

**EMPLOYER BRANDING: PERCEPTIONS OF EMPLOYER  
ATTRACTIVENESS IN THE TELECOM INDUSTRY OF  
PAKISTAN**



**SOHAIRA AYAZ**

**2K14**

A thesis submitted to NUST Business School for the degree of Master of Science in Human  
Resource Management

**2017**

## **Declaration**

I hereby state that no portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

---

Sohaira Ayaz

## **Acknowledgement**

I am highly grateful to Allah Almighty for His countless Blessings. Special Thanks to my Supervisor Zunaira Saqib for showing interest and support during my thesis project, and for her commitment, effort and supervision which truly helped me throughout the thesis.

I am thankful to my sample organizations T1 and T2 who gave me their precious time and helped in providing data.

Lastly I am thankful to my parents for their support, encouragement and endlessly prayers.

## TABLE OF Contents

Table of Figures .....	7
Table of Tables .....	7
ABSTRACT.....	8
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	10
1.1. Background.....	10
1.2. Thesis Structure .....	15
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	16
2.1. Employer Branding.....	16
2.3. Employer Branding Conceptualizations .....	18
Table 1: Employer Branding Conceptualization .....	19
2.4. Perceptions of Employer Attractiveness.....	20
2.4.1 Organizational Identity.....	21
2.4.2. Employment Offering .....	24
2.4.3. Communication .....	26
2.5. Psychological Contract .....	29
2.6. Theoretical Framework.....	32
2.7. Research Gap.....	33
2.8. Research Questions.....	34
Chapter 3: Methodology .....	35
3.1. Research Philosophy.....	35
3.2. Ontological Stance.....	37
3.3. Epistemological Stance.....	38
3.4. Methods .....	39
3.5. Data Analysis.....	45
3.6. Context of the Research: Overview of the Telecom Sector.....	46
3.6.1. Telecom T1 .....	47
3.6.2. Telecom T2 .....	47
3.7. Limitations.....	48
Chapter 4: Analysis- Telecom T1 .....	50
4.1. Organizational Identity .....	50

4.1.1. Brand Image .....	51
4.1.2. Culture.....	53
4.2. Communication .....	63
4.2.1. Internal Communication for Current Employees .....	63
4.2.2. External communication for Potential Employees.....	66
4.3. EMPLOYMENT OFFERING.....	70
4.3.1. Compensation and Benefits .....	70
4.3.2. Working Environment .....	72
4.3.3. Learning and Development .....	74
Chapter 5: Analysis-telecom T2 .....	80
5.1. Organizational Identity .....	80
5.1.1. Brand Image .....	81
5.1.2. Culture.....	82
5.2. Communication .....	90
5.2.1. Internal Communication for Current Employees .....	91
5.2.2. External Communication for Potential Employees .....	94
5.3. Employment Offering.....	98
5.3.1. Compensation and Benefits .....	98
5.3.2. Working Environment .....	100
5.3.3. Learning and Development .....	102
Chapter 6: Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Dissonance in Perceptions .....	108
6.1. Organizational Identity .....	109
6.1.1. Brand Image .....	109
6.1.2. Culture.....	110
6.2. Communication .....	113
6.3. Employer Value Proposition: Organizational Offering.....	115
6.3.1. Compensation and Benefits .....	115
6.3.2. Culture/ Working Environment.....	116
6.3.3. Learning and Development .....	117
6.4. Recommendations and Future implications.....	121
Chapter 7: conclusion .....	125

References..... 128

Appendices..... 146

    Appendix A: Interview Guide for HR ..... 146

    Appendix B: Interview Guide for employees ..... 148

    Appendix C: Interview guide for Potential Employees (Focus Groups) ..... 150

Table 1: Summary of Candidates T1 ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

## **Table of Figures**

Figure 1: Employment Offering.....	25
Figure 2: A Conceptualization of the Employee Branding Process (Miles and Mangold, 2004).....	27
Figure 3: Framework (Source: Based on Literature Review) .....	32
Figure 4: Source: Adapted from Hay (2002) and Crotty (1998).....	35

## **Table of Tables**

Table 1: Table 1: Employer Branding Conceptualization.....	19
Table 2: Elements of Organizational Identity .....	23
Table 3: Source: Lincoln and Guba, 1994 and Morgan and Smircich (1980) .....	36
Table 4: Summary of Organizational Identity Features of T1 .....	62
Table 5: Summary of Communication of T1 .....	70
Table 6: Summary of Employment offering of T1 .....	78
Table 7: Summary of Analysis of T1.....	79
Table 8: Summary of Organizational Identity Features of T2 .....	90
Table 9: Summary of Communication of T2 .....	98
Table 10: Summary of Employment Offering of T2 .....	106
Table 11: Summary of Analysis of T2.....	108
Table 12: Comparative Analysis of T1 and T2.....	121

## **ABSTRACT**

The study contributes to the existing knowledge on employer branding by exploring the perceptions of organizational attractiveness of the employer brand image of two leading telecom organizations in Pakistan which claim to be actively pursuing employer branding strategy in the telecom industry. The purpose of this thesis was to explore how organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions of organizational attractiveness through their employer branding strategy and how they are perceived by current and potential employees. Detailed interviews were carried out from HR of the organizations, their existing employees and potential employees who were MBA students from the graduating batch of top two business schools of Islamabad. The study identified major factors which impact the attractiveness of an employer brand are organizational identity, communication, and employment offering. These factors impact the expectations and perceptions of current and potential employees which make their psychological contract with their employer. These key features are discussed in detail considering the organization, current and potential employee perceptions.

The findings suggest brand image and organizational culture to be the main elements of an organizations identity. Current and potential employees desire to be part of prestigious employer brand as it a matter of social identity and pride. Strong organizational culture has become an essential for employees as it elevates their spirit at workplace and addresses their need to have their efforts acknowledged and their desire for appreciation. Communication with internal employees aims at making employees aware and involved with the purpose of engaging them, employees expect it to be honest and frequent. Communication to reach out to potential employees was through summer internship programs and university visits, latter was perceived as misleading and dishonest influencing the psychological contract with employees. Among employment offering, monetary compensation of T1 and T2 was perceived to be similar. While salaries were less in comparison with other industries employees perceived non-monetary aspects such as brand image and organizational culture more significant.

Overall, the employer branding strategy of T1 was inclined towards retaining current employees by caring for their well-being through its culture and learning and development opportunities. T2



was found to be following in the footsteps of T1, such as branding itself a fun place to work, and as an organization that cared for employees' well-being and encouraged open communication. Their employer branding strategy aimed to attract potential employees more than their current employees particularly the youth; however they were not aware of this cultural change at T2, and still viewed T2 as a bureaucratic and old school organization. T2 was considered as the second choice after T1. The research suggests that employer branding can be used as a long-term strategy to shape desired perceptions of current and potential employees to retain and attract them. The study concludes by providing recommendations for the practitioners in telecom industry and avenues for future research.

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1. Background**

Traditionally, branding has been used to make products and services appealing to customers and to sustain their brand loyalty. For a long time, organizations did not realize that efficient employees who are capable enough to actualize the vision of a brand are the cornerstone of a strong brand. Therefore, the issue for organizations became how to attract and retain efficient employees, whose goals and aspirations are in line with those of the organization; thus enabling them to ensure the success of a brand. Consequently, this led organizations to realize the importance of managing their human resources efficiently, as the success of an organization lies within its human resources. As globalization and liberalization have greatly intensified competition in job markets, it has further led to the war for talent. Attracting and retaining the best talent is not just essential for organizational growth but talented professionals can also result in a sustained competitive advantage for the organization. Hence a key challenge facing the knowledge-based economies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the dearth of skilled human resources and their ever-increasing demand (Moroko & Uncles, 2016). The cost to an organization of employee turnover and consequent rehiring and replacement of employees can be quite high (Mitchell, Burch & Lee (2014). Investing in hiring human resources is far less than replacing them. According to Jain & Bhatt (2015) the projected cost of an employee leaving the organization is around one and-a-half years of that individual's salary.

It is therefore important for organizations to develop an understanding of the current and potential employee's expectations and organizational attributes which might influence their job search (Montgomery and Ramus, 2011). Consequently, to strengthen the ability of organizations and to attract and retain potential and current employees, the concept of employer branding emerged. Employer branding is understood as the set of distinctive features of an organization that has been manifested in the minds of the target people; current and potential employees (Meffert, Barmann, & Koers, 2002; Perkoric, 2004). The fundamental notion of employer branding is that the attractiveness of a firm depends upon the perceptions of the current and potential employees regarding the employer brand. It is also considered as a strategy to get

access to potential employees (Branham, 2001). Hence creating desired perceptions among current employees, allows right cues to be sent to potential employees as well. The unique image of the organization influences the perceptions and choices of potential employees (Petkovic, 2004). As the purpose of employer branding is to create a desirable image and a good reputation of the organization, transmitting the correct and consistent messages to current and potential employees, is key (Smedley, 2007). Moreover, it is significant to understand and make available the attractive features of the organization to retain the current and attract the potential employees (Kottolli, 2006).

Today, organizations have placed a lot of emphasis on developing their products and services brands through multiple forms of aggressive advertising such as sales promotion, direct and internet marketing and other promotional mix to place their brands in the minds of consumers (Branham, 2001). While aggressively attracting customers, organizations paid little attention to employees leading to serious repercussions on the ability of retaining and attracting talented human resources. The concept of internal branding describes, that an organization's human resources are the first market of any organization (George & Gronroos 1989; George 1990), similarly employees are directly affected by the activities of the organization. Thus, employer branding emerged to overcome the inability of organizations to attract and retain talent. The concept is gradually gaining importance and interest in human resource management research and within organizations around the globe. However, most organizations have yet to understand the importance of employing employer branding activities. To come to terms with this reality, organizations are adopting the employer branding principles to enhance their organizational identity to position themselves in the market such that it creates a distinctive, emotional and sensational image of themselves in the minds of current and potential employees - to retain and attract them (Olapido et al, lations 2013).

From the internal branding view, employment opportunities will be viewed as a product of an organization (Sasser & Arbeit, 1976), where consumer behavior models can be applied to the job market. Like products are assessed based on their market information, trust in the brand and prior consumer experience, similarly jobs may be assessed based on the information available, experience and trust characteristics (Franck, Pudack, & Opitz, 2001; Schmidtke, 2002; Teufer,

1999). This implies that potential employees can observe certain job offer characteristics such as location and salary, while some characteristics such as work environment and employee orientation within the organization cannot be observed by potential employees. To assess the attractiveness of an organization, potential employees acquire costs accompanied by relevant information required to make an informed decision. Observable information is possible for features such as location and salary, but for experience and trust characteristics such as career development and culture, potential employees make use of information substitutes like brand signals (Weiber & Adler, 1995, Backus and Tikoo, 2004). Lievens (2007) in his study suggests to explore the brand beliefs of both potential and current employees, although studies have explored what comprises of an attractive brand (Maxwell & Knox, 2009; Lievens 2007), limited attention has been paid towards exploring the relationship between employer branding and perceptions of current and potential employees (Rampl, 2014, Lievens & Slaughter 2016). This gap in research is particularly applicable in certain contexts such as unique organizations and regions which are defined by the environment. This background led to the objective of the study which concerns how an organization promotes its employer brand to create desired perceptions among current and potential employees and how current and potential employees perceive attractiveness of an employer brand.

Although employer branding has gained attention in the practitioner world, its academic and theoretical grounding is not fully developed (Backus and Tickoo, 2004, Edwards, 2010, Heilmann, Saarenketo & Likannen: 2013; Love & Singh, 2011). Ever since the initial conceptualization of employer branding by Amber and Barrow (1996), the concept is increasingly being understood in various setting. Although the interest in academia is growing as well, there has not been enough attention paid to understanding the perceptions of employer branding in different contexts (Aggerholm, Andersen & Thomsen, 2011). It is therefore crucial to understand the concept academically on how it is understood, perceived and practiced in countries that have adopted human resource management practices by importing them from the countries that developed them. More specifically this gap is identified in Pakistan, as the concept of employer branding is in its nascent stages, in a developing country like Pakistan, the term employer branding is not widely known and practiced in the indigenous and local organizations

Fairly recently, some multinational organizations in Pakistan have introduced this concept in their organizations which is still not a mature practice.

Research in Pakistan is weak and not substantial with very little interest and effort to explore employer branding on empirical grounds. Although employer branding is emerging as an essential for organizational success to attract and retain talented resources, research in this area is weak. Generally the awareness and acceptance of employer branding is lacking. Organizations in Pakistan resist adopting new concepts and resort to old methods of management. This may also be attributed to limited resources, infrastructural limitations and rigidity of systems to adopt new ideas and practices. Despite these reasons, there are some multinational organizations who have adopted employer branding practice to some extent, while some international and national organizations are practicing it informally. The wide acceptance of such novel concepts can take place if extensive efforts are carried out to explore such concepts on theoretical and empirical grounds. This makes Pakistan an appropriate place for this study as it is a developing economy where employer branding is gradually gaining interest by multinational organizations to retain and attract talented resources.

As discussed previously, although the concept of employer branding lacks theoretical foundation (Cable & Turban, 2001, Backaus and Tikoo, 2004) there is an established connection between employer branding and organizational attractiveness (Barber et al., 1994; Lievens, 2007; Davies, 2008; Agrawal and Swaroop, 2009; Moroko and Uncles, 2009; Mandhanya and Shah, 2010; Wilden et al., 2010; Ong, 2011; Priyadarshi, 2011; Shahzad et al., 2011). However its implications of attracting employees are a developing subject. The study of this relationship of employer branding and perceptions of organizational attractiveness is the key concern of this study. As it is important for organizations to find out what job seekers find attractiveness in an organization (Jian & Iles, 2011). In pursuit of creating brand attractiveness, organizations avalanche perceptions and expectations towards their organization. Hence there are risks involved as these perceptions become part of the brand promise and if perceptions are not positive the employee may leave the organization and may also impact future hiring of talent. Several authors have identified in their research that there is a need to understand the perceptions of employees with different culture and nationalities with regard their employer brand to identify

dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding ( Filip Levens, 2007, Pierre Berthon, Michael Ewing & Li Lian Hah (2005).

Hence, this study contributes in the academic research by highlighting the significant factors affecting the perceptions of organizational attractiveness of an employer brand as perceived by current and potential employees. The findings will guide organizations in the telecom sector and other industries at large in Pakistan to improve their employer brand. Organizations can adopt and modify their practices of employer branding based on the finding to make their employer brand appear more attractive to current and potential employees to retain and attract them. This study provides a way forward for researchers in considering research in the area of employer branding by providing avenues for future research. As the study used qualitative approach of data collection in gathering detailed information on the perceptions of organizations, current and potential, it attempts at filling the existing methodological gap in employer branding research.

## 1.2. Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the topic and its relevance and significance in the field of Employer branding.

Chapter 2 provides a detailed literature review (secondary research) carried out by previous researchers in the field of employer branding. This section highlights the gap in literature which this research addresses, followed by research objectives and questions. The thematic framework discusses the main variables central to employer branding, this research focuses on three major themes identified in literature research and later validated in data collection: Organizational Identity, Communication, and Employment Offering.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology undertaken for the study. It basically highlights the philosophical reasoning in following qualitative research and the data collection process for the research.

Chapter 4 discusses in detail the findings and analysis of data collected from T1 presented in three perspectives i.e. Organizational perspective, current employees' perspective and potential employees' perspective.

Chapter 5 discusses in detail the findings and analysis of data collected from T2 presented in three perspectives i.e. Organizational perspective, current employees' perspective and potential employees' perspective.

Chapter 6 presents a comparative analysis of the findings on T1 and T2 by highlighting the similarities and differences in both organizations employer branding strategies and perceptions.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by providing a conclusion of the overall research findings and making recommendations and providing avenues for future research

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1. Employer Branding

The concept of employer branding has come to surface by applying marketing principles, particularly the ‘science of branding’, to people management practices. While product branding primarily targets customers, corporate branding targets external stakeholders and employer branding targets, current and potential employees - how an organization appears to them (Edwards, 2010). To clarify the understanding of employer branding, we need to reflect first on what exactly a ‘brand’ is. According to Swystun (2007, p. 14) *“A brand is a mixture of attributes, tangible and intangible, symbolized in a trademark, which if managed properly, creates value and influence”* When the concept of a brand is applied to human resources it represents the branded product as an exceptional and unique employment experience offered to employees by the particular organization. The idea is, when organizations manage their employment experience it creates value for employees and the employment experience becomes unique to an organization. According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004, p. 502) employer branding is *“Differentiation of a firm’s characteristics as an employer from those of its competitors, the employment brand highlights the unique aspects of the firm’s employment offerings or environment”* According to this definition employer branding allows to identify the unique elements an employment opportunity offers and the employment experience which an organization promotes. Therefore, by articulating the unique aspects of an organization’s identity, an organization can differentiate the employment experience it offers compared to other organizations (Edwards, 2010). Knoex et al (2000) argues it is important for an organization to explicitly communicate the “unique organizational value proposition” to employees. The way an organization presents its values, attributes, characteristics and the mix of its employment benefits enables it to communicate the employer brand value proposition clearly. While employees experience different values and feelings towards an organization, employer branding is an attempt to present a common employment experience. At the same time, it is important to extensively communicate the employment offering as a desirable place of work (Berthon et al., 2005).



Determining an employee's employment experience is not a simple task as the offerings differ across organizations. One facet of an organization's offering is the economic and financial component of the reward package (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) which is different across organizations. In addition, companies differ in providing intrinsic rewards such as social needs; hence an employment experience mix consists of multiple features. Discussing the employment offering in employer branding, Ambler and Barrow (1996, p.187) stated it as "*The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company*". Here the functional benefits may include both learning and development opportunities and career advancement opportunities. Economic benefit is the compensation package offered to employees, while psychological benefit refers to recognition and feeling of belonging (Kimpakor and Dimmitt, 2007). Moreover, organizations differ in offering intangible experiences - such as working for a charity organization may fulfill an individual's ideological needs such as serving a good cause (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003). Hence employer branding involves identifying the right mix of tangible and intangible aspects of an organization's offering, which represents the unique employment experience it proposes to its employees. It is important to note that an organization's employer brand must possess something distinctive for it to stand out, amongst the others, and appear attractive to current and potential employees to retain and attract the best talent (Corte et al 2011). Employer branding helps increase the desired perceptions among current and potential employees, thereby making an organization an employer of the employees' choice (Olapido et al, 2013). Organizations that develop a strong employer brand not just attract and retain employees but also improve employer and employee relations (Pingle and Sodhi, 2011).

Hence, it may be said that employer branding can be used as a strategy through which the perceptions of current and potential employees and other stake holders can be managed: by projecting a desirable brand image of an organization through identifying and clarifying the extrinsic and intrinsic employment offering and communicating it to potential and existing employees. The employer branding strategy when utilized effectively holds the promise of competitive advantage for organizations.

### 2.3. Employer Branding Conceptualizations

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Employer Branding Conceptualizations</b>
<b>Backhaus &amp; Tikoo (2004)</b>	The authors conceptualized an employer branding framework produces two major assets: brand associations and brand loyalty. Brand associations help in developing a brand image which affects organizational attractiveness for potential employees. Employer branding has an impact on organizational identity and culture which results in employer brand loyalty to retain current employees.
<b>Knox and Freeman (2006)</b>	The authors presented an employer brand recruitment process model which shows the relationship between the recruitment process and the perceptions of potential employees and employers about the employer brand image of a firm. According to the which, potential employees assess the brand image externally, while employers assess the brand internally. It emphasizes the role of interpersonal communication (signaling cues or perceptions) between internal (employer) and external groups (potential employees) in developing the brand image.
<b>Mosley (2007)</b>	The author presented an employer brand experience framework, which incorporates multiple employee “touch-points” that make customer experience distinctive and consistent. He claims by managing employee experience, a long term relationship can be built by creating a distinctive attitude and behavior towards the brand that adds value for them, while differentiating the organization from competitors.
<b>Maxwell &amp; Knox (2008)</b>	The authors identified the attributes that employees find attractive in organizations: attributes that vary across organizations. These differences are attributed to the unique characteristics of every organization that employees find attractive. The attributes were categorized into four categories: employment, organizational success, construed external image and attributes of the product or service.
<b>Mandhanya &amp; Shah (2010)</b>	The authors presented a model based on Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) model, further suggesting that talent management begins with employer branding. Employer branding is a two-stream process targeting current and potential employees. It aims at building a brand image as a desirable and attractive place to work for potential employees, this brand image is developed from brand associations through employer branding. While for current

employees, employer branding aims at building a culture of respect and trust for employees and creating an organizational identity which impacts loyalty towards the organization. This loyalty in turn helps in retaining employees and in supporting the organization to manage talent.

**Wilden, R., Gudergan, S., & Lings, I. (2010).**

The authors conceptualized a framework in which, potential employees are considered unaware of the prospective employment experience, hence they assess jobs based on experience, search and trust characteristics, similar to how products are assessed based on experience, market information and trust in the brand (Franck, Pudack & Opitz, 2002). While there is some information available to potential employees like salary structure they are unaware of the work environment, for which they incur costs in seeking information necessary to make an informed decision. Therefore, it becomes essential for potential employees to use information substitutes such as brand signals (Weiber & Adler, 1995). A signal if perceived as credible and clear the employer is perceived as trustworthy, in such a case potential employees associate decreased risk with organization, and gain satisfaction that the promises made to them are likely to be fulfilled.

**Lievens (2007)**

The author identified the relative importance of instrumental and symbolic beliefs of current and potential employees. The study identified instrumental and symbolic attributes affecting the attractiveness of an employer and how current employees perceive the symbolic and instrumental attributes of an employer more favorable than potential employees.

---

Table 1: Table 1: Employer Branding Conceptualization

All the models presented above are conceptual except Liven (2007) which is a quantitative study. Despite these contributions in research, it appears that limited attention has been paid towards understanding the relationship between employer branding and perceptions of current and potential employees particularly in specific contexts using qualitative research methods. Most of the research available on employer branding has concerned itself with attracting potential employees while not considering its relation with retaining and motivating current employees. Moreover, research on employer branding has not fully addressed the influence of employer branding on the perceptions of current and potential employees (Rampf, 2014, Lievens & Slaughter 2016) Hence there is a need to establish the relationship between employer branding

and the perceptions of current and potential employees regarding the attractiveness of an employer brand.

Based on the review of models presented, multiple factors have been identified in literature which impact perceived organizational attractiveness. Organizational Identity (Backaus and Tikoo, 2004) is identified as a major theme, as multiple sub-themes identified in models are covered by it such as brand image, organizations success or reputation and organizational culture, and it would have been a repetition in considering them as separate themes. Another major theme identified is Communication (Widen , 2010, Edwards, 2010, Backaus and Tickoo, 2004) targeting both current and potential employees. This emphasis on how information about the brand reaches its targeted audience and through which sources and channels messages or brand signals are transmitted to current and potential employees. Such as Knox and Freeman (2006) mention an HR Practice; recruitment and selection. Later in the literature review, a model is presented by Miles and Mangold (2004) which emphasize the role of communication in employer branding and its impact on psychological contract. Multiple researchers talk about Employment Offering as a significant theme to impact the perceptions of organizational attractiveness (Backaus and Tikoo, 2004, Mosely, 2007, Lievens, 2007, Edwards, 2010). Employment offering includes both tangible (instrumental) and intangibles (symbolic) aspects to the employment (Lievens, 2007). Brand associations can be built on organizational offering (Backaus and Tikoo, 2004) and thus impact organizational attractiveness. Thus the following sections will discuss these factors in light of detailed literature review.

## **2.4. Perceptions of Employer Attractiveness**

Employer attractiveness is a set of perceived benefits that employees view in an organization (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005). It is regarded as the subjective evaluations of the attractiveness of a brand expressed through brand associations (Collins and Kanar, 2013). This section discusses the primary determinants identified from literature, which impact the perceptions of current and potential employees of the attractiveness of an organization.

### **2.4.1 Organizational Identity**

Organizational identity refers to the central, enduring and distinctive elements of an organization which make it unique and has relevance in the field of employer branding (Albert and Whetten, 1985). The identifiable characteristics of the organization are renowned especially among employees. According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) employer branding especially involves certain attributes of the organization which form its identity. Research shows an organization with strong identity gives employees the confidence to associate with the organization they are working for (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). The basics of employer branding involve an attribute of the organization as an employer which current and potential employees are attracted to, that identification attribute of the organization has similarity to the current and potential employee's identity. One of the essential objectives of employer branding initiatives is to motivate existing employees to identify with the organization (Edwards, 2005a; Martin, 2008). According to Ashforth and Mael (1989) organizational identification is the perception of being one with the organization. Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) provides a link that individuals have a natural instinct to connect with other social groups and to form their personal identity through those groups. The theory postulates that people attain their self-concept from associating themselves with certain social groups (Tajfel, 1982). Moreover, the status of the groups' individual identity adds to their self-concept (Underwood et al., 2001). In case of a product brand, the more positive perception it has the more it will be desirable by customers, due to the positive self-concept resulting from feeling part of the brand (Underwood et al., 2001). Similarly, when potential employees have a positive perception of an employer brand they are more likely to desire membership with the organization because of the brand image the organization promises (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). The idea is making the employer organization part of an individual's social identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Van Dick, 2001), as there is a need to have a positive self-regard in relation with their identity. An important aspect of organizational identification is the similarity of values between employer and employees (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Edwards, 2005b; Hall, 1971).

## Elements of Organizational Identification

---

**Brand Image** Brand image is determined through brand associations, it is an image composed of the perceptions and expectations about a product, its attributes and its functional and symbolic benefits which are in the minds of a consumer (Keller, 1993).

Research by Dukerich et al. (2002) suggests organizations with attractive organizational image yield high levels of organizational identification. A similar case is with organizations with greater presumed prestige (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). Procedural justice in an organization's people management practices (Tyler and Blader, 2003, Olkkonen and Lipponen, 2006), supportive environment (Cheung and Law, 2008, Sluss et al, 2008 and perception of an open environment and communication (Bartels et al, 2007) also encourages employees to associate with the organization.

Hence managing the image of the organization's brand is essential and the positive attributes communicated to current and potential employees to encourage them to associate with the organization's brand values.

**Organizational Culture** An organization's culture through its shared values can be an effective representation of the organization's identity and its key features (Bachuas and Tikoo, 2004). Organizations promote the value of the organizational culture to support employees quality of life and reinforce desired behavior (Bergstrom and Anderson, 2001).

A culture which is inclined towards supporting the quality of work life is likely to enhance commitment to the organization (Gifford et al., 2002). Researchers have examined the impact of organizational culture on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results showed that a bureaucratic culture is less likely to result in job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Odom et al., 1990).

Research by Lund (2003) on different cultures identified a positive impact of cultures which emphasize flexibility, innovation and creativity. At the same time a negative impact was found between organizations stressing on competitions and efficiency. Silverthorne (2004) asserts a supportive culture results in maximum level of job satisfaction as compared to bureaucratic cultures. Cultures which foster respect for each other, innovation and stability result in high job satisfaction (McKinnon et al., 2003). Employer brand loyalty maybe affected by organizational culture in a way that the employer branding efforts affect organizational culture and organizational identity, which then affects employer brand loyalty (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

Table 2: Elements of Organizational Identity

Hence employer branding presents the distinctive elements of an organization which are the embodiment of its organizational identity and help project the organization's image for employer branding. It can be said that positive perceptions of organizational identity have a link with employee commitment and positive organizational outcomes (Mael and Ashforth, 1992). During the recruitment phase, applicants will be attracted to the attributes of the firm which they believe are important to them, hence an employer brand image is developed by potential employees as a result of brand associations which are an outcome of employer branding by the firm (Edwards, 2010). Organizations involved in effective employer branding identify desired brand associations and develop those associations. One factor which potential employees take into account is the person-organization fit (Byrne and Neuman, 1992). The person-organization fit is when applicants make a comparison of the organization's brand image with their personal values, beliefs and needs - the organization which best matches their values is most preferred by potential applicants (Schneider, 1987; Cable and Judge, 1996; Judge and Cable, 1997). Research suggests when employee perceptions of organizational identity are positive employees are likely to be more committed to the organization. Therefore employer branding highlights features, of organizational identity, which are central and distinctive to the organization.

