

RHODES UNIVERSITY

Where leaders learn

Alumni Consultation Process

Commissioned by Rhodes University Alumni Relations
Communications and Advancement Division



Alumni Consultation Process

Commissioned by Rhodes University Alumni Relations Communications and Advancement Division

Executive Summary

The aim of this research was to provide an updated understanding of how the Alumni felt around issues of transformation. Data was obtained from a total of 713 Alumni spread over 3 countries - a total of 525 Alumni had their consultations done via face-to-face interactions and self-completion questionnaires, with the added focus group discussions recorded on tape, while a total of 188 alumni submitted their thoughts and feedback via written email, which will be taken as first hand written documentation to contribute towards the qualitative data.

The results showed an overwhelming support to keep the name as Rhodes University for its strong link to the brand identity that is Rhodes. However, the Alumni also gave diverse responses as to the changes needed at the University - especially around visual culture and rituals.

76% of the Alumni believe changing the name of the university will lead to the disenchantment of Alumni and supporters, as well as less affinity and attachment from graduates (who are also alumni).

Key Findings



- A total of 713
- Alumni in the research spread over a total of 3 countries and 9 cities/towns.
- Knysna had a total of 12 attendees with 11 respondents. 100% of the respondents were opposed to the name change.
- Perth (Australia) had a total of 35 attendees with 18 respondents and 89% were opposed to the name change.
- Namibia Alumni (different group from current students) had 22 respondents and 73% of them were opposed to the name change.
- East London Alumni had 40 attendees with 31 respondents and 77% of them were opposed to the name change.
- Port Elizabeth had a total of 50 attendees with 34 respondents and 77% of them were opposed to the name change.
- Namibian current Postgraduate students were 68 in total and 81% of them were opposed to the name change.
- Cape Town had a total of 85 attendees with 70 respondents and 54% of them were opposed to a name change.
- Sentiments to keep the name Rhodes University carried over in the discussion groups in Durban (45 attendees), Johannesburg (94 attendees) and Grahamstown with (42 attendees) at the Consultation and 32 at Convocation.
- This is the same for the 188 respondents who communicated via email.



Table of Contents

Key Findings	1
Executive Summary	1
1. Research methodology, design and study goals.....	3
1.1 The main goals of the research	5
1.2 Research Design	5
2. A profile of Alumni	7
3. Knysna Consultation Process.....	7
4. Cape Town Consultation Process.....	11
5. Namibia Alumni Consultation Process	15
6. Namibia Current Postgraduate Students (Also Alumni)	18
7. Port Elizabeth Consultation Process	21
8. Perth Consultation Process	24
9. East London Consultation Process.....	27
10. Summary and Concluding Remarks	30
References cited.....	34
Appendix Tables.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Researcher

Leroy J Maisiri

1. Research methodology, design and study goals

This paper was commissioned by the Rhodes University office. The method used was triangulation because triangulation is a process of verification that increases validity by incorporating several viewpoints and methods. In the social sciences, it refers to the combination of two or more theories, data sources, methods or investigators in one study of a single phenomenon to converge on a single construct, and can be employed in both quantitative (validation) and qualitative (inquiry) studies (Alexander, 2001). The Alumni consultation process report was brought together through self-answered questionnaires, focus group consultations recorded with consent on audio, and written documentation such as emails dating back to 2015 – 2017. Further to that the researcher employed the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Scientists (SPSS). The SPSS made use of the quantitative data being generated by the research, where the researcher applied coding and statistical analysis to assess the responses.

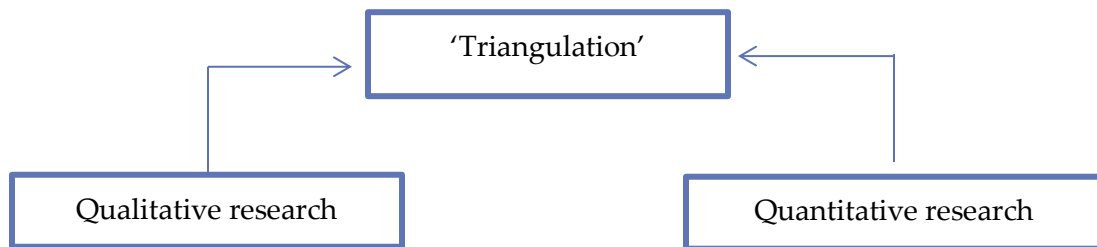


Figure 1. Basic Triangulation Model

The research focused on the ideas and perspectives of the different alumni and tried to position these ideas in relation to the ongoing debates around transformation. Due to the consistent use of triangulation the researcher believes that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data compared to a standalone methodology.

By combining the written questionnaires, recordings from the focused group conversations and written correspondents from various respondents, this paper has overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that arise from the use of a single method. General and inherent biasness were avoided by taking the data generated from the questionnaires and consolidating it with the focus group discussions with the same respondents filling in the questionnaires. This allowed for more careful elaboration around



the responses in the questionnaire. The use of written documentation in the form of various Alumni emails was also used to keep track of the different concerns and notes arising. This paper, guided by the data, used triangulation as its set methodology (Bryman, 2014).

Triangulation was the best choice to validate this research - especially a research project such as this one with little theoretical underpinnings. In the quantitative approach, 'triangulation' for confirmatory purpose is normally applied to confirm if instruments were appropriate for measuring the data. This research used the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) to code and arrange the data collected from the questionnaires. With SPSS the researcher was able to present the data in a more accessible way largely by use of graphical and tabulated information. Using this tool allowed for the easier integration of the quantitative data to be paired with the qualitative data for analysis. This was specifically done for the purposes of completeness.

The use of 'triangulation' for the purposes of completeness gradually emerged in the literature and generated the themes found in the paper. It did this through its allowance for the recognition of multiple realities. 'Triangulation' for completeness purposes is used mainly in researching the less explored or unexplored research problems. Understandably, this is the first time such research has been done on Rhodes Alumni. This paper then inherently carries the advantage of a qualitative research paradigm that has generated new data of Rhodes Alumni. The use of the sections marked off as “other” in the questionnaire paired with over 100 emails allow for a richer quality of data that further assisted in understanding the generated quantitative investigations.

Lastly, ‘triangulation’ was used to increase the credibility of the scientific knowledge generated by improving both internal consistency and generalizability through combining both quantitative and qualitative methods into the same study.

The Data was collected across three countries - namely South Africa, Namibia and Australia. Across the research field Namibia had the largest set of respondents, that is, 90 respondents. Namibia was split into two groups - specifically Alumni (22 respondents) and recent graduates together with current students (68 respondents). Thus in total, there were 90 respondents from Namibia. The lowest set of respondents came from Knysna with a total of 11 respondents. Falling on the spectrum between 11 – 90 respondents, Perth had a total of 18 respondents, East London had 31 respondents; Port Elizabeth and Durban had 34



respondents, Grahamstown had 74 respondents; Cape Town had 85 respondents and lastly Johannesburg had 94 respondents.

1.1 The main goals of the research

The research sought to find out:

- (i) The demographics of active “Alumni”;
- (ii) To assess how far Rhodes University had come with the transformation project and in part understanding the transformation narrative;
- (iii) To understand the Rhodes University “Brand” and what its reputation is, and;
- (iv) To assess the debate around the name change.

1.2 Research Design

The consultative questionnaire used in Perth, Cape Town, East London, Knysna, Port Elizabeth and Namibia had a total of 14 questions. The questionnaire started off with an updated character of who the Rhodes University active Alumni were. The questions were designed to pull biological information, race, sex, what they studied but also measured how long ago the alumni were at Rhodes University.

Question 1 addressed governance issues, hoping to assess what the Alumni’s views were around the current mission statement of Rhodes University and if the practices of the University lived up to the mission and vision. Some Alumni (34% who registered from 1940 – 1990) were very reserved on commenting on this, fearing that they had been away for too long to give an opinion on the question. Question 2 sought to gauge the strides Rhodes University had taken on numerous issues, ranging from developing shared values that embraced basic human rights to rejecting all forms of discrimination, as well as whether the appropriate measures were in place to address imbalances and the advancement and safety of students and staff life. The questionnaire asked alumni to respond on a spectrum of strongly agree to strongly disagree, which was coded as 1 – 4.

Question 3 addressed the continuous debate around the name “Rhodes University” - investigating its reputation, and “global brand”. Question 4 directly dealt with the issue of the name change, responses were also put on a spectrum ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Question 5 built on question 4 giving a total of 9 responses that respondents could choose two from to explain what the “benefits” of



renaming Rhodes University would be. Options 1 to 8 spoke towards “realities of a new African context”, spoke towards transformation, minimizing conflict and polarisation. Option 9 maintained that “there will be no benefits if the name is changed”.

Question 6 almost an opposite of question 5, asked “what issues might be associated with changing the Rhodes University name?” This question gave the respondents a total of 8 responses to choose from, allowing a selection of two answers. The responses ranged from “disenchantment of alumni” to a sense of loss of prestige and academic standing, a perceived perception of an exodus from both staff and students. Options 5 to 7 discussed reduced interests from the private sector, donors, international students and reduced academic collaborations. The final option in the list was “there will be no issues with changing the name”. Question 7 and 8 directly related to the Alumni and their roles to the university in line with conversations of transformation. Question 7 asked the Alumni what their commitments would be if the name was to change, while question 8 specifically asked how the alumni would contribute to the continued process of transformation in the university.

