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the five principles proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) provide the basis of the discourse perspective of identity. They provide a framework for the study of identity in discourse in this study.

3.5 Definition of identity used in the study

This study adopts Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) definition of identity as "the social positioning of self and other" (p. 586). A discourse perspective in the study of identity construction is adopted as outlined in the previous section. Identity is understood as socially constructed in discourse and can vary from temporary discourse identities to the more enduring social categories. This broad definition of identity encompasses any

reference to self, such as role or responsibility, attitude, characteristics or traits or even a way of looking at things.

3.6 Organisational control

Organisational control is an issue which is central to any organisation. For an organisation to function effectively and efficiently, a system or mechanism of control has to be in place that would ensure that organisational members behave as they should and perform according to processes and procedures that will enable the organisation to attain its goals. Control is a central organisational function which coordinates and directs activities and resources in an organisation to meet its goals (Schaad, 2003).

Control has been variously defined, and different terms (for example, power, authority, and influence) are sometimes used synonymously with it. Control can be direct or indirect. It refers to any process in which a person or group of persons or organisation of persons determines and intentionally affects the behaviour of another person, group, or organisation.

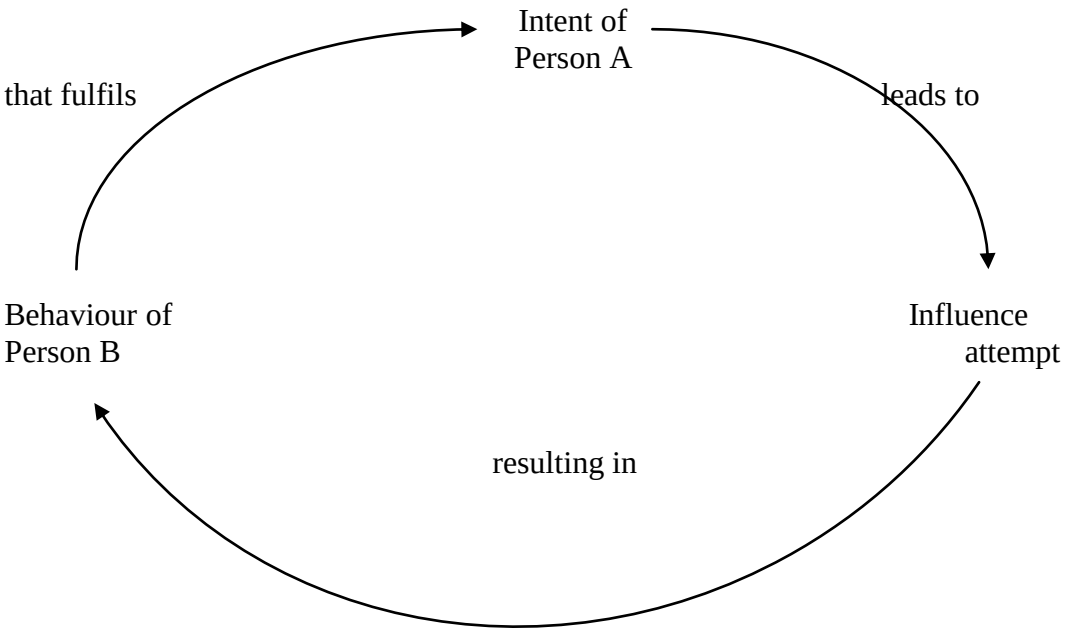
The results of a number of studies suggest that the total amount of control in an organisation is related positively to organisational effectiveness. Relatively high total control implies a more “tight knit” organisation, one in which there is a greater degree of interaction and influence within and between hierarchical levels and greater mutual

understanding and uniformity in relevant attitudes and behaviours. This suggests better coordination of efforts, higher motivation and identification, and more efficient efforts towards attaining organisational objectives and goals.

The meaning of control is illustrated in a simple prototype in Figure 3.1, which represents control as a cycle beginning with intent on the part of one person, followed by an influence attempt addressed to another person, who then acts in some way that fulfils the intent of the first.