### **2.4.2. Employment Offering**

Aaker (1997) makes a distinction of organization's personality characteristics into symbolic and instrumental personality characteristics. Instrumental element of employment offering represents the tangible and objective characteristics - such as salary, benefits, allowances and the like. Compensation is considered a potent tool for aligning organizational goals with employee interests. The salary structure of an organization determines the attitudes and behaviors of employees and the kinds of employees who are attracted to and retained within the organization (Noe et al., 2003). This is an important component as the signal sent by the reward sends messages which are very critical; they form the basis of employee expectations and perceptions (Vroom, 1964). When employees are not rewarded with what they were promised in the form of salary raises or promotions, they perceive their expectations have not been met (Miles and Mangold, 2004). While symbolic elements of the employment offering represent the intangible, subjective and abstract characteristics of the employer brand - such as perceptions about the organization's reputation, prestige and social approval which potential employees seek for working for an organization (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003 and Lievens et al., 2007). According to Lievens and Highhouse (2003) job related benefits are mostly similar within an industry and it becomes difficult for organizations to differentiate from competitors, hence employer branding can be significant in conveying the symbolic benefits to develop a desirable employer image. In finding out the perceived attractiveness of an employer, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) found out that symbolic attributes presumption of organization has precedence over monetary job and organizational attributes such as salary and benefits. When applying these personality characteristics, for instance, a person may work for a charity organization for symbolic or ideological purpose of 'doing good' and not the relational or transactional elements of the employment offering (Thompson and Bunderson, 2003). The strength of employer branding lies in the acknowledgment of symbolic benefits and attributes by potential employees. A strong brand has the capacity to offer more than just the tangible benefits (Hirschman, 1980). Symbolic associations, which represent the feelings or emotions by a brand, help individuals attain meaning in their personal and social world (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Symbolic attributes in employer branding may include organizational characteristics such as innovation or prestige.



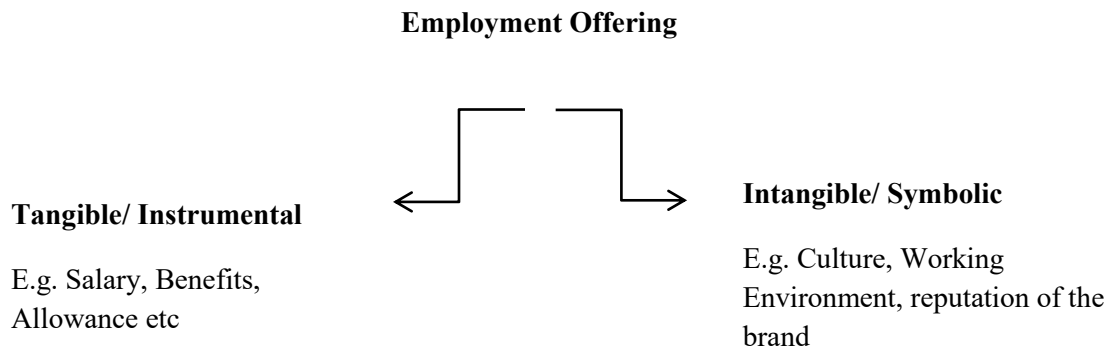


Figure 1: Employment Offering

Moreover, research suggests that organizations with a positive and good reputation are likely to attract more potential employees (Edwards, 2010). Several studies investigating the factors of perceptions of potential applicants on an organization's positive reputation have found profitability to be most essential (Cable and Graham, 2000; McGuire et al., 1988; Preston and O'Bannon, 1997; Turban and Greening, 1996). Although organizations which are performing well regardless of profit can also attract potential recruits, since employer branding efforts involves communicating externally to increase awareness of the organization and its successful endeavors to potential employees. Moreover, other messages that an organization gives out regarding its reputation building for employer branding can be social causes such as environment, community and employee relations, quality of the products and equal opportunity (Turban and Greening, 1996). The study conducted by Cable and Turban (2003) supports the notion that the positive reputation of the organizations attracts potential applicants. Two factors identified in the study of potential employees' perceptions were familiarity of the organization and external reputation of the organization. An interesting finding from the study revealed that determined efforts to communicate information about the organization such as advertisements and other promotional material with job postings alone do not have a significant impact of potential employees' perceptions, as influencing perceptions is considered a long-term process.

Although some research does exist where potential recruits were found to be attracted towards organizations that sponsored events at their university or those organizations with a high company profile (Collins and Stevens, 2002). Hence the idea reinforced here is that organizations which have a good reputation and involve in recruitment advertising (Collins and Han, 2004) will be more successful in attracting potential employees. Perceptions of potential employees built through messages from promotional materials do not always give a truthful image of the organization's culture. According to Cable et al (2000) organizations in emphasizing desirable elements of the organization might set unrealistic expectations, which may later lead to employee disappointment and eventually turnover (Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Griffeth et al., 2000).

Hence features of employment offering both tangible and intangible help project the organizations brand image for employer branding. Research suggests intangible benefits have precedence over monetary benefits (Lievens et al., 2007). The perceptions of employment offering are mainly contingent on how the offering is communicated to current and potential employees to attract and retain them. The following section on communication discusses it in detail.

### **2.4.3. Communication**

Miles and Mangold (2004, pg. 71) conceptualized an internal branding process known as an "Employee Branding Process", where they define it as a "*process by which employees internalize the desired brand image and are motivated to project the image to customers and other organizational constituents*". According to the employee branding model, the employer brand image is driven by the messages received by employees and the psyche of unfolding those messages and signals. These messages are delivered through multiple sources while the employer-employee relationship is best explained through the psychological contract which is central to the employer branding process.

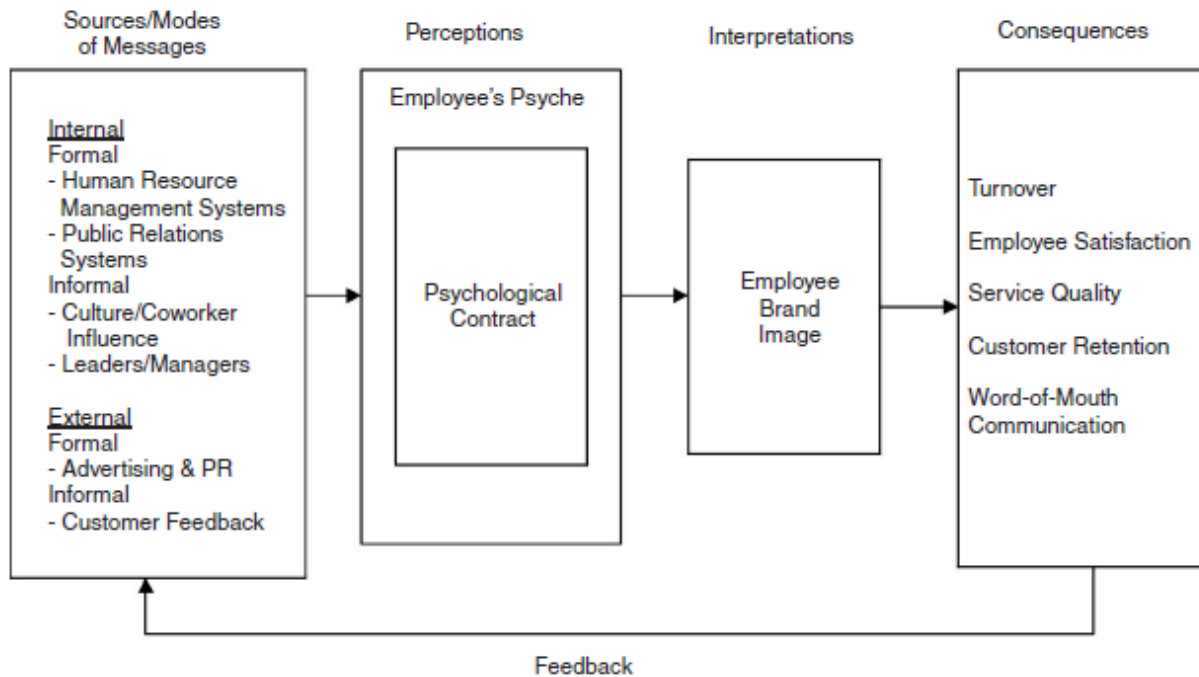


Figure 2: A Conceptualization of the Employee Branding Process (Miles and Mangold, 2004)

The model above by Miles and Mangold (2004) highlights the role of communication by describing the employee branding process in which the organization's vision and values are the foundation of the process. The values represent the goal and mission of the organization, while the mission and values form the basis of the organization's desired brand image. For the employee branding process to be effective, messages conveyed within the organization must clearly, consistently and frequently communicate throughout the message sources of the organization, the values, mission, and brand image of the organization along with the accepted behaviors and attitudes of employees in the organization. This will allow employees to internalize the employer brand and experience the employer brand. Moreover, it will support the psychological contract between the employer and the employee, essential for effective employer branding which is explained in detail in the following section. If the messages transmitted are inconsistent, they are likely to create disloyalty on the organizations part, as employees view it as

a breach of their psychological contract, thereby negatively affecting employee productivity, turnover, loyalty, satisfaction and reputation among other stakeholders.

According to Miles and Mangold (2004) model of employee branding, for an organization seeking to improve its employer brand it is important to consider multiple sources of messages from within and outside the organization. There are two sources of messages, internal and external, within these sources there are formal and informal sources of information in each category. The internal formal sources consist of human resource management system and public relations system of the organization, while internal informal sources consist of culture and influence of coworkers and the management. According to Greene, Walls, & Schrest (1994) it is critical for internal messages to be consistent. However, it is often not the case and there is inconsistency in messages (Mitchell, 2002). When inconsistent messages are delivered to employees and customers, then employees who are aware of the messages are likely to perceive dishonesty on part of the employer. As a result, emotional connection with the brand will be lacking and employees will be less likely to deliver on the organization's performance (Robinson, 1996). This failure to deliver weakens external communication efforts from the employee's point of view. Hence messages communicated in the organization are fundamental to the employer branding process.

## 2.5. Psychological Contract

The aim of employer branding is to project a unique employment experience, which many researchers refer as the psychological contract in this regard (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Martin, 2008; Miles and Mangold, 2004). Although the written contract between employer and employee contributes towards the unique employment offering and experience and the kind of relationship they will have, however implicit features are also involved. According to Rousseau (1989, p. 123) the psychological contract is “*an individual’s beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party*”. The offering of each organization will be different and it would also differ in what is promised and what is offered to employees. Assessing the psychological contract in terms of the perceptions of what the employees expect of the organization, what was promised and what is offered gives the basis for the functional, economic and psychological benefits, hence providing a foundation for the employer brand. Rousseau (1990) explains the two types of psychological contracts, relational and transactional. Transactional psychological contract involves the economic exchange, while relational psychological contract involves subjective aspects of the job offering such as perceptions of justice and fairness and social and emotional elements. Culture can be key feature in making a unique employer brand. Another type of psychological contract is working for a certain ideology with certain principles (Martin and Hetrick , 2006). This is particularly significant for employer branding as a certain segment of employees would like to work for an organization with a certain ideological purpose and values and potential employees share those values (Blau’s, 1964).

The psychological contract theory and its influence on employer-employee relationship provide the central foundation for the concept of employer branding (Bachkoos and Tikoo, 2004). The relationship between the employer and employee is embodied in the psychological contract, which is developed when an employee joins an organization (Rousseau, 1995). This contract is based on the expectations and perceptions of employees and the employer. These expectations and perceptions stem from the messages employees receive from the employer starting from recruitment and selection process throughout till the very end of the employee’s tenure with the organization. The psychological contract impacts the employer-employee relationship as

employees keep comparing their perceptions with the psychological contract. As long as the contract delivers on the promises made, employees will stay committed to the organization (Robinson, 1996). However, if the employees perceive that their psychological contract is not being honored, they are likely to experience negative emotions and exhibit behaviors not in favor of the organization (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). This may eventually lead to employee turnover, reduced loyalty and commitment, negative word of mouth to potential employees and customers (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1995). It is the employees who determine whether the psychological contract is being honored or not. For instance, employees perceive from the early organizational messages that the organization gives a high value to customer satisfaction and treat employees well, just as they would expect the employees to treat their customers. This message develops employee expectations regarding justice and fairness. Hence it allows a standard treatment towards all organizational stakeholders to be created which is expected to emanate throughout organizational practices and systems such as the employees may expect the organization to be fair and just in its rewards, provide opportunities for growth and development (Miles and Mangold, 2004). To honor the contract, the organization must meet the expectations of the employees (Rousseau, 1995). Similarly, a perception of an employee may include the organizations expectations in the form of maximum effort, commitment and achievement of organizational goals. Consistency in the messages of psychological contract result in satisfied employees and increased level of customer service.

Therefore, it is critical for the organization to understand and manage the psychological contract to set expectations of what is required of an employee behavior and how it can be met. The messages or signals originating from the organizational system impact employee perceptions towards organizational values. According to Mitchell (2002) if HR communicates that the organization hires only friendly people, provides resources to training employees on customer service and rewards employees delivering good customer service. Then this message can form the basis of organizational expectations from employees which is customer service in this case. Internalization of these messages is important as it allows employees to base their behaviors and job-related decisions on the organizational brand image and exhibit that same image to other stakeholders (Mitchell, 2002). For instance, during recruitment stages the organization gives out information on the employment experience in the organization regarding career development,

challenging opportunities and training to attract talented candidates. These messages are perceived by potential employees as promises on part of the firm. The psychological contract starts building up from the recruitment information (Rousseau, 2001) therefore sufficient, accurate and realistic information is important to remove any previous misconceptions and to reduce turnover due to false expectations (Locke, 1976, Dugoni and Ilgen, 1981)

Traditionally in the psychological contract, employees promise commitment to the employer in exchange for job security (Hendry and Jenkins, 1997). Recently however due to outsourcing and flexibility required by the organization, the psychological contract has taken a new shape in which the employer enables the employees in marketable skills through training and development in exchange for flexibility and performance (Baruch, 2004). These new employment dynamics have brought about some negative perceptions towards employers, hence to overcome these, employer branding is used to promote the other offerings of the employer such as career opportunities, development and personal growth. (Newell and Dopson, 1996; Hendry and Jenkins, 1997) Employer branding is also used to change negative perception of an organization. Hence psychological contract drives the brand image exhibited by employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

Miles and Mangold (2004) discuss the psychological contract as the foundation of the employment offering and hence employer brand for current employees. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) present an alternative for potential employees which is that the, employer brand forms the psychological contract based on the truthful information of the employer brand and impact the perceptions of honoring or breach of the psychological contract. What is informed about the employer brand in advertising and other sources forms expectations of what the organization will provide to employees, hence potential employees will see and judge based on what is communicated to them as part of employer brand activities. The other often ignored aspect of the psychological contract is the expectations and obligations to be fulfilled by the employees (Conway and Briner, 2005). This would also make up the features of a unique employment experience for instance working long hours for higher salary. Hence, psychological contract plays a very significant role in the employer branding process, as the extent to which the organization honors the psychological contract impacts the trust and motivation of employees

towards the organization. Despite being an individual's perceptual process, the formation of the psychological contract is shaped by how an organization interacts with employees, therefore the perceptions of organizational identity, organizational offering and how the organization communicates with current and potential employees impacts the psychological contract which in turn impacts the perceptions of organizational attractiveness.

### 2.6. Theoretical Framework

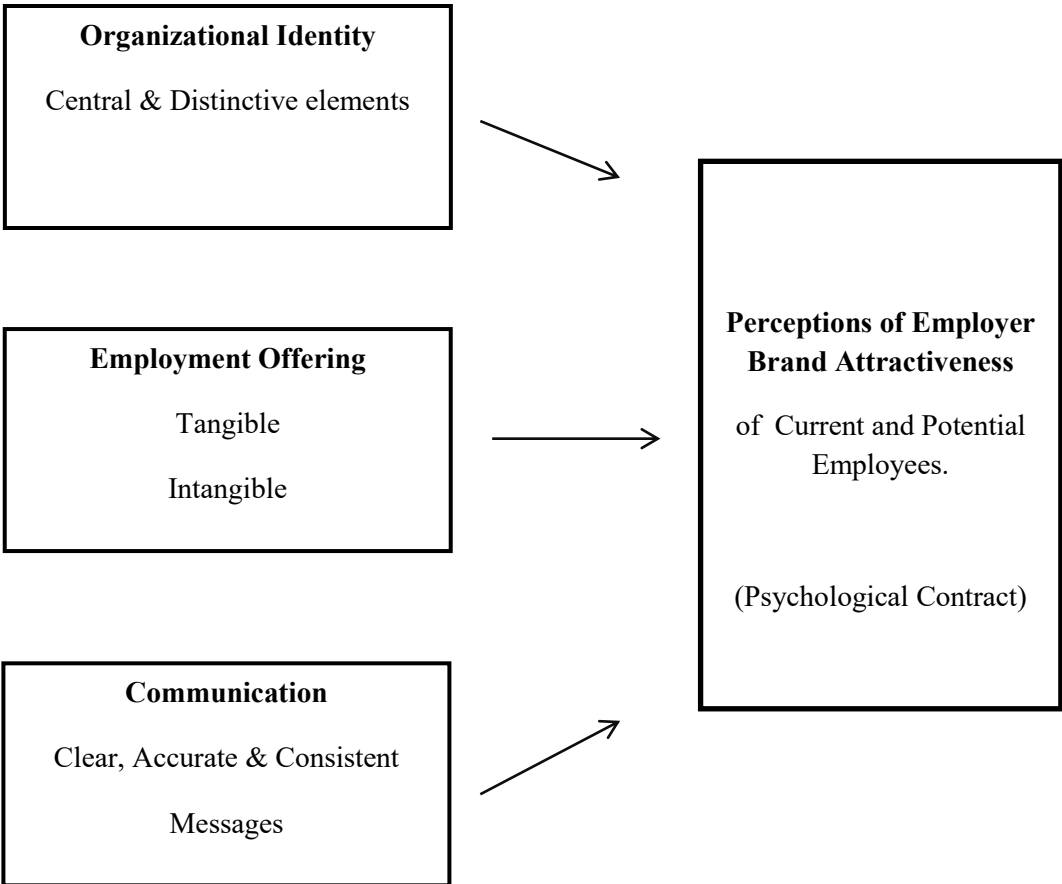


Figure 3: Framework (Source: Based on Literature Review)



The figure above provides an overview of the theoretical framework of this research. The themes shown in the diagram have been identified from literature review. The framework exhibits Organizational Identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985, Mael and Ashforth, 1992, Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, Moroko & Uncles, 2008, Edwards, 2010), Communication (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, Miles and Mangold, 2004, Wilden, 2010, Edwards, 2010) and Employment Offering (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, Edwards, 2010) as the primary factors which have an impact on the employer brand attractiveness as perceived by current and potential employees. Organizational identity consists of the central and unique features of an organization which are perceived as attractive by current and potential employees. The organizational offering involves the tangible and intangible mix, which makes up the employer value proposition; and all communication the organization has with current and potential employees is expected to be clear, consistent and accurate. The perceptions of current and potential employees on the identified factors impact the employees' perceptions of attractiveness of an organization's employer brand and their psychological contract. The study so far has identified relevant research regarding the current and potential employee perceptions of employer brand attractiveness. This would help in analyzing research objectives and answering research questions stated below.

## **2.7. Research Gap**

After a detailed review of literature in the field of employer branding, it was identified that there is a need for further research to understand the relationship between employer branding and the perceptions of current and potential employees in specific contexts especially. The major focus of research related to employer branding has been on attracting potential employees while the aspect of retaining and motivating current employees is under researched. There is a lack of research on the influence of employer branding on the perceptions of current employees (Rampl, 2014, Lievens & Slaughter 2016) It has been suggested by Rampl (2014) that the existent gap in research, needs to be addressed by establishing a relationship between employer branding and the perceptions of current and potential employees regarding the attractiveness of an organization. The authors suggest that perceptions of employer attractiveness need to be identified in their unique context through extensive qualitative research. Hence the use of in-

depth interviews contributed to understanding the phenomenon in its unique context. Addressing this literature and methodological gap this research focuses on exploring how organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions and how current and potential employees perceive the attractiveness of an organization's employer brand by using qualitative approaches of data collection in two telecom organizations in Pakistan who are actively pursuing employer branding strategy. Given the significance of employer branding, the results of this empirical study may prove to be beneficial for all organizations in the telecom industry willing to improve their employer branding strategies in order to attract, retain and motivate scarce talent. Moreover, this research will help the telecom organizations studied and the telecom sector at large to identify and make available the attractive attributes to retain and engage current employees. Based on the research gap, the objective and questions of the study are as following:

1. To explore how organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions among current and potential employees through its employer branding strategy in the telecom industry of Pakistan.
2. To explore the perceptions of current employees regarding the attractiveness of their organization's employer brand.
3. To explore the perceptions of potential employees regarding the attractiveness of targeted organizations' employer brand.
4. To draw a comparison on the perceived attractiveness by current and potential employees on the attractiveness of the organization in the telecom sector of Pakistan.

## **2.8. Research Questions**

1. How do organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions among current and potential employees through its employer branding strategy in the telecom industry of Pakistan?
2. How do current employees perceive their employer brand?
3. How do potential employees perceive the employer brand of Telecom organizations in Pakistan?

How and why are there similarities and differences in the perceptions of current and potential employees regarding the organizations employer brand?

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1. Research Philosophy

Philosophy can be explained as having multiple views of the world and the processes that are part of it. Research philosophy deals with the beliefs and assumptions pertaining to the creation of knowledge according to the nature of the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). An individual's view of the world is linked closely to how they perceive reality (Mason & McBride, 2014). In relation to this thesis it is important to identify how the researcher and subjects in the study perceive reality of the world, gain knowledge and act in it as it affects the way research is conducted. How an individual's views the world in a called 'Paradigm', a research paradigm can be explained as a set of common beliefs and assumptions that are agreed between scientists on how problems should be understood and solved (Kuhn, 1962). According to Guba (1990) research paradigms can be characterized through their:

- Ontology: what is reality?
- Epistemology: How do you know something?
- Methodology: How do you go about finding it out?

Relationship between paradigms

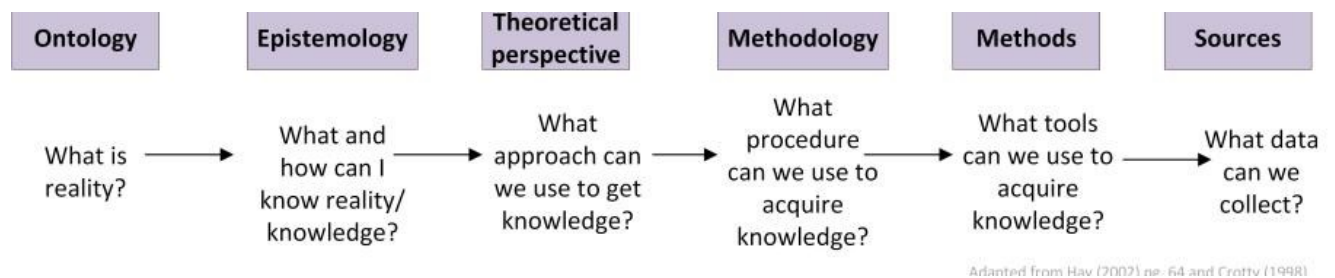


Figure 4: Source: Adapted from Hay (2002) and Crotty (1998)

According to Lincoln and Guba (1994) some of common paradigms are described in the diagram

Objectivist  
Approaches to  
Social Science

Subjectivist  
Approaches to  
Social Science



<i>Item</i>	<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Postpositivism</i>	<i>Critical Theory et al.</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>
<b>Ontology</b>	Naive realism-“real” reality but apprehendable	Critical realism –“real” reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Historical realism- virtually shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time	Relativism- local and constructed specific realities
<b>Epistemology</b>	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified objectivist; tradition/ findings probably true	Transactional/ subjectivist; mediated findings	Transactional/ subjectivist; created findings
<b>Methodology</b>	Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified expert mental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutical/dialectical

Table 3: Source: Lincoln and Guba, 1994 and Morgan and Smircich (1980)

This following section describes the ontological and epistemological stance of this research leading us to the methodology of the research which explores various methods of data collection, explains the logic of scientific inquiry and identifies the limitations of certain research techniques (Hay, 2002). This is followed by the choice of research methods: the procedures and techniques that were used to gather and analyze data (Blaikie, 2000). In this research the ontological and epistemological stance of the research led to the questions of research and how they were answered. Consequently the research methods were synced with purpose and aim of the research. The purpose of the research was to explore how organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions and to identify the perceptions of existing and

potential employees regarding the attractiveness of their employer brand. Therefore, the methods selected aimed at fulfilling the purpose of the research.

### **3.2. Ontological Stance**

Ontology deals with finding the reality of the world out there hence questioning ‘What is the nature of the social and political context we might acquire knowledge about’ (Hay, 2002). Example if a real world phenomenon is assumed then ‘what can be known about it?’ and ‘how things really work?’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1994). The ideologies of research can be viewed in a continuum as suggested by Morgan and Smircich (1980) refer to table above, however the two dominant ideologies are positivism and constructivism or interpretive which are at opposite ends (Lincoln and Guba, 1994). The ontology of positivism assumes the world as external (Carson et al., 1988) having a single objective reality in any phenomenon, not considering the researchers’ beliefs and perspectives (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). This results in a controlled and rigid research approach (Churchill, 1996; Carson et al., 2001). The researcher remains detached from the subjects being examined, as the purpose is to remain objective. The researcher stays emotionally neutral and examines the phenomenon on the basis of logic and reason with no account of personal experience and value judgment (Carson et al., 2001). The aim is to make context and time-free generalizations. However, a positivist approach is not suitable when examining a social science phenomenon which deals with humans and understanding their interactions, their perceptions and their experiences.

The purpose of this study was to uncover the perceptions of various individual employees of their employer brand in their own unique organizational context, based on their experiences and values, how individuals perceive their psychological contract with their employer i.e. whether the employee perceives the psychological contract is being honored or not. As a result, there were multiple perceptions of employer branding by different employees based on their preferences and experiences. Moreover perceptions of potential employees were also analyzed. Therefore, for this research the ontological approach was towards being constructivist/interpretive. These multiple realities are due to the different meanings attached to their context (Neuman, 2003). The knowledge was not objective rather it was determined subjectively through social interaction (Carson et al., 2001). It allowed the researcher to adopt

flexible and personal research methods which try to capture the essence of human interaction (Black, 2006) and make sense of perceptions (Carson et al., 2001). The researcher was interdependent on the subjects as they mutually construct reality based on the interactions between the interviewer and the subjects as in this study. Moreover, the interpretivist approach assumes that the researcher has some prior insight of the phenomenon but it is insufficient due to the complex, multiple and irregular nature of the perceived reality (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). Identification of the ontology of the research was very significant as the following sections, which are the epistemology, methodology and research methods were based on its ontology.