Questions 9 – 12 specially dealt with the visual culture and rituals of the institution, asking about colours, symbols, art works, as well as the graduation ceremony and how it can be changed (conversely, if there is a need to change it). The questions further asked about ‘the space’ - how one experienced the accommodation, sports, integration and the impact of the diversity of culture and personality differences at the University. Question 14 looked into the curriculum, asking the alumni to reflect on it and measure it against its ability to prepare one for the work place as well as to question the intellectual content in the curriculum.

During the consultation process, drawing from the same questionnaire questions, Namibian current students who participated had slightly different sets of questions. Namibian current student questionnaires consisted of 7 questions. Question 1 asked them to speak towards the “Rhodes University reputation and global brand”. Question 2 was an exact duplicate of question 4 in the Alumni consultation Questionnaire, namely asking whether “The name of Rhodes University should be changed”. Responses were also scaled on a spectrum of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Question 3 asked what the benefits of renaming the university were, offering the exact same responses to choose from as found in the Alumni consultation process. Question 3 was followed by question 4 that asked the respondents to speak towards the issues which would potentially be associated with changing the name Rhodes University.



Question 5 and 6 in the Namibian current student questionnaire was identical to question 7 and 8 in the Alumni consultation Questionnaire. However, this time the responses can be viewed as the current students expectations of the alumni around what they would still expect from the Alumni if the name was to change and also, to define the expectations from the current students about how they thought the alumni could contribute to transformation.

The final question was around the issue of curriculum, with an ending off section for the respondents to write or comment on other matters.

2. A profile of Alumni

To be an Alumni (gender neutral term) means one who has graduated or has had a relationship with the institution for over a year. Rhodes University to date is now a 113-year-old institution, the research found alumni who have had up to a 77 year old relationship with the institution having registered for their first degree in 1940, this stretched all the way to alumni currently enrolled for study in the year 2017. This means that the data collection spanned seven decades of understanding, with diverse responses within the sample group.

The consultation process although designed to assess how the Rhodes alumni felt about issues around transformation, also found an alumni that is still engaged with the University, an alumni that follows and supports the institution in various ways. Many of the respondents here answered based on their own experience and observations of the institution. According to the data gathered the alumni are not as isolated and removed from the institution as generally perceived. Currently the alumni are annually responsible for 1.3 million Rand in direct funding via the individual giving Annual Fund project. Bequests brought in R720 000 last year, with a further estate of R3.5 million waiting for completion. year. In addition, there are alumni donating via their trusts, boards and companies, which brings in millions for specific faculties and projects.

Knysna Consultation Process.

Knysna had the smallest set of respondents in the entire consultation process, with only 11 respondents. 9/11 respondents were white while 2 of the respondents choose not to answer the race category question. Knysna was split equally with regards to gender as one respondent chose not to answer that section.



The alumni in Knysna although a small group had a diversified relationship with the University as they all seem to have registered at different times for their first degree at Rhodes University. This gave the consultation a process a broad representation of thinking of different alumni over a period of up to 77 years. 1 of the respondents registered between 1940 -1950 (9.1%). 18% (2/11 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between 1951 - 1960, another 18% (2/11 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between the year 1961- 1970, and yet another 34% (4/11 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between 1971 -1980. 36% (4/11 of the respondents) registered between 1971 – 1980. 1 respondent registered between 2001 – 2017.

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Number of respondents	Percent
Valid	1940-1950	1	9.1
	1951-1960	2	18.2
	1961-1970	2	18.2
	1971-1980	4	36.4
	2001-2017	1	9.1
	Total	10	90.9
Missing	Did not answer	1	9.1
Total		11	100.0

Table 1. *Knysna First year registration.*

When asked how they viewed Rhodes University’s reputation and global brand recognition none of the respondents thought it was “dated and a historically conflicted name”. The majority (4/11 respondents), felt that the Rhodes reputation and brand recognition was a “notable name for academic research and alumni success”. 3/11 respondents argued that the brand was “extremely positive and favorable worldwide”, while 3/11 respondents argued that it was a “strong embodiment of higher learning excellence”. 1 of the respondents maintained that the brand was moderately well-known, but carried inconsistent achievement.

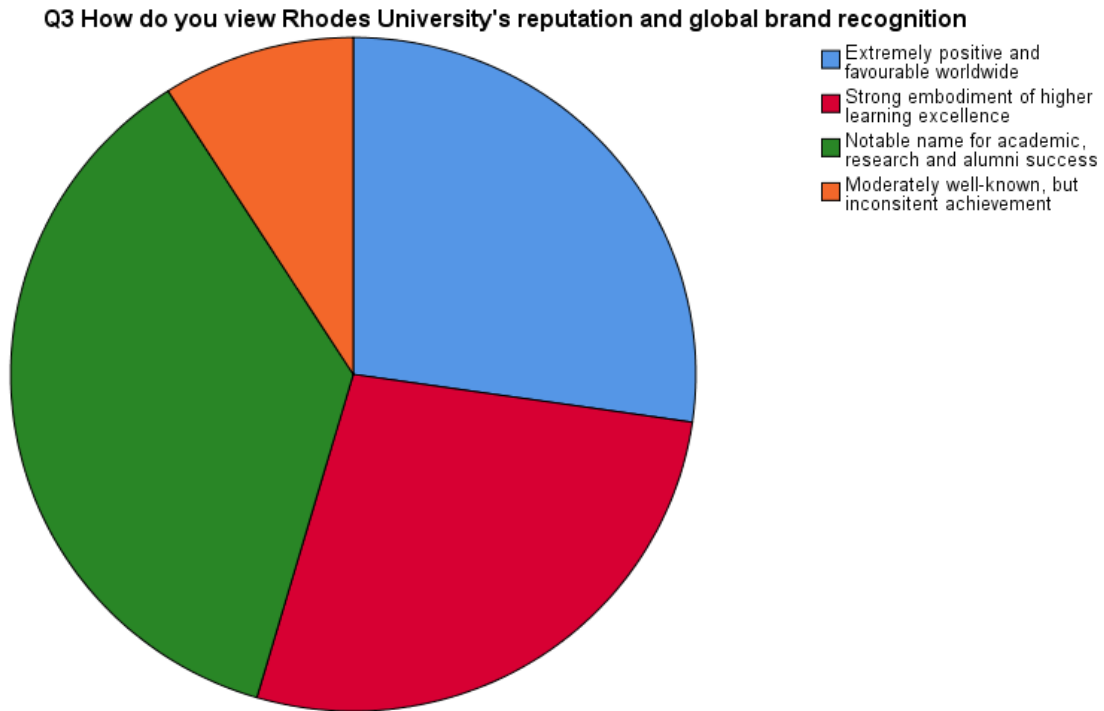


Figure 1. *Knysna – Rhodes University's reputation and brand.*

When asked if the name of Rhodes University should change 100% (11/11 respondents) were opposed to the name change. 10/11 selecting “strongly disagree” towards the name change while one respondent (1/11) selected disagree.

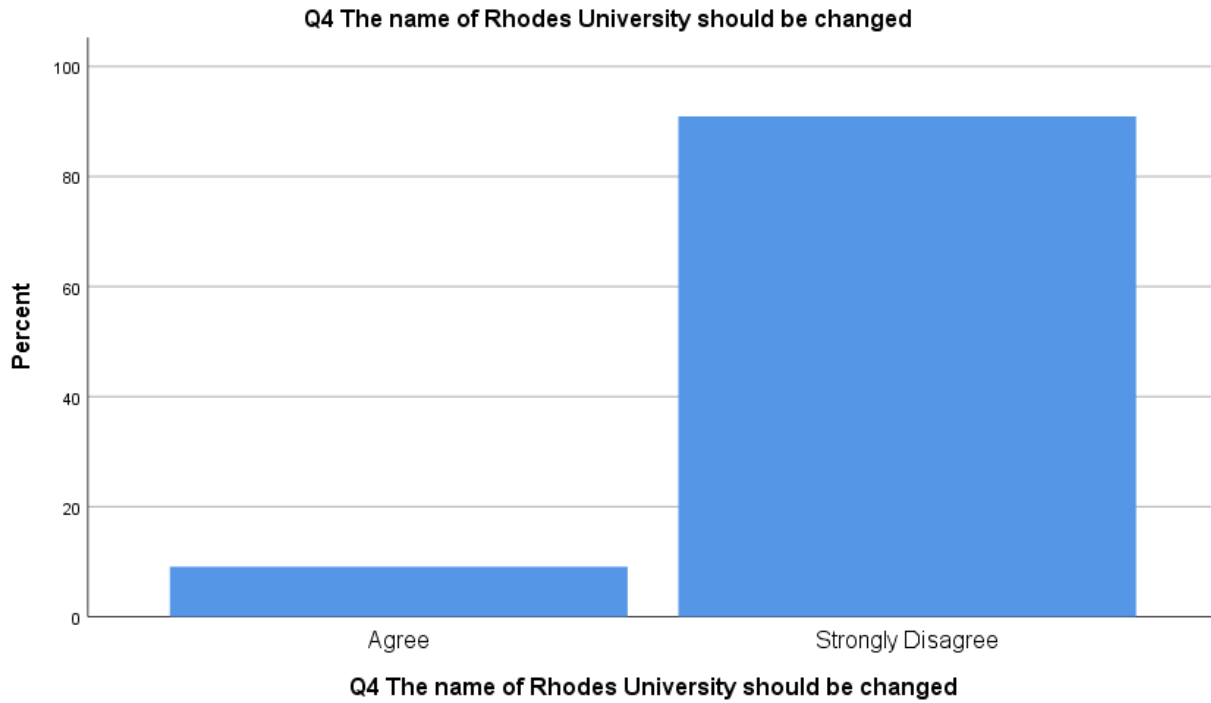


Figure 2. *Knysna on changing the name.*

When asked what the benefits of renaming Rhodes University would be, 9/11 respondents (82%) argued that “there will be no benefits if the name changed”. 1 of the respondents argued that a name change would “pay tribute to a contemporary icon of change and transformation”. Added to that the respondent also selected that the name change would “minimize and redress conflict, polarization and inequalities”. One respondent choose not to answer this question.