Figure 3.1

The Control Process



Management is usually associated with the exercise of control. Although managers do other things, the exercise of control is a dominant part of a manager's job. Managers monitor and regulate how efficiently and effectively an organisation and its members are performing activities necessary to achieve organisational goals. They keep an organisation on track, anticipating events, and making changes when necessary to respond to opportunities and threats.

There are several organisational control systems such as the output control, behaviour control, and organisational culture or clan control. Output control would include measures of performance in terms of finance, organisational goals and operating budgets, while behaviour control is achieved through direct supervision, management by objectives, rules and standard operating procedures. Organisational culture on the other hand, involves the inculcation of values, norms and socialisation. The internalised values, norms, and standards of behaviour control the ways in which individuals and groups in an organisation interact with each other to work and achieve organisational goals.

The latter form of control is identified by Alvesson et. al. (2000) as social control. They relate this form of control to the internalised values, norms and behaviour of organisational members. These are efforts to persuade people to adapt to certain value systems, norms, beliefs and ideas about what is good, important, and praiseworthy in terms of work and organisational life. Typical examples of belief or value systems include mission statements, statements of purpose, and corporate visions.

Other mechanisms that target behaviour and are forms of managerial control are various forms of standardisation of work (procedures, outputs, skills), or direct supervision.

Managerial control is usually carried out by a powerful group of people who plan or "orchestrate" and exercise executive authority over other social groups within an organisation (Alvesson & Karreman, 2004, p.152). Through planned efforts of the powerful social group, management can exercise control over organisational members.

Another definition of control means that members of the organisation have their actions determined, or influenced by membership of the organisation. Membership of an organisation can constrain and influence how one acts and thinks.

Finally, there is the method of unobtrusive control (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985) which is described as getting employees to control themselves. It is a process by which members of an organisation are guided in making organisationally relevant decisions and is often referred to as normative, concertive or ideological control. It is achieved by persuading and influencing employees' cognitive premises of decision-making, causing them to be more likely to make decisions in line with those of the organisation. The employee complies with organisational rules and expectations because he has accepted that it is the right and appropriate thing to do. The employee has internalised or assimilated the organisation's goals to become his own. Thus, the element of control becomes invisible to him, hence the term unobtrusive control.

The process by which ideological or unobtrusive control is achieved is called identification in organisational research. Identification is defined as the "integration of the beliefs about one's group into one's identity" (Pratt, 1998, p. 172) by which an individual claims oneness with or belongingness to a group. The degree of identification is the degree to which the values, goals and beliefs of the organisation become part of the social identity of the organisational member. The process of identification and its management is the crux of ideological control.

It is this method of control which is of interest in the present study. The aim of the study is to elucidate how unobtrusive control is accomplished through organisational discourse at KCUC. As Fairclough (1995) asserts:

> ... we live in an age in which power is predominantly exercised through the generation of consent rather than through coercion, through ideology rather than through physical force, through the inculcation of self-disciplining practices rather than through the breaking of skulls (p. 219).

Unobtrusive control, thus works through winning 'the hearts and minds of employees: to define their purposes by managing what they think and feel, and not just how they behave' (Wilmott, 1993). The exercise of unobtrusive control is subtle and overt power may be invisible or 'hidden' (Fairclough, 2001). Organisational members may not be aware that they are the targets of control. In fact, unobtrusive or ideological control functions to have members believe that their compliance to organisational goals and

expectations are voluntary. Fairclough (2001), Wodak (1996) and Barker (1993) explained that when power is exercised so subtly, opposing it becomes more difficult. So for this reason, unobtrusive control is regarded as more powerful and difficult to oppose, in contrast to other types of bureaucratic control.

Thus, it can be seen that there are several methods of control that an organisation uses to exert control over organisational members. Some are direct and others not so direct. In the following sub-sections (3.6.1.1 and 3.6.1.2) two conceptual models in the study of construction of identity and regulation are presented.