### **3.3. Epistemological Stance**

Epistemology is questioning ‘what is the relationship between the knower and what can be known?’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1994). It is concerned with gaining knowledge of social reality. It seeks to gain knowledge of what is assumed to exist (Blaikie, 2000). Epistemology is questioning what is considered as acceptable knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It focuses on the process of gathering knowledge and developing new theories as it assumes that knowledge is constantly changing and being updated. The epistemological stance is not only concerned with knowledge development, but also to the methodology suited to the study. As shown in the tables above the dominant epistemological approaches in scientific literature are positivism and constructivism/interpretivism. Researchers have different lenses of how they view the world; the way they observe measure and understand social reality (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). The positivist school of thought is dominant in natural sciences, it is concerned with analyzing data, which is preferably objective and quantifiable observations which can be statistically analyzed (Collins, 2010). The researcher works with an observable social reality through testing it with an already developed theory by developing hypotheses to test them. The nature of the study is usually experimental and operates on the assumption that the researcher is independent of the research (Remenyi *et al.*, 1998). In the realist school of thought the researcher believes that the reality is independent to the researcher’s belief, the idea is similar to the positivist school of thought (Bryman, A. & Bell, 2003). Interpretivism has a more practical orientation, and is opposite to the instrumental view of positivism. It provides a subjective view of the world where individuals’ interactions are interpreted as distinctive and unique (Ibid, Neuman, & Kreuger,

2003). As mentioned above in the positivist approach the researcher is independent to the data collection process (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009), because of this, the positivist approach was not suitable for this study, to gather the perceptions of the employer and current and potential employees as interviews are required where it would not have been possible to ask each respondent the same question in the same manner as their situation was different. The purpose of the study was to contextualize the employer branding concept hence an objective view was not possible. Instead the aim was to understand multiple interpretations and perceptions of the participants of the study as there are multiple realities of the employer branding phenomena. This study is thus based on the interpretive view as the study explores the perceptions of current and potential employee of their unique organizations employer brand. The constructivist/ interpretive approach in organizational research suggest that the methods used in natural sciences are insufficient in the research of a social reality. The same institutions or human actions, stated differently are likely to have different meanings for different people being studied and also for the researcher. The researcher must interpret the empirical study in context of what it means to people being examined, the perceptions of the employees being studied in this case. In studying for subjective meanings in social interactions, the researcher must gather data which is not just the obvious and objective elements of human behavior but also the subjective aspects of human behavior (Lee, 1991). The subjective perceptions were gathered in interviews which allowed a closer look of the employer branding practice in the targeted organizations. The respondents' perceptions were based on their experiences and subjective opinions hence allowing in understanding employer branding from individual employees point of view.

### **3.4. Methods**

Determining the research methods is important to identify the procedure which needs to be used in the research process. Employer branding is a relatively novel and under-researched field with a focus on a few aspects only (Moroko & Uncles, 2008), there is a need to employ more qualitative approaches to address this theoretical and methodological gap. Hence, the study was exploratory in nature, based on qualitative research methodology, As suggested by (Robson, 2011) qualitative research is appropriate to explore multiple insights to a phenomenon in a unique context.

## **Data Collection**

As a result of this study's ontological and epistemological stance it supported the interpretivist view where the researcher and the subjects were interdependent and knowledge was created mutually with the help of respondents. The goal of the research was to explore how organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions and to identify the perceptions of current and potential employees regarding their employer brand, for which it was important to understand the meanings, reasoning, motives and subjective experiences of employees which were dependent on their context. Due to this, inductive approach of reasoning and qualitative data collection methods were used, in order to determine multiple insights about the phenomena (Easterby-Smith & Thorpe, 2012) as the aim was to gather the perceptions of practitioners and existing employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Roper & Davies, 2007; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Contrary to quantitative research methods which provide an objective approach of reasoning focusing on quantifying data, opinions and behaviors, qualitative research was considered suitable for the research (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative data collection helped in developing a deep understanding of the real and unique phenomenon (Holme & Solvang, 1997) therefore it was used in developing an in-depth understanding of the practice of employer branding in the targeted organizations and the perceptions of attractiveness of the organizations employer brand by current and potential employees.

Data collection techniques comprised of semi-structured interviews from the HR of the organization, current employees and potential employees. An interview is a significant tool of data collection when the researcher aims to identify the perceptions of subjects, the meaning and deeper understanding of situations where the phenomenon occurs (Punch 1998). This study used a semi structured interview format; which allowed the researcher to design questions in identified themes while also allowing for flexibility of a conversation. Three separate interview guides were designed for each category of participants: HR of the two organizations, their current employees and focus groups for potential employees. The interview guides contained



questions regarding the themes which were identified from the detailed review of the literature, which were asked in different ways from the respondents according to the situation (Lindlof & Taylor 2002), however the themes remained the same in both the organizations and focus groups. The interview guides allowed the interviewer to focus on the main themes of the area being researched (Lindlof & Taylor 2002). Moreover, the semi-structured interviews allowed questions to be based on the responses by interviewees.

Other data collection and analysis techniques were also considered such as single case study and multiple case study approach, which requires extensive data collection over a sufficient period of time with the aim of discovering the uniqueness of each case. However due to limited time period and limited access to all the information of the organizations, this approach seemed less relevant. Generally for case studies multiple sources of data are used such as observation, archival information and interviews (Yin 1984) however for this study observing employees for the period of case study and organizations archival documentation was inaccessible, therefore making case study approach inappropriate. Moreover the usefulness of case study approaches is limited to an exploratory phase in a hierarchically arranged research programme (Miles, 1979). Researchers claim that the process of preparing case studies requires a long time and often result in huge amounts of unreadable documents. Case study analysis requires more skill, rigor in method, and execution, while only a researcher with appropriate skills and experience is able to carry out a case study, otherwise it is prone to more researcher bias than other research strategies (Schell, 1992). Hence interviewing respondents followed by a thematic analysis approach was considered more suitable for this study, as explained in detail in the subsequent analysis section.

Moreover, the survey method was also not appropriate for this study, as data collection relies on quantitative measures and statistical analysis (Fowler, 2013). Surveys are most effective when sufficient research has taken place in an area, while the purpose of this study was to gather detailed subjective data on a relatively under researched topic, as the research gap suggested using qualitative data collection methods to understand the perceptions of employer attractiveness in its unique context. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were considered appropriate as they allow probing of respondents. This helped in gathering a detailed insight on

employer branding from HR, on how they were promoting their employer brand through their employer branding strategy, their active practices and current programs; while employees' perceptions and experiences were gathered in detail on employer attractiveness. The questions in the semi-structured interview guide were based on the themes identified in literature and later validated from data collection which were; Organizational Identity, Employment Offering and Communication.

### **Population and Sampling**

Employer branding is a relatively recent HR practice which is mostly being practiced by the telecom industry and multinational FMCGs present in Pakistan. For this study two telecom sector organizations were selected, the reason for selecting organization from the telecom sector was easy access to telecom sector as compared to that of FMCGs; also head offices of multinational FMCGs are either mostly based in Lahore and Karachi, where access to information was difficult, the HR of regional offices in Islamabad and Rawalpindi is limited in scope and operations and would have prevented the researcher from obtaining a holistic view, while head offices of telecom organizations are based in Islamabad, making it easier and accessible to gather information. The two telecom sector organizations were selected based on their expressed strategy of actively pursuing employer branding in the telecom industry and being most prominent in employer branding activities as compared to the rest of the organizations in the telecom sector. The two telecom organizations are labeled as T1 and T2.

Getting access to these organizations and extracting information from them was a daunting challenge despite the availability of references. Considering Pakistan's reference based culture it was difficult to get access to Upper management such as GM level in HR, hence managerial and officer level employees from HR Department were interviewed for the research. HR in T1 and T2 have sufficient decision making authority, particularly in the domain of employer branding, all initiatives and practices of employer branding are initiatives of the HR department, hence organizational perspective on employer branding was gathered from interviews with HR. In the initial stages of topic selection, telecom sector organizations were contacted to identify the

relevance of employer branding in Pakistan's job market, due to which pilot interviews were not conducted during data collection process. Moreover, due to time and availability constraints of personnel from T1 and T2 it was difficult to arrange pilot interviews; however, the relevance of the topic had already been determined during topic selection, hence there were no doubts in availability of information on the topic. Moreover, interview guides were constantly revised to ensure the effectiveness of the interview process.

The ideal number of interviews depends on the nature and scope of the qualitative study, research suggests minimum 25-30 respondents are required to gather sufficient information until it reaches a saturation point (Dworkin, 2012). For optimal sample size, gathering enough information was the focus where information started repeating and no new information was being collected. Therefore, the sample size consisted of one HR manager and one HR executive from each organization and 12 employees from T1 and 14 employees from T2, making 30 respondents in total. Details of respondents are attached in appendix

To meet the objectives of the research and to answer the research questions, purposive sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for the study. Purposive sampling technique is usually used in qualitative research which allows cases to be selected based on the personal judgment of the researcher. The chosen subjects were those who were most suitable in answering the research questions and helpful in fulfilling the research objectives. Therefore, an HR manager and an HR executive were interviewed from each organization to gather the perspective of the organization and to identify how HR promotes its employer brand, while existing employees were interviewed to gather current employee perspective. The interviews were started off by asking general questions about the organization before going into details of employer brand attractiveness. Refer to appendix A and B for interview details from HR and employees. After gathering the perceptions of HR and current employees, perceptions of potential employees were sought. For this, two focus groups were conducted at Fast School of Management and NUST Business School to explore the perceptions of potential employees on how they perceive the Telecom industry as an employer and T1 and T2 as employers, refer to appendix C for detail interview guide for potential employees. The reason for selecting these two institutes is because they are the top business schools in Islamabad and access to them was relatively easy. Moreover in the sample of the current employees interviewed for the study it was found 80% of the

respondents were graduates from these two universities. There were eight participants in each focus group, in the age bracket lied between 23-27 years of age. All participants were in the graduating batch of their MBA. There were 60 % male participants and 40% female participants.

The interviews from employees were conducted from multiple departments such as Corporate Communications, Marketing, Sales and Distribution, Supply Chain, Human Resources, Business Intelligence and IT, across different junior cadre levels from officer level, executive and senior executive levels having 2-8 years of experience. The reason for targeting employees from all departments was to reduce bias towards a single department and to allow for diversity, hence two employees from each department were selected, junior level employees were selected due to their relatively easy accessibility and the impact employer branding has on employees who are new in their careers is more significant than the impact it has on experienced employees, moreover, a study by Tallulah David (2015) states employer branding has a higher impact on millennials than boomers. Interviews conducted from the HR Managers in T1 and T2 were approximately sixty minutes long, while interviews from the employees lasted 15-20 minutes. Some employees were hesitant in sharing information despite much probing; their interview duration was approximately 10 minutes each. Interviews were recorded after taking permission from employees and the organization, a few instances where permission was not granted notes were taken. All interview respondents' identities are kept anonymous due to confidential reasons. In T1, the employees were confident and eager in answering questions related to their organization. They were relatively more aware of the organizational and employee related activities directed towards them and they were aware of the concept of employer branding and the current programs and activities as compared to the employees interviewed in T2. While some employees in T2 were unsure of HR activities and were reluctant to talk about what the HR was doing. The employees interviewed, from HR and Marketing were more aware of employer branding practices in T2. The time horizon for the study is cross-sectional i.e. data collected at a certain point in time across different functions or variables (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2009). Due to limited time and resources, data was collected during a certain time period, which helped in understanding the construct of employer branding during that particular period.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

Qualitative approaches to data analysis are diverse, complex and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest thematic analysis should be a foundational analysis method for qualitative analysis and thus first qualitative method for new researchers to learn and carry out on their research. Therefore to analyze the data, thematic analysis approach was used, in which the data was identified, analyzed and classified in themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This technique systematically analyses the data to identify the precise meanings of the information (Holsti, 1962). After a detailed literature review, multiple themes were identified from the literature, which were found to be common among all major studies in the field of employer branding. To carry out the data collection process, semi-structured interview guides were prepared keeping in view the identified themes from literature for HR managers, employees working in the organizations and potential employees. This study focused on how HR promoted and perceived its employer brand and how current and potential employees perceived the attractiveness of their employer brand keeping in view the themes identified in literature which were later validated in the data collection process; Organizational Identity, Employment Offering and Communication.

Welsh (2002) suggested analytical software's such as Nvivo have limited searching capability hence they were not used to analyze the data, as it was considered not to be very useful for this research, as identifying themes is easier for researchers themselves. Moreover some of the data collected was in Urdu, hence translating the interviews from Urdu to English would not have been possible by the software. Since the nature of the research is subjective, the software might have created forced categories of themes which may not have been the true depiction of the data. As the interpretivist approach allows the researcher to be a participant of the research process to search and categorize data in themes and to allow for better understanding of data. To analyze the data, interviews were audio recorded and constantly transcribed completely in order to make sure that data was not overlooked. The transcripts were then analyzed using the qualitative

procedure (e.g. Glaser&Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The initial transcription helped in developing a broad understanding of the data. During the interview data collection, questions were rephrased and adjusted according to responses of the interviewees, probing questions were asked to understand and gather a detailed perspective on the perceptions of employees and potential employees. However the major themes remained the same in all interviews with the employees and potential employees. Patterns and concepts were identified from each interview keeping in view the themes identified in literature (De Chernatony and Cottam, 2006), irrelevant information was removed. For example, initially culture was a separate theme however as data collection progressed it was found to be a sub-theme of organizational identity hence it was categorized under it, as its emphasis as a separate theme was not relevant and was repetitive. The data was classified under themes while reporting the findings. Some of the candidates were interviewed again to clarify certain concepts from both HR and employees, and accordingly data was revised, after searching for themes and refining the data was classified under themes while reporting the findings.

### **3.6. Context of the Research: Overview of the Telecom Sector**

The world has become a global village. A global village is defined by many characteristics and one very important characteristic is easy and widely accessible communication. With the advent of cutting edge cellular technology in the past few years, a boom in the telecom industry can easily be observed. With its large subscriber base, Pakistan is seen as a country with a huge potential for growth in the telecom sector. With a population of around 200 million, and a subscriber base of around 140 million, Pakistan has become one of the largest cellular markets in the world. According to Butt (2006), it is mainly because of this reason that Pakistan has seen a huge increase in investment from large telecom companies all over the world. The presence of a large number of telecom operators in the country has resulted in a general air of competitiveness in the telecom sector with companies fighting for a larger market share. This has translated to competitive pricing between the companies and the end customer reaping the benefits. Currently, there are four major cellular operators in Pakistan. The two top telecoms companies selected for this study are T1 and T2. The reason for selecting these telecom organizations is because they

were one of the first organizations to initiate employer branding practices and are employing expressed efforts towards employer branding. Their employer branding is relatively prominent and mature in the industry.

### **3.6.1. Telecom T1**

T1 Pakistan is 100% owned by the international T1 group. T1 group is an international provider of voice, telephony and data services having a presence in 13 markets and a huge penetration in Asia and Europe. It is one of the largest mobile operators in the world with a subscriber base of around 200 million and a workforce of about 33,000 employees. According to PTA, T1 Pakistan has a subscriber base of around 38 million, which comfortably makes it the second largest mobile operator in Pakistan, closely lagging behind T2. T1 was awarded the telecom license in 2004 and began its operations in Pakistan on March 15, 2005. Till 2016, T1 Pakistan has reportedly invested USD 2.3billion in the local economy. The impact on job creation has also been huge as it has created 2,400 direct and around 25,000 indirect jobs. T1 also operates a network of over 200,000 retailers, franchises and service centers. Around Rs. 147 billion have been contributed in the form of direct and indirect taxes by T1 Pakistan. T1 has its headquarters in Islamabad with regional offices in other large cities such as Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad and Peshawar.

By having a look at the vision and mission of T1 Pakistan, it can be easily understood that the company wants to make a difference in the lives of its customers. They solidify this sentiment in the minds of their customers and their stakeholders by reiterating the fact that they bring positive change to the societies they operate in by improving the infrastructure, services provided and products introduced. Senior executives at T1 Pakistan are aware of the fact that the needs of the customer of today are changing. This comes at a time when the telecom sector as a whole is going through monumental changes with the introduction of 3G and 4G services across Pakistan. T1 executives believe that such changes have given rise to the need of a brand which will help T1 sustain the present and take them to the future by helping them stand out from the competition and delivering value through each step of their business. This can be seen from T1's move from cellular services to financial services in the form of EasyPaisa and T1 EasyPay.

### **3.6.2. Telecom T2**

According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, T2 is Pakistan's largest telecommunication company. With a subscriber base of around 40 million, it is the company which has the largest market share in Pakistan, closely followed by T1. T2 has the largest network structure in Pakistan with over 9000 cellular sites - making its infrastructure the biggest in the country. T2 further solidified its position in the market with the successful acquisition of another telecom operator in Pakistan and consequently, permission to operate 4G services in the country. T2 is operating using the largest distribution and contact center, and an extremely strong 6,500 kilometer fiber optic network. T2 has carried out an investment of more than USD 3.9 billion with further plans of network modernization bringing in another USD 1 billion. With the help of their impeccable infrastructure, they are committed to provide unmatched customer services to their customers in Pakistan. They provide personalized tariff plans for a diverse set of customers, thus providing a solution to the requirements of a diverse group of customers with varying needs and spending power. T2 has been aiming towards becoming the best employer in Pakistan by providing their employees a safe and nurturing business environment while making sure that employees feel coveted and an integral part of the overall T2 strategy. T2 has also proven itself to be a socially responsible corporate entity by introducing and supporting initiatives through the T2 foundation. The areas include: education, health, environmental initiatives, and self-sustainable business models.

The intense competition the telecom sectors faces in products, pricing and employees makes it very crucial for these organizations to attract and retain employees due to the turnover the employers face. This study focuses on how T1 and T2 promote their employer brand through their employer branding strategy and programs, and how their employees both current and potential view their attractiveness as an employer.

### **3.7. Limitations**

A number of impediments were faced during the research process. The most difficult stage was data collection. Multiple references were used to gain access to employees. It was difficult to get



access to upper management in HR due to their inaccessibility, hence managers were interviewed. The duration from the point of contacting HR managers and employees to getting an interview meeting with them took a long time, approximately one month. During interviews, some employees were reluctant in expressing their views completely and honestly such as any negative comments about their organization, although they had been assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

An exhaustive sample of employees could not be interviewed due to time constraints from the organizations. This however opens avenues for further research, targeting all telecom organizations operating in Pakistan to generalize the results. During interviews with the HR personnel, confidentiality was another obstacle as they were reluctant in disclosing all policies and figures related to employer branding, as some projects were in pipeline. Moreover, employees had limited time to give the interviews due to their busy schedules, several appointments were rescheduled to set the interview meetings which increased the duration of the data collection process more than expected. During interviews, keeping the respondents on the topic was a challenge, as some interviewees gave vague and insufficient answers.

To sum up, this section explains the reasons for adopting exploratory research based on qualitative research methodology. The research questions focused on “How” and “Why” questions of research, therefore constructivist approach was used, followed by interpretivist epistemological domain to suit the purpose of the study. It further explains the methodological details of the study such as the data collection process and details of sample organizations and respondents targeted for the study. The section concludes by providing an overview of the telecom sector in Pakistan particularly the two telecom organizations studied, T1 and T2 which helped in analyzing the results of the objective of the study.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis- Telecom T1**

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from T1. To address the objectives of the study: to explore how T1 promotes their employer brand to create desired perceptions through its employer branding strategy, practices and programs of its employer branding function. For this the Talent Acquisition and Employer Branding Manager and Executive were interviewed from HR to gather the perspective of the organization. To address the second objective of the study, which was to explore the perceptions of current and potential employees regarding the attractiveness of T1's employer brand, current employees of T1 were interviewed to gather the perspective of current employees. To find out the perceptions of potential employees two focus groups were conducted at NUST Business School and FAST School of Management to gather the perspective of potential employees. The analysis is presented under organizational attractiveness themes identified from literature which are: Organizational Identity, Communication and Employment Offering.

Hence the analysis below is presented from three perspectives i.e. Organizational perspective, current employees' perspective and potential employees' perspective.

### **4.1. Organizational Identity**

According to the literature studied, the central element in employer branding is identifying and communicating the central and unique aspects of the organization which make it different from competitors and makes it attractive to employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) these elements makeup an organization's identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Corte et al, (2011) suggested an organization's employer brand must possess something distinctive for it to stand out and appear attractive to current and potential employees to retain and attract the best talent. Hence to understand the employer brand of T1 its organizational identity was explored.

As revealed by the findings of the interviews from HR, the employer branding function was initiated by T1 in 2013. The analysis is substantiated through ample evidence of employer branding being considered as a core function of their Human Resource department. The aim of

the employer branding initiative at T1 was to brand itself as the top ranked employer in the country and to maintain that position for the years to come. It was found that T1 had been recognized by job portals such as Rozee.pk and Glassdoor, as one of the best employers of the country. According to HR, current and potential employees the central elements identified as the organizational identity of T1 was its Brand Image and Culture. The individual components within T1's culture were identified as open communication, working environment, strong values and employee development and empowerment.

#### **4.1.1. Brand Image**

To explore the organizational identity of T1 the HR emphasized that T1 was amongst the top multinational employers in the country and the top telecom organization in Pakistan. It was found that T1 had been recognized by job portals such as Rozee.pk and Glassdoor, as one of the best employers within the country.

To explore the perceptions of employees about the brand image of T1, it was found; employees felt it was a matter of great pride for them to be part of T1, as it was considered as one of the most preferred employers in Pakistan. It was believed to be the leading telecom organization and also leading in digitalization strategy being followed by other telecoms, as an employee said:

*“I was offered a job in T1 and Nayatel at the same time, and even though Nayatel was offering more salary I chose T1 because of its brand image”. T1-E10*

Employees said they felt very happy when they told people in their professional and social network that they worked for T1, as they felt their individual professional success was associated with the success of T1, as an employee said:

*“When T1 comes up with a good ad, I feel pride in that, knowing I work for this organization.”*

T1-E4

Employees who were new hires and fresh graduates felt pride in associating with T1 because joining the organization had always been their aspiration as a student. Some respondents felt good about being part of T1, because they perceived the telecom sector to be doing very well and to be playing a major part in the economy as an employer.

Associating with a reputed brand name was considered a significant factor among potential employees while seeking jobs. The findings of focus groups conducted with potential employees suggest that pride is one of the important factors to be associated with one's potential employer.

Respondents felt that their first employer had a major role to play in their career path; based on word of mouth, they believed having reputable employer brands on their resumes was significant for jobs, and considered T1 as the top most reputable organization. Hence they were interested in doing an internship at T1. T1 was also considered the top multinational telecom organization in Pakistan which groomed graduating students during their respective summer internship programs. The responses suggested that a reputable employer brand name was crucial for social acceptance, as a respondent said:

*“Where you work is the most frequently asked question in a social gathering”*

Potential employees felt the learning and developing opportunities offered at T1 would be a great start for their career. Although potential employees were of the view that T1 offered lower salary brackets to fresh graduates but because of their brand image they were willing to join T1.

Hence, it can be concluded, through T1's employer branding strategy its brand image was projected in a way to attract current and potential employees. Identifying with their employer is matter of pride for both current and potential employees. Brand image played an important role in helping employees associate with T1. Current employees considered their association with T1 as matter of pride because of its brand reputation, as T1 was considered to be one of the top employers in the county as a multinational organization and a top telecom organization. The elements of its organizational identity such as culture made their association stronger. While potential employees also wished to associate with T1 because of its brand image and name in the industry. Both current and potential employees expressed that despite T1's salary being less than what other market competitors were offering, they still preferred T1 because of its brand image.

#### **4.1.2. Culture**

The interviews with HR, current and potential employees identified, Culture was central element of T1's organizational identity. T1 defined its culture through open communication, employee wellbeing and fun at work environment, strong values and focus on employee development and empowerment. The following sections will analyze these sub-elements of culture in the light of HR, current and potential employees' perceptions.

##### **4.1.2.1. Open Communication**

It was inferred from the interviews that, the T1 believed that open communication was one of the most integral part of its culture. It was found that open communication was encouraged and facilitated through the open door policy where employees could sit wherever they liked, there were no fixed office spaces given to them. This evidence corroborates with the statement of the HR manager:

*“We focus on a culture which is very egalitarian and encourage open communication, this is the brand image we want to build and retain”.* (T1-HR1)

The HR emphasized that open communication was also encouraged by the organizational design of T1 where the bureaucratic lines of management were minimal and teamwork was encouraged. The management including CXO's (chief experience officers) and CEO were easily approachable. It was found from the interviews that the CEO would be seen walking around office floors communicating freely with all employees, highlighting the significance of open communication and egalitarianism in T1.

The interviews from current employees revealed, that most employees perceived T1 to have a very non- bureaucratic working environment with negligible bureaucratic reporting lines. The physical environment supported the idea as there were no separate office spaces for the senior management. This led employees to have an open relationship with their managers and CXO's, any employee could walk up to their CXO and ask anything, eventually removing barriers to communication. Stressing this point an employee stated:

*“The culture here is a champion because you are basically sitting at the same table as your director so communication can be as direct as you like. I believe this also leads to less office politics/leg pulling and eventually happier employees.” T1- E5*

It can be inferred from current employees’ views that they saw open communication as a virtue which reduced office politics. While HR emphasized that open communication was meant to reduce bottle necks which may emerge in work and employer and employee relationship. The employees believed with open communication encouraged at all levels, some senior managers who were old fashioned or orthodox like a departmental or divisional head, it became very easy to communicate with them as well because they would be at an arms distance from the rest of the employees so naturally it became very easy to communicate, hence reinforcing open communication in culture. In discussing this element of the organization’s culture an employee said:

*“The culture is very open and egalitarian I mean I wouldn’t have to think twice that I have to walk up to my director or ask my line manager first. I just walk up to him and say and ask whatever I want to. The level of comfort in approaching your higher ups is great.” T1-E6*

The approachability of management in the working environment was seen as a motivating factor for employees. Stressing this point an employee said:

*“I have prior experience of working in a government organization for two months so whenever the director came in, my boss told me that we had to stand up to greet him. Moreover, here you don’t have to dress formally like wear a suit, like I’m just wearing a polo shirt. Here we don’t have that mentality that if someone is a director so he must sit in a separate office with close doors. Here I’m sitting with my director and we are working together, the approachability is very easy. “T1-E12*

Moreover, the culture represented a relaxed organizational design with emphasis on teamwork, this was observed from an example given by an employee, that in her team there was a director, manager and an executive being herself, she would get tasks delegated directly from the director

who was the senior most person in the department directly, hence no extra lines of delegation were involved. The employee stated:

*“I’m reporting to everyone in my team so it’s not just reporting you are basically working together as a team, this is what I’ve experienced in my department and overall organization”.*

T1-E6

This work structure as described by employees was in practice, which corroborated with the claims of HR, that T1 offered a non-bureaucratic and open communication work environment. T1 allowed flexibility to employees in terms of the nature of work and flexibility in timings and work from home as an employee added:

*“T1 is very employee accommodating as an employer, such as the flexible timings suit me a lot, I can come at 9 or 9 30 or 10, it not a problem as long as the work gets done”.* T1-E11

Although employees’ responses suggested that the organization encouraged open communication through its lean structure within teams and easy approachability of managers, it was found that most of it was dependent on an employees’ line manager. When an employee had an open relationship with their line they could enjoy all the perks that came with open communication, if their line was not supportive and appreciative then employees didn’t feel satisfied. An employee said:

*“If your line is supportive and encouraging then it is obviously a plus but if your line is not supportive or encouraging and doesn’t appreciate your ideas then you might not be satisfied with T1.”* T1- E5

The responses identified that employees would not report their line managers, if they perceived them unfair, because they felt since their performance appraisal had to filled by their line, they were afraid their manager would hold a grudge against them and their working relationship would become unpleasant. As we already discussed how literature suggests the implicit relationship between the employer and the employee known as the psychological contract, it contributes towards the unique employment offering and experience of employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Martin, 2008; Miles and Mangold, 2004). Employees’ perceptions regarding the aspects of the organizations culture will help establish expectations and define their behavior.

As long as the psychological contract delivers the promises made, employees will stay committed to the organization. Here we find some employees felt their expectations were not met. This clause goes forward to show that elements such as open communication, which are not part of the legal contract but, are part of the psychological contract led to a positive or negative image of the organization being constructed. These perceptions and expectations further grew to form employee opinions of the organization and cumulatively contribute to its culture.

Some respondents viewed communication in open spaces a hassle for them, since there was no designated place for any individual, finding a person of contact whom the employees did not know before was difficult. Teams which worked with data collection such as financial services found it difficult to collect data from people because open spaces had made it difficult to interact and find people. Some employees viewed open communication had although facilitated communication, but they wished they could sometimes work in peace and quiet, since open work spaces created a lot of noise for them and it got difficult for them to concentrate.