3. Cape Town Consultation Process

A total of 70 respondents completed the alumni consultative questionnaire in Cape Town, as shown in the table below. Cape Town had a 66% majority of white respondents (that is 46 out of the 70) who participated in the consultative process. 20% (14 out 70 of the respondents) were black, 7% (5 out of the 70) were coloured and 1% (1 out of 70) were Indian. 3 of the respondents selected ‘Other’ with no specification as to what they meant and one chose not to fill it in. 59% of the respondents were female (41/70 respondents), while 40% (28/70 respondents) were male. One of the respondents chose not to answer the gender question.

Table 2 shows the year they first registered at Rhodes University. Cape Town had 5 respondents who registered with Rhodes University from 1951 – 1960, creating a 66 year old relationship with the institution. Majority of the Cape Town respondents seems to have registered from 2001 – 2017 (25 respondents). Table 2 gives a careful look at the Cape Town alumni racial character. The majority of those who attended were white (46 out of the 70 respondents/ 66%), black alumni were at 14%, while coloured alumni had 7% representation and Indian alumni had 1.4% representation. One respondent chose not to select a race and 3 chose “other”.

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Number of respondents	Percent
Valid	1951-1960	5	7.1
	1961-1970	12	17.1
	1971-1980	15	21.4
	1981-1990	9	12.9
	1991-2000	4	5.7
	2001-2017	25	35.7
	Total	70	100.0

Table 2. *Cape Town first year registration*

When asked about how each respondent felt about Rhodes University’s reputation and global brand, 20 respondents noted that the Rhodes brand was notable for academic research and alumni success, while 17 respondents attested that the Rhodes brand was a “strong embodiment of higher learning excellence”.



Another 15 of the respondents believed that the brand was “extremely positive and favourable worldwide”. One respondent felt that the Rhodes Brand was actually underdeveloped and undervalued as an institutional brand. Out of the 70 respondents 5 chose not to answer this particular question while 4 respondents felt the Rhodes University brand was a “dated and historically conflicted name”.

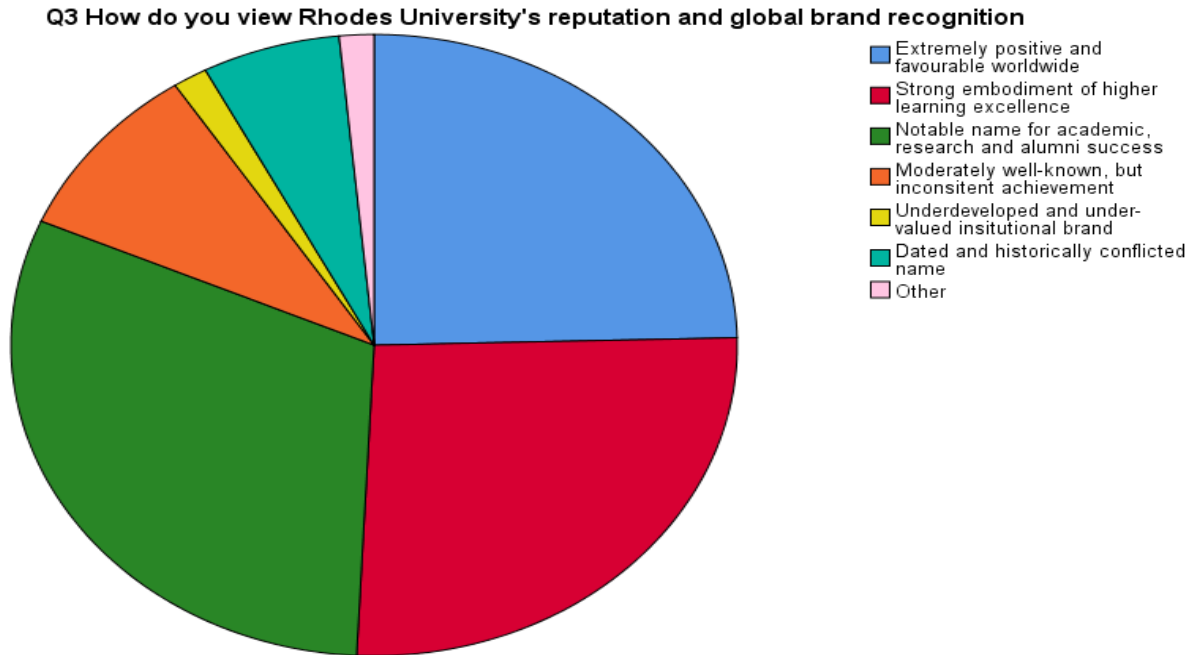


Figure 3. Cape Town Rhodes University reputation and global brand recognition.



When asked if the name of the institution should be changed 7/70 respondents chose to not answer this part of the questionnaire. A total of 54% (38/70 respondents) of the Cape Town alumni were against changing the name. 16% agreed with the idea of changing the name (11/70 respondents) while 19% (13/70 respondents) strongly agreed that the name of the institution should be changed. One respondent instead created an “other” response but did not elaborate on it. Illustration of these results can be found below.

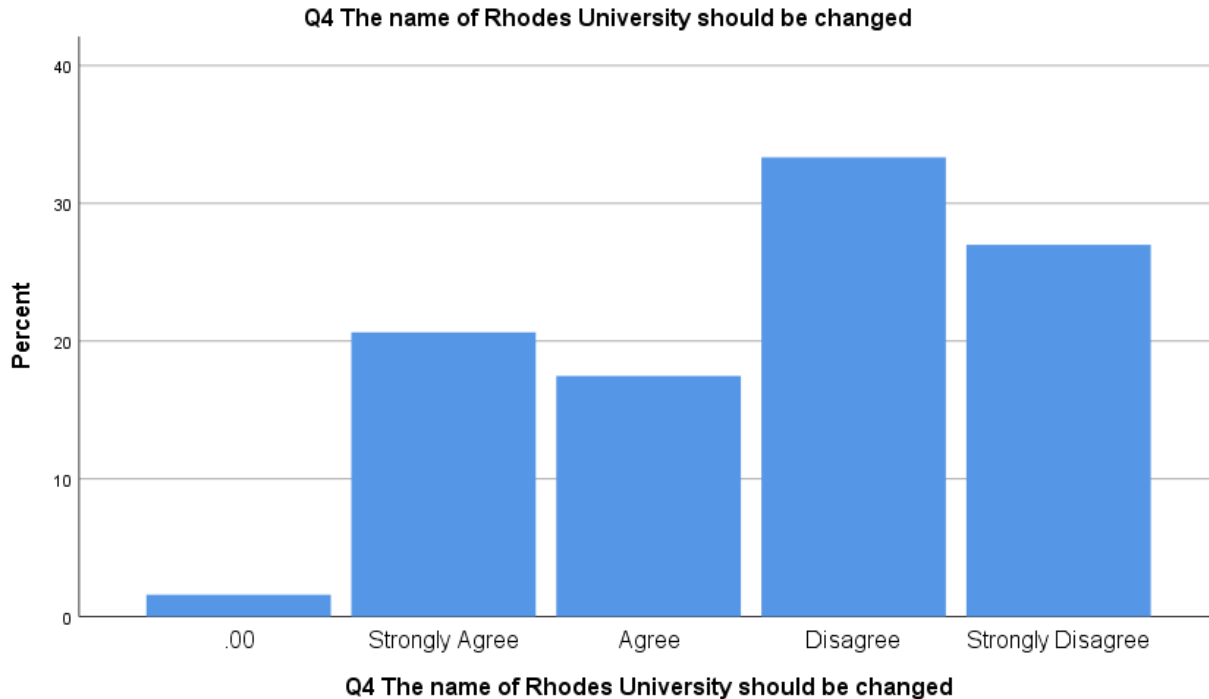


Figure 4. *Cape Town – Should Rhodes change its name?*

Building on the name change, the respondents were then asked if there would be any benefits to changing the names of the institution. 15/70 respondents selected “there would be no benefits if the name changed”, while 10/70 respondents responded saying that the name change would in fact reflect the realities of a new African context, identity and momentum and in so doing would minimize polarization and inequalities. 4 respondents chose not to answer this question.

23% (being the highest response from Cape Town) believed if the name of Rhodes University was to change there would be “disenchantment of alumni and supporters and potentially less affinity and attachment from graduates”. 19% of the respondents believed that there would be “alumni disappointment” but also “a loss of prestige and academic standing” if the name were to change. 9% of



the respondents agreed that there would be “a loss of prestige but also reduced interest of private sector partners and contributors”. Another 9% of respondents argued that there would be a “reduced interest from international students”. Out of the 70 respondents from Cape Town, 3 believed that there would be no issues in changing the name.