3.6.1 Conceptual models

Any act of communication or utterance expresses or constructs identity, as supported by the theory of the multifunctional view of language (Halliday in Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999) and the three meanings of text; ideational, representational and actional (Fairclough, 2004). This study, similar to Chan's (2008) study of identity, takes the view that the act of constructing identity is not merely an act of social communication, but an intentional strategic act aimed at ideological control (see Section 3.6).

In this section, two conceptual models that can be utilised to illuminate the ideological function of identity construction in controlling the subjectivity of the target of control

are explored. The ultimate aim of identity construction is to "change the subject" (Fairclough, 2004, p. 208) that is to effect changes in a person's way of thinking, being and acting.

3.6.1.1 Inculcation: Strategic action, naturalisation and common sense

Discourses may be inculcated as new ways of being, acting, interacting and assuming new identities. According to Fairclough (2001; 2004) the process of 'changing' a subject through the use of discourse is called 'inculcation' (Fairclough, 2004, p.208).

Inculcation is the act of imposing discourses and identities in an exercise of power by certain parties, usually the management. This is often done in an unobtrusive or "hidden fashion" (Fairclough, 2001, p.62). The process of inculcation begins with the strategic act of deployment of new discourses and identities which may begin as rhetorical deployment but could become 'ownership'- how people become unconsciously positioned within a discourse (Fairclough, 2004).

Strategic action on the part of management involves the intentional imposition of particular discourses with the aim of influencing the identity and ideology of subjects. This does not mean that subjects would automatically accept the new discourses and identities imposed. According to Fairclough, the subject would 'position' himself or herself within the new discourses which results in the eventual unselfconscious

positioning of self only when it becomes natural to him or her. This is when the ways of being, perceiving and acting become commonsensical. The process by which discourses lose their ideological character and are regarded as common sense is called "naturalisation" (Fairclough, 2001, p.76).

To conclude, Fairclough's (2001; 2004) notion of inculcation serves to provide a clear explanation of the process of how discourse influences or transforms identities and ideologies or ways of thinking of organisational members. Organisational members may not subscribe to this change in thinking and may resort to resist this change. However, management can unobtrusively or indirectly influence the process of change by effective deployment of discourses that construct ideal identities, to subject them to particular subject positions, to construct particular worldviews, to influence their ways of perceiving, being, and acting and to eliminate alternative ways of perceiving, being, and acting. According to Fairclough (2001) and Wodak (1996), power that is exercised unobtrusively or in a hidden fashion is difficult to resist.

3.6.1.2 Theory of identity regulation

As Deetz (1995, p. 87), put its "the modern business of management is often managing the 'insides' – the hopes, fears, and aspirations – of workers, rather than their behaviours directly".

Albert, Ashfort and Dutton (2000, p.14) said that:

> … it is because identity is problematic – and yet so crucial to how and what one values, thinks, feels and does in all social domains, including organisations – that the dynamics of identity need to be better understood.

Studies of identity that directly bear upon organisational control include analyses of institutional and other macro level phenomena, (e.g. Albert & Whetten, 1985; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1994) as well as studies that concentrate on individuals and forms of identification and subjectivity (Alvesson, 2000; Deetz, 1992). According to Gidden's (1991, p. 53), "Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person… self-identity is continuity (across time and space) as interpreted by the agent". Alvesson and Willmott (1996, p. 7) coined the following metaphor: "*the employee as identity worker"* who is enjoined to incorporate the new managerial discourses into narratives of self-identity. This is usually achieved by organisations through processes of induction, training and corporate education (e.g. in-house magazines, posters etc.) – to embrace the notion of 'We' (for example, of the organisation or institution) in preference to 'The Company', 'It' or 'They'.

Organisational discourse facilitates identity regulation. Organisational norms and culture form a system of values and practices which mould employees' behaviour and performance. Through these processes of moulding and coordinating work, organisational members' subjectivity becomes aligned with increased organisational utility.