In order to identify the views of potential employees regarding open communication, it was found, they perceived T1 to have a culture which encouraged open communication between the management and employees. Potential employees through word of mouth or experience through internships knew about the working style of T1 being non-bureaucratic such as open work spaces where employees could sit anywhere. These aspects were found to be important for graduating students who felt such working environment allowed them to learn and grow without the restrictions of bureaucratic structures and allowed them to network freely with rest of the organization.

To conclude the findings, T1 encouraged open communication at all levels to brand a culture which was perceived as open, facilitated by minimal hierarchy, easy approachability of management and an open door policy. However employees perceived it was mostly contingent on the support of employees' respective line managers. The open space culture was viewed as a hassle by some employees. On the other hand, potential employees viewed open communication as means of learning and development as it would give them an opportunity to network freely. They looked forward to such working environments which do not restrict them physically and



creatively. It was analyzed from the responses of potential employees that; they had not foreseen the impact of line managers with the employees.

#### **4.1.2.2. Working Environment**

It was inferred from the interviews that a characteristic feature of the culture of T1 was the employee friendly attitude of T1 and fun at work environment. T1 had introduced programs and practices targeting existing employees to ensure a nurturing and fun environment to satisfy, engage and retain employees. One such program for existing employees was called “vitality” as the name suggested this program dealt with looking after the physical health and wellbeing of employees. There were three elements in the vitality program physical, organizational and stress level of employees to address this there were a number of facilities such as a fitness gym in the office and sports facilities like table tennis, foosball and badminton, there were yoga and meditation classes also being offered along with games like Xbox and PlayStation, the HR manager stated:

*“We ensure and expect that our employees’ physical health is as important as their mental health. T1 also offers fun activities for employees to relieve their stress levels and make their work fun for them by providing activities such as sports gala, fun at work, away days, family day, the idea is employees are having fun while they are working”.* (T1-HR1)

On the other hand, current employees viewed this aspect of the culture very positively. Most employees, believed T1 took care of them by providing a fun at work culture. They felt they could enjoy their work which was not possible in other organizations. Sports facilities such as table tennis, badminton and Xbox were found to be favorites of most employees, as one employee mentioned:

*“During our breaks we play table tennis, it’s a fun and healthy option for me”* T1- E1

Female employees believed that, T1 was very accommodating towards them by providing facilities such as transport and daycare facility. They viewed the general culture as very respectful towards them as one the female respondents said:

*“The attitude is very respectful towards females by colleagues”*. T1- E2

This suggests employees preferred fun activities which are healthy as well as help balance out their work, fun and health routine. The responses identified regular fun galas and theatrical plays were sponsored by T1 which were free for employees, employees perceived T1 to be taking care of their fun at work and outside work. However, there were employees who believed these activities wasted their time at work especially if they were working in a team, and although they were fun for some, but it meant sitting late in office to finish daily targets. This routine was not suitable for all employees. Employees especially in the marketing, sales and IT departments felt they had a lot of work load on most days which made work-life balance that T1 promoted and boasted about, difficult to manage. Employees when they joined T1 did not expect that they would have to sit late every other day. Moreover, employees were of the view that more than often, activities like office dinners had been turned into opportunities to score with your bosses rather than fulfilling their intended purpose of team-building and socializing. The very open and direct communication style also meant that some of the employees when being overly appreciated could lead to others feeling left-out and gave rise to professional jealousy.

Potential employees believed the brand name of T1 as one of the most reputable in the job market, because it was perceived as it took care of its employees' well-being in terms of their physical wellness and social needs. One participant stated:

*“T1 gives of that perception that once you join the organization they will take care of you, your professional growth and your personal needs as well”*.

Encouraging sports activities was considered an attractive element of the culture at T1, as well as being part of the physical environment which was considered conducive to learning as well. Overall the responses from potential employees suggested that reputation of T1 in telecoms was at the top, it was perceived better than all other telecoms as a participant said:

*“Among all telecoms in Pakistan I would definitely prefer T1”*

Potential employees viewed fun at work very attractive, they viewed T1 as an organization which gave employees the creative freedom, recognized their efforts and an environment where

could have fun and work as well, however they seemed to not foresee the strings attached with the fun activities such extra workload and sitting late at office to finish off daily targets.

To conclude, it can be analyzed that T1 projected fun at work culture to be a central part of its organizational identity. Through offering fun and sports activities T1 believed it had developed its working environment, its unique selling proposition; most current and potential employees found it very attractive and part of its unique identity. Although the environment was packaged as fun with entertainment activities such as away days, many employees complained about the excess work load they had on most days, balancing work and life was a challenge for them while sitting overtime in the office was considered a norm for most employees especially marketing, sales and IT departments. This suggested that the work missed during the entertainment activities had to be completed sitting overtime and this routine did not suit many employees. This aspect of working overtime and work load was not foreseen by potential employees.

#### **4.1.2.4. Employee Development And Empowerment**

It was identified from the interviews with HR, that employee development and empowerment was considered to be an integral feature of T1's culture. The HR emphasized that T1 had a lot of focus on employee learning and development needs through job rotation and job enrichment. They provided training opportunities based on competency gaps identified in employees. HR emphasized that T1 believed in developing its employees mostly through lateral promotions to encourage and motivate employees.

Also, current employees believed learning and development to be an impactful feature of T1 and they believed T1 took care of learning and development needs of employees. The growth opportunities offered were mostly in terms of job rotation and job enrichment such as working in cross functional teams was encouraged, in explaining this aspect an employee said:

*“I'm in sales right now when I feel my learning has saturated, I can apply for more positions in the department, either my line can recommend it or I can myself also change the department and the position, so yeah that's what keeps me going and yes I do see a future for myself here as there are many opportunities to grow”.* T1- E1

According to HR T1 provided a conducive learning environment and sufficient advancement opportunities. However it was found that many employees felt that their careers had become stagnant and opportunities for vertical promotion were very slow. Although T1 offered progression in the form of job rotation and job enrichment, after a certain period of time employees expected vertical promotion: where opportunities for them were limited. As discussed earlier, employees' expectations of growth in the form of promotions impacts their psychological contract expectations from employees, employees perceived initially there would be sufficient opportunities however in reality they were limited. Employees in the sales department especially felt progression was slow and limited and if an employee got stuck in a position which had no clear career path then they would be extremely unhappy and difficult to engage and retain, the career path for them would be to relocate to another city which many employees were not willing to, especially female employees. Employees who were dissatisfied with their growth felt may have felt a breach of their psychological contract. An employee expressing her concern stated:

*“It took me 8 years to become an assistant manager, which is considered a very long period in the telecom industry”.* T1-E7

Focus groups found out, potential employees perceived T1 to offer good professional growth and learning and development opportunities. They felt since they will be entering the job market, their top priority in a potential employer was learning and development which T1 provided. Respondents believed learning in the form of job rotation and job enrichment provided a good opportunity for development in the long run.

The HR believed empowering employees was essential where they could come up with initiatives and express their creativity in projects by allowing them to work and express themselves in an unrestricted environment. HR viewed empowerment as, allowing employees to take charge of their career and at the same time providing them with opportunities to grow. Now the employee had the liberty to further steer their career path. The data revealed, T1 had a special focus on women empowerment as part of its employer branding and diversity strategy and considered it as its 2020 organizational goals. This was another reason why female employees considered T1 to be a preferred employer for them.

When employees' views were analyzed, it was identified that employees felt empowered as the culture allowed freedom of expression and room for experiment. Employees perceived T1 to be distinctive among other organizations because employees were encouraged to take the lead, they felt empowered to take on tasks and contribute to projects, as one employee said:

*“I feel the work I do has a direct impact on output of the company – I feel empowered which is a very motivating factor”.* T1-E9

Employees felt the nature of work and the kind of products and services T1 produced had an impact on the society at large, employees viewed this as actually caring for all the customers of T1. They felt T1 envisioned empowering society, so the initiatives directed towards empowering masses such as the “Easy Paisa” initiative which aimed at enabling masses to carry out cashless banking, empowered the employees also. Another initiative in which employees took pride was called ‘Magri’ where farmers got messages on their phones regarding the temperature, right time to sow/reap the crop and the like, these kinds of initiatives were thought of as one of a kind in the industry and were truly aimed at empowering society. Explaining this, an employee stated:

*“The kind of work we do; the projects we work on are very rewarding. That is something I believe what makes T1 stand out because we are contributing towards the society.”* T1-E10

However, some employees viewed empowerment with decision-making; they felt they would be empowered if they can make decisions on their own. Employees felt this was dependent on their line managers, how much they empowered them, there were employees who felt their line didn't really empower them, they couldn't make decisions completely on their own and had to seek approval from their line managers at every step. It can be analyzed from this finding that those employees, who were not given decision making powers of some sort, felt they were not empowered enough. They viewed empowerment comes with decision making, that's how they would be developed to take on multiple and higher level roles.

Interviews from potential employees found, graduating students didn't feel the importance of empowerment at the beginning stages. They lacked the understanding of empowerment in workplace setting. Most potential employees felt communicating freely was empowerment and

they believed T1 practiced open communication, which was considered an attractive aspect of T1's organizational identity.

To conclude it can be analyzed that to project a desired brand image of T1 learning and development opportunities were offered to employees mostly in the form of job rotation and job enrichment. Current employees believed job rotation and job enrichment provided them with a good development opportunity however vertical progression was slow and limited, and most employees expected T1 to offer growth in the form of promotion as well. While potential employees believed T1 offered good learning and development opportunities for fresh graduates. T1 believed it empowered employees by allowing them to work creatively and coming up with their unique initiatives. Employees felt pride on the projects they were working on as they felt they contributed to the society. Women empowerment was a significant aspect of its culture and nature of work which is why female employees particularly considered T1 a preferred place to work. While some current employees felt empowerment came, when decision making power was given to them, this aspect was dependent on an employee's line manager. Potential employees viewed empowerment related with open communication and flexibility.

Brand Image	Perceived as the most preferred telecom employer and top multinational in the country. Employees felt pride in associating with T1 and potential employees aspired membership in it
Open Communication	Facilitated easy approachability of higher management and encouraged networking. Dependent on employer employee relationship, open space perceived hassle by some. Potential employees viewed it as learning and networking opportunity.
Working environment	Perceived as respectful, employee friendly and fun through various sports and entertainment activities. Excess workload and sitting overtime considered a norm.
Employee development & Empowerment	Learning and development mostly through job rotation and job enrichment, limited training opportunities for all employees. Limited opportunities for vertical promotions which employees wanted. Some employees perceived they career was stuck. Employees empowered to be creative and take initiatives on projects, associated empowerment with decision making. Potential employees' priority L &D, perceived empowerment with communication and flexibility.

Table 4: Summary of Organizational Identity Features of T1

## **4.2. Communication**

One of the central elements of employer branding is to clearly and extensively communicate the unique aspects of an organizations identity to differentiate its employment experience it offers as compared to other organizations (Edwards, 2010, Wilden, 2010). For effective employer branding communicating the brand image of the organization and transmitting the correct and consistent messages to current and potential employees, is key (Smedley, 2007). To find out the communication effectiveness of T1 for both current and potential employees, the HR, current employees and potential responses were analyzed.

Internal communication was identified to be targeted at current employees, while external communication was used to target potential employees as part of employer branding activities in the employer branding function.

### **4.2.1. Internal Communication for Current Employees**

In finding out the role of internal communication for current employees in T1's employer branding, the interviews identified T1 relied heavily on digital media to reach out to its internal audience. It was considered as the first point of encounter for employees. To make the employer brand visible T1 had been using the company's official website and internal job portals to advertise vacancies, upcoming programs and other information for employees, LinkedIn website and Facebook page were also used to ensure an active presence on digital media. Facebook at work which was an internal networking portal was being used to share events, new policies and networking for all current employees.

It was found T1 considered effective communication as one of the core elements of engaging and motivating employees of its employer branding strategy. For this communication regarding organizational goals and expectations, human resource practices and culture were communicated in a way to encourage employees to exhibit behaviors in accordance with the organizations values.. To keep the relationship between the employees and T1 strong, T1 ensured to remove any communication gap, such as whenever any new initiative was introduced it was directly communicated to all employees through an email, intranet or Facebook at work. The HR manger added:

*“It is our primary focus to ensure frequent and consistent communication to constantly improve our relationship with the employees” T1-HR1*

To ensure consistent communication HR practices were matched with the organizational goals. The HR business partners were assigned to every function to make sure that HR practices were aligned with the organizational goals. Communications team in employer branding made every effort to communicate clearly. Further the interviews identified, T1 employed a lot of mediums to communicate with its employees, for instance if a communication had to be made for all T1 employees, a standard process following four steps was used. Which meant all the communication had to be rolled out through four different channels, the first was the T1’s intranet called WOW (the default landing place) the moment an employee would open their laptop it was the first page they viewed. The second was the email channel called 3 to 3 which would send out communication emails to the entire company, thirdly communication would be sent from the process lead whoever was heading the initiative and lastly the internal campaigns were used such as standees, posters, wall papers and screen savers. The HR manager explained:

*“If it’s a big campaign, for example we had the launch of our corporate strategy 2020, the communication and messages were literally everywhere to make sure there was a lot of repetition of messages so we are leaving no stones unturned in getting the messages communicated”.* T1-HR2

Furthermore, the onboarding process was used to brand T1 to its current employees. Thus whenever an employee joined the organization, the initial few days were considered very crucial to make the employee feel comfortable and part of the organization. The HR manager said

*“Onboarding is an excellent time and opportunity to brand T1. The first few hours or the first few days the candidate may have certain thoughts about T1, we use this time to brand T1”.* T1-

HR2

During onboarding, the HR made sure the newly hired candidates’ PC or laptop was set up and their email was configured and other formalities like the employee RFID card were ready. HR would introduce the new joiner to the entire department along with a welcome email which was



sent to all employees. Female new joiners' conveyance arrangements with administration department were sorted out. HR claimed it made sure the new joiner was communicated all the policies and procedures such as medical, insurance, leaves and the like relating to employee benefit.

In finding out how the current employees perceived the internal communication efforts of HR, it was found employees perceived communication at T1 to be very effective and strong in the organization. For instance, when employees joined the organization, the values were explained to them with clear examples in their orientation session. Quizzes regarding the culture along with online video training modules were developed and regular trainings were conducted to explain values in the form of fun activities. In responding to communication effectiveness an employee said:

*“The HR department conducts sessions which are very clear and detailed. My experiences of recruitment and onboarding were very good. I had an issue of transport which was immediately resolved”.* T1-E4

This suggests that most employees were satisfied with the organizations communication , some employees responded that they felt everything was in place when they first joined the organization and everything was settled in a smooth manner suggesting their employee expectations were met hence their psychological contract was honored.

Another employee stated:

*“HR is very crisp when it comes to communicating their policies and procedures. We get continuous reminders in the form of emails, workshops, town halls. So all the policies and procedures are, very clearly, communicated to each and every department and also to every individual separately.”* T1-7

Overall it can be concluded effective internal communication was used to build a desirable employer brand of T1 for current employees to engage and retain them. Most of the responses from current employees corroborated with the claims of T1 that communication was prompt,

effective and encouraging. Digital media was used to reach out to its employees through emails, official website, job portals and Facebook at work. Internal messages were communicated through multiple channels to ensure, no information and audience was left out. Current employees perceived the dissemination of information as frequent and consistent starting from the employee's contract to operational communication at work. Employees believed HR was approachable as any employee could just email them in case of any query for instance an employee explained if they wanted to find out the development opportunities available to them, they could just email HR. During onboarding new joiners were made comfortable and were given extensive information on how the organization works and their role in the job. Similarly awareness sessions were conducted on T1's culture, policies, values and conduct which were mostly perceived as realistic. However some employees felt there was discrepancy in the what the organizations preaches and what is applied in terms of values of trust and transparent communication often found in employer and employee relationship. Where employee's felt they were given insufficient information or miscommunication they felt T1 had been unfair to them resulting in feeling of psychological contract not being honored.

#### **4.2.2. External communication for Potential Employees**

In order to find out the role of external communication in employer branding of T1 for potential employees, the data identified: the most popular program targeted at potential employees was T1's Summer Internship Program. Every year T1 gave an opportunity to fresh graduates and graduating students to experience the work culture of T1 through the "Summer Internship" program; the HR Executive said:

*"The summer internship program aims to attract young graduates, to provide experience working at T1: their experience starts from applying on the website to the online test". T1-HR2*

This program was arranged annually in summers; 60 interns were hired from all over Pakistan; the HR executive stated:

*“Can you imagine the number of people who applied this year? This year 28,000 people applied from all over Pakistan! Hence the summer internship program gives us a lot of mileage on T1’s employer branding strategy”.* T1-HR2

Another program targeted at potential employees was known as “T1 Excel” in which potential employees were physically reached out through visiting universities. Workshops were conducted with students and faculty on topics such as job interviews, personal capacity building, leaderships and values. The idea was to target as many universities as possible in all major cities like Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar, as the HR manager said:

*“We try to reach out to as many universities as possible in all the major cities to attract diverse talent, this really helps us with our employer branding strategy”.* (T1-HR1)

Moreover, the candidate experience was used as an employer branding tool for potential employees where communication played an integral role. The interviews from HR gathered that the recruitment process and the employer branding activities go hand in hand. For instance the job description for a position and its advertisement were used as an employer branding tool. T1 advertised vacancies on its official website for potential employees. HR at T1 believed that the recruitment process had a great impact on employer branding hence it had to be managed carefully from advertising the JD to the candidate experience. For this, when candidates would come in for interviews, they would be welcomed in a friendly manner and were treated with respect and protocol, it was made sure the interview started on time and arrangements were made for tea and water, while exposing them to some sort of physical branding of T1 in the form of banners and displaying the values and philosophy of T1. The HR executive stated:

*“Small acts of courtesy add up to the candidate experience, which the organization pays careful heed to”.* T1-HR2

This suggests that T1 used the candidate experience, ranging from digital to physical candidate experience, to brand itself as a preferred employer.

In order to find out the perceptions of potential employees on how T1 communicated to them, the data revealed, most candidates looked for jobs online through the official website of T1;

however, they believed referral basis was most effective. LinkedIn website was no more considered a trustworthy website as it had gone out of its scope now, a participant said:

*“I don’t trust LinkedIn at all now, random people have posted jobs there and asked to like or comment on their posts, they are all fake.”*

Respondents felt T1 never advertised on Rozee.pk, while Facebook was not considered a credible source which could be used to apply for a job, hence for potential employees the official website was the only credible digital medium to contact and communicate with T1. Furthermore, the internship drive of T1 was considered a very attractive and great exposure to the corporate world, some respondents had heard about their friends’ experiences and some had been through T1’s internship experience themselves. It was believed to be a great learning opportunity. An online test was conducted to shortlist candidates, some participants felt it was a hassle filling lengthy forms, while unsuccessful candidates were found to be disgruntled by the process, as one participant said:

*“I’ve applied many times, but I’ve never gotten a reply, never ever!”*

The data from potential employees revealed, respondents expected T1 to set realistic expectations by conveying truthful information about vacancies, the culture of T1 and upcoming programs of T1 targeting potential employees. The responses suggested potential employees expected T1 to give feedback on why the candidates did not make it against a certain vacancy. Organizations which did not send an acknowledgement of whether they had received an applicant’s CV were likely to damage their employer image, on the other hand when an organization sends an acknowledgement it shows that the organization is responsible and cares for its employees as one participant stated:

*“I applied for many jobs at T1 but I never got any reply from them.”*

Respondents felt it was important to at least convey the decision whether positive or negative when making a hiring decision. The university recruitment drive of T1 was seen as ineffective; respondents felt T1 barely visited to recruit from their university. Similarly, the perception of workshops conducted by T1 was that, they had no intention to hire, hence they were perceived as ineffective, as a respondent said:

*“I don’t find university workshops conducted by T1 effective, because when they visit, they give the perception that they might recruit, however they are just there to give information on CV building and give feedback on our CVs”.*

It was inferred from the focus groups that when the organizations physically visited universities, the graduating students expected the companies to shortlist a few CVs and add them to their pool. So generally, T1’s visits without the intention to hire were perceived ineffective. This certain act had led to the image of T1 being perceived as an employer in jeopardy - in the minds of potential employees. This suggests potential employees expected realistic information to be conveyed to them and not unnecessarily raise their expectations if they were not going to be fulfilled. This is precisely how psychological contract affected T1’s communications with potential employees, that their expectation were not met.

Hence, it was concluded to reach out to potential employees with the purpose of projecting a desired employer brand, communication was considered essential by T1. Most popular program targeted at them was T1’s Summer Internship Program. The HR believed it gave mileage to their employer branding strategy while potential employees also considered it very attractive and a great exposure to the corporate world. Physically reaching out to universities was only considered effective when T1 conveyed accurate information on vacancies. Candidates’ online experience from viewing a JD of a position to physically appearing from an interview was targeted to attract potential employees to brand T1. A significant finding was the dissonance in perceptions between current and potential employees. Current employees perceived the information given out to them as accurate, consistent and honest. They believed that HR was easily available to answer all queries, the multiple channels of communication made sure that no information was missed out. While potential employees perceived T1 to often give out misleading information during university visits for example regarding the hiring process, vacancies they felt T1 never visited to hire graduating students. Moreover, potential employees felt T1’s communication regarding vacancies was inappropriate, they expected a reply regardless of their decision of hiring, however they believed T1 never replied to unsuccessful candidates. This appears to be a problem area for T1 in employer brand since honest communication is integral to a brand image as it may jeopardize the brand image of T1.

Internal Communication for Current Employees	Communication was perceived to be very frequent, consistent and prompt Digital media was used for extensive communication using multiple channels reach out to employees through emails, official website, job portals and Facebook at work. Some employees felt discrepancy in the what the organizations preaches and what is applied in terms of values of trust and transparent communication impacting the perceptions of their psychological contract
External Communication for Potential Employees	Summer Internship Program, physical visits to universities and candidate experience were used to communicate and attract potential employees. University visits were perceived as ineffective as potential employees felt organization did not intend to hire. Expected truthful and realistic information on vacancies and response over a hiring decision.

Table 5: Summary of Communication of T1

**4.3. EMPLOYMENT OFFERING**

According to literature, employer branding involves identifying the mix of tangible and intangible aspects of an organization’s employment offering, which represents the unique employment experience to its employees (Backhaus and Tikoo (2004). Thus this section explored the tangible and intangible employment offerings of T1. In exploring the employment offering of T1 and the perceptions of employees on it found that the working environment of T1 was considered the most attractive element of the organization’s offering.

**4.3.1. Compensation and Benefits**

HR emphasized that salary was an important part of T1’s monetary compensation in its employment offering. However T1 perceived the cultural aspect of its value proposition slightly more attractive than compensation and benefits. Stressing this point, the HR manager said:

*“I am being humble when I say the salaries are quite good as compared to the industry, but we don’t focus on salary as such, we focus on a concept known as total rewards, it includes everything under one umbrella, we sell total reward!”. (T1-HR1)*

The total reward strategy included all the monetary benefits such as salary, increments, bonuses, medical and other expenses which was supplemented and complemented with the development

nature and culture of T1. T1 considered the working environment which fostered nurturing, learning, open communication and fun at work an integral part of the employment offering. A combination of these aspects was clubbed as T1's employment offering to engage current employees and attract potential candidates.

While reviewing compensation, we need to keep in mind that salaries are a sensitive subject and even while pursuing research the respondents of the research cannot be coerced to disclose any information they deem sensitive. It is one reason why we cannot be entirely sure whether the participants were being entirely honest while expressing their views. There is a certain comfort level required for participants to open up and express views and opinions upfront and outright. We have reason to believe that some, if not all, participants may have divulged half-truths while answering questions regarding compensation satisfaction.

When the perceptions regarding compensation of current employees were explored, the responses suggested that compensation in terms of salary was dependent on the experience and portfolio of the individual employees. Hence attractiveness of salary varied from employee to employee, overall employees who were at initial stages of their career or had taken up their first job at T1 felt that the basic salary offered to them was below their expectations and was not at par with the brand image of T1. Their expectations were high of what T1 would offer being a top multinational, in terms of monetary benefits. The responses suggested that salaries were not the most attractive feature of T1's employment offering, especially right after graduation. These expectations were part of the employees' psychological contract and the self-created perception they had developed with respect to T1. However once they became aware of the organizational offering and with the passage of time they felt their expectations had gotten realistic and toned down. We can hence safely conclude that involvement with the culture and the organization's compensation and benefits system led to a change in the psychological contract of the employees and can be used as an example to track changes of perception from potential to current employees, which are inherent changes in the psychological contract.

Benefits and facilities were considered attractive at all levels, such as medical, insurance and other allowances. Transport facility for female employees, and daycare facility for women with children was considered very attractive. Appreciating the facilities at T1 a female employee said:

*“I was simultaneously offered a position in T1 and another Telecom, even though T1 asked me join at a 30 % pay cut, I was willing to because of the day care facility. I knew if I joined any other organization which did not have a daycare facility; half of my salary would be spent on it.”*

This suggested even though T1 did not offer an attractive basic salary, but the benefits offered were lucrative enough to attract candidates.

The perceptions of potential employees were explored through focus groups. It was found that potential employees perceived T1 as an employer who did not pay well, as generally, telecom companies were perceived as employers who did not offer high salary brackets to fresh graduates as compared to other industries such as FMCGs and the oil industry. However, T1 was believed to have a reputation of providing an environment conducive to learning. It was deemed from the interviews that most graduates did not expect a high salary bracket, considering the current tight job market, they were willing to accept a job offer by T1 despite lower salaries, as T1 provided a good learning environment. One participant of the focus group said:

*“If you don't have a lot of salary expectations, then you will be satisfied at T1.”*

To sum up the discussion, it can be observed that compensation and benefits mix was used to brand T1 as a desirable employer. Current employees did not consider T1 attractive in terms of salary, especially by new hires who were fresh graduates and also by potential employees. However due to other monetary benefits such as medical, transport, and day-care facility offered by T1, both current and potential employees were willing to join T1 at lower salary brackets.

#### **4.3.2. Working Environment**

It was inferred from the interviews with HR that, the strategy for internal employees was slightly different from that for potential employees, since the employer proposition was already made with them, hence it was important to engage internal employees, their engagement levels were considered a key indicator of their retention, therefore engagement and development activities were essential. HR asserted T1 believed in taking care of the physical health and wellbeing of employees. For this T1 offered fun activities like outdoor sports, fun gala, away days, different



sport activities at the work place like tennis, foosball, badminton and Xbox so the employees could take a break to freshen themselves.

Interviews with current employees found out, both monetary and non-monetary benefits were found to be attractive and competitive in their offering. However non-monetary benefits such as the working environment were perceived to be more encouraging and motivating for employees, especially female employees. The working environment was perceived as very friendly and respectful, female employees both unmarried and married perceived T1 as an ideal workplace for women in Pakistan, they believed so not just because of the physically facilitative environment but the respectful culture towards them as one of the female respondents said:

*“The attitude is very respectful towards females by colleagues”*. T1- E2

Another employee stated:

*“For me the monetary aspect is secondary to the work environment and the element of respect given to us. The culture is very employee friendly. We have a lot of workload as well but they give the same in return”*. T1- E1

New hires especially felt T1 was on top of their employer list while they were looking for jobs, as one of the employee said,

*“The work culture of T1 is most attractive for me, when I was on a job hunt right after my graduation I felt T1 was the only place which provided this kind of work culture”*. T1- E6

The responses revealed, although employees felt there were fun elements in the work culture, the work load was a lot as most employees felt their work-life balance was a challenge for them, late sitting was a norm at T1. Employees were of the view that more than often, activities like office dinners had been turned into opportunities to score with your bosses rather than fulfilling their intended purpose of team-building and socializing. A significant finding from the interviews revealed, satisfaction of employees was influenced by the relationship with employees' line managers, the learning and growth opportunities of employees, the work load, training opportunities were mostly dependent on their respective line managers. If the relationship between the employee and line manager was perceived as positive, friendly and open, employees

were found to be satisfied. On the other hand employees who felt their bosses were difficult to please, were found to be not completely satisfied with T1. The very open and direct communication style also meant that some of the employees when being overly appreciated could lead to others feeling left-out and gave rise to professional jealousy. Moreover, annual holidays which were part of the employment offering were difficult to get, employees felt taking days off was problematic, although it was their right. These expectations of employee from T2 impacted their psychological contract with T2 as initially employees expectations were raised a lot positively

Overall it can be concluded the working environment was branded as part of the organizational offering to make T1 a desirable employer brand. Current employees perceived the culture as the most attractive feature of the organizational offering. It was analyzed, that this was so mostly because T1 had stressed a lot on culture through pushed efforts from the HR and communications team. Attractiveness of monetary compensation varied, however culture superseded compensation for most employees, especially female employees. Potential employees through word of mouth had heard of the culture at T1 and believed their management style encouraged open communication, an attribute which was aspired for by potential employees in their employer.