4. Namibia Alumni Consultation Process

Namibia had a total of 90 respondents. The group was split into two as 22 were alumni while 68, although alumni, were also current students based in Namibia studying through contact sessions. The first group of 22 respondents classified as Namibia Alumni seem to have all registered for a Rhodes Degree between the years 2001 and 2017. 10 out of the 22 respondents were male while 8 were female and 4 chose not to answer that part of the questionnaire.

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Number of respondents	Percent
Valid	2001-2017	18	81.8
Missing	Did not answer	4	18.2
Total		22	100.0

Table 3. Namibia Alumni (22 respondents) first year registration.

72% of the Namibian alumni were black, (16/22 respondents), 4 respondents chose not to answer this part of the questionnaire and there was one 1 white and 1 coloured person.

When asked to assess the Rhodes University Brand 15/22 respondents said the brand was extremely positive and favourable worldwide. 4/22 respondents chose to say the brand was a strong embodiment of higher learning while 2/22 believed the brand was a notable name for academic research and alumni success. 1/22 chose other but did not further note what they meant by that.

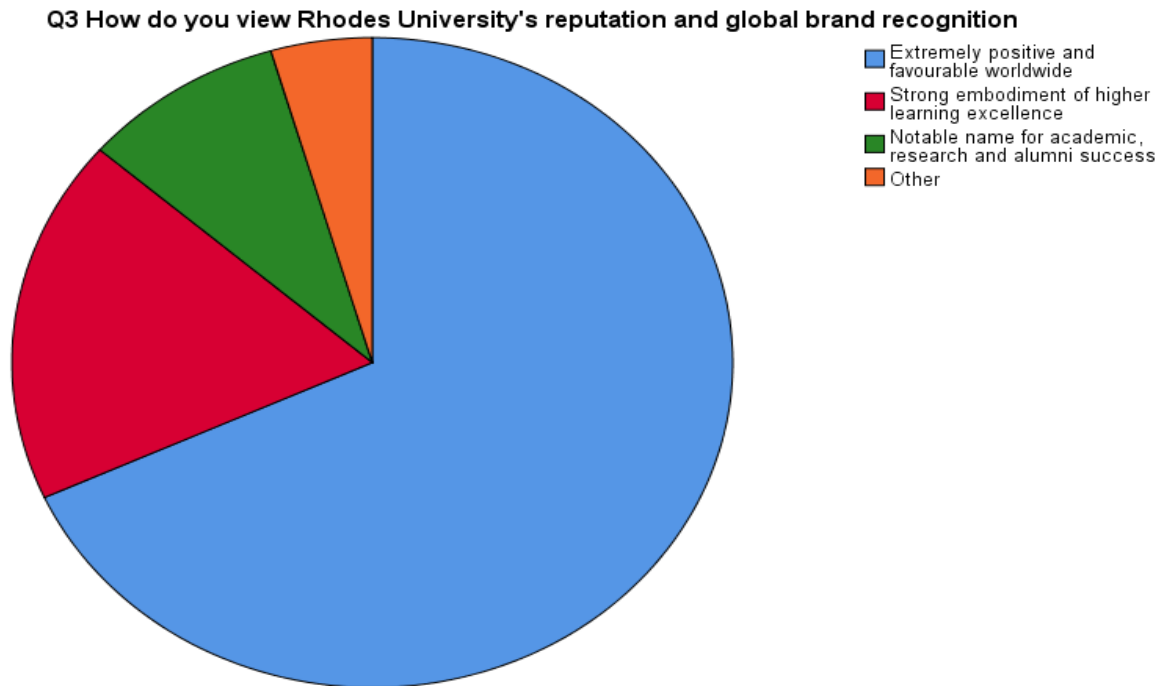


Figure 5. Namibia (22 respondents) How do you feel about Rhodes University's reputation and brand.

When it came to assessing what the benefits would be of renaming Rhodes University, 8/22 respondents argued that there would be no benefits if the name was to be changed. 6/22 respondents argued that if the name was to change it would “unify all stakeholders around a common agenda and focus”, which would have the effect of minimizing and redressing conflict, polarization and inequalities. 3/22 respondents felt that changing the name would “reflect the realities of a new African context, identity and momentum”. Of note is that 73 % of the Alumni were against the name change, while 22% agreed that they wanted the name to change.

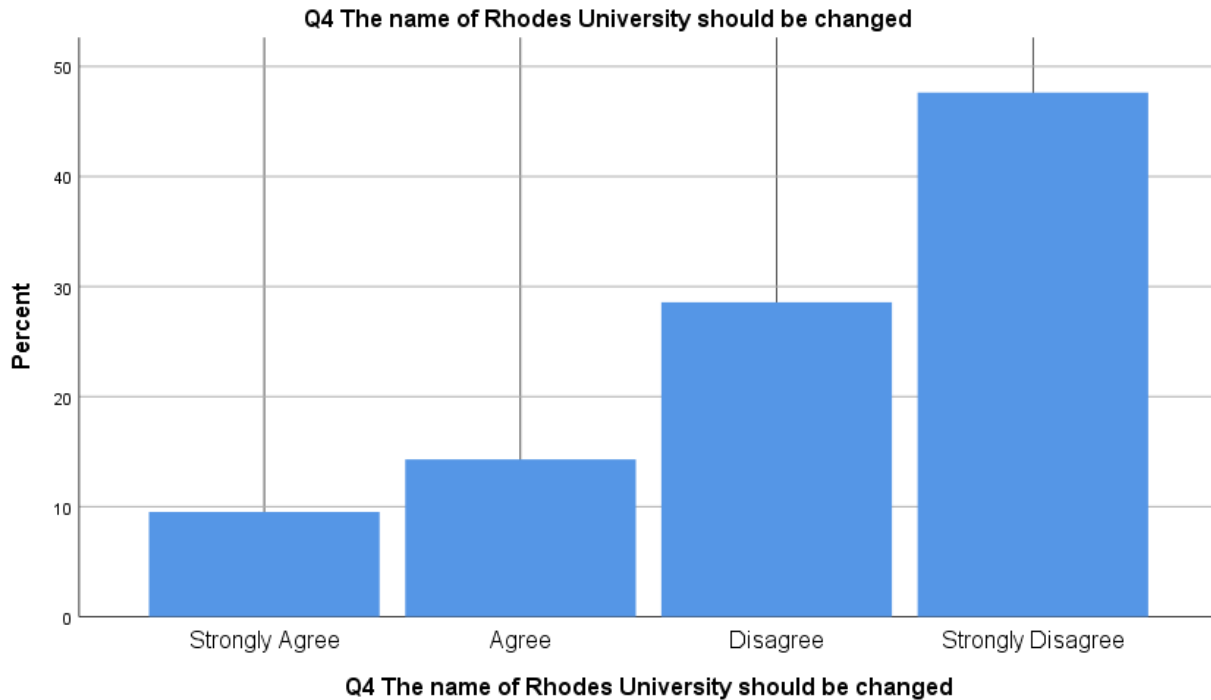


Figure 6. *Namibia alumni – Should the name of Rhodes University be changed?*

When asked about what issues would possibly be associated with changing the Rhodes University name, 7/22 respondents selected that there would be a “loss of prestige and academic standing, together with a reduced interest from international students”. Noting that all students involved in the Namibian consultation process are international students, 6/22 of the respondents argued that if the name changed there would “disenchantment of alumni and supporters and less affinity and attachment from graduates”. 4/22 respondents argued that there would be no issues at all with changing the name



5. Namibia Current Postgraduate Students (Also Alumni)

Classified as Postgraduate students of Namibia, this group had a total of 68 respondents (this is outside the 22 Alumni assessed above). The majority of these respondents are doing long distance based learning in education via contact sessions. 96% of the respondents requested that Rhodes University set up a campus in Namibia, largely motivated by the Rhodes Brand and “quality of education” it gave. The respondents varied at level of study but 93% of them first registered for their Rhodes degree from 2011 – 2017. 60% of respondents were female (41/68 respondents).

85% (58/68) of the respondents were black, 6% (4/68) were coloured both Indian and 1 respondent was white. A total of 3 respondents did not answer this part of the question.

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Number of respondents	Percent
Valid	2000 – 2005	2	2.9
	2006 – 2010	2	2.9
	2011 – 2017	63	92.6
	Total	67	98.5
Missing	Did not answer	1	1.5
Total		68	100.0

Table 4. Namibia recent graduates and current students.

When asked how they viewed the Rhodes University reputation and global brand, 59% of the respondents argued that it was “extremely positive and favorable worldwide with a strong embodiment of higher learning and excellence”. 17% of the respondents added to the above specifically noting also that it was a notable name for academic, research and alumni success. 5% of the respondents (3/68) argued that the Rhodes University reputation and brand was an “underdeveloped and under-valued institutional brand” and further that it was a “dated and historically conflicted name”. Also of notice is that 8% of the respondents argued that the Rhodes brand, although in essence the epitome of higher learning excellence, was also “moderately well-known but inconsistent in its achievement”.