This disciplining effect of individual identification with the organisational nexus finds resonance in Foucault's (1988) concept of technologies of the self. Technologies of the self, require one to discover truths of the self through self-examination in order to affirm and transform oneself. The individual, thus, becomes the object of improvement and the subject that does the improving (Kosmala & Herrbach, 2006).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) propose a theory of identity regulation to illuminate how managerial discourse controls the subjectivity or identities of members in an organisation. Identity regulation refers to the intentional efforts on the part of management to inculcate identities that are deemed to be appropriate or congruent with organisational goals and objectives and are thus "management-driven" (p. 636). The objective of identity regulation is to produce "an appropriate individual" in the worker (p. 619) who embodies traits, characteristics, behaviour and ways of being that are compatible with organisational objectives.

Identity regulation is accomplished through discourse. The conceptual framework of Alvesson and Willmott's (2002) understanding of the relationship between self-identity, identity work and identity regulation is summarised in Figure 3.2.

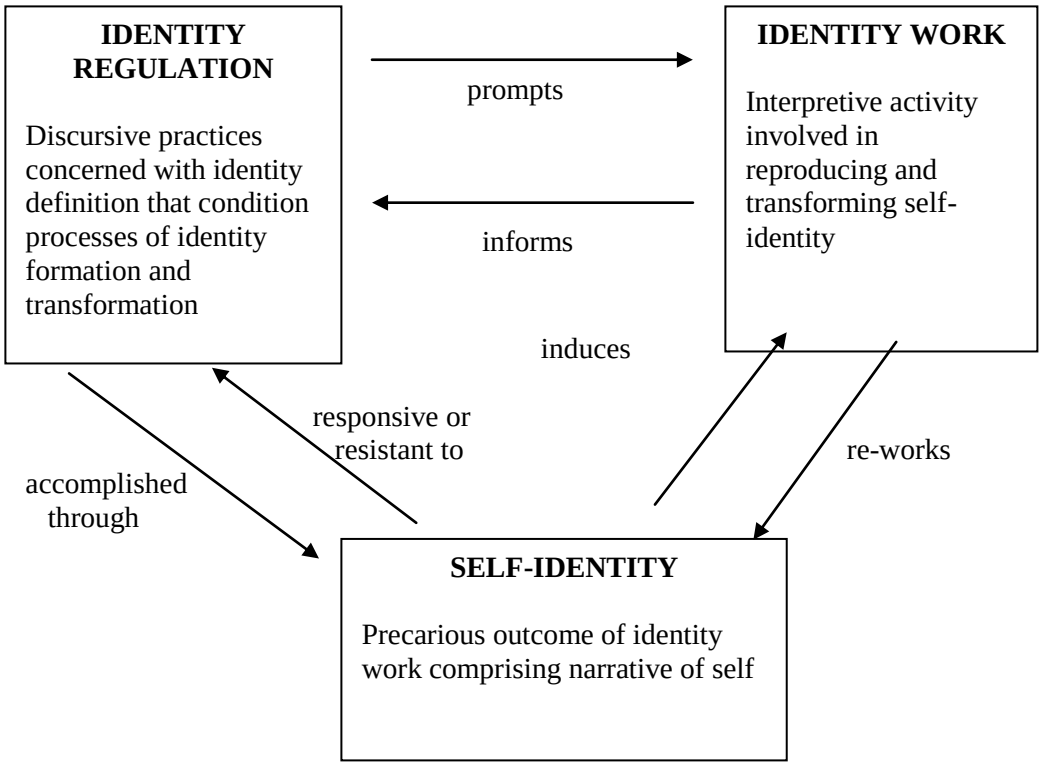


Figure 3.2: Identity Regulation, Identity Work and Self-Identity

Source: Alvesson and Willmott, 2002, p. 627

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) conceptualise identity processes as the interplay between three constructs: (a) self-identity, the individual's image of himself or herself; (b) identity work, the active construction of a self-identity; and (c) identity regulation,

which refers to the regulative effects of organisational and social processes. Identity regulation is the more or less intentional discursive practices which serve to impact upon identity definition that influences the construction of identity through identity work. Identity work refers to the process of interpreting identities that result in the reproduction or transformation of self-identity. Self-identity is seen as a repertoire of narratives, and is sustained through identity work in which regulation is accomplished by selectively, but not necessarily reflectively, adopting practices and discourses that are more or less targeted at the "insides" of employees. It refers to subjective meaning and experience, and provides answers to questions such as "Who am I?, What do I stand for? and How should I act?" (Alvesson and Willmott 2002, p. 625).