#### **4.3.3. Learning and Development**

To engage and attract employees T1 provided learning and development opportunities to all its employees. T1 stressed a lot on job enrichment to enhance the skill set of employees, for this working in cross functional teams was encouraged. Similarly, employees were encouraged to go beyond their call of duty to interact with other teams, develop themselves and switch roles after they felt that the current position was not adding enough value to their career and development. The trend of role switching was seen in a number of employees, one employee said:

*“I started off in HR which was more of administrative work, after a year I switched to regulatory strategy and now I’m currently working in corporate communications.” T1-E7*

Employees who had prior experience of working in other organizations said that that the level of empowerment given to employees by T1 makes it the best employer in Pakistan. Employees believed T1 offered them a lot of creative space and sufficient opportunities to learn as one of the employee said:

*“There are negligible bottlenecks and the opportunity to grow is tremendous over here. That is what I really like that about T1”. T1-E9*

Stressing on the importance of empowerment another employee stated:

*“We are given room for innovation, T1 doesn’t create hurdles or issues as long the work gets done”. T1- E5*

Some employees felt that although there were training opportunities available but not a lot of people got selected for them, employees from different departments participated and only high achievers or a few selected people went for these trainings, as one employee said:

*“I don’t think everybody gets the same amount and level of opportunities in training and career advancement opportunities”. T1-E12*

For most employees advancement opportunities were limited and slow. Employees expected vertical promotion after two to three years of work; however, there were limited positions available and so it slowed the process. This eventually created churn amongst some employees who started losing motivation and engagement, for them culture was not a motivational factor. Retaining these employees was a challenge for T1. These expectations from employees contributed to their psychological contract with T2.

It was found potential employees perceived professional growth to be important to them, regardless of salary, as a participant said:

*“I am a fresh graduate, for me it is important to establish a career first, rather than just worrying about better pay.”*

However, some participants of the focus groups felt that they had nothing to look forward to in T1 because the telecom market had become very saturated limiting growth potential. Jobs were

not being created, there was a perception that people who were already holding major positions kept switching from one telecom to another and retained those positions. Respondents felt there were limited growth opportunities for employees when they reached mid-career level. A participant said:

*“I wouldn’t give much weightage to the professional growth provided by T1 because the telecom industry has become very saturated, as an employer market.”*

Stressing this point another participant stated:

*“I know people working in T1 for over 5-6 years and they can’t move because the market has gotten really saturated.”*

The responses suggested that T1 was not creating many job opportunities for fresh graduates. When a position did come up for fresh graduates, it required an experience of one year while people with 3-4 years of experience would apply for them. So the chances for fresh graduates become bleak, as one participant said:

*“For me the telecom sector does not present itself as an attractive professional market for fresh graduates”.*

Hence, it was analyzed learning and development opportunities were offered as part of T1’s organizational offering to create a desirable employer brand for current and potential employees. T1 encouraged learning and development of employees mostly through job rotation and job enrichment. Employees felt empowered as T1 gave them sufficient opportunities to work on their own and room for creativity. Some employees however felt training opportunities were not provided equally to every employee. While advancement opportunities after assistant management level were limited, this was a characteristic of the telecom industry. Potential employees believed telecom industry was not a lucrative job market for them, since it had become very saturated and T1 was not creating job for potential employees. However, they valued the learning and development opportunities which were essential at that particular stage of their careers. Psychological contract addressed the expectations and promises made by T1 to current and potential employees and vice versa. Current employees believed that T1 had conveyed truthful information about the organization’s culture, policies and procedures, however

their expectation of growth and development were raised unrealistically. The culture of working late caused dissatisfaction to some employees. An important feature identified in the employer-employee relation was, the employees' satisfaction was tied to how their line managers encouraged them, supported them, developed and empowered them; that was how employees gauged their satisfaction towards T1.

In summary, the attractiveness of T1's employer brand was categorized under three major themes identified in literature and data collection i.e. Organizational Identity, Communication and Employment Offering. Culture was found to be the main source of organizational identity of T1. The elements of culture which were open communication, fun at work environment and employee learning and development opportunities were found to be most appealing to current and potential employees. Internal communication with current employees and external communication with potential employees was integral to employer branding activities. In the employment offering, non-monetary benefits superseded the monetary benefits for most employees, especially female employees. T1's focus on the learning and development of employees, on providing them with an environment which was conducive to learning and fun to work in were found to be most attractive. The expectations arising from communication and employment offering impacted the psychological contract of employees. When employees perceived that their expectations were being met, they were found to be satisfied with their relationship with T1 and vice versa.

Compensation and Benefits	Salaries were not perceived as attractive by fresh graduates hired by T1, although other benefits and facilities were considered attractive at all levels. Transport facility for female employees, and daycare facility for women with children were most unique and attractive benefits. Telecom companies were perceived as employers who did not offer high salary brackets to fresh graduates by potential employees.
Working Environment	T1 had developed a unique and fun working environment which was perceived as the most attractive part of their organizational offering. Female employees perceived T1 as an ideal workplace for women in Pakistan. Work load was a lot as most employees felt their work-life balance was a challenge for them, sitting late at office was considered a norm which was difficult for employees. Satisfaction with the employment offering was influenced with the kind of relationship employees had with their line managers.
Learning and Development	Job rotation and Job enrichment to enhance the skill set of employees, for this working in cross functional teams was encouraged. Empowered employees through opportunities of development. For most employees advancement opportunities were limited and slow,

	employees expectation of growth raised unrealistically. Potential employees perceived telecom market had become saturated with limiting growth potential.
--	---

**Table 6: Summary of Employment offering of T1**

<b>Organizational Identity</b>
<b>1. Brand Image</b>
Perceived as the most preferred telecom employer and top multinational in the country. Employees felt pride in associating with T1 and potential employees aspired membership in it
<b>2. Culture</b>
<b>Open Communication</b> Facilitated easy approachability of higher management and encouraged networking. Dependent on employer employee relationship, open space perceived hassle by some. Potential employees viewed it as learning and networking opportunity.
<b>Working Environment</b> Perceived as respectful, employee friendly and fun through various sports and entertainment activities. Excess workload and sitting overtime considered a norm.
<b>Employee Development and Empowerment</b> Learning and development mostly through job rotation and job enrichment, limited training opportunities for all employees. Limited opportunities for vertical promotions which employees wanted. Some employees perceived their career was stuck. Employees empowered to be creative and take initiatives on projects, associated empowerment with decision making. Potential employees' priority L &D, perceived empowerment with communication and flexibility.
<b>Communication</b>
<b>1. Internal Communication for Current Employees</b>
Communication was perceived to be very frequent, consistent and prompt. Digital media was used for extensive communication using multiple channels. Some employees felt discrepancy in the what the organizations preaches and what is applied in terms of values of trust and transparent communication impacting the perceptions of their psychological contract
<b>2. External communication for Potential Employees</b>
Summer Internship Program, physical visits to universities and candidate experience were used to communicate and attract potential employees. University visits were perceived as ineffective as potential employees felt organization did not intend to hire. Expected truthful and realistic information on vacancies and response over a hiring decision.
<b>EMPLOYMENT OFFERING</b>
<b>1. Compensation and Benefits</b>
Salaries were not perceived as attractive by fresh graduates hired by T1, although other benefits and facilities were considered attractive at all levels. Transport facility for female employees, and daycare facility for women with children were most unique and attractive benefits. Telecom companies were perceived as employers who did not offer high salary brackets to fresh graduates by potential employees.
<b>2. Working Environment</b>
T1 had developed a unique and fun working environment which was perceived as the most attractive part of their organizational offering. Female employees perceived T1 as an ideal workplace for women in Pakistan. Work load was a lot as most employees felt their work-life balance was a challenge for them, sitting late at office was considered a norm which was difficult for employees. Satisfaction with the employment offering was influenced with the kind of relationship employees had with their line managers.
<b>3. Learning and Development</b>
Job rotation and Job enrichment to enhance the skill set of employees, for this working in cross functional teams was encouraged. Empowered employees through opportunities of development. For most employees advancement opportunities were limited and slow, employees expectation of growth raised unrealistically. Potential employees perceived telecom market had become saturated with limiting growth potential.

**Table 7: Summary of Analysis of T1**

## **Chapter 5: Analysis-telecom T2**

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from T2. The objective of the study was to explore how T2 promotes its employer brand in creating desired perceptions through its employer branding strategy, practices and programs of its employer branding function. For this the Talent Acquisition and Culture Transformation Manager and Executive were interviewed from HR to gather the perspective of the organization. To address the other objective of the study, which was to explore the perceptions of current and potential employees regarding the attractiveness of T1's employer brand, current employees of T1 were interviewed to gather the perspective of current employees. To find out the perceptions of potential employees two focus groups were conducted at NUST Business School and FAST School of Management to gather the perspective of potential employees. The analysis is presented under organizational attractiveness themes identified from literature which were: Organizational Identity, Communication and Employment Offering. Hence the analysis below is presented in three perspectives i.e. Organizational perspective, current employees' perspective and potential employees' perspective.

### **5.1. Organizational Identity**

According to the literature studied, the main element in employer branding is identifying and communicating the central and unique aspects of the organization which make it different from the competitors and are attractive to employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004); these elements make an organization's identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Corte et al, (2011) suggested that an organization's employer brand must possess something distinctive for it to stand out and appear attractive to current and potential employees to retain and attract the best talent. Hence, to understand the employer brand of T2, its organizational identity was explored.

The interviews from HR identified that the practice of employer branding was relatively new in T2. Functionally, it had been a little over a year since T2 had started making devoted efforts in employer branding function. Hence, it was still in its nascent stages.



According to HR, current and potential employees, the primary selling proposition for the organizational identity of T2 was its identity as the market leader in the telecom industry.

### **5.1.1. Brand Image**

Interviews with HR suggested that T2 identified itself as the leading telecom organization in Pakistan with the largest network and subscriber base. This was believed to be the major attractive and unique selling proposition for T2. Through other key features of T2's identity such as its culture and elements in its culture, T2 aimed to maintain this position and attract potential employees, while retaining current employees. The HR manager asserted:

*“We have the most prominent brand name in the telecom industry and people want to be a part of something this big”.* T2-HR1

Regarding the brand reputation of T2, majority of the employees interviewed believed the central characteristic of T2 was the repute of T2's brand name as the largest telecom operating in Pakistan. Employees believed T2 being the pioneer in the telecom industry, it was a matter of great pride for them to be associated with such as a brand name. Employee responses found that they felt happy in sharing experiences of T2 with their friends and family and recommended it whenever there was an opportunity. As an employee explained:

*“I feel a great deal of pride being part of T2, as it is the oldest and largest Telecom in Pakistan, with the most reputable brand image”.* T2- E13

Overall, the brand image of T2 as the market leader made the employees feel happy in associating themselves with T2 because of its well-recognized brand name. They felt that when they told people they worked for T2, everyone knew it was a reputable organization. Explaining this, an employee said:

*“T2 is a big name, when you tell people about T2 they know what exactly it is, the kind of company and the brand name, so they won't ask me what it is. They know it's a big thing so it is good to be associated with something this big”.* T2- E9

On the other hand, potential employees perceived the brand name of T2 as a reputable employer brand. They expressed their interest in availing an internship opportunity at T2 considering the limited choices graduating students had. However, T2 was considered their second choice after T1 for jobs and internship programs. It was analyzed despite being the largest and oldest in the league; T2 had not advanced like other multinational organizations such as T1 in terms of its culture and was still relying on the traditional methods of operations and management. T1's culture, perceived as fun and employee friendly, was more attractive to potential employees than the perceived culture of T2 which was not as open and more bureaucratic. Potential employees aspired to work for companies which offered open and fun working environments, where there was minimal bureaucracy.

To sum up, it can be analyzed that the brand image was used by T2 to project itself a desirable employer for current and potential employees. T2's brand reputation as the market leader was considered an attractive element of its brand image. Current employees considered their association with T2 as a matter of pride, as T2 was considered the leading telecom in the country with the largest subscriber base. It can be analyzed that current employees viewed the success of T2 in terms of employer base as their success, so they felt pride in being part of the largest telecom operator in the country. Although potential employees considered it a reputable brand, they still rated it as their second choice in the telecom industry after T1 because the culture was perceived as bureaucratic and not as fun and open as T1's.

### **5.1.2. Culture**

The interviews with HR, current employees, and potential employees identified "Culture" as a central element of T2's organizational identity. T2 defined its culture through its working environment and learning and development opportunities for employees. The following sections analyze these sub-elements of culture in the light of HR, current and potential employee perceptions.

### **5.1.2.1. Working Environment**

According to HR, a significant element in the culture of T2 was that it provided a fun and healthy environment at work through creating work-life balance for all employees and caring for employees. For this, a few initiatives were being taken such as a program was launched called “Live Well, Live Happy”, through which employees could initiate fun activities and make their own clubs and plan their own activities such as sports and music clubs. Away days, excursions, and office lunches were planned for every department to allow informal networking, to create bonding between employees and having fun. Moreover, a culture of respect was promoted throughout the organization. HR emphasized that they had no tolerance of disrespectful attitude, especially towards female employees. With the aim of taking care of its female employees, a transport facility was provided to them while external daycare and medical expenses were catered for all employees. It was found that the initiatives of HR aiming at creating an open environment where fun and sports activities were encouraged were new and evolving. They were now focusing more on a youth orientated image as opposed to their corporate image in the past due to their subscriber base changing along with the dynamics of the market.

Current employees on the other hand perceived the excursion activities to be very attractive and motivating. However the culture of fun at work was not consistent throughout the organization. Due to the culture being in a state of transition, HR department being the flag bearer had embraced this culture along with the marketing department, however, other departments such as finance, supply chain and technology were still found to be in the transition phase. This was because other departments were initially resistant to change, however the process had been initiated. According to the HR manager, he felt it would take T2 sometime but they were optimistic they would reach their goal of developing an open and less bureaucratic culture. It was analyzed from the interviews that T2 offered a comfortable environment for women where they could work in ease and security without any hesitation as their male counterparts respected and supported them; they believed it was not a characteristic of every organization in Pakistan, as an employee said:

*“The working environment for females is excellent, I know if I worked in a medium sized company I would have to face difficulties in working with male colleagues, being a woman. The*

*management is really encouraging here which is a great career boost and keeps me going.” T2-  
E12*

The element of fun at work was believed as a healthy addition to the working environment. The employees believed the element of fun in the working environment was mutually created by all employees, as an employee said:

*“The culture in T2 is very friendly although being in finance it gets a little boring and dry sometimes but the managers and colleagues really make an effort for us, for making it fun and bearable.” T2- E13*

A significant finding from the employees’ responses was that due to cultural transformation, the management style was changing: open communication between employees and management was now encouraged and the HR policies were more inclined towards being employee friendly, as previously the culture was dominantly bureaucratic and closed. Collaborative working style was being introduced which meant cutting down hierarchical lines to facilitate open communication. However, the new cultural transformation was not consistent throughout the organization; it had been embraced by some departments while others were in the process. For example, a cultural difference was observed between IBC 1 (marketing and HR) and IBC 2 (Finance, supply chain, logistics), in terms of open communication, HR and marketing departments had relatively swiftly embraced the new open and fun culture, while other departments were found to be uptight and resistant therefore the cultural transformation was taking time. It was inferred from the interviews with employees that in spite of organization-wide efforts of encouraging open communication by facilitating it through open work spaces, employees still felt that although communicating directly with your CXO’s was made easy due to easy availability, bureaucracy in essence had not been eliminated. Employees still had to take multiple approvals for little details of their operational work, as an employee explained with an example:

*“Working on software such as Photoshop is my daily work, but I still need to get multiple approvals from the management such as CHRO to get it installed.”*

Employees felt there were many manual processes which could have been automated. There was still reliance on the traditional methods of operating. Like approvals from CEO on papers, these

processes would take up a lot of time and energy. It can be analyzed, although the cultural change had begun, the attributes of open communication and the fun-at-work culture that HR seemed to be projecting, had not been fully embraced.

Data collection for this study took place before the effective merger, hence at that time the employees were found to be apprehensive about their job security due to news of the merger. Some part of the data was collected after the merger, it was found out that the voluntary separation scheme (VSS) introduced by T2 initially created a lot of apprehensions and fear among employees while causing speculation regarding the image of T2 as an employer in the industry. Soon after it was found there was a lot of turnover from the top management and that resulted in a lot of projects being halted. The turnover from the management represented an opportunity for the middle management and junior executives as a career path appears before them. At the same time, this also meant accomplishing the aim of T2 of becoming more youth oriented as fresh ideas from the millennial's would emerge.

Potential employees felt that T2 despite being the oldest and largest telecom organization in Pakistan, and having a very diverse network, had not really changed much over the years. Regarding the culture, they did not view it as other multinationals such as T1 which encouraged new styles of management, such as the open communication style. Instead T2 was still relying on traditional methods of communication, while the office culture had not evolved much. A respondent from the focus group said:

*“T2 hasn't changed much over the years, I've heard their culture is not as open and fun as T1, they are still very bureaucratic.”*

Despite T2's efforts of reaching out to youth and making their culture more youth oriented, they lacked the visibility as potential employees were not aware of the cultural transformation happening in T2. Moreover, due to the merger, potential employees were very apprehensive. They were doubtful as to what the new culture would be like and finding a job in T2 would perhaps mean a lot of job insecurity. Activities aimed at employees' wellbeing and creating fun for employees, although existed, were generally not in the knowledge of potential employees. They believed T2 was following in the footsteps of T1 and other multinationals and making their

culture youth friendly but they were seen as lagging behind or still in transitional phases. All these factors contributed towards reputation of T2 being a second choice, after T1, among telecoms.

To conclude it can be said that the working environment of T2 was used to project a desirable employer brand image to current and potential employees. The culture of T2 was transitioning towards a more open and youth oriented culture where fun at work was being introduced. Sports activities, music club, away days and other excursion activities were introduced by HR, to allow for employee well-being in its culture. Female employees especially appreciated the comfortable and respectful working environment and the benefits offered to them. However this cultural transition was not consistent throughout the organization. Employees felt all departments had not embraced this transition in culture from being very corporate oriented to being youth oriented. Although open communication was encouraged, bureaucracy had not been eliminated in essence; employees felt there were many manual processes. These perceptions of employees impacted their expectations from T2; hence the satisfaction of their psychological contract was affected. The efforts of reaching out to potential employees by HR lacked clarity as potential employees still believed T2 to be bureaucratic and following traditional styles of management. They did not perceive the culture of T2 as open and fun as that of T1.

### **5.1.2.3. Learning And Development**

In order to explore the most attractive elements in the culture, the interviews with HR identified that T2 had a lot of focus on the learning and development needs of all employees. A common practice for learning and development identified was job rotation and job enrichment to develop employees and to enhance their skill set. This practice was found to be similar to T1's approach towards learning and development. An employee explained:

*“I have switched from finance to project transformation, I had not applied for this new position, but my managers saw the potential in me and suggested that my potential will be more suited in this field, so that is something really encouraging for the younger lot.”*

T2- E1

Training opportunities were offered at both national and international level across the board, addressing both functional and competency skills. HR believed in enhancing the skill sets of employees and enabling them with the must have job market skills and competencies.

Current employees perceived training opportunities to be one of the most attractive features of T2. This was deemed attractive by employees because they felt that before T2 had gone through the cultural transformation, training opportunities were offered only to experienced employees or employees with foreign degrees. With the change in culture, the new management was focusing on learning and development needs of all employees including employees who were just starting their career. Employees felt the management was very supportive towards facilitating employees in achieving their individual goals. Moreover, employees felt the working environment was very supportive and collaborative towards learning and improving performance. The higher management ranging from the CEO, CXO's, and senior managers all the way down to the line managers were perceived as supportive towards employees in achieving their goals and targets. An employee explained this by saying:

*“Everybody from my boss to colleagues has been very supportive whenever I go up to them, they have always helped me out, never made me feel like I do not know anything, and have always encouraged me. The environment is very supportive which is mutually created by all the employees”. T2-E11*

Another employee said,

*“I report directly to my manager who has been very supportive, always helped me out. He has been training me like a student and that has so far been the best thing in my experience”. T2- E9*

The employees' responses suggested that the nature of work was through collaboration in teams within and across departments. Employees felt this increased their learning opportunities as it allowed them to work towards betterment of the entire organization rather than their individual or departmental goals. Employees felt it allowed them to be more engaged and involved in T2's projects. As an employee stated:

*“We had a project of Subscriber Identification module (SIM) card verification, although it was under sales domain but our CEO involved everyone, and everyone did their bit in getting the SIM cards verified. Accordingly, we were given incentives and appreciation too.” T2- E4*

It was analyzed from the interviews that although learning opportunities were provided, the pressure of constantly updating individual skills and competencies had created a very competitive environment. This aspect had both positive and negative aspects to it. Employees felt they had to constantly improve and develop themselves to survive. This attitude made employees work hard and put in extra effort and also made them feel that there was always some new learning opportunity. However, the competitive environment had also brought a lot of pressure with it; employees felt there was cutthroat competition with colleagues, if they slightly lagged behind or did not perform according to the organization’s expectations they would be laid off. Hence working with this constant pressure created doubts in the minds of employees; and as observed earlier, with this kind of pressure it would be difficult for T2 to retain its talent. Some employees at T2 shared that they had a good experience in terms of career advancements. They included those who were working as interns but were soon hired as employees and felt that it was an excellent start to their careers where they had been guided and nurtured through every step. As one employee stated:

*“I joined as a fresh graduate, I had no idea what to do and what was expected of me I was guided through every step. I frankly didn’t have any expectations I have been guided like student here.” T2- E12*

The findings also revealed that there were employees who had remained in one position for over 8 to 10 years before they were promoted. They felt that their expectations had not been fulfilled. For instance, one employee said:

*“I have been expecting a promotion since the last two years, and that expectation has still not been met.” T2- E5*

When employees joined T2, they expected a promotion after completing a certain number of years. T2 had made promises of ample progression opportunities at the time of joining, however, it was found that there were many employees unhappy about their progression feeling that



promotions were very limited and slow, because their expectations were not met and their perceptions proved to be wrong, creating negative feelings towards their psychological contract. Job rotation and job enrichment were encouraged but after a certain number of years, employees expected vertical promotion. Since opportunities for vertical promotions were limited many employees felt that their careers had become stagnant, those employees were found to be disengaged and thinking of switching because as long as the psychological contract delivers on the promises made, employees will stay committed to the organization. This was often the case when employees got stuck in a position which had no clear career path, for them the only choice was to move to another telecom or switch the industry, which was very difficult. In such cases it was difficult to engage and retain employees. Since the data was collected pre-merger of T2, there was uncertainty among employees about their job security. Hence, a natural response was that of a lot of candidates being uncertain about their future with T2, apart from them feeling that due to inadequate promotional opportunities they were stuck in a rut. The above instances of employees perceptions regarding the learning environment and development opportunity had an impact on their expectations, hence their employer-employee relationship which contributes to their psychological contract. Employees whose learning and development expectations were met felt their psychological contract being honored and vice versa.

Focus groups for potential employees found out that they perceived the learning and development opportunities offered at T2 as attractive. Although T2 was their second choice after T1 in industry, they were willing to take up internships and job opportunities at T2 considering the limited choices in the job market. They believed experience in T2 could be a stepping stone to get to T1 due to same industry experience.

To sum up, it can be analyzed that T2 emphasized on learning and development to be an integral part of T2's organizational identity to promote the organization as a desired employer and claimed to provide sufficient development opportunities. Current employees believed job rotation and job enrichment provided them a good development opportunity. With the change in culture, the new management was focusing on learning and development needs of all employees including employees who were just starting their career; however employees felt, vertical progression was slow and limited. The learning environment had become very competitive and

had created a lot of pressure on employees, where some employees feared being laid off if they lagged behind. Potential employees believed T2 offered good learning and development opportunities for fresh graduates and internship opportunities, however they were limited.

Brand Image	Perceived as the leading telecom organization in Pakistan with the largest network and subscriber base. Current employees considered their association with T2 as a matter of pride. Potential employees perceived T2 had not advance like T1 in term of open communication and style of management, considered T2 their second choice after T1.
Working Environment	Culture was transitioning towards a more open and youth oriented culture where fun at work was being introduced. Employees perceived the new cultural was not consistent throughout the organization, resistant to change. Perceived bureaucracy in essence was not eliminated. Potential employees perceived T2 as an organization which was relied on old style of management and communication. In terms of culture they preferred T1 over T2.
Learning and Development	Job rotation, job enrichment and trainings were used to develop and enhance employees' skill sets. Employees perceived T2 as supportive towards individual development. The working environment was perceived as very competitive with apprehension of being laid off in case of nonperformance. Vertical Progression and advancement was slow and limited. Potential employees perceived the learning and development opportunities offered at T2 as attractive, however T2 was their second choice after T1.

Table 8: Summary of Organizational Identity Features of T2

## 5.2. Communication

One of the central elements of employer branding is to clearly and extensively communicate the unique aspects of an organizations identity to differentiate its employment experience it offers as compared to other organizations (Edwards, 2010, Wilden, 2010). For effective employer branding, communicating the brand image of the organization and transmitting the correct and consistent messages to current and potential employees, is key (Smedley, 2007). To find out the communication effectiveness of T2 for both current and potential employees, the HR, current employees and potential responses were analyzed.

Internal communication was identified to be targeted at current employees, while external communication was used to target potential employees as part of employer branding activities in the employer branding function. To ensure a solid relationship between T2 and its employees, HR ensured that communication between them was open, clear and frequent.

### **5.2.1. Internal Communication for Current Employees**

In finding out the role of internal communication in T2's employer branding, the interviews identified that effective internal communication was one of the core elements of engaging and motivating employees. Organizational goals and expectations, human resource practices, management style, culture, and work environment had to be communicated in a way to encourage employees to observe the values of T2. Regarding this objective, the interviews with HR identified the aim of the internal communication and branding strategy was to create employee awareness of the policies, programs addressing employee wellbeing and any updates and changes in them. Along with T2's brand image and values to indoctrinate them within current employees of the entire organization, with the purpose of engaging and retaining them.

It was inferred from the interviews that efforts related to internal communication and branding were recent at T2, as the culture and organizational strategy were evolving, the significance of internal communication was being enhanced. Communication through all channels and mediums was considered essential throughout the organization, at all levels. The HR emphasized that the CEO considered it a personal objective to make communication as widespread as possible. For example, whenever a new initiative or a policy was introduced, the CEO would call meetings and town halls; and messages would be sent through internal and external portals. Communication was made through both digital and physical mediums. Most internal communication used electronic media, as part of the organization's digitalization strategy. The mediums used were T2's internal portal, email and Facebook at work. An account for all employees was created through their work email ID and all employees were added as each other's friends. The purpose was to instantly communicate with employees and allow them to informally network with each other. It was also used to launch programs and policies, as the HR manager stated:

*“Facebook at work is used for campaign launches and promotions and any other announcements. Previously we just had email alerts, with this we have a lot of internal outreach*

*because it enables people to comment on the same thread and engage more effectively.” T2-*

HR2

Moreover, organization wide communication and awareness sessions were carried out, along with introducing manuals and e-learning modules to help in understanding everyday behaviors.