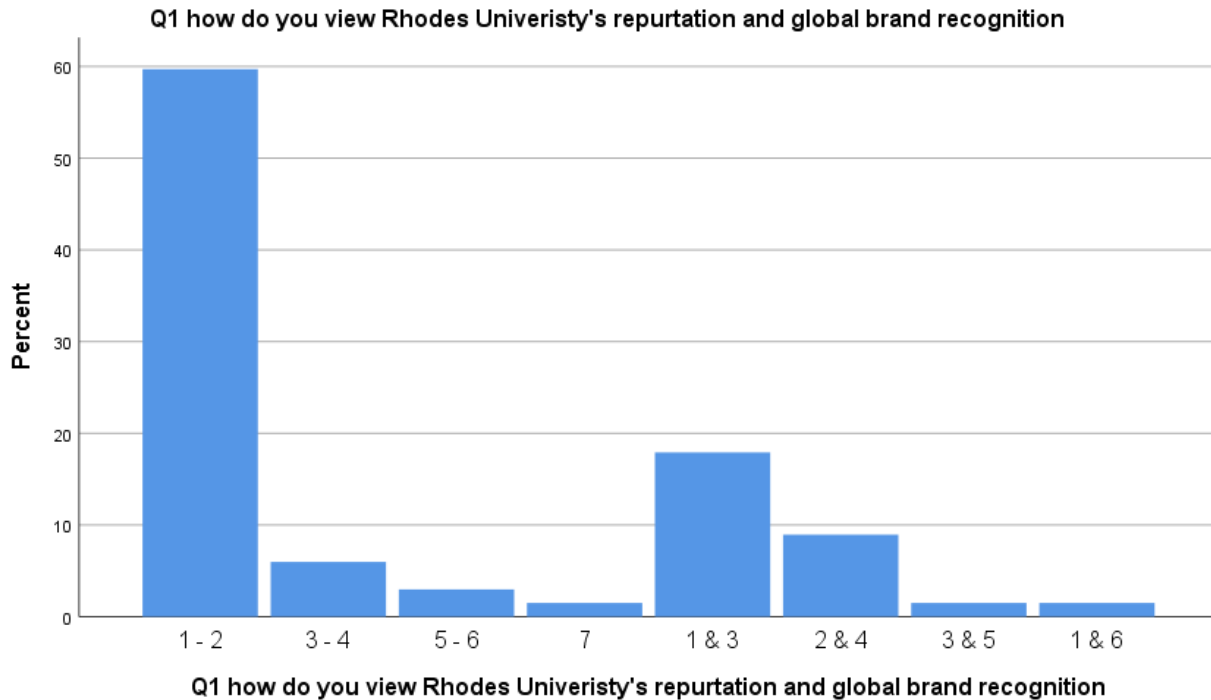


Figure 7. *Namibia recent graduates and current students on Rhodes reputation and brand.*

81% (55/68 of the respondents) were against changing the name while 19% agreed that the name should change. When asked what the benefits of renaming Rhodes University would be, 55% (37/68 respondents) argued that “there would be no benefits if the name changed”. 16 % (11/68 respondents) argued that changing the name would reflect the realities of a new African context, identity and momentum and this would potentially “unify all stakeholders around a common agenda and focus”. 10/68 respondents chose not to answer this question, while the remaining few chose that a new name would “enable the university to reimagine and reshape its role and leadership”.

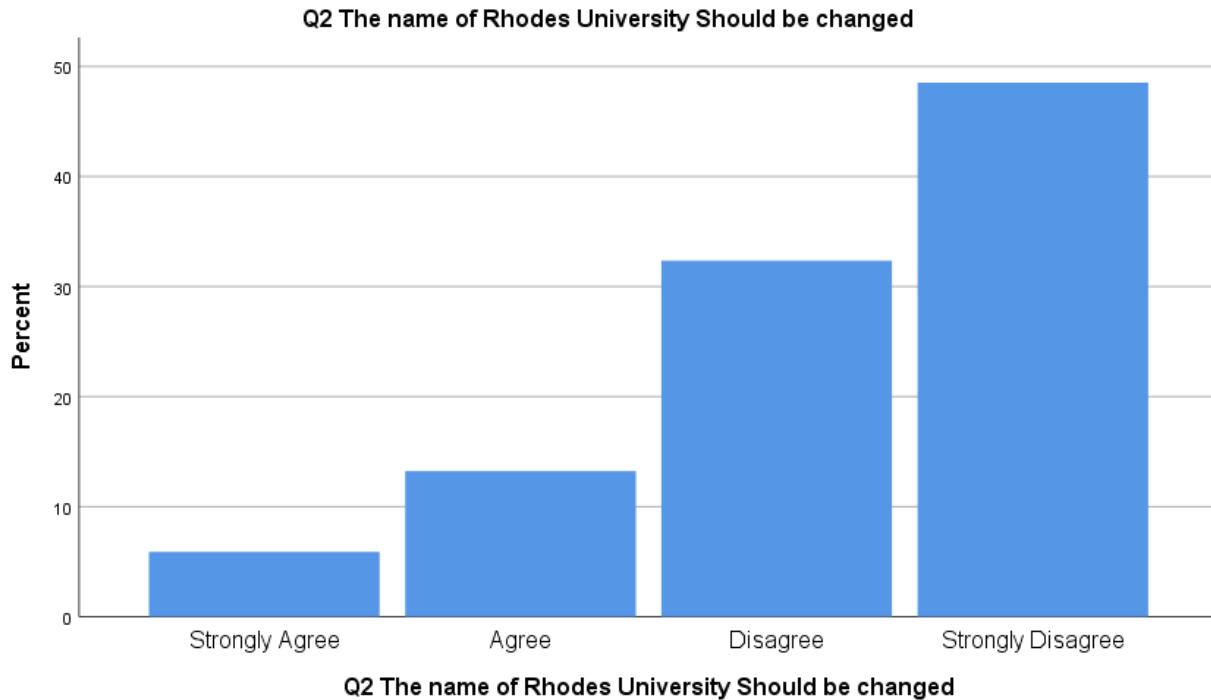


Figure 8. Namibia Recent graduates and current students on the name change.

When asked what issues would potentially be associated with changing the Rhodes University name, the responses were quite varied across the 55 respondents, with all selecting one or two responses given in the questionnaire. 13 chose not to answer this particular question. The most popular choice among the 55 respondents was that of 24% of the respondents, who argued that “there will be no issues changing the name”. This was followed by 13% (9/68 respondents) who argued that if the name were to change then there would be “disenchantment of alumni and supporters” and “less affinity and attachment from graduates”. Another 7% (5/68 respondents) argued that if the name was to change “there would be a loss of prestige”, “academic standing and a potential departure of current students and staff”.



6. Port Elizabeth Consultation Process

Port Elizabeth had 34 respondents in total who completed the consultation process. 56% were white (19/34 respondents), 21% (7/34 respondents) were coloured, 15 % (5/34 respondents) were black, there was one Indian, one of the respondents chose to tick other and 1 respondent did not answer this part of the questionnaire. There were more females than males, with 53% of the respondents being female (18/34) while 44% of the respondents were male (15/34). 1 of the respondents ticked other.

The alumni in Port Elizabeth seem have registered at different times for their first degree at Rhodes University. This gave the consultation a process a broad representation of thinking of different alumni over a period of 77 years. One of the respondents registered between 1940 -1950. 24% (8/34 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between 1961 and 1970, another 24% (8/34 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between the year 1981- 1990, and yet another 24% (8/34 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between 2001 -2017. 15% (5/34 of the respondents) registered from 1951 – 1960, while only 6% (2 of the respondents) registered from 1971 – 1980 and another final 6% (2/34 respondents registered) from 1991 – 2000.

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1940-1950	1	2.9
	1951-1960	5	14.7
	1961-1970	8	23.5
	1971-1980	2	5.9
	1981-1990	8	23.5
	1991-2000	2	5.9
	2001-2017	8	23.5
	Total	34	100.0

Table 5. Port Elizabeth Alumni first year registration.

When the respondents were asked how they viewed Rhodes University’s reputation and global brand recognition, 44% (15/34 respondents) argued it was “extremely positive and favourable worldwide” while 24% (8/34 respondents) felt it was a “notable name for academic research and alumni success”. 7/34 respondents (21%) argued that the name was a “strong embodiment of higher learning excellence” while



3/34 respondents (9%) maintained that the name was “moderately well-known but inconsistent in its achievement”. 1 respondent argued that the name was “underdeveloped and an under-valued institutional brand”. None of the respondents found the name to be “dated and historically conflicted”.