If the prescribed identity conflicts with the self-identity of the employee, the identity work will become intense resulting in either resistance or accommodation of the prescribed identity. Self-identity is precarious in the sense that it is open to further change as the process of identity regulation continues. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) assert that identity work is a significant medium and outcome of organisational control.

3.6.1.3 Summary

This section has highlighted two conceptual models for the study of identity; the process of inculcation and the theory of identity regulation. Both these models serve to change the subject, who is the target of control.

This study seeks to address how organisational control is accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses about work, organisation, and change with which they may become more or less identified and committed. It draws attention to identity as an important yet insufficiently explored dimension of organisational control Thus, the modern business of management in "*managing the 'insides' – the hopes, fears, and aspirations – of workers, rather than their behaviours directly"* is fulfilled.

3.7 Studies related to identity and organisational control

Alvesson and Karreman in '*Cages in Tandem: Management Control, Social Identity, and Identification in a Knowledge-Intensive Firm'* (2004) label managerial efforts to manage experiences and accounts - beliefs, meaning, norms, and interpretations- as "*socio-ideological forms of control*". This form of control targets social relations, identity formation, and ideology. They label "*technocratic control"* for attempts to directly control worker behaviour (Alvesson and Karreman, 2001b). The technocratic forms of control that they identified in their study of a multinational consulting company called Big Consulting are hierarchy, continuous evaluation, standardised work procedures, and career paths. They categorise these as the "Structural Cage" and the "Mental Cage" as the identification and pressures towards ideational conformity. These include the "we-feeling", homogenization, subordination, and obedience.

In citing Etzioni, Kunda (1992), elaborates that organisations target the behaviour of their members indirectly, through norms and values. This is accomplished through managerial practice that Etzioni labels and Kunda elaborates as *normative control*: "the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experience, thoughts, and feelings that guide their actions" (Kunda, 1992, p. 11).

Corporate culture is another form of normative control (Kunda, 1992; Peters & Waterman, 1982, cited in Lo, 2000). It is described as a system that works within an organisation by ascribing people with subjective attributes and dispositions. Cultivating strong corporate cultures that harness loyal, committed, and hardworking employees is a form of control strategy. Peters and Waterman argued that corporate cultures, which centre on principles such as cultivating workplace values, employee motivation, autonomy, organisational commitment, and team building, are the keys to success in contemporary business (cited in Lo, 2000). Corporate culture has increasingly been recognised as an important means of controlling workplace activities.

Zanoni and Janssens's (2005) study of minority employees in two different contexts; TechnoLine, a technical drawing company and Saint Mary's hospital serves to illustrate yet other methods of organisational control – that of diversity approaches and organisational structures. TechnoLine relies on clients to control employees directly while regulating their identity as empowered professionals. In contrast, Saint Mary controls majority and minority employees in partially different ways. In addition to a variety of direct controls and the identity regulation of 'open' carers, minority

employees are controlled by a well-developed and autonomous diversity management. This diversity management stresses cultural group differences, providing minority employees with an identity of 'cultural experts' who contribute to culturally appropriate care for patients belonging to their same cultural group.

Discourses of the organisation can be used by management to control employees. Unobtrusive control is largely effected through the mediation of such discourses. Analysing such discourses is an important aspect in the study of control. Discourse analysts and organisational researchers have illuminated how management appropriates discourse in organisations to control organisational members. In the following sub-sections, studies related to the construction of identity through discourse and what they serve to do in enacting organisational control are presented.