To increase the impact of communication, important messages were also communicated physically through standees and posters. The idea was to keep the employees engaged at work by keeping them aware and constantly updating them on initiatives, policies and programs that were being introduced for employee wellbeing, as the HR manager stated:

*“We have recently revised some of our HR policies and improved them a lot, so we are campaigning about them a lot. Whenever such an initiative comes up we promote it organization-wide so the employees are aware of any new initiative or policy from either HR or other departments which is there for their well-being.” T2-HR2*

To ensure a solid relationship between T2 and its employees, HR ensured that communication between them was open, clear and frequent. For instance, during the hiring process the final decision lied with the line manager, so if the promises and expectations set by the line manager were not met, the employee was given the provision to meet with HR to discuss any bottlenecks, issues, and breach of contract. The HR officer stated:

*“Employees are empowered enough to tell us if they aren’t happy or satisfied or if they feel their promises/contract is not being fulfilled, although we make sure whatever has been promised is being delivered. T2- HR1*

HR believed frequent communication was important for employees to feel involved, encouraged and motivated to go the extra mile thinking that the organization is concerned about their well-being. This aspect of communication contributed in building the psychological contract of the employees as their expectation and promise were addressed by HR.

In finding out how the current employees perceived internal communication efforts of HR, mixed reviews were identified; some employees perceived communication by HR as effective while others did not. The policies and practices were strictly followed and the messages were

compliant with the organizational goal. For example, whenever new policies and practices were introduced, there were awareness sessions and trainings on them such as objective setting and appraisals. However, some employees felt communication was not sufficient and clear enough. They felt that whatever was communicated was not fully implemented: for example, the goals and objectives and how to implement them in daily work. Some employees felt that there was a gap on the part of HR in effectively communicating the organizational goals, policies and HR practices. As stated by an employee:

*“Although the HR communicates messages, I feel there can be improvements. Sometimes things are not clearly translated like the goals at individual level: it becomes difficult to translate goals.” T2- E11*

A gap in communication was found through an example given by a new hire in the finance department who felt disconnect with HR; she felt the reality was different from what was communicated by HR. In describing communication an employee said:

*“I feel a communication gap between the HR and other departments, such as there are some values and norms being followed by employees, I see them in my manager and my colleagues follow them too, but they were not directly communicated to me, I’m new here, it has been six months and there has not been any workshops or seminars so I feel something missing.” T2- E13*

The responses from employees suggested that onboarding opportunity was not utilized to communicate about the organization with the new joiners, as newly hired employees asserted they were not given any training or introduced in a session where they could know more about T2. As stated by an employee

*“When I joined T2, there wasn’t a proper induction program but my colleagues and seniors really helped me out in my learning and understanding of the organization.” T2- E4*

Also, some employees felt hesitant in answering questions regarding HR saying they did not know much about the HR department and HR practices and policies.

Overall it was analyzed, internal communication was used to promote T2 as a desirable employer brand for to retain and engage employees. The purpose was to keep employees aware and

involved in the organization. Both digital and physical mediums were being used to communicate with employees such as Facebook at work, with the purpose of engaging and retaining employees. Some employees felt they were not fully communicated the goals and policies of their department. While HR was seen as making efforts, there remained a gap which employees felt needed to be addressed. The onboarding process was a missed opportunity to communicate the brand image and values of T2. The mixed employee responses suggested that the promises and expectations of some employees were fulfilled while for some employees they were not fully address, impacting their psychological contract with T2. Similarly some information regarding work, policies, and learning and development was accurate, while some part was not. A significant finding from the analysis revealed that T2's employer branding efforts by HR were found to be less inclined towards current employees as opposed to potential employees, resultantly the internal communication efforts were not perceived as very effective by current employees. While in T1 the emphasis of employer branding was more inclined towards their current employees.

### **5.2.2. External Communication for Potential Employees**

The employer branding strategy for external communication targeted potential employees. It aimed at attracting talented youth, as the HR executive interviewed said:

*“Our external employer branding strategy is youth driven, because we believe in fresh ideas coming from young talents, to be successful in the long term.” T2-HR*

Digital media platforms were being used to communicate and attract potential talent such as T2's official website, T2 blog, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. The aim was to promote the internal culture of T2 and to project internal policies and practices to create awareness among potential employees that when they join T2, this is what their experience is going to be like. Physical presence in universities was considered equally important. Teams from HR visited the universities in major cities of Pakistan like Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, and Karachi to conduct workshops and seminars, as the HR manager explained:

*“We physically visit students and conduct workshops to create university linkages just to create physical presence in universities and among the youth.” T2- HR2*

Since the external employer branding strategy focus was on youth, there were initiatives targeting graduating students from universities and fresh graduates, according to the HR executive interviewed:

*“Currently we are focusing a lot on the youth, so we are coming up with a lot of initiatives for the fresh graduates, such as an internship program.” T2- HR2*

To reach out to potential employees, the annual summer internship program was offered where T2 visited universities to conduct online tests and take interviews to shortlist applicants for the internship. During their visit they would give information about T2 such as the processes, the timelines and other necessary details required by students. Other than that, there were regular internships all year round in every department of T2 to constantly keep the students connected with the corporate world. Another program called “Master Your Future” was a student development workshop, the purpose of which was to conduct workshops in major universities of Pakistan, such as NUST, LUMS, IMS and others. The HR executive explained:

*“We conduct workshops, at universities all over Pakistan, on career counseling and awareness sessions on career opportunities in T2.” T2- HR2*

Reaching out to potential employees through university visits was a practice of employer branding found in T1 as well. In order to understand the role of external communication in employer branding targeting potential employees, it was identified that the recruitment process plays a crucial role. HR asserted the use of employer branding practices was still in its early stages and they were looking to improve the processes. Most initiatives and practices were in pipeline to be implemented in near future, as the HR officer said:

*“We need to improve the use of employer branding in our recruitment process, we are working on a few initiatives that we will be implementing soon.” T2- HR2*

Moreover, the candidate experience was used as an employer branding tool for potential employees where communication played an integral role. It was gathered from the interviews

with HR that during the recruitment process potential employees were targeted using the official website of T2. HR believed that T2's website was a significant tool which was used to attract candidates. To create a physical candidate experience, when potential employees would visit for interviews, they would be given protocol. HR assigned a person who received them and escorted candidates to interview rooms. It was analyzed from the interviews that the candidate experience was considered as significant aspect of the employer branding strategy whether it was an online experience of looking for a vacancy on the website, understanding the job description, making sure sufficient information is available about the job and about T2, and the candidate's physical experience of coming in for different rounds of interviews, it was made sure that the candidates felt valued. As the HR officer said:

*“We are working on the entire experience of the potential employee, from their digital experience to their physical experience.” T2- HR2*

In explaining why giving candidates a great experience and making them feel valued was significant, the HR officer stated:

*“The advantages of employer branding aren't really quantifiable, although we have certain KPI's like engagement, however still you cannot use a number to quantify the value of a person feeling good. The result is, we get an excellent feedback from our interns who tell us about their amazing experience and tell us that they would want to come back.” T2- HR2*

Moreover, during the recruitment process, HR ensured the candidate was an ideal cultural fit for the team they were being hired for more than either skill or competency fit. It was especially noted that if a position had to be filled, in case a candidate was not a cultural match, they were rejected no matter what their skill level was. In explaining this, the HR manager said:

*“We don't want one bad fish ruining the pond. We believe that people can learn the work but not behavior: behaviors can't be changed easily. Skill levels can be enhanced through trainings, mentoring and coaching but learning attitude cannot be changed easily. We've had experience with people who are inflexible to learn they don't gel in with the rest of the team.” T2- HR2*

In order to find out the perceptions of potential employees on how T2 communicated to them, the findings were similar to that of T1. Official website was considered more credible than



LinkedIn, while referral basis was most effective. The perceptions and expectations of potential employees towards the internship at T2 were the same as those of T1's internship. It was considered a good exposure to the corporate world and a great learning opportunity. However, the university recruitment drives were generally seen as ineffective of both T1 and T2. Respondents felt T2 did not have the intention to hire when they visited their universities. Viewing the expectations aspect in the psychological contract, potential employees had the same expectations from T2 as they had from T1, such as realistic information regarding vacancies and responding to them when making a hiring decision. University visits were considered misleading and ineffective.

Hence, communication with potential employees was used to build T2 as a desirable employer brand to attract them. University visits and candidate experience were used to communicate and attract potential employees. University drives were often seen to be giving out misleading information during university visits at job fairs regarding hiring. Potential employees felt T2 never visited to hire graduating students. Potential employees expected T2 to visit their universities' job fairs with the intention to hire, which they believed was not the case currently. They expected T2 to give accurate information when applying for a position and to set realistic expectations. Moreover, potential employees expected a reply, from both T1 and T2, irrespective of the decision of hiring. Overall it was analyzed from the interviews with HR that T2 aimed to target the younger lot in potential employees. The employer branding strategy was found to be more inclined towards potential employees than towards current employees' as the HR asserted T2 is more concerned with attracting talented youth from the market. While in analyzing data collected from T1 it was observed that their employer branding strategy was more inclined towards current employees. However, the general perception of respondents in the focus groups was that they perceived T2 as the largest telecom with a strong brand name but as there was relatively less awareness about T2's culture, potential employees did not perceive it as attractive as T1. They were also unaware of the elements of fun at work and other employee wellbeing initiatives. They considered T2 as their second choice in the telecom industry after T1. It was observed from the interviews that communication formed the basis of an employee's perception, whether it is a current employee or a potential employee. Their image of T2 relied on what information was communicated to them and how honestly and truthfully were messages

communicated to them. In case of imprecise and perfidious communication, the effect on brand image was slightly detrimental: perceptions were the basis for it all.

Internal Communication for Current Employees	Aim of the internal communication strategy was to create awareness, involvement and engagement among employees. Communication strategy was evolving, therefore some employees were not satisfied, felt it lacked clarity and transparency. Expectations of some employees were fulfilled while for some employees it impacted their psychological contract.
External communication for Potential Employees	Aimed at attracting talented youth. University visits to conduct workshops and job fairs were perceived as ineffective. Annual summer internship program and regular internships were seen as a good learning opportunity. Despite T2 being the largest telecom with a strong brand name potential employees were relatively less aware of T2's culture and did not perceive it as attractive as T1.

Table 9: Summary of Communication of T2

### 5.3. Employment Offering

According to literature, employer branding involves identifying the mix of tangible and intangible aspects of an organization's employment offering, which represents the unique employment experience to its employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Thus, this section explored the employment offering of T2. In exploring the employer value proposition of T2 and the perception of HR on their efforts in making the employment offering attractive, it was found HR considered compensation and its culture to be the most important elements of its organizational offering. HR asserted that T2 believed culture to have a direct impact on the employees. The culture of T2 was believed to attract and retain potential and current employees, as the HR manager said:

*“People are really attracted to the culture of T2, we get to hear a lot of people saying that we are here and staying because of the culture, culture more than anything else attracts the people in our employer value proposition.” T2- HR1*

#### 5.3.1. Compensation and Benefits

Interviews with HR analyzed that basic salary was not promoted as a separate attractive element of T2's employment offering. They promoted the entire monetary and non-monetary benefit package to be a part of its employment offering. For example, medical benefits, transport facility

for female employees, daycare reimbursement, and other facilities along with learning and development opportunities and the working environment offered at T2.

As discussed earlier in the compensation and benefits section in chapter 4 that salaries are a sensitive subject and even while pursuing research the respondents of the research cannot be coerced to disclose any information they deem sensitive. Hence the information gathered was not sufficient and may not be entirely accurate. When the perceptions of current employees were explored, the responses suggested that compensation in terms of salary was dependent on the experience and portfolio of individual employees. Employees who were at the start of their career felt their salary was on the lower side, as the telecom industry as a whole tends to pay low salaries to inexperienced employees, this case was similar to our findings in T1. They believed the entire package, however was satisfactory. Employees who had recently graduated perceived the benefits such as training and development opportunities primary to the salary. Explaining this, an employee said:

*“Now that I have spent some time in the industry, for me non-monetary benefits are more attractive.” T2- E3*

Hence, attractiveness of salary varied from employee to employee; overall, employees who were at the beginning of their careers or T2 was their first employer, felt that the basic salary offered to them was below their expectations and they expected more salaries considering T2 being a large organization with a strong brand name. The aspect of employees’ expectations impacted their psychological contract, as their initial expectations were not met in terms of salary. Although there were some employees who were at the start of their career and did not have a lot of salary expectations from T2. Hence responses suggested salary was not an attractive feature of T2’s and T1’s employment offering for recently graduated employees. However, benefits such as medical and conveyance were considered attractive enough, for which employees had accepted the salary offered.

The perceptions of potential employees were also explored, through focus groups. It was found that potential employees perceived T2 as an employer who did not pay well, like T1, as generally, telecom companies were perceived as employers who did not offer high salary

brackets to fresh graduates compared to other industries such as FMCGs and the oil industry. However, T2 being a big brand name and known to provide a good learning opportunities led to potential employees willing to take up a job at T2, since they did not have high salary expectations from either T1 or T2.

To sum up it can be said, compensation and benefits were used to promote T2 as a desirable employer brand. Salaries were not perceived as attractive as T2 was not considered a pay master by new hires who were fresh graduates and potential employees, however, due to the other benefits such as medical facility, learning and development environment offered by T2 both current and potential employees were willing to join T2 at lower salaries.

### **5.3.2. Working Environment**

Interviews with HR identified that T2 aimed at making the culture youth orientated, driven by fun activities to keep employees engaged. To provide a fun environment and creating work-life balance, activities such as sports, music, and literature clubs were introduced. Moreover, away days, excursions, and office lunches were planned for every department to allow informal networking and fun opportunities for employees. HR stressed that along with providing a fun environment, a culture of respect and tolerance is promoted throughout the organization for employee well-being. The organization was moving towards a less bureaucratic environment. Open door policy was implemented to encourage open communication for all employees with the senior management, separate work stations were being removed as part of T2's open communication strategy. HR believed in changing the organizations culture and moving towards more contemporary management styles, as the HR manager said:

*“There are a lot of factors involved which take an organization to an open culture, things are changing here as well, and once that happens, it will do wonders.” T2- HR1*

Current employees perceived the culture as professional and respectful, as an employee said:

*“The working environment here is very good; it is just the start of my career so for me the corporate environment is really attractive. Our CEO is very supportive and very appreciative towards females especially.” T2- E2*

The element of fun through excursion activities was considered attractive and motivating for employees, however, this culture of fun at work was not consistent throughout the organization. Due to the culture being in transition, HR department being the flag bearer had embraced this culture along with the marketing department. However, other departments such as finance, supply chain and technology were still found to be in the transition phase. Current employees viewed open communication as breaking barriers in the working environment of T2. They felt they could easily walk up to their chief experience officers (CXOs) and talk to them without any hesitation as such. In explaining this, an employee from the HR department said:

*“We sit at a big table. If any employee has to reach out to their CXO, they talk to him/her directly.”*

It was found through employee responses that this culture of open communication and cutting down bureaucratic structure was new in T2, and the culture was spreading gradually throughout the organization. The HR, marketing and corporate communications department had achieved this culture to a greater extent. For instance, in removing personal work spaces and close door policy, although it was gradually changing in other departments as well such as Accounts, Finance, MFS and budgeting, and others. The responses further revealed that although culture was changing, there was still a lot of bureaucracy. Employees felt they needed a lot of approvals from the top management for every little work related activity which wasted a lot of time. It can be analyzed that an open communication culture takes into account a lot of factors. So, creating open spaces does not mean the organization has achieved a culture of open communication. It also has to be reflected in everyday interactions between colleagues, bosses, management, work processes and also in the physical spaces of the office. Further employee responses revealed that the environment would get very stressful due to competitive pressure and workload.

The impact of culture on an individual employee was also dependent on his or her relationship with their line managers. If the relationship between the employee and line manager was

perceived as positive, friendly, and open, employees were found to be satisfied. On the other hand, employees who felt their bosses were difficult to please, were found to not be completely satisfied with T2. This suggested that there were times when the expectations had been met and sometimes they had not. It was inferred from the interviews that work related expectations were mostly dependent on the employee's line manager. When line managers were not supportive or appreciative of their work and set unrealistic targets for them, the employees were found to be dissatisfied with T2 impacting their psychological contract. This finding on employer-employee relation was similar to that of T1. Employees felt that expectations were dependent on the level of their career. Female employees expected a comfortable environment for themselves, where they felt secure and respected and they felt that they got this in T2 because the working environment was very respectful towards them and encouragement for female employees in every front of T2 contributing to their psychological contract. .

Potential employees at large were not aware of the cultural change at T2. They perceived it as following a traditional style of management. Although they were attracted to it due to its brand name and the learning and development opportunities it offered, culturally, it was not perceived as attractive when compared with T1. Moreover, since HR was making a lot of efforts in attracting youth, the visibility of their strategy seemed to lack as potential employees viewed T2 to be still following the old corporate style of management.

### **5.3.3. Learning and Development**

According to HR, the learning and development opportunities offered at T2 were a significant part of its organizational offering. Learning was emphasized and for this, trainings were offered, both in-house and external. To facilitate trainings, an online portal called "Digital Factory" was available where all the trainings were available such as Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint and other software where employees could register themselves and take up a course, anywhere and anytime; there were no time or physical constraints to attend these trainings. The initiative of e-learning was part of the organization's digitalization strategy, it can be analyzed that their employment offering aimed at attracting and engaging employees was aligned with the organizational strategy. The concept of digitalization stemmed from the idea of making HR

processes and other departmental processes easy, effective and smooth, to facilitate employees and create flexibility for employees. In explaining this, the HR manager said:

*“We are in the process of initiating a lot of initiatives to create flexibility for employees.”* T2-

HR1

Classroom trainings were limited; and when they were arranged, the employees said their line managers wouldn't spare them for the training duration. Interviews with employees found out that the training opportunities were considered very attractive as they led to career growth opportunities. Employees felt the management focused on individual grooming and development of employees through coaching, stressing on their strengths and leadership abilities. In explaining this, an employee said:

*“Our leaning and training is based on practical insight of core strengths and need for developing leadership abilities in individuals, T2 is more focused on enhancing individual potential and eventually the brand of the organization.”* T2- E5

A common practice used for developing employees was through job rotation and job enrichment. When employees felt they had spent enough time in one role and their work had become monotonous and was not adding further value, they could easily ask their line manager for job rotation. Learning and advancement through job rotation and job enrichment was a common practice found in T1 as well.

The exposure given to employees through the learning environment was considered very valuable. Employees at early stages of their careers felt learning and training opportunities were more important to them, as one employee said:

*“I am a fresh graduate, so I feel training opportunities are more important at this time of my career. T2 offers several training and learning opportunities and I feel I am at a good learning place, I feel sometimes I'm treated like a baby, helping me learn in every step and grow alongside.”* T2- E3

Learning and advancement opportunities provided to female employees were considered a characteristic of T2. Female employees were very appreciative of the support from management towards them, as one employee stated:

*“As a female, Pakistan offers very limited scope for females to make careers and advance in their careers, however T2 has given me a lot of opportunities, so that is why if I’m given a choice to switch between other international companies or FMCGs or any other telecom, I would definitely prefer T2.” T2- E1*

However, there were employees who felt that although there were training opportunities available but not a lot of people got selected for them, and so they felt everyone did not get the same opportunities. As found in T1, most employees felt that advancement and progression opportunities were limited and slow. Employees at T2 also expected vertical promotion after a certain number of years, however there were only limited positions available. This eventually created churn among some employees who started losing motivation and engagement, for them culture was not a motivational factor. This aspect of expectation impacted their psychological contract as employee felt their expectations and promises made to them were not fulfilled. Some employees at T2 shared that they had a good experience in terms of career advancements. They included those who were working as interns but were soon hired as employees and felt that it was an excellent start to their careers where they had been guided and nurtured through every step. As one employee stated:

*“I joined as a fresh graduate, I had no idea what to do and what was expected of me I was guided through every step. I frankly didn’t have any expectations I have been guided like student here.” T2- E12*

The findings also revealed that there were employees who had remained in one position for over 8 to 10 years before they were promoted. They felt that their expectations had not been completely fulfilled. For instance, one employee said:

*“I have been expecting a promotion since the last two years, and that expectation has still not been met.” T2- E5*



The views of potential employees towards learning and development opportunities at T2 were the same as that at T1. They perceived professional growth to be a really important factor for them regardless of salary. A participant said:

*“I am a fresh graduate and for me it is important to make a career first rather than to worry about better pay.”*

Some participants in the focus groups felt that they had nothing to look forward to in T2 because the telecom market had become very saturated and jobs were not being created, especially for fresh graduates.

Overall it can be said that the learning and development offered as part of the organizational offering at T2 was used to project as a desirable employer brand image for current and potential employees. Responses suggested that T2 provided a good learning environment and focused on individual training and development needs. Employees felt progression was slow, however, it was found to be a characteristic of the telecom industry. The environment was also perceived very competitive and employees felt pressure on their job security. Potential employees perceived training and career advancement opportunities more important to them than salary at the beginning of their career.

In summary, the attractiveness of T2’s employer brand was categorized under three major themes identified in literature i.e. Organizational Identity, Communication and Employment Offering: Employer Value Proposition. The brand name as being the leading telecom in the industry was found to be the main source of organizational identity of T2, followed by culture. The elements of such work environment, values and employee learning and development opportunities were considered central by T2 and appealing to current and potential employees. Internal communication with current employees and external communication with potential employees was integral to employer branding activities. In the employment offering, non-monetary benefits superseded the monetary benefits for most employees, especially T2’s focus on the learning and development of employees. The relationship of T2 with current and potential employees was perceived as satisfactory based on expectation and perceptions by employees and promises made by T2, certain elements needed to be addressed and we saw how psychological

contract affected most of our themes and sub themes and we also noted that the psychological contract was perceived as two-way relation by HR.

Compensation and Benefits	Promoted the entire monetary and non-monetary benefit package to be a part of its organizational offering. Salary not perceived as attractive by entry level employees and potential employees while benefits such as medical and learning opportunities were considered attractive.
Working Environment	T2 aimed at making the culture, less bureaucratic, youth orientated, driven by fun activities to keep employees engaged. Employees perceived cultural change was not perceived as consistent throughout the organization, bureaucracy found in everyday work. Working environment perceived stressful due to competitive environment and workload. Employee satisfaction and work related expectations dependent on their relationship with their line manager. Potential employees at large were not aware of the cultural change at T2, perceived it as following a traditional style of management.
Learning and Development	T2 offered learning in the form of trainings, job rotation and job enrichment. Employees felt that advancement and progression opportunities were limited and slow and learning environment would get very competitive. Potential employee felt that they had nothing to look forward to in T2 because the telecom market had become very saturated and jobs were not being created, especially for fresh graduates

Table 10: Summary of Employment Offering of T2

<b>Organizational Identity</b>
<b>1. Brand Image</b>
Perceived as the leading telecom organization in Pakistan with the largest network and subscriber base. Current employees considered their association with T2 as a matter of pride. Potential employees perceived T2 had not advance like T1 in term of open communication and style of management.
<b>2. Culture</b>
<b>Working Environment</b> Culture was transitioning towards a more open and youth oriented culture where fun at work was being introduced. Employees perceived the new cultural was not consistent throughout the organization, resistant to change. Perceived bureaucracy in essence was not eliminated. Potential employees perceived T2 as an organization which was relied on old style of management and communication. In terms of culture they preferred T1 over T2.
<b>Learning and Development</b> Job rotation, job enrichment and trainings were used to develop and enhance employees' skill sets. Employees perceived T2 as supportive towards individual development. The working environment was perceived as very competitive with apprehension of being laid off in case of nonperformance. Vertical Progression and advancement was slow and limited.
<b>Communication</b>
<b>1. Internal Communication for Current Employees</b>
Aim of the internal communication strategy was to create awareness, involvement and engagement among employees. Communication strategy was evolving, therefore employees were not satisfied, felt it lacked clarity and transparency. Expectations of some employees were fulfilled while for some employees it impacted their psychological contract negatively.
<b>2. External communication for Potential Employees</b>
Aimed at attracting talented youth. University visits to conduct workshops and job fairs were perceived as ineffective. Annual summer internship program and regular internships were seen as a good learning opportunity. Despite T2 being the largest telecom with a strong brand name potential employees were relatively less awareness about T2's culture and did not perceive it as attractive as T1.
<b>EMPLOYMENT OFFERING</b>
<b>1. Compensation and Benefits</b>
Promoted the entire monetary and non-monetary benefit package to be a part of its organizational offering. Salary not perceived as attractive by entry level employees and potential employees while benefits such as medical and learning opportunities were considered attractive.
<b>2. Working Environment</b>
T2 aimed at making the culture, less bureaucratic, youth orientated, driven by fun activities to keep employees engaged. Employees perceived cultural change was not perceived as consistent throughout the organization, bureaucracy found in everyday work. Working environment perceived stressful due to competitive environment and workload. Employee satisfaction and work related expectations dependent on their relationship with their line manager. Potential employees at large were not aware of the cultural change at T2, perceived it as following a traditional style of management.
<b>3. Learning and Development</b>
T2 offered learning in the form of trainings, job rotation and job enrichment. Employees felt that advancement and progression opportunities were limited and slow and learning environment would get very competitive. Potential employee felt that they had nothing to look forward to in T2 because the telecom market had become very saturated and jobs were not being created, especially for fresh graduates

## **Chapter 6: Comparative Analysis: Similarities and Dissonance in Practice and Perceptions**

The objectives of the study were to explore how organizations promote their employer brand to create desired perceptions of organizational attractiveness through its employer branding strategy, and how the organizational attractiveness was perceived by current and potential employees. Literature suggests it is important for organizations to develop an understanding of the current and potential employee's expectations and organizational attributes which influence them in their job search (Montgomery and Ramus, 2011). It is crucial for organizations to identify the perceptions of current employees as retaining them is significant to an organization. Therefore an identifying and understanding perception of organizational attractiveness becomes imperative. The organizational attractiveness of the employer brand was sought under themes identified in literature and data collection which were Organizational Identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985, Mael and Ashforth, 1992, Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, Moroko & Uncles, 2008 , Edwards, 2010), Communication (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, Miles and Mangold, 2004, Wilden, 2010, Edwards, 2010) and organizational offering(Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004, Edwards, 2010) and how these factors impact the expectation and perceptions of current and potential employees which make their psychological contract with their employer (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Martin, 2008; Miles and Mangold, 2004).

Two major telecom sector organizations were studied who were actively pursuing employer branding strategy. Interviews with HR were conducted to gather the perspective of the organization, and interviews with current and potential employees were conducted to analyze their perceptions. This section presents a comparative analysis of the two telecom organizations, describing the similarities and differences in their employer branding strategy and perceptions of employees and potential employees.

Current and potential employees perceived T1 as one of the best employers in Pakistan, as it had been recognized so by standards such as Rozee.pk and Glassdoor. The organization had a devoted employer branding strategy for years. In T2 the practice of employer branding was relatively recent than T1. It was analyzed that T2 being the largest telecom in Pakistan with the largest subscriber base felt it did not require the need to brand itself as an attractive employer as it did not face competition for a long time. Gradually as T1 emerged to be the second largest telecom in Pakistan, it started giving T2 competition, taking away not just subscribers but also talented human resources. It was around the same time T2 realized the significance of employer branding.

## **6.1. Organizational Identity**

According to the literature studied, the central element in employer branding is identifying and communicating the central and unique characteristics of the organization which make it different from the competition and are attractive to employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), these elements make an organization's identity (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Corte et al, (2011) suggested an organization's employer brand must possess something distinctive for it to stand out and appear attractive to current and potential employees to retain and attract the best talent.

The brand image and organizational culture were promoted by T1 and T2 as part of their organizational identity to promote a desirable brand image.

### **6.1.1. Brand Image**

The brand image was found to be a central organizational feature for both T1 and T2 which attracted current and potential employees. As Dukerich et al. (2002) suggests organizations with attractive image and organizational identity yield high levels of organizational identification.