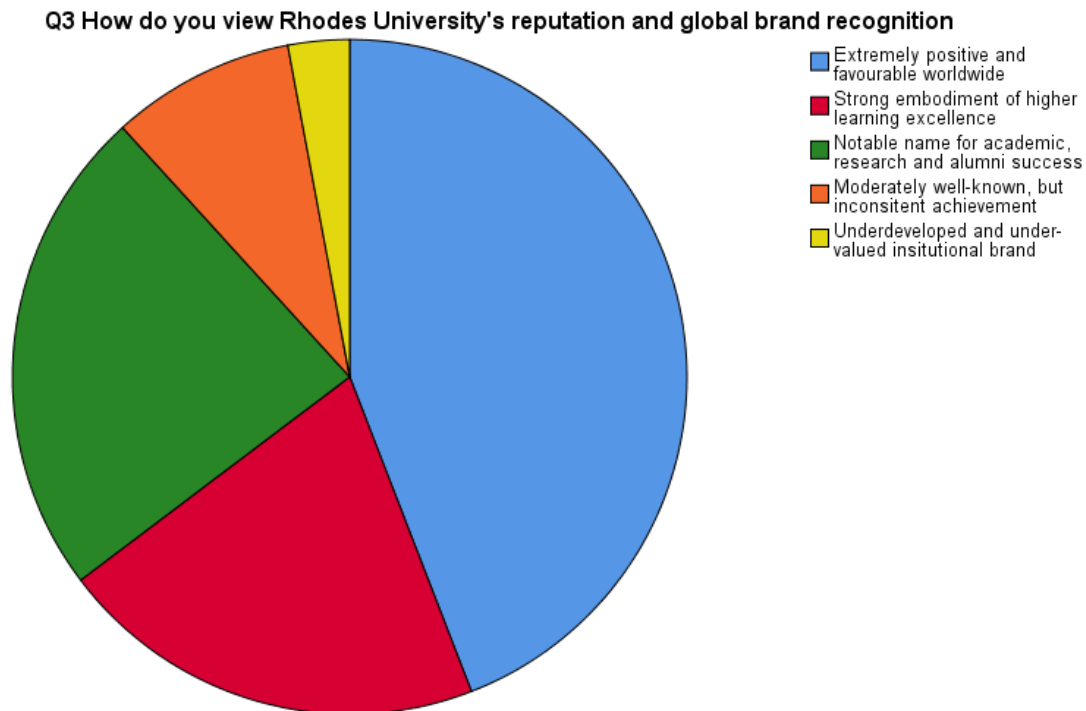
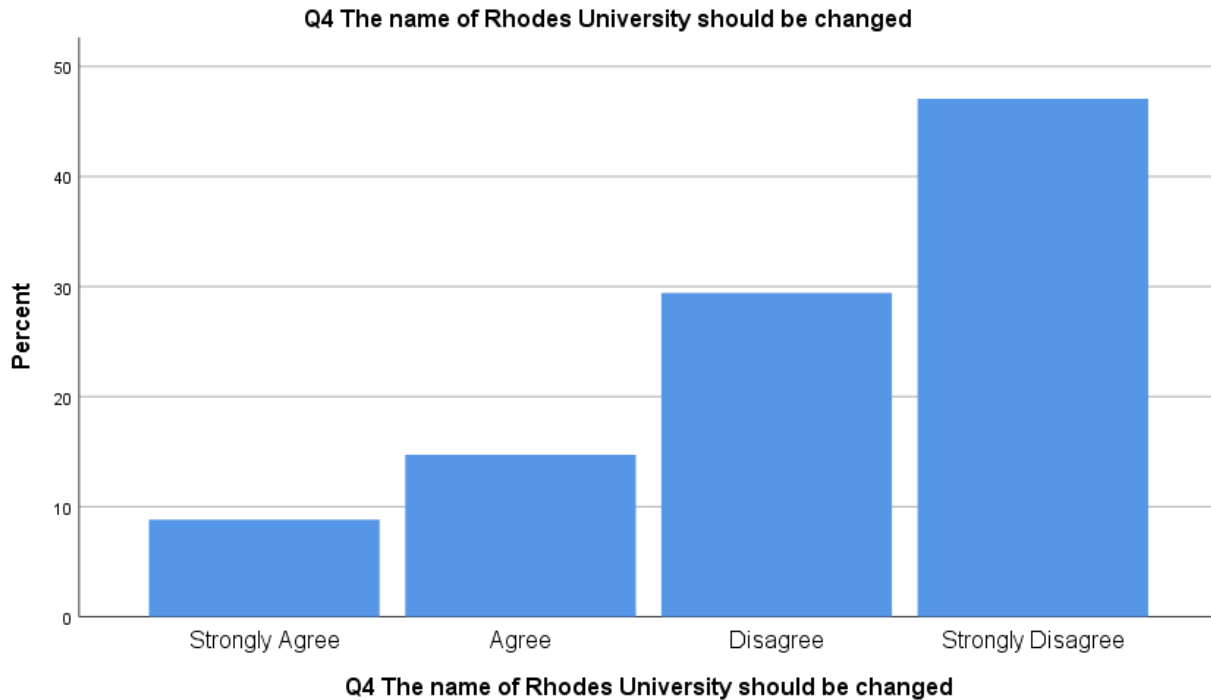


Figure 9. Port Elizabeth on Rhodes reputation and global brand.

The majority of the Port Elizabeth respondents were completely against the name change. To be exact, 77% (26/34) of the Port Elizabeth respondents were opposed to changing the name of Rhodes University. 16/34 strongly disagreed that the name should be changed while another 10/34 respondents disagreed with the name change. 23% (8/34 respondents) wanted the name to change.



When asked what the benefits of renaming Rhodes University might be, the most popular response (16/34 respondents) was that “there will be no benefits if the name changed”. One respondent chose not to answer this question. The remaining 18 respondents answers were varied, 7 argued that changing the name would reflect the realities of a new African context, “identity and momentum” and “unify all stakeholders around a common agenda and focus”. 3 of the respondents believed changing the name would “pay tribute to a contemporary icon of change and transformation”. 7 respondents claimed changing the name would “minimize and redress conflict, polarization and inequalities”.

When asked to comment on the potential issues that would be associated with changing the Rhodes name 85% (29/34 of the respondents) argued that there would be “disenchantment of alumni and supporters” 10/34 added that this would also be seen in “less affinity and attachment from graduates”. 6/34 argued that apart from the above there would be a “loss of prestige and academic standing”. 2 of the respondents argued that “there would be no issues with changing the name”.



8. Perth Consultation Process

Perth, Australia had 18 respondents in total who completed the consultation process. 89% were white (16/18 respondents), 11% (2/18 respondents) were coloured, 15 % (5/34 respondents) were black, there was one Indian and one of the respondents chose to tick other. 1 respondent did not answer this part of the questionnaire. Perth had an equal split in gender with 9 male respondents and 9 female respondents.

Between these 18 respondents was a 56 year old relationship with the university with 5 respondents having registered for their first degree in 1961 – 1970. 3 registered between 1971 -1980, while 4 registered at the institution between 1981 -1990. From 1991 – 2000, 3 registered. The most recent alumni registered in 2001 – 2017 (3 respondents).

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1961-1970	5	27.8
	1971-1980	3	16.7
	1981-1990	4	22.2
	1991-2000	3	16.7
	2001-2017	2	11.1
	8	1	5.6
	Total	18	100.0

Table 6. Perth first year registration.

When asked “how do you view Rhodes University’s reputation and global brand recognition” none of the respondents selected a “dated and historically conflicted name”. 5/18 believed the name was extremely positive and favourable worldwide, while 3/18 believed it was a strong embodiment of higher learning excellence, while 4 respondents argued that it was a notable name for academic research and alumni success. 2 of the respondents choose not to answer this question while the final 4/18 advocated that the name was moderately well-known, but inconsistent in its achievement.

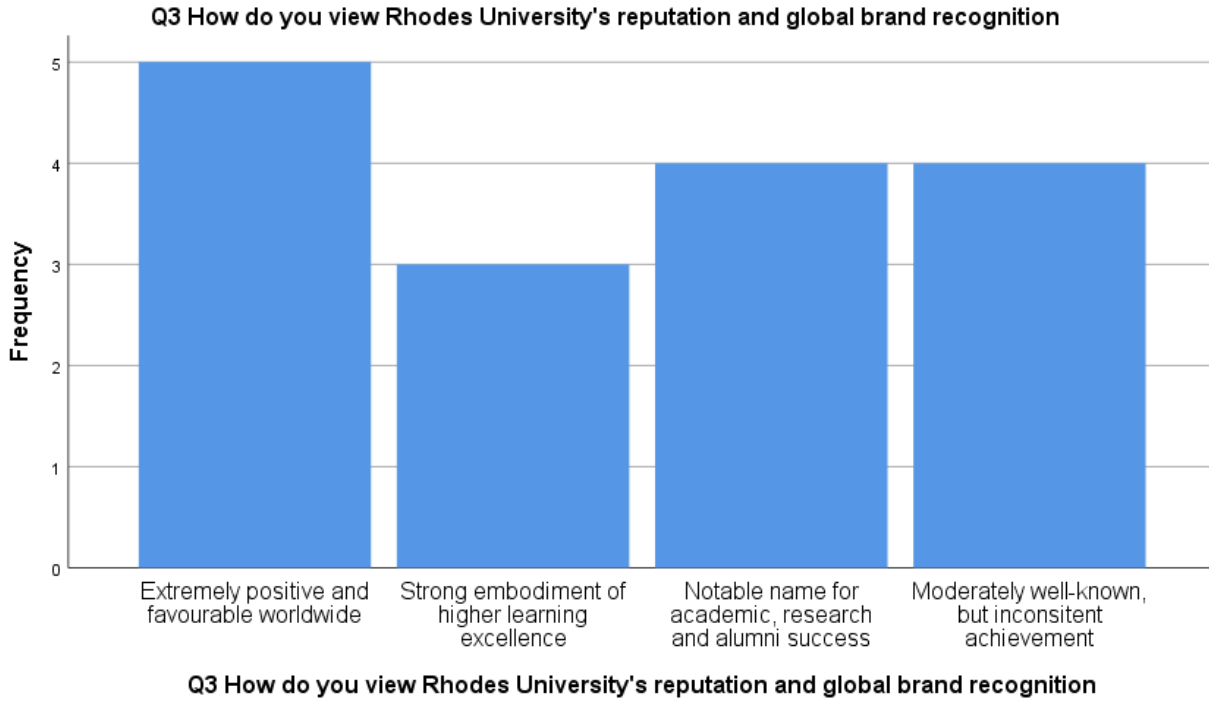


Figure 10. *Perth on Rhodes reputation and brand recognition.*

89% (16/18 respondents) of the respondents were against the name change.