3.7.1 Constructing history

Witten in her study; '*Narrative and the Culture of Obedience at the Workplace'* (1993), states that narratives can unobtrusively and persuasively communicate core organisational values as they embed exemplars – concrete, situated examples of actions for members of organisations to follow or emulate. She cites the example of a narrative that a new employee at a leading management consulting firm in New York would hear. Witten argues that stories told in organisations function to create a culture of obedience among organisational members. The mechanism of control is achieved through the

reiteration of stories told again and again, to new recruited employees as a form of initiation into the culture of the organisation. Narratives such as this help form the 'deep structure' of organisational order – a set of taken-for-granted, unexamined assumptions about what is appropriate behaviour in the organisation. Analysis of the stories shows the strategic moulding of identities in the stories – identities that are disempowered to challenge or question the power or hierarchical structure of the organisation.

Thus, narratives can be a "potent vehicle for channelling thought and action ..... and can serve purposes of control by persuasively – and unchallengeably – modelling desired behaviours; by supplying core values, and by inventing a credible history for the firm in which attempts at protest are consigned to failure" (Witten, 1993).

Another study that shows the capacity of discourse in constructing identities through the construction of history is that of Linde (2001). Linde (2001) in her study of narratives in an institution, namely a major American insurance company, called MidWest Insurance, founded in the 1920s argues that discourse can be used to reproduce the institution, reproduce or challenge the power structures of the institution, induct new members, create the identity of the institution and its members, adapt to change, and deal with contested or contradictory versions of the past. This can be understood as the way an institution uses narrative to create and reproduce its identity by the creation and maintenance of an institutional memory. Through repeated stories about the history of the organisation and its founder, the values of the organisation and how things are done in the organisation, are conveyed to members. Thus, members position themselves as

part of the history of the organisation and they acquire knowledge about the 'proper ways to be a member' (Linde, 2001).

Yet another study is that of a case study of the United Kingdom-based specialist tour operator Laskarina Holidays. Brown et al. (2005) studied narrative constructs through an analysis of shared identity stories about the founders, Ian and Kate Murdoch. They identified three distinctive but interwoven collective identity narratives (which are labelled "utilitarian" (economic-focused), "normative" (morality-focused) and "hedonic" (pleasure-focused) (p. 315). They argue that organisational identities are narrative accomplishments and can be theorised both as linguistic constructs and as power effects. Organisational identity stories are dynamic constructs, invented and reinvented in continuing dialogues between participants, including those between employees and external stakeholders such as customers and suppliers.

Organisational stories thus are an important means used by organisations in disseminating knowledge and enhancing organisational learning, instigating processes of social and organisational change, and building solidarity. They can 'rule in' what is acceptable and 'rule out' what is unacceptable, thereby constraining organisational members to conform.

3.7.2 Constructing community memory

Another study that describes the construction of identity through discourse is that of the study of narratives in work settings by Orr (1990 and 1996). Orr's study of the use of narrative in the work of copier repair technicians shows that narrative forms a significant part of their work practice. The technicians told stories about copiers, clients and repair technicians to preserve community memory on how to deal with problems and undocumented solutions. Being part of the community was significant to the copier repair technicians. Narrative thus is central to workplace life as a means of being and of acting.

3.7.3 Change in mindsets

One of the studies that has examined the role discourse plays in the social construction of specific organisational change initiatives and how people conduct themselves in these initiatives is Doolin's (2003) study of change in a New Zealand hospital. Doolin's study demonstrated how 'narratives of ordering' and a new information system were used in the mechanism of ordering and organising change at the hospital. The 'clinical leadership' narrative appealed to economic notions of efficiency and enterprise while the new information system provided users with a technical vocabulary that determined the meaning ascribed to particular events and social relationships within the organisation. As part of the clinical leadership initiative, clinicians were persuaded to

think of themselves as ‘managers’. This was significant in legitimising the economic and management discourses that were to justify the need for change. These new discourses came to dominate the thinking and behaviour of organisational members. Doolin’s study highlights how techno-structural and discursive interventions can interact in ways that can help shape mindsets about specific organisational changes.