T2 was perceived as the leading telecom organization in Pakistan with the largest network and subscriber base. Current employees considered their association with T2 as a matter of pride for them, as it was the pioneer in the telecom industry, research shows an organization with strong identity gives employees the confidence to associate with the organization they are working for (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). It was analyzed that current employees viewed

the success of T2 in terms of its employer base as their success, so they felt pride in being part of the largest telecom operator in the country. While current employees in T1 believed T1 to be the top employer in the country due to its brand image of having a unique culture which fostered fun and open working environment, as an organization's brand image is also built using the organization's symbolic elements which play an important role in employees identifying with the organization (Ashforth and Mael, 1996). For potential employees brand image in an employer was significant, they felt it was a social pressure on them to be associated with a prestigious organization. In comparison they preferred T1 over T2 as an employer because they felt T2 had not advanced like other multinational organizations such as T1 in terms of its culture and was still relying on the traditional methods of operation and management. The brand image of T1 was perceived as more positive than that of T2 by potential employees; hence T1 was the preferred choice of potential employees. This finding is congruent to the findings of (Backhus and Tikoo, 2004) who assert that when Potential employees have a positive perception of an employer brand they are more likely to desire membership with the organization because of the brand image the organization promises (Backhus and Tikoo, 2004). We find similarity in the perceptions of current and potential employees when it comes to brand name of an employer, both desire to be part of attractive and prestigious brand name as it is matter of social identity and pride.

### **6.1.2. Culture**

The organizational culture at both T1 and T2 was promoted to make the employer image attractive. Employer branding is often used to develop a culture aimed at supporting employees' quality of life and reinforcing desired behavior. To achieve this, organizations promote the value of the organizational culture (Bergstrom and Anderson, 2001). The most significant features in the culture identified by HR, current and potential employees were analyzed; open communication, working environment and learning and development.

#### **6.1.2.1. Open Communication**

Open communication was found to be the most central and attractive characteristic of T1's culture. HR encouraged open communication at all levels and current employees' perceived open communication had been facilitated through minimal hierarchy, easy approachability of management and open door policy. Bartels et al. (2007) in their research identified that higher levels of employee identification are found where an open communication environment is

perceived. In T2 the culture was slowly transitioning towards an open communication environment, employees however perceived bureaucracy had still not been eliminated, as employees still had to take multiple approvals for little details of their operational work. This was an important and necessary step in the culture of T2 as research by Odom et al. (1990) found out that a bureaucratic culture is less likely to result in job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover research by Lund (2003) on different cultures identifies a positive relationship between organizations which emphasize flexibility, innovation and creativity. Potential employees viewed open communication as means of learning and development as it would give them an opportunity to network freely. They looked forward to such working environments which did not restrict them physically and creatively, they believed T1 offered such an environment. They did not view T2 as an organization which allowed open communication as much as T1 did. Potential employees perceived T2 to be relying on the traditional methods of communication, where their office culture had not evolved much. Despite T2's efforts of reaching out to youth and making their culture more youth oriented they lacked the visibility.

We can analyze that both current and potential employees perceived open communication to be an integral part of the organizations culture. Open communication entails easy approachability to higher management and easy and constant networking. Another important point to consider here is that the reason for significance of open communication among Gen Y employees stems from their need to have their efforts acknowledged and their need for appreciation from senior management instead of the usual practice of line managers taking credit for their work. Employees also have the need of their efforts being visible to higher management. Potential employees perceptions differed at the point where they did not fully understand both aspects of having open communication. Proponents of open communication when talking about the benefits of open communication in organization's usually do not talk about the flip side of open communication. Open communication thrives on a positive relationship between the employees and their line managers. Open communication can be very effective if the employee and their line manager are on good working terms but can become a hindrance to work when their relationship is strained.

#### **6.1.2.2. Working Environment**

The most popular and well acknowledged aspect of T1's culture by current and potential employees was the fun at work element in the working environment, as research suggests the environment of an organization impacts the attitudes of employees towards the organization (Aiken et al., 2000). The working environment was packaged as fun with emphasis on entertainment and relaxing activities such as sports and excursions. The flip side of it was, employees usually had a lot of work load, overtime was a norm and therefore work-life balance was a challenge for employees. At T2 the working environment was evolving into a more open, fun and employee friendly environment, as research asserts employer branding efforts affect organizational culture and organizational identity which then affects employer brand loyalty (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Employees perceived this cultural change had not been embraced by the entire organization. Potential employees showed interest in working for organizations' which have fun working environment. The analysis suggests that both current and potential employees perceived a positive working environment to be an essential for an attractive organization, as it elevates the employees spirits at work and helps in making the workplace a place where they would want to spend more time and not take their 9-to-5 jobs as a burden. An organizational culture helps create an emotional bond between employees and employer that the employees perceive that organizations actions are directed towards their wellbeing. The dissonance in their perceptions was found where potential employees viewed the fun at work culture without any strings attached, as current employees felt this culture led to long working hours in the form of over time, more responsibility and accountability to take charge of their work and deadlines. Moreover Current employees felt this culture was not suitable for all employees keeping check of certain cultural sensitivities such as a lot of free mixing of genders, excursion activities in which all employees could not be part of.

#### **6.1.2.4. Employee Development and Empowerment**

Learning and development of employees was considered to be an integral part of both T1's and T2's organizational identity. Most commonly job rotation and job enrichment were used to provide development opportunities. According to Miles and Mangold (2004) messages sent through training and development develops employee expectations which impact their perceptions towards an organizational brand. Employees' perceived vertical progression in telecom industry was slow and limited; hence job switching was also considered a norm to



upgrade their designation. It was found employees at T1 felt relatively more empowered than those at T2 as they could work freely and come up with their own initiatives as research by McKinnon et al. (2003) identified cultures which foster respect for each other, innovation and stability result in high job satisfaction. However employees expected more empowerment through decision making powers. Employees at T2 felt the working environment created a lot of pressure on employees and they feared being laid off if their performance lagged. Potential employees on the other hand perceived both T1 and T2 to offer good learning opportunities during internships. They desired to find jobs with T1 and T2 for their professional growth since they would be fresh graduates. For them learning opportunities were more significant at this stage. T1 was their preferred choice over T2 due to their perceived fun working environment and open communication, easy approachability of higher management. We can say that both current and potential employees perceived learning and developmental in their employer organization as attractive and essential part of an employment offering. This was because learning opportunities added value in their career development, they felt this was how the organization invested in them and thus created feelings of loyalty towards the organization. Potential and entry level employees perceived the learning opportunities more attractive to salary; however for mid-level employees progression was important.

## **6.2. Communication**

One of the central elements of employer branding is to clearly and extensively communicate the unique aspects of an organizations identity to differentiate its employment experience it offers as compared to other organizations (Edwards, 2010, Wilden, 2010). For effective employer branding communicating the brand image of the organization and transmitting the correct and consistent messages to current and potential employees, is key (Smedley, 2007). To find out how T1 and T2 promoted its employer brand through communication effectiveness and how it was perceived by current and potential employees was explored. Internal communication was targeted at current employees, while external communication was used to target potential employees as part of employer branding activities. Employees at T1 perceived the communication with them was prompt, effective and encouraging. As literature suggests for the employee branding process to be effective the messages must be clearly, consistently and

frequently communicated throughout the message sources of the organization. This will allow employees to internalize the employer brand and experience the employer brand (Miles and Mangold, 2004). Employees were frequently communicated through multiple digital mediums on organizational policies and practices to make them aware and to engage and motivate them. As Weiss (2014) suggested, having an online reputation has become essential to maintain an organizations reputation as part of their employer branding efforts. Current employees' responses suggested HR was easily approachable and they trusted T1's communication with them. While in T2 employees had mixed responses, some employees did not perceive communication with them as frequent and consistent. They were not fully communicated the goals and policies of their department, while HR was seen as making efforts, there was a communication gap which employees felt needed to be addressed, such as new policies and programs were sometimes unclear to them. As research suggests when inconsistent messages are delivered to employees and customers, then employees who are aware of the messages are likely to perceive dishonesty on part of the employer. As a result, emotional connection with the brand will be lacking and employees will be less likely to deliver the on the organizations performance (Robinson, 1996). Moreover the onboarding process was a missed opportunity to communicate the brand image and values of T2, as newly hired employees asserted they were not given any training or introduced in a session where they could know more about T2. However, in T1 employees felt during their onboarding process, they were introduced to the culture and values of T1, they were made to feel comfortable and part of the organization which was appreciated by the employees. It was analyzed T1 focused a lot on communicating the desired elements of its organizations identity and employment offering such as its organizational culture to showcase itself as a desirable employer brand in the eyes of employees so they believe that the organization cares for them and puts its people first.

To reach out to potential employees, external communication by T1 and T2 involved their summer internship program and university visits for internship drives, seminars and job fairs. We find a great deal of dissonance in perceptions of organizational communication with them and between current and potential employees. Potential employees perceived T1 and T2 to often give out misleading information during university visits and job fairs regarding vacancies and hiring, they felt T1 and T2 did not visit with the intention to hire graduating students. This is a

very significant time and opportunity for T1 and T2 to capture potential employees and attention and brand themselves as attractive employees, as potential employees gather information during this stage about the organization to make an informed decision (Miles and Mangold, 2004). Moreover, potential employees felt T1's and T2's communication regarding vacancies was inappropriate, they expected a reply regardless of their decision of hiring, however T1 and T2 never replied to unsuccessful candidates. As literature suggests organizations who over emphasize the desirable features of the organization might set unrealistic expectations from the organization which may lead to disappointment later Cable et al. (2000) and which may lead to turnover (Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Griffeth et al., 2000). Therefore, T1 and T2 during their employer branding must ensure realistic information is transmitted to potential employees; however this appeared to be a problem area in both companies' employer brand, as honest communication is integral to a brand image. We find glaring dissonance in perceptions between current and potential employees, while employees more or less trusted the communication of the organization, potential employees did not trust information transmitted by T1 and T2.

### **6.3. Employment Offering**

According to literature, employer branding involves identifying the mix of tangible and intangible aspects of an organization's employment offering, which represents the unique employment experience to its employees (Backhaus and Tikoo (2004). According to literature, the assumption of the value proposition is that it is a true representation of what the organizations offers; it is developed by keeping in mind the organizational culture, skill of current employees, the employment image of current employees, perception of the value of the product and service (Sullivan, 2002). For both T1 and T2 the central elements of the organization's employment offering promoted were compensation, culture/ working environment and learning development.

#### **6.3.1. Compensation and Benefits**

In Both T1 and T2 it was found the organizations promoted the concept of total rewards which included all the monetary benefits such as salary, increments, bonuses, medical and other expenses which were supplemented with the development nature and culture of the organizations. According to Lievens and Highhouse (2003) job related benefits are mostly

similar within an industry and becomes difficult for organizations to differentiate from competitors, hence employer branding can be significant in conveying the symbolic benefits to develop desirable employer image. This research is significant to our research findings according to which in T1 the HR promoted the cultural aspect more than compensation and benefits and most employees valued the cultural aspect more than monetary aspect, hence as Lievens and Highhouse (2003) found out that symbolic attributes presumption of organizations has precedence over monetary job and organizational attributes such as salary and benefits. Salaries varied from being very high to low. Entry level employees perceived they were not offered attractive salaries, however due to the other benefits such as their culture and the conducive learning environment offered by T1 and T2 both current and potential employees were willing to join T1 at lower salaries. The dissonance in perceptions of potential employees was found where they did not perceive the telecom industry as a pay master compared to FMCG's and the oil industry. Due to limited job opportunities in the region they valued the learning environment offered by T1 and T2 and showed willingness to join only due to tight job market.

### **6.3.2. Culture/ Working Environment**

Both T1 and T2 promoted their employer brand through their working environment calling it their unique selling point. However, for T1 it was most prominent and most popular feature of their organizational identity and their employment offering. This aspect was accepted by all employees and potential employees. The working environment was perceived as fun at work and it provided an environment where employees felt T1 took care of their wellbeing. For this T1 offered fun activities like sports and fun gala, away days, different sport activities at the work place table like tennis, foosball, badminton and Xbox where the employees could take a break to freshen themselves up. Female employees both unmarried and married perceived T1 as an ideal workplace for women due to the facilities provided and the respectful working environment towards them. Although culture was the most attractive element of T1's work environment, employees felt balancing work-life was a challenge for them. HR in T2 was found to be promoting the culture of T2 as friendly and fun also, since this transition of culture was recent not all employees felt the same way as HR did. The element of fun through excursion activities was considered attractive and motivating for employees, however, this culture of fun at work was not consistent throughout the organization, due to the culture being in transition. It was found

through employee responses that the culture of open communication and cutting down bureaucratic structure was also new in T2, and the culture was spreading gradually throughout the organization hence HR, marketing and corporate communications department had achieved this culture to a greater extent than the others. However, a significant revelation was that although HR was promoting cultural change, bureaucracy in essence was not eliminated. Employees felt they needed a lot of approvals from the top management for every little work related activity which wasted a lot of time. Overall regarding working environment it was analyzed T2 was following in the footsteps of T1, T2 being a very large organization with huge employee base it would inevitably take time to transform into an organization similar to T1. T1 promoted its culture and fun working environment through a lot of pushed efforts from HR and communications teams; hence it was projected to current and potential employees as the most attractive feature superseding compensation for most employees, especially female employees.

Potential employees had heard about the fun at work culture of T1 through friends and through internship experience and considered it a very attractive feature of its culture. Most of them were not aware of the cultural efforts being taken at T2. They perceived it to be following a traditional style of management. Although they were attracted to it due to its brand name and learning and development opportunities offered by it, culturally, it was not perceived as attractive when being compared with T1. Since HR at T2 was making a lot of efforts in attracting youth, the visibility of their strategy seemed to lack as potential employees still viewed T2 to be following the old bureaucratic style of management. Potential employees preferred T1 as an employer due to its culture as research suggests that organizations with a positive and good reputation are likely to attract more potential employees (Edwards, 2010). Hence we can say the working environment which is characterized as fun and employee friendly is preferred by current and potential employees where they can express themselves freely as opposed to the previous conservative cultures of bureaucracy. While potential employees only perceive the positive aspects of such cultures, current employees perceive this culture brings a lot of accountability and responsibility on individual employees along with a lot of work pressure.

### **6.3.3. Learning and Development**

A major feature offered as part of T1's and T2's organizational offering was the learning and development opportunities offered to employees. In both the organizations learning and development was encouraged mostly through job rotation and job enrichment. Some employees however felt training opportunities were not equal for all employees, while employees' progression and advancement opportunities after assistant management level were limited; this was a characteristic of the telecom industry. In T2 employees felt the learning and advancement environment was very competitive often accompanied with job insecurity. This finding tells us when T1 and T2 make an employer offer to candidates, their expectation should be made clear from the beginning as to what they should expect in learning and development to avoid disgruntlement later. According to cable et al (2000) organizations in emphasizing desirable elements of the organization might set unrealistic expectations, which may later lead to employee disappointment and eventually turnover (Cotton and Tuttle, 1986; Griffeth et al., 2000).

On the other hand, Potential employees perceived differently from current employees, they believed telecom industry was not a lucrative job market for them, since it had become very saturated and T1 and T2 were not creating jobs for potential employees. However, they valued the learning and development opportunities offered by both organizations which were essential in the current stages of their career. Some of the potential employees who had completed internships with either T1 or T2 felt the organizations were a good place to start, in terms of learning despite starting salaries being low.

<b>Organizational Identity</b>	
<b>T1</b>	<b>T2</b>
<b>1. Brand Image</b>	
Perceived as the most preferred telecom employer and top multinational in the country. Employees felt pride in associating with T1 and potential employees aspired membership in it	Perceived as the leading telecom organization in Pakistan with the largest network and subscriber base. Current employees considered their association with T2 as a matter of pride. Potential employees perceived T2 had not advance like T1 in term of open communication and style of management, considered T2 their second choice after T1.
<b>2. Culture</b>	
<p><b>Open Communication</b> Facilitated easy approachability of higher management and encouraged networking. Dependent on employer employee relationship, open space perceived hassle by some. Potential employees viewed it as learning and networking opportunity.</p> <p><b>Working Environment</b> Perceived as respectful, employee friendly and fun through various sports and entertainment activities. Excess workload and sitting overtime considered a norm.</p> <p><b>Employee Development and Empowerment</b> Learning and development mostly through job rotation and job enrichment, limited training opportunities for all employees. Limited opportunities for vertical promotions which employees wanted. Some employees perceived they career was stuck. Employees empowered to be creative and take initiatives on projects, associated empowerment with decision making. Potential employees' priority L &amp;D, perceived empowerment with communication and flexibility.</p>	<p><b>Working Environment</b> Culture was transitioning towards a more open and youth oriented culture where fun at work was being introduced. Employees perceived the new cultural was not consistent throughout the organization, resistant to change. Perceived bureaucracy in essence was not eliminated. Potential employees perceived T2 as an organization which was relied on old style of management and communication. In terms of culture they preferred T1 over T2.</p> <p><b>Learning and Development</b> Job rotation, job enrichment and trainings were used to develop and enhance employees' skill sets. Employees perceived T2 as supportive towards individual development. The working environment was perceived as very competitive with apprehension of being laid off in case of nonperformance. Vertical Progression and advancement was slow and limited. Potential employees perceived the learning and development opportunities offered at T2 as attractive, however T2 was their second choice after T1.</p>
<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Internal Communication for Current Employees</b>	

<p>Communication was perceived to be very frequent, consistent and prompt. Digital media was used for extensive communication using multiple channels reach out to employees through emails, official website, job portals and Facebook at work. Some employees felt discrepancy in the what the organizations preaches and what is applied in terms of values of trust and transparent communication impacting the perceptions of their psychological contract</p>	<p>Aim of the internal communication strategy was to create awareness, involvement and engagement among employees. Communication strategy was evolving, therefore some employees were not satisfied, felt it lacked clarity and transparency. Expectations of some employees were fulfilled while for some employees it impacted their psychological contract.</p>
<p><b>External communication for Potential Employees</b></p>	
<p>Summer Internship Program, physical visits to universities and candidate experience were used to communicate and attract potential employees. University visits were perceived as ineffective as potential employees felt organization did not intend to hire. Expected truthful and realistic information on vacancies and response over a hiring decision.</p>	<p>Aimed at attracting talented youth. University visits to conduct workshops and job fairs were perceived as ineffective. Annual summer internship program and regular internships were seen as a good learning opportunity. Despite T2 being the largest telecom with a strong brand name potential employees were relatively less awareness about T2's culture and did not perceive it as attractive as T1.</p>
<p><b>Employment Offering</b></p>	
<p><b>1. Compensation and Benefits</b></p>	
<p>Salaries were not perceived as attractive by fresh graduates hired by T1, although other benefits and facilities were considered attractive at all levels. Transport facility for female employees, and daycare facility for women with children were most unique and attractive benefits. Telecom companies were perceived as employers who did not offer high salary brackets to fresh graduates by potential employees.</p>	<p>Promoted the entire monetary and non-monetary benefit package to be a part of its organizational offering. Salary not perceived as attractive by entry level employees and potential employees while benefits such as medical and learning opportunities were considered attractive.</p>
<p><b>2. Working Environment</b></p>	
<p>T1 had developed a unique and fun working environment which was perceived as the most attractive part of their organizational offering. Female employees perceived T1 as an ideal workplace for women in Pakistan. Work load was a lot as most employees felt their work-life balance was a challenge for them, sitting late at office was considered a norm which was difficult for employees. Satisfaction with the employment offering was influenced with the kind of relationship employees had with their line managers.</p>	<p>T2 aimed at making the culture, less bureaucratic, youth orientated, driven by fun activities to keep employees engaged. Employees perceived cultural change was not perceived as consistent throughout the organization, bureaucracy found in everyday work. Working environment perceived stressful due to competitive environment and workload. Employee satisfaction and work related expectations dependent on their relationship with their line manager. Potential employees at large were not aware of the cultural change at T2, perceived it as following a traditional style of management.</p>
<p><b>3. Learning and Development</b></p>	



<p>Job rotation and Job enrichment to enhance the skill set of employees, for this working in cross functional teams was encouraged. Empowered employees through opportunities of development. For most employees advancement opportunities were limited and slow, employees expectation of growth raised unrealistically. Potential employees perceived telecom market had become saturated with limiting growth potential.</p>	<p>T2 offered learning in the form of trainings, job rotation and job enrichment. Employees felt that advancement and progression opportunities were limited and slow and learning environment would get very competitive. Potential employee felt that they had nothing to look forward to in T2 because the telecom market had become very saturated and jobs were not being created, especially for fresh graduates</p>
--	--

Table 12: Comparative Analysis of T1 and T2

#### **6.4. Recommendations and Future implications**

An attractive brand image allows an organization to attract talented human resources, who are aware of its values and business needs, consequently, employee productivity increases which eventually make an organization competitive. Hence the perceptions of current and potential employees were explored in context to the attractiveness of T1’s and T2’s employer brand. The findings from this paper propose certain recommendations for the telecom sector to adopt and further improve their employer branding strategy to gain maximum advantage from it.

Telecom industry faces intense competition in terms of employees, product, delivery and service. A strong employer branding strategy can help gain competitive advantage over others to identify themselves as the best place to work. This study suggests, employer branding to be used as a targeted-long term strategy to manage and the perceptions of current and potential employees to brand an image of an organization which has the capacity to attract and retain potential and current employees for greater organizational benefit. Therefore it is important to understand what motivates employees and what does not and to achieve a balance between the two.

The findings from the study suggest that organizations must adapt to the perceptions of current and potential employees majority of which comprise of millennial talent. Open communication, instant feedback, having a say in decision making, friendly work environment and creative workspace are some of the elements desired by employees. Therefore telecom organizations must investigate on how to offer this type of experience to young professionals. Research also identified learning and development and work-life balance as some benefits which attract and retain employees. It is crucial for employers to understand which benefits matter to employees at which stage of their life and career. Entry level current employees’ and potential employees

stated learning and development to be more important to them than salary at that stage of their career. Although a good remuneration attracts talent but work-life balance and strong learning and development helps retain talent. Moreover coaching and mentoring can be used to attract and retain employees as our findings suggested, employees cared deeply over their relationship between their managers and them, how they supported their development, this is something that should be seriously considered when developing training and development programs.

Organizational culture has become essential for employees today, organizations need to build a culture that employees crave and want to be part of by giving them an environment which makes them love their work and what they do. In return the employees will build the desirable brand for the organization and spread word of mouth. Moreover a strong organizational culture is built through its employees, so an organization must hire individuals who align with their culture, and then those individuals further attract top talent to the organization.

This research identified that the employer branding strategy of T1 focused a lot on marketing everything as part of their organizational identity and organizational offering. Fun at work culture particularly was highlighted as a unique element so all current and potential employees see it. Therefore it is important for organizations to not just promote their basic benefit aspects such as competitive salaries and benefits but also highlight other benefits which are considered low key such as work-life balance, organizational culture, creative space, mentorship, foreign training which are paid by the organization such as diplomas, short courses tuition reimbursement, pick and drop facility for female employees. Showcasing organizational culture and other elements mentioned above is a powerful way to build a desirable employer brand in the eyes of employees that it shows that the organization puts its people first. It is important because these elements maybe very valuable to potential employees and the organization would not be publicizing them, like T2 also offered transport facility but it goes unnoticed as it is not talked about or advertised like T1. Social media can be a very valuable tool for marketing, although T1 and T2 were using digital media to advertise themselves, today organizations need to advertise and publicize their identity and offering even more such as fun and interesting events taking place in the company.

All this will contribute towards strengthening the psychological contract between employees and the organization by meeting their expectations, fulfilling promises advertised, ensuring an honest and caring relationship.

The internal benefits that can be derived from a sound employer branding strategy can be:

1. It can drastically enhance employees' engagement and satisfaction with the organization, helping manage talent retention and eventually recruitment within an organization.
2. It will help develop a sense of trust and loyalty among employees towards the management; this can have a direct impact on the cultures of the organizations, which reduces negativity, politics and grapevines.
3. When employees are satisfied with the brand name of the organization and feel pride in associating themselves with the organization, the rate of absenteeism and turnover will decline, directly impacting recruitment of the organization.

The external benefits that can be derived from a sound employer branding strategy are:

1. The number and quality of potential applicants who desire to be part of the organization will increase; it will help the organization in sourcing talented employees.
2. The process of hiring will become more efficient as time to hire can be decreased if the talented potential employees will be willing and eager to join the organization due to its employer brand name.
3. It will be easier to attract talent from other organizations when employer branding strategy is well managed hence recruitment cost may be reduced.
4. A reputable brand name enables an organization to gain financial benefits, as with a good brand name it is likely to increase its stock price, creating monetary value for the business.

This study had certain limitations, which may serve as avenues for further research. It is recommended that future research may target all telecom operators in the industry to get a more holistic and wider view on employer branding in the telecom industry of Pakistan. This would help in understanding the concept in depth and identifying more generalized factors. The reason for selecting T1 and T2 was that these two organizations in the telecom industry claim and are

known to make expressed efforts in employer branding as compared to the rest of the telecom organizations. Exploring employer branding in all telecoms would help clarify as to why other organizations have not adopted the strategy to their competitor's extent or what the benefits they may gain from doing so. Moreover, the data collected was geographically restricted, since it was collected from Islamabad and Rawalpindi offices of T1 and T2 only. Although the data was collected from the head offices, regional representatives' views may add diversity and further contextualize the phenomenon. Due to time and others constraints such as limited access to employees in the organizations a sample size of 35 was selected including HR and current employees, therefore future research could focus on increasing the sample size within an organization, developing it as a detailed case study or increasing the sample size from all telecom organizations. A longitudinal case-study may be carried out to explore the perceptions of employees, regarding their pre and post-employment experience from an organization. Focus groups of potential employees included graduating students from two universities in Islamabad, therefore more universities from all around Pakistan can be used to increase the sample size, whereas potential employees who have experience and are looking to switch organizations maybe studied. Moreover the impact on Social exchange in employer-employee relationship can be studied with regard to employer branding. These areas would help in providing a more detailed and holistic view on employer branding and results may also be generalized.

## **Chapter 7: conclusion**

This study explored how T1 and T2 promote its employer brand to create desired perceptions of organizational attractiveness through its employer branding strategy and how the organizational attractiveness was perceived by current and potential employees. The attractiveness of the employer brand was sought under three major themes identified in literature and later validated in data collection which were organizational identity, communication and employment offering: In analyzing the perceptions of current and potential employees it was found that the employer-employee relation described as the psychological contract is impacted by the expectations of current and potential employees.

T1 and T2 were selected for this study as these two organizations are major players in the telecom industry who are actively pursuing employer branding. The findings suggest that the employer branding strategy of T1 was more inclined towards current employees. It was concerned with making the employees happy and caring for their well-being. This suggested that word of mouth from current employees reached potential employees without making a lot of effort to brand themselves as an employer externally, as potential employees preferred T1 as an employer. On the other hand, T2's employer branding strategy aimed to attract potential employees more than their current employees. T2 was especially targeting the younger lot in potential employees, such as graduating students. T2 was found to be following in the footsteps of T1, such as branding itself as a fun place to work at and as an organization that cared for its employees' well-being and encouraged open communication between all employees. However potential employees were not aware of this cultural change at T2; they viewed T2 as a bureaucratic and old school organization and considered T2 as their second choice in the telecom industry.

Both T1 and T2 had attracted employees through their unique brand identity, T1 was perceived attractive due to its cultural and T2 was perceived as the largest telecom organization. Current and potential employees desired to be part of prestigious employer brand as it was a matter of social identity and pride. Culture was found to be the most popular feature of T1 which fostered open communication, fun at work, employees' well-being and learning and development. Culture at T2 was evolving, they were found to be following in the footstep of T1 by encouraging open

communication, and introducing fun at work, this was perceived positively by employees yet they felt bureaucracy was not yet eliminated. Learning and development efforts of both T1 and T2 were appreciated by their employees and potential employees. Potential employees aspired to be part of a culture where they had fun during work, they believed T1 offered it and preferred T1 over T2. T2 on the other hand aimed at attracting the youth, whereas respondents in the focus groups perceived the culture of T2 as bureaucratic and not as open and fun as T1. Positive organizational culture was perceived to be essential for employees more than the monetary benefits as it elevated employees' spirit at workplace and acknowledged individual employees. Internal communication with current employees was another factor influencing the employer brand of T1 and T2. At T1 employees perceived the communication effective, honest and frequent while in T2 employees felt, communication was inadequate and unclear. For external communication internship programs and university visits were used to communicate their brand by both T1 and T2. Internship opportunities were perceived as attractive, however potential employees perceived communication by T1 and T2 at job fairs and during university visits as misleading.