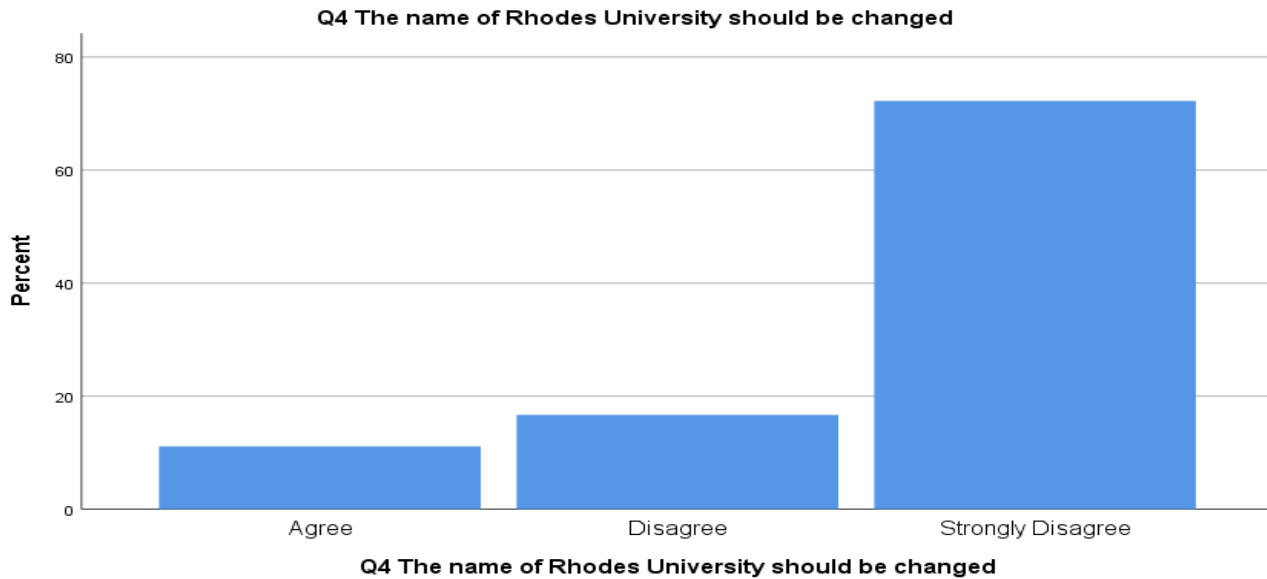


Figure 11. *Perth on Name change.*



When asked what the benefits of renaming Rhodes University would be, 6/18 respondents argued that there would be no benefits if the name was changed. 2 respondents argued that it would reflect the realities of a new African context, identity and momentum while unifying all stakeholders around a common agenda and focus. 10 of the respondents (adding to the above) argued that a name change would minimize and redress conflict, polarization and inequalities.

When asked what “issues” might be associated with changing the name of Rhodes University, 6/18 respondents argued that if the name was to change there would be a disenchantment of alumni and supporters including the loss of prestige and academic standing. 5/18 respondents argued that there would be less affinity and attachment from graduates. 4/18 believe that there would be a reduced interest from international students while the final 3 were worried about reduced interest of private sector partners and contributors.



9. East London Consultation Process

East London had 31 respondents in total who completed the consultation process. 42% were black (13/34 respondents), 6% (2/34 respondents) Indian and 52% (16/34 respondents) were white. East London had more male alumni than females, with males making up 61% of the attendance and 36% female. 1 respondent chose not to answer this question.

The alumni in East London seem to have registered at different times for their first degree at Rhodes University. This gave the consultation process a broad representation of thinking of different alumni over a period of 56 years. 3 of the respondents registered between 1961 -1970 (10%). 19% (6/31 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between 1971 and 1980, another 10% (3/31 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between the year 1981- 1990, and yet another 23% (7/31 respondents) registered with Rhodes University between 1991 -2000. 38% (12/31 of the respondents) registered between 2001–2017.

1st Year Register at Rhodes

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1961-1970	3	9.7
	1971-1980	6	19.4
	1981-1990	3	9.7
	1991-2000	7	22.6
	2001-2017	12	38.7
	Total	31	100.0

Table 7. East London first year registration

When asked how they view Rhodes University reputation and global brand recognition, none of the respondents thought it was a dated and historically conflicted name. The majority (14/31 respondents) of the East London alumni felt that the Rhodes reputation and brand recognition was a “notable name for academic research and alumni success”. 8/31 respondents argued that the brand was “extremely positive and favourable worldwide”, while 6/31 respondents argued that it was a “strong embodiment of higher learning excellence”. 1 of the respondents maintained that the brand was moderately well-known, but



carried inconsistent achievement. 2/31 respondents argued instead that the brand was “underdeveloped and under-valued institutional brand.

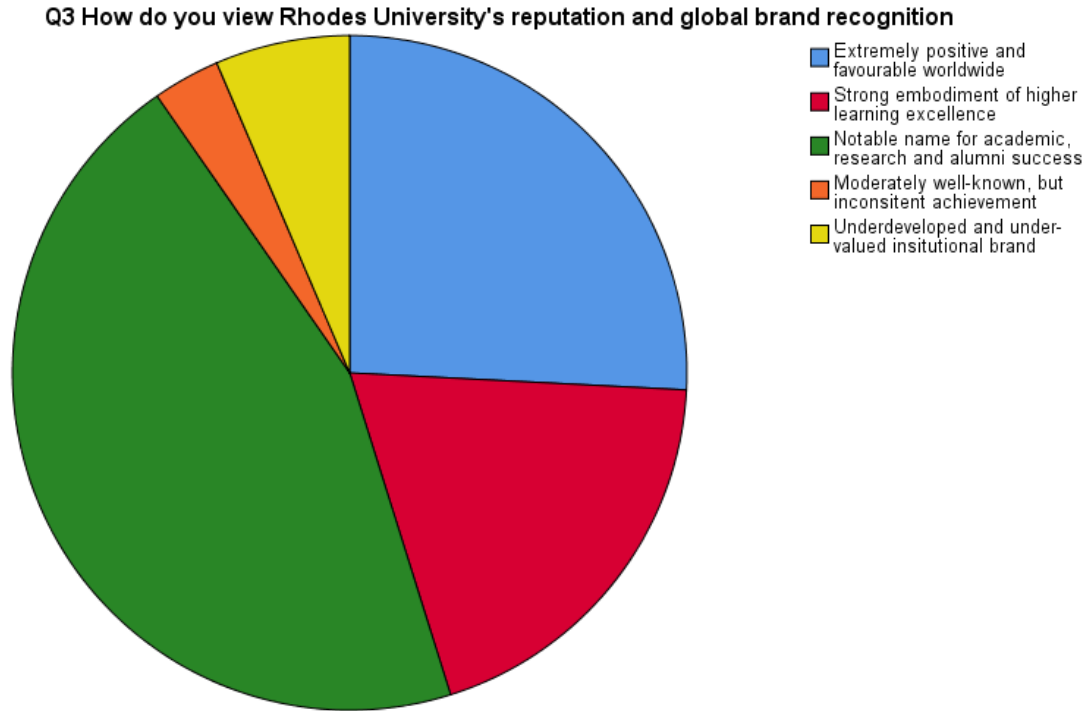


Figure 12. East London on Rhodes reputation and brand.

When asked if the name of Rhodes University should change, 77% (24/31 respondents) were opposed to the name change. 13/31 selected “strongly disagree” towards the name change while another 11/31 selected disagree. 13% (4/31 respondents) were for the name change, with 2 respondents selecting agree and the other 2 strongly agreeing to the question. 3 respondents chose not to answer this question. This data is further illustrated below.

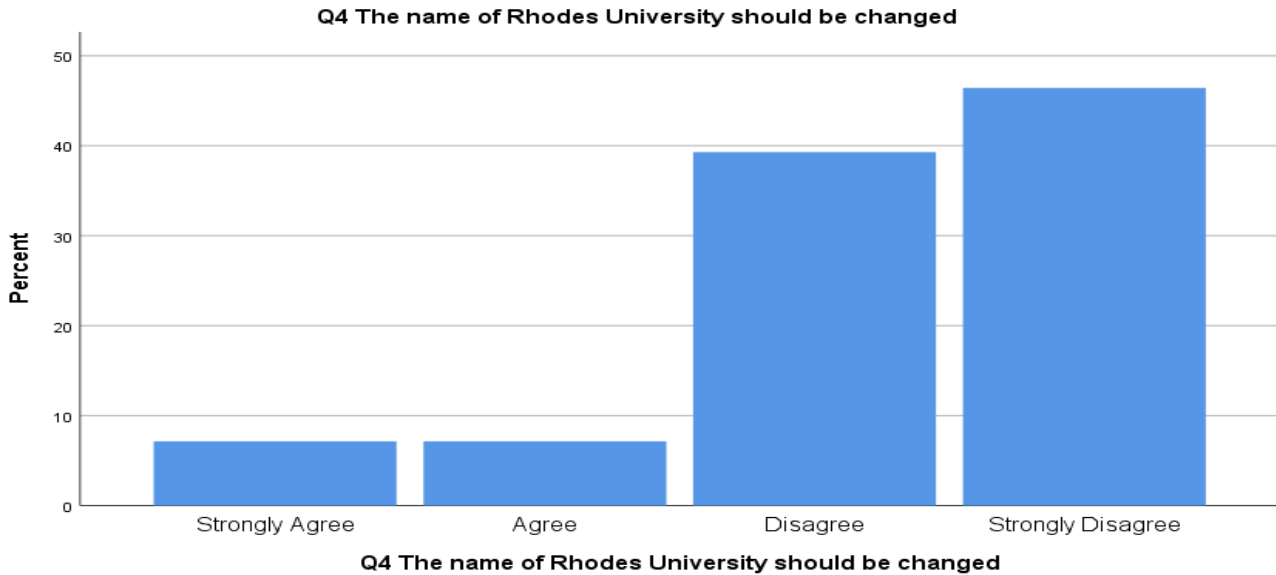


Figure 13. East London on name change

When asked what the benefits of renaming Rhodes University would be, 11/31 respondents argued that “there will be no benefits if the name changed”. 5/31 respondents argued that a name change would be “necessary to activate and accelerate transformation”. 3/31 respondents choose to say changing the name would “unify all stakeholders around a common agenda and focus”. 2/31 respondents argued that changing the name would, energize faculty, students and staff with new purpose and positioning. 3/31 respondents believe changing the name would “enable the university to reimagine and reshape its role and leadership” and lastly 2/31 respondents argued that changing the name would “minimize and redress conflict, polarization and inequalities”.