3.7.4 Constructing religious identity

Discourse can also be a central variable for determining an organisation’s religious identity. As Euske and Roberts (1987) note, discourse “... is the social glue that ties members, subunits, and organisations together ... without communication organisations do not exist” (p.42).

In a study conducted by Jerold (2004), the communication of a specific message component, that of values, by the United Church of God, an international association, determines the identity of the Church. Results of a longitudinal analysis indicate that United’s identity reflects the following values: (a) during the first year of existence family security, obedience, mature love, helpfulness, and ambition; (b) during its third year of operation family security, helpfulness, ambition, obedience and true friendship; and (c) in its fifth year family security, helpfulness, ambition, obedience and wisdom. Thus, communication of values in an organisation through discourse among organisational members serves to define identity of its members.

3.7.5 Constructing the 'ideal' member

Chan (2008) examined the discursive construction of identity within the social practice of organisational control in network marketing discourse. The field of network marketing is known for its use of ideological means to motivate members to become committed. An 'ideal' member is one who possesses traits, attitudes, and beliefs that are implicitly or explicitly evaluated as 'correct' or 'preferred' in the managerial discourse of the network marketing company. Chan identified nine 'ideal' member identities. The 'ideal' member believes that as a sales agent for the company, he or she does not really need to do any selling, regards himself not just a salesperson but a business owner, builds the business, is ethical, is productive, has a healthy attitude towards training and is fully committed to his business. In setting up 'ideal' identities the social practice of network marketing constrains and conscripts members to be obedient. This implicates control.

3.7.6 Modes of prescribing identities

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) in their study of identity regulation as organisational control, propose nine modes of identity regulation strategies. These strategies may be grouped into four parameters: the employee/organisational member, action orientations, social relations, and the scene/environment/context. (Note: these strategies are discussed

in Chapter 4, section 4.3.3, as part of the analytical framework for this study). Any reference to these parameters has identification effects on members.

Alvesson and Willmott (2002) in their study make reference to two cases. In one of the cases, a production worker refuses to say ‘business’ instead of ‘product’ as instructed by the marketing manager. It was a corporate or managerial effort to make the company more market oriented. This act of management utilises three modes of strategies which are outlined as follows:

a. Changing the rules of the game

Production workers have identified themselves with a production oriented identity. Business or market oriented identities on the other hand are seen to be relevant in the domain of the marketing department. So in asking the production worker to change his mindset to adopt a business oriented perspective is akin to changing the rules of the game. It is an attempt to reconstruct the identity of the production worker.

b. Hierarchical location

The marketing manager summons the production worker to his office and instructs him to use the new prescribed language. He thus reinforces his position as one with authority over the worker. This establishes the subordinate position of the worker.

c. Knowledge and skills

This managerial effort can also be construed as ranking different kinds of knowledge and skills. In the example, the marketing manager subordinates production knowledge and skills to marketing and business knowledge and skills. By subjugating the production worker to adopt a marketing oriented identity, marketing knowledge is privileged over production knowledge. This allows for the legitimisation of the extension of the power of the marketing manager over the production workers.

To summarise, identity may be a more or less direct target for control as organising practices address the actor, expertise, hierarchical location, rules of the game, and the wider context. The strategies may be indirect and therefore not easily identified as they are embedded in language and language use. Organisational control therefore may operate through the management of identity, primarily by means of discourse.

This study's assertion is similar to Alvesson's and Willmott's in that identity regulation is a pervasive and increasingly intentional modality of organisational control.

3.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has set out to examine the notion of organisational control and the study of identity construction and its regulation as a means of organisational control within the social practice of organisational change. A discussion on the linguistic approaches in the analysis of identity serves to explicate how identity construction is examined. Two conceptual models; inculcation and identity regulation are discussed as the means of elucidating the ideological function of identity construction in controlling the subjectivity of the target of control. Finally, studies on identity and organisational control are reviewed.