In discussing what “issues” might be associated with changing the Rhodes University name, 2 respondents choose not to answer and 10/31 respondents argued that the change would create “disenchantment of alumni and supporters and less affinity and attachment from graduates”. 6/31 respondents argued that “there would be no issues with changing the name”, while another 6/31 respondents selected that if the name changed there would be a loss of prestige and academic standing. 4/31 respondents selected that if the name would change Rhodes University would see a reduced interest from private sector partners and contributors. 2/31 respondents argued that there would be a reduced interest from international students. 1 respondent argued that changing the name would result in reduced academic and research collaborations and partnerships.



10. Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis are presented. The data was collected and then processed in response to the goals mentioned above. Those goals were to develop a base of knowledge about the ideas of Rhodes University Alumni over various issues linked to the broad idea of transformation within the institution. The objectives of this research were accomplished. The findings presented in this chapter that Rhodes University has an active alumnus that is closely connected to the institution and has a voice that needs to be acknowledged with regards to transformation.

The research as already stated used triangulation and so the data was collected through questionnaires, focus group conversations, written documentation sent via email and all face to face interactions were tape recorded.

The written emails show cased a total of 188 respondents who had voiced out their opinions between the years 2015 – 2017. Most of those opinions were largely around the name change. It is important to note that respondents who participate in the 2017 consultation process and those (188 respondents) who had sent out emails were one in mind with regards to disagreeing for the name change. This is both true with the data collected from the questionnaires and audio files from the focused group conversation across all 9 cities where the consultation processes were held.

Specifically focusing on the 188 respondents, the data showed that Alumni spoke towards representation for their constituency as the alumni but also towards the role of Alumni that is continued support of the institution both in financial and none financial terms. The respondents were against the name of Rhodes University changing, the reasons varied across a short and narrow spectrum. Although an overwhelming 92% strongly disagreed with the name change, some of the Alumni respondents suggested “that instead of changing the name from one historical figure to the next we should look at the geographical naming of spaces”, (Email 33: 2016),. a few of the respondents in their own right also suggested that “Rhodes University adopt a double barrel name” (Email 158: 2017).

The point of view of the alumni (all 188) relates to question 4, 5 and 6 found in the questionnaires that were done during the consultation process. Question 4 asked directly if the name of Rhodes University should be changed, while question 5 asked what the benefits would be of renaming Rhodes University and finally question 6 that discussed the issues that might be associated with changing the name. These



188 respondents while expressing their views on the name change, showed that they strongly disagreed with it not only that but that any change would result in the continued "disenchantment of alumni and supporters", "less affinity and attachment from graduates" and a very consistent theme which was "reduced interest of private sector partners and contributors". Most of the respondents saw the name of "Rhodes University" carrying the meaning being the process of "building reconciliation and education in a country that is still deeply wounded by the legacy of apartheid" (Email,79:2016). The general view was changing the name implied an authoritative approach to re-writing history.

However, a more consistent line of thought from the Alumni was that of funding and continued financial support. Some respondents took the time in their emails to personally address the Vice Chancellor saying "I repeat what I said earlier. I will consider a donation when I hear you have finally decided not to change the name of the university" (Email 148:2017).

This continued through the hundreds of emails,

"I am an alumnus of Rhodes University (Ph.D. 1989). I don't know if you are the person to contact, but I am writing to say that, should Rhodes University decide to change its name, I will no longer feel able to donate to the University or provide for it in my will. I know of a significant number of Rhodes graduates here in the United Kingdom who were intending to provide for RU in their wills but now feel equally strongly about this issue. A University's reputation can take decades, a century even, to be built up, but it only takes the stroke of a pen to undermine it severely. Over the past year, I have witnessed not only the vandalising of the Rhodes statue at UCT but, much more seriously, of the Memorial to the Dead UCT Alumni of the two world wars. Now, portraits in that University have also been destroyed. If against this wider background, Rhodes University decides to abolish its name, I will be clear about deciding about my will. I understand that you cannot take a view of this matter, but trust you may understand my reasons for making my feelings clear at this stage" (Email, 179: 2017).

Another respondent wrote "I will no longer feel able to donate to the University or provide for it in my will. I know of a significant number of Rhodes graduates here in the United Kingdom who were intending to provide for RU in their wills but now feel equally strongly about this issue. A University's reputation can take decades, a century even, to be built up, but it only takes the stroke of a pen to undermine it severely" (Email 155: 2017).

Others against the name change highlighted other issues the University should be focused on. "I believe you would be better served to try to improve your global reputation", (Email, 56: 2015). "This change of



name would deny the existing prestige and advantage referred to above to all future graduates, who will effectively be graduating from an unknown institution" (Email,119:2016). Overall across the spectrum, the Alumni felt that the name change would result in server cuts of funding, and a loss of prestige that the name carries.

The above was equally backed up during and through the audio focused group talks. The purpose of the focused group was to dive into the consultation questionnaire in greater detail but also to allow respondents an opportunity to express themselves outside of the confinements of the questionnaire. This allowed for enriched conversation and data.

These focused conversations were recorded and covered all areas that arose around transformation. They were able to capture detailed information and perceptions of the alumni, provided a broader range of understanding of the alumni thinking. The respondents used it as a platform and opportunity to speak on issues and even seek for clarification when needed. Of special note, the Grahamstown focused discussion session that had a total of 42 respondents was where the decision was made to have alumni representation during the transformative summit.

Across the board the starting point for the discussions was understanding what was the meaning of "transformation" and if that implied a sudden and immediate change of things or an "a process that enhances" (Respondent, in Johannesburg). In line with the possibility of changing the name of Rhodes University, there has been consistency amongst the alumni, be it in the questionnaire, email correspondents and focused groups were the name change seen to be a cosmetic change and more importantly a waste of money with regards to rebranding. A respondent in Johannesburg said "If we change the name today, what happens the next day – the next day Mabizala and his staff will start spending money to brand this new name RU has 10 spaces for students who come from the local community but none of them make it due to the quality of high school education – let's use the money to support the community of Grahamstown and increasing the quality of education than spending on changing a name for the sake of changing the name".

When discussing issues around the curriculum, alumni in Johannesburg, Durban and Port Elizabeth spoke about the need for the curriculum to be globally relevant. Respondent in Cape town said, "instead of transforming the curriculum lets instead broaden it, to avoid losing all the valuable things it brings but also allowing for it to be better developed and more inclusive". The respondents from Durban argued that



the curriculum needed to adapt to the working world and not just to the university". Dr. Mabizela more so during the Durban Consultation process spoke towards the issues of demographics and curriculum, he maintained that "Rhodes University was a small university and would stay that", he further went on to add that the current curriculum was based on a more formative educational approach, we do not educate for a job, we educate for life. If we focus on a job by the time they graduate all those jobs will be finished, so we equip them with the skills and knowledge". When asked about the graduation ceremony the alumni consensus was to keep it the way it was with several respondents comparing the Rhodes University's one to other places they had been to and viewed the Rhodes University graduation ceremony "excellent". Alumni felt that it would be even more beneficial to make the graduation process more inclusive for everyone.

Respondents in Perth warned against changing everything to the point of losing the foundation and complete loss of identity. "we must stay away from the process of re-writing history", the history of this country is written in tragedies and victories.

While the questionnaire was thorough, it also gave the respondents several opportunities to add in extra comments this was a common sentiment across all alumni "do not change the name", (respondent 57: Cape Town). "I am neutral about the name change. If it's to change then keep the name neutral like the University of the Eastern Cape" (respondent 34: Namibia).



References cited

- Brannen, J. (1992). *Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches: An Overview*, Aldershot: Avebury.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Methods*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Creswell JW, Plano Clark VL (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jakob, A (2001). *On the Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Data in Typological Social Research: Reflections on a Typology of Conceptualizing 'Uncertainty' in the Context of Employment Biographies*, Forum: Qualitative Social Research, Volume 2, Number 1.
- Hussein, Ashatu (2009). *The Use of Triangulation in Social Sciences Research: Can Qualitative and Quantitative Methods be Combined?* Journal of Comparative Social Work, Number 1.
- Mathison, S. (1988) *Why Triangulate?* Educational Researcher 17(2): 13-17.
- Mertens DM (2009). *Transformative research and evaluation*. New York: Guilford 2009.
- Palinkas LA, Aarons GA, Horwitz S, et al (2011). *Mixed methods designs in implementation research*. Adm Policy Ment Health 38(1):44–53.