The employment offering of T1 and T2 comprised of a mix of both monetary and non-monetary elements. Monetary compensation of T1 and T2 is perceived to be similar, while the telecom industry was generally not perceived as pay masters. Potential employees and entry level employees found the salary on lower side. However for them salary was not such an important element at that stage of their career. Benefits such as learning and development opportunities and working environment were considered more attractive. In T2 HR was making efforts to change the working environment, some employees appreciated the corporate working environment, yet they found it bureaucratic. Learning and development opportunities of both T1 and T2 were considered attractive; however advancement opportunities became limited after a certain period. This was also a characteristic of the telecom industry in general. In analyzing the perceptions of attractiveness, it was found the expectations of employees of their employment offering and communications impact their psychological contract with the organization in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of employees. Employees at both organizations felt sometimes their expectations had been fulfilled while at other times they were not. Both current and

potential employees expected honest information and fulfillment of the promises made to them at the time of recruitment and over their tenure.

To sum up, the thesis provides a detailed analysis of the perceptions of attractiveness by current and potential employees of T1 and T2, two telecom organizations claiming to actively pursue employer branding strategy. It can be concluded that being aware of these perceptions can help organizations develop employer brands which have the capacity to attract and retain talent. Significant contributions have been made as part of this research. This research contributes to the academic development in the field of employer branding in Pakistan, particularly the telecom industry, as two major players were studied. It adds theoretical value by defining employer branding through its characteristic features in Pakistani telecom industry context. Since research in employer branding is in its nascent stages, this study adds methodological contribution by applying qualitative approach. Moreover, it provides practical insight to the telecom organizations which were studied and telecom industry at large to adopt employer branding as a strategy to manage the perceptions of current and potential employees by considering the significant features identified affecting employer branding to attract and retain talent.

## References

- Adams, J. S. (1963). Toward an understanding of inequity. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 67, 422-436.
- Agrawal, R. K., & Swaroop, P. (2009). Effect of employer brand image on application intentions of B-school undergraduates. *Vision*, 13(3), 41-49.
- Aiken, L., Havens, D. and Sloane, D. (2000), "The magnet nursing services recognition program: a comparison of two groups of magnet hospitals", *American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 100 No. 3, pp. 26-36.
- Albert, S. and Whetten, D.A. (1985), "Organizational identity", in Cummings, L.L. and Staw, B.M. (Eds), *Research in Organizational Behavior*, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, pp. 263-95, Vol. 7.
- Ambler, T. & Barrow, S. (1996). The employer brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 4(3), pp.185-206.
- Ambler, T. and Barrow, S. (1996), "The employer brand", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 4, pp. 185-206.
- Ashforth, B.E. and Mael, F.A. (1989), "Social identity theory and the organization", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14, pp. 20-39.
- Ashforth, B.E. and Mael, F.A. (1996), "Organisational identity and strategy as a context for the individual", in Baum, J.A.C. and Dutton, J.E. (Eds), *Advances in Strategic Management*, Vol. 13, JAI Press, Greenwich, CT, pp. 19-64.
- Ashforth, B.E., Harrison, S.H. and Corley, K.G. (2008), "Identification in organizations: an examination of four fundamental questions", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 325-74.
- Backhaus, K. and Tikoo, S. (2004), "Conceptualizing and researching employer branding", *Career Development International*, Vol. 9 Nos 4/5, pp. 501-17.



- Barney, J.B. (1991), "Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 17, pp. 99-120.
- Barrow, S. (2007), "The future of employer branding and HR? Employer branding: the latest fad or the future for HR?", *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Guide*, CIPD, London, pp. 12-14.
- Barrow, S. and Mosley, R. (2005), *The Employer Brand: Bringing the Best of Brand Management to People at Work*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester.
- Bartels, J., Pruyn, A., DeJong, M. and Joustra, I. (2007), "Multiple organizational identification levels and the impact of perceived external prestige and communication climate", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 28, pp. 173-90.
- Baruch, Y. (2004), *Managing Careers: Theory and Practice*, Prentice-Hall, Harlow.
- Bergstrom, K. and Anderson, M. (2001), "Delivering on promises to the marketplace: using employment branding to build employee satisfaction", *Journal of Integrated Communications*.
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M. and Hah, L.L. (2005) 'Captivating Company: Dimension of Attractiveness in Employer Branding'. *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(2): pp. 151-172.
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M. and Hah, L.L. (2005), "Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 151-72.
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M., & Hah, L. L. (2005). Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(2), 151-172.
- Blaikie, N. (2000), *Designing Social Research*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Blaikie, N. W. H. (2000). *Designing social research: the logic of anticipation*. Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA.

- Blau, P.M. (1964), *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.
- Bone, P. F. (1995). Word-of-mouth effects on short-term and long-term product judgments. *Journal of Business Research*, 32, 213-223.
- Bone, P. F. (1995). Word-of-mouth effects on short-term and long-term product judgments. *Journal of business research*, 32(3), 213-223.
- Branham, L. (2001), *Keeping the People Who Keep You in Business: 24 Ways to Hang on to Your Most Valuable Talent*, American Management Association, New York, NY.
- Branham, L. (2001). *Keeping the people who keep you in business: 24 ways to hang on to your most valuable talent*. New York: American Management Association.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2003) *Business research methods*, Oxford University Press 2003.
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper.
- Byrne, D. and Neuman, J. (1992), "The implications of attraction research for organizational issues", in Kelley, K. (Ed.), *Theory and Research in Industrial/Organizational Psychology*, Elsevier Science Publishers, New York, NY, pp. 29-70.
- Cable, D.M. and Graham, M. (2000), "The determinants of organizational reputation: a job search perspective", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 21, pp. 929-47.
- Cable, D.M. and Graham, M. (2000), "The determinants of organizational reputation: a job search perspective", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 21, pp. 929-47.
- Cable, D.M. and Graham, M. (2000), "The determinants of organizational reputation: a job search perspective", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 21, pp. 929-47.
- Cable, D.M. and Judge, T.A. (1996), "Person-organization fit, job choice decisions and organizational entry", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 67, pp. 294-311.

- Cable, D.M. and Judge, T.A. (1996), "Person-organization fit, job choice decisions and organizational entry", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 67, pp. 294-311.
- Cable, D.M. and Turban, D.B. (2003), "The value of organizational image in the recruitment context: a brand equity perspective", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 33, pp. 2244-66.
- Cameron, K.S. and Quinn, R.E. (1999), *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA.
- Carson, D., Gilmore, A., Perry, C., & Gronhaug, K. (2001). *Qualitative marketing research*. Sage.
- Cheung, M.F.Y. and Law, M.C.C. (2008), "Relationships of organisational justice and organisational identification: the mediating effects of perceived organisational support in Hong Kong", *Asia Pacific Business Review*, Vol. 14, pp. 213-31.
- CIPD (2007), "Employer branding: a no-nonsense approach", *Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Guide*, CIPD, London.
- Cole, M.S. and Bruch, H. (2006), "Organizational identity strength, identification and commitment and their relationship to turnover intention: does organizational hierarchy matter?", *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, Vol. 27, pp. 585-605.
- Collins, C.J. and Han, J. (2004), "Exploring applicant pool quantity and quality: the effects of early recruitment practice strategies, corporate advertising, and firm reputation", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 57, pp. 685-717.
- Collins, C.J. and Stevens, C.K. (2002), "The relationship between early recruitment-related activities and the application decisions of new labor-market entrants: a brand equity approach to recruitment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87, pp. 1121-33.
- Conway, N. and Briner, R. (2005), *Understanding Psychological Contracts at Work. A Critical Evaluation of Theory and Research*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

- Corte, V. D., Mangia, V.D.C., Micera, R. and Zamparelli, G. (2011) 'Strategic Employer Branding: Brand and Image Management as a Tool of Attractiveness for Talented Capital'. *China – USA Business Review*, 10 (12): pp. 1231-1252.
- Cotton, J. and Tuttle, J. (1986), "Employee turnover: a meta-analysis and review with implications for research", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 11, pp. 55-70.
- Cotton, J. and Tuttle, J. (1986), "Employee turnover: a meta-analysis and review with implications for research", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 11, pp. 55-70.
- Crewson, P.E. (1997), "Public-service motivation: building empirical evidence of incidence and effect", *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Vol. 7, pp. 499-519.
- De Chernatony, L., & Cottam, S. (2006). Internal brand factors driving successful financial services brands. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(5/6), 611-633. Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. R. (2012). *Management research*. Sage.
- Dell, D. and Ainspan, N. (2001), *Engaging Employees through Your Brand*, Conference Board Report No. R-1288-01-RR, April, Conference Board, Washington, DC.
- Dugoni, B.L. and Ilgen, D.R. (1981), "Realistic job previews and the recruitment of new employees", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 24, pp. 570-92.
- Dukerich, J.M., Golden, B.R. and Shortell, S.M. (2002), "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: the impact of organizational identification identity and image on the cooperative behaviors of physicians", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 47, pp. 507-33.
- Dutton, J.E., Dukerich, J.M. and Harquail, C.V. (1994), "Organizational images and member identification", *Administration Science Quarterly*, Vol. 39, pp. 239-63.
- Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 1-2.
- Edwards, M. R. (2009). An integrative review of employer branding and OB theory. *Personnel review*, 39(1), 5-23.

- Edwards, M. R. (2010). An integrative review of employer branding and OB theory. *Personnel Review*, 39(1), 5–23.
- Edwards, M.R. (2005a), “Employer and employer branding: HR or PR?”, in Bach, S. (Ed.), *Human Resource Management: Personnel Management in Transition*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Edwards, M.R. (2005b), “Organizational identification: a conceptual and operational review”, *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 207-30.
- Eisenberg, B., Kilduff, C., Burleigh, S. and Wilson, K. (2001), *The Role of the Value Proposition and Employment Branding in Retaining Top Talent*, Society for Human Resource Management, Alexandria, VA.
- Elliott, R. and Wattanasuwan, K. (1998), “The Brands as symbolic resources for the construction of identity”, *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 17, pp. 131-45.
- Erdem, T., & Swait, J. (1998). Brand equity as a signaling phenomenon. *Journal of consumer Psychology*, 7(2), 131-157.
- Folger, R., & Konovsky, M. A. (1989). Effects of procedural and distributive justice on reactions to pay raise decisions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32, 115-130.
- Foster, C., Punjaisri, K. & Cheng, R. (2010) ‘The Relationship Between Corporate, Internal and Employer Branding’. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6): pp. 401-409.
- Franck, E., Pudack, T., & Opitz, C. (2001). Zur Funktion von Topmanagement-Beratungen als „Karrieresprungbrett“ für High Potentials. *Arbeitspapier im Rahmen der Working Paper Series, Lehrstuhl für Unternehmensführung und-politik Universität Zürich, abrufbar unter*
- Frook, J.E. (2001), “Burnish your brand from the inside”, *B to B*, Vol. 86, pp. 1-2.
- George, W. R. (1990). Internal marketing and organizational behavior: A partnership in developing customer-conscious employees at every level. *Journal of Business Research*, 20(1), 63-70.

- George, W. R., & Gronroos, C. (1989). Handbook of services marketing. *AMACOM, New York, NY*.
- Gephart, M. A., Marsick, V. J., Van Buren, M. E., & Spiro, M. S. (1996). Learning organizations come alive. *Training and Development, 50*, 35-45.
- Gifford, B.D., Zammuto, R.F., Goodman, E.A. and Hill, K.S. (2002), "The relationship between hospital unit culture and nurses' quality of work life", *Journal of Healthcare Management, Vol. 47*, pp. 13-27.
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. *London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 24(25)*, 288-304.
- Glassdoor (2015) 'Employer Branding' [Online]. Available from: <http://employers.glassdoor.com/employer-branding/> [Accessed 10th June 2015].
- Goetting, S. (2000, June/July). Aligning external and internal messages: Marketing a learning program to an internal audience. *Strategic Communication Management*, pp. 18-21.
- Goodenough, W.H. (1971), *Culture, Language and Society*, Basic Books, Reading, MA.
- Goodman, E.A., Zammuto, R.F. and Gifford, B.D. (2001), "The competing values framework: understanding the impact of organizational culture on the quality of work life", *Organization Development Journal, Vol. 19*, pp. 58-68.
- Goodman, E.A., Zammuto, R.F. and Gifford, B.D. (2001), "The competing values framework: understanding the impact of organizational culture on the quality of work life", *Organization Development Journal, Vol. 19*, pp. 58-68.
- Gratton, L. (1998, June). The new rules of HR strategy. *HR Focus*, pp. 13 14.
- Greene, W. E., Walls, G. D., & Schrest, L. J. (1994). Internal marketing: The key to external marketing success. *Journal of Services Marketing, 8(4)*, 5-13.

- Griffeth, R.W., Hom, P.W. and Gaertner, S. (2000), "A meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: update, moderator tests, and research implications for the next millennium", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 463-88.
- Griffeth, R.W., Hom, P.W. and Gaertner, S. (2000), "A meta-analysis of antecedents and correlates of employee turnover: update, moderator tests, and research implications for the next millennium", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 463-88.
- Grönroos, C. (1981). Internal marketing—an integral part of marketing theory. *Marketing of services*, 236, 238. Aaker, D.A. (1991), *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*, The Free Press, New York, NY.
- Hall, D.T. (1971), "A theoretical model of career sub-identity development in organizational settings", *Organisational Behaviour and Human Performance*, Vol. 6, pp. 50-76.
- Hay, C. (2002), *Political Analysis. A Critical Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Hendry, C. and Jenkins, R. (1997), "Psychological contracts and new deals", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 7, pp. 38-44.
- Hendry, C. and Jenkins, R. (1997), "Psychological contracts and new deals", *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 7, pp. 38-44.
- Herr, P. M., Kardes, F. R., & Kim, J. (1991). Effects of word-of-mouth and product-attribute information on persuasion: An accessibility-diagnosticsity perspective. *Journal of consumer research*, 17(4), 454-462.
- Herr, P. M., Kardes, F. R., & Kim, J. (1991). Effects of word-of-mouth and product-attribute information on persuasion: An accessibility-diagnosticsity perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17, 454-462.
- Heskett, J. L., & Jones, T. O. (1994). Putting the service-profit chain to work. *Harvard Business Review*, 72, 164-170.

- Hirschman, E.C. (1980), "Comprehending symbolic consumption", in Hirschman, E.C. and Holbrook, M.B. (Eds), *Symbolic Consumer Behavior*, Association for Consumer Research, Ann Arbor, MI, pp. 4-6.
- Holme, I. M., & Solvang, B. K. (1997). *Forskningsmetodik. Om kvalitativa och kvantitativa metoder, 2.*
- Holsti, O. R. (1962). The belief system and national images: A case study. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 244-252.
- Hudson, L. A., & Ozanne, J. L. (1988). Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of consumer research*, 14(4), 508-521.
- Huselid, M. A., Jackson, S. E., & Schuler, R. S. (1997). Technical and strategic HRM effectiveness as determinants of firm performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40, 171-188.
- Jacobs, K. (2007), *The Rewards of Retention: Retaining Your Best and Your Brightest*. PRSA (Public Relations Society of America).
- Johnson, J.G. and Johnson, R.W. (2002), "Perceived over qualification and dimensions of job satisfaction: a longitudinal analysis", *The Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 134 No. 5, pp. 537-55.
- Jones, G. R., & George, J. M. (2003). *Contemporary management*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Judge, T.A. and Cable, D.M. (1997), "Applicant personality, organizational culture, and organization attraction", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 50, pp. 359-94.
- Keller, K.L. (1993), "Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 57, pp. 1-22.
- Kelman, H. C. (1958). Compliance, identification and internationalization: Three process of attitude change. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2, 51-60.



- Kerin, R. A., Berkowitz, E. N., Hartley, S. W., & Rudelius, W. (2003). *Marketing* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw Hill Irwin.
- Khalid, S., & Tariq, S. (2015). IMPACT OF EMPLOYER BRAND ON SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS. *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, 53(2), 351.
- Khan, M. K., & Naseem, I. (2014). Investigating the power of employer branding attributes.
- Kimpakorn, N. & Dimmitt, N. (2007). Employer Branding: The Perspective of Hotel Management in the Thai Luxury Hotel Industry. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, Vol 15, No 2.
- King, C. and Grace, D. (2007) 'Internal Branding: Exploring the Employee's Perspective'. *Brand Management*, 15(5): pp. 358-372.
- Knox, S., & Freeman, C. (2006). Measuring and managing employer brand image in the service industry. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 22, 695-716.
- Knox, S.D., Maklan, S. and Thompson, K.E. (2000), "Building the unique organisation value proposition", in Schultz, M., Hatch, M.J. and Larsen, M.H. (Eds), *The Expressive Organisation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 216.
- Kotler, P. (2003). *A framework for marketing management*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kottolli, A. (2006), "Branding to attracting talent", IT Tool Box Blogs, May 17, available at: [http:// it.toolbox.com/blogs/it-marketing/branding-to-attracting-talent-9338](http://it.toolbox.com/blogs/it-marketing/branding-to-attracting-talent-9338) (accessed July 10, 2011).
- Kryger Aggerholm, H., Esmann Andersen, S., & Thomsen, C. (2011). Conceptualising employer branding in sustainable organisations. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 16(2), 105-123.
- Lievens, F., & Slaughter, J. E. (2016). Employer image and employer branding: What we know and what we need to know. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 3, 407-440.

- Lievens, F. and Highhouse, S. (2003), "The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 56, pp. 75-102.
- Lievens, F., Van Hoye, G., & Anseel, F. (2007). Organizational identity and employer image: Towards a unifying framework. *British Journal of Management*, 18(s1), S45-S59.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). Asking, listening, and telling. *Qualitative communication research methods*, 170-208.
- Locke, E.A. (1976), "The nature and consequences of job satisfaction", in Dunnette, M.D. (Ed.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, Rand McNally, Chicago, IL, pp. 1297-349.
- Love, L. F., & Singh, P. (2011). Workplace branding: Leveraging human resources management practices for competitive advantage through "Best Employer" surveys. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 26(2), 175-181.
- Lund, B. (2003), "Organizational culture and job satisfaction", *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 219-36.
- Mael, F.A. and Ashforth, B.E. (1992), "Alumni and their Alma Mater: a partial test of a reformulated model of organisational identification", *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 103-23.
- Mandhanya & Shah. (2010). Employer branding: a tool for talent management. *Global Management Review*, 4(2), 43-48.
- Martin, G. (2008), "Employer branding and reputation management: a model and some evidence", in Cooper, C. and Burke, R. (Eds), *Peak Performing Organizations*, Routledge, London, pp. 252-74.
- Martin, G. (2008), "Employer branding and reputation management: a model and some evidence", in Cooper, C. and Burke, R. (Eds), *Peak Performing Organizations*, Routledge, London, pp. 252-74.

- Martin, G. (2008), "Employer branding and reputation management: a model and some evidence", in Cooper, C. and Burke, R. (Eds), *Peak Performing Organizations*, Routledge, London, pp. 252-74.
- Martin, G. and Hetrick, S. (2006), *Corporate Reputations, Branding and Managing People: A Strategic Approach to HR*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- Martin, G., Beaumont, P.B., Doig, R.M. and Pate, J.M. (2005), "Branding: a new performance discourse for HR?", *European Management Journal*, Vol. 23, pp. 76-88.
- Martin, G., Gollan, P.J. and Grigg, K. (2011) 'Is there a Bigger and Better future for Employer Branding? Facing up to Innovation, Corporate reputations and Wicked Problems in SHRM'. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(17): pp. 3618-3637.
- Mathis, R. L., & Jackson, J. H. (2000). *Human resource management*. Cincinnati, OH: Southwestern College Publishing.
- McGuire, J.B., Sundgren, A. and Schneeweis, T. (1988), "Corporate social responsibility and firm financial performance", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 31, pp. 854-72.
- McKinnon, L.J., Harrison, L.G., Chow, W.C. and Wu, A. (2003), "Organizational culture: association with commitment, job satisfaction, propensity to remain and information sharing in Taiwan", *International Journal of Business Studies*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 25-44.
- Miles, S.J. and Mangold, W.G. (2004), "A conceptualization of the employee branding process", *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, Vol. 3 Nos 2/3, pp. 65-87.
- Mitchell, C. (2002, January). Selling the brand inside. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 99-105.
- Mitchell, C. (2002, January). Selling the brand inside. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 99-105.
- Montgomery, D.B. and Ramus, C.A. (2011), "Calibrating MBA job preferences for the 21<sup>st</sup> century", *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 9-26.

- Moroko, L., & Uncles, M. D. (2008). Characteristics of successful employer brands. *Journal of Brand Management*, 16(3), 160-175.
- Neuman, W.L. & Kreuger, L.W. (2003) *Social Work – Research Methods*, Pearson Education, 1st ed. 2003.
- Newell, H. and Dopson, S. (1996), “Muddle in the middle: organizational restructuring and middle management careers”, *Personnel Review*, Vol. 25, pp. 4-20.
- Newell, H. and Dopson, S. (1996), “Muddle in the middle: organizational restructuring and middle management careers”, *Personnel Review*, Vol. 25, pp. 4-20.
- Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B., & Wright, P. M. (2003). *Human resource management: Gaining a competitive advantage* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- O’ Reilly, C.A. (1989), “Corporations, culture, and commitment: motivation and social control in organizations”, *California Management Review*, Vol. 31, pp. 9-25.
- Odom, R.Y., Box, W.R. and Dunn, M.G. (1990), “Organizational cultures, commitment, satisfaction, and cohesion”, *Public Productivity & Management Review*, Vol. 14, pp. 157-69.
- Olkkonen, M.E. and Lipponen, J. (2006), “Relationships between organizational justice, identification with organization and work unit, and group-related outcomes”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 100, pp. 202-15.
- Ott, J. S. (1989). *The organizational culture perspective*. Dorsey Press.
- Palthe, J., & Ernst Kossek, E. (2003). Subcultures and employment modes: Translating HR strategy into practice. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 16(3), 287-308.
- Petkovic, M. (2004), “Geschichte markenpolitik”, *Personal*, Vol. 48 No. 6, p. 6.
- Pingle, S. S. and Sodhi, H. K. (2011) ‘What Makes an Attractive Employer: Significant Factors from Employee Perspective’. *Anvesha*, 4(2): pp. 18-25.

- Preston, L.E. and O'Bannon, D.P. (1997), "The corporate social-financial performance relationship: a typology and analysis", *Business and Society*, Vol. 36 No. 4, pp. 419-29.
- Punjaisri, K., & Wilson, A. (2007). The role of internal branding in the delivery of employee brand promise. *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(1), 57-70.
- Punjaisri, K., Evanschitzky, H. and Wilson, A. (2009) 'Internal Branding: an Enabler of Employees' Brand-Supporting Behaviour'. *Journal of Service Management*, 20(2): pp. 209-226.
- Rampl, L. V. (2014). How to become an employer of choice: transforming employer brand associations into employer first-choice brands. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(13-14), 1486-1504.
- Remenyi, D., & Williams, B. (1998). *Doing research in business and management: an introduction to process and method*. Sage.
- Robbins, S. (1994). *Management* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Robinson, S. L. (1996). Trust and breach of the psychological contract. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41, 574-599.
- Robinson, S.L. and Rousseau, D.M. (1994), "Violating the psychological contract: not the exception but the norm", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 15, pp. 245-59.
- Roper, S., & Davies, G. (2007). The corporate brand: Dealing with multiple stakeholders. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 23(1-2), 75-90.
- Rousseau, D. (1995). *Psychological contracts in organizations: Understanding written and unwritten agreements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rousseau, D.M. (1989), "Psychological and implied contracts in organizations", *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Journal*, Vol. 2, pp. 121-39.
- Rousseau, D.M. (1989), "Psychological and implied contracts in organizations", *Employee Rights and Responsibilities Journal*, Vol. 2, pp. 121-39.

- Rousseau, D.M. (1990), "New hire perceptions of their own and their employer's obligations: a study of psychological contracts", *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, Vol. 11, pp. 389-400.
- Rousseau, D.M. (2001), "Schema, promise and mutuality: the building blocks of the psychological contract", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 74, pp. 511-41.
- Rousseau, D.M. (2001), "Schema, promise and mutuality: the building blocks of the psychological contract", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 74, pp. 511-41.
- Saini, G.K., Rai, P. And Chaudhary, M. K. (2013) 'What do best Employer Surveys Reveal about Employer Branding and Intention to Apply?' *Journal of Brand Management*, 21(2): pp. 95-111.
- Sasser, W. E., & Arbeit, S. P. (1976). Selling jobs in the service sector. *Business horizons*, 19(3), 61-65.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*.
- Schein, E. (1985), *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Schneider, B. (1987), "The people make the place", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 40, pp. 437-54.
- Silverthorne, C. (2004), "The impact of organizational culture and person-organization fit on organizational commitment and job satisfaction in Taiwan", *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 25, pp. 592-9.
- Silvertzen, A., Nilsen, E. R. and Olafsen, A. H. (2013) 'Employer Branding: Employer Attractiveness and the Use of Social Media'. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22(7): pp. 473-483.
- Sluss, D.M., Klimchak, M. and Holmes, J.J. (2008), "Perceived organizational support as a mediator between relational exchange and organizational identification", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 73, pp. 457-64.

- Smedley, T. (2007), "Employer brand is 'bigger than HR'", available at: [www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2013/01/29/employerbrandisbiggerth\\_nhr\\_2007-09.aspx](http://www.cipd.co.uk/pm/peoplemanagement/b/weblog/archive/2013/01/29/employerbrandisbiggerth_nhr_2007-09.aspx) (accessed December 10, 2014).
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Sullivan, J. (2002), "Crafting a lofty employment brand: a costly proposition" ER Daily, November 25, available at: [www.ereexchange.com/articles/db/9856ED899A524B8A8C61146906\\_E21331.asp](http://www.ereexchange.com/articles/db/9856ED899A524B8A8C61146906_E21331.asp) (accessed October 22, 2003).
- Sullivan, S. (1999), "The changing nature of careers: a review and research agenda", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 25, pp. 457-75.
- Supphellen, M. (2000), "Understanding core brand equity: Guidelines for in-depth elicitation of brand associations", *International Journal of Market Research*, Vol. 42, pp. 319-38.
- Swystun, J. (2007), "The brand glossary", Interbrand, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY.
- Tajfel, H. (1982), "Social psychology of intergroup relations", *Annual Review of Psychology*, p. 33.
- Underwood, R., Bond, E. and Baer, R. (2001), "Building service brands via social identity: lessons from the sports marketplace", *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 9, pp. 1-14.
- Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1979), "An integrative theory of social conflict", in Austein, W. and Worchel, S. (Eds), *The Social Psychology of Inter-group Relations*, 2nd ed., Nelson Hall, Chicago, IL.
- Taylor, S. (2010) *Resourcing and Talent Management*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- The Conference Board (2001), *Engaging Employees Through Your Brand*, The Conference Board, New York, NY.

- Thomas, W.L. and Terence, R.M. (1994), "An alternative approach: the unfolding model of voluntary employee turnover", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 19 No. 1, pp. 51-89.
- Thompson, J. A., & Bunderson, J. S. (2003). Violations of principle: Ideological currency in the psychological contract. *Academy of Management Review*, 28(4), 571-586.
- Thompson, J.A. and Bunderson, J.S. (2003), "Violations of principle: ideological currency in the psychological contract", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 28, pp. 571-86.
- Turban, D.B. and Greening, D.W. (1996), "Corporate social performance and organizational attractiveness to prospective employees", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 40, pp. 658-72.
- Tyler, T.R. and Blader, S.L. (2003), "The group engagement model: procedural justice, social identity theory, and cooperative behavior", *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 7, pp. 349-61.
- Van Dick, R. (2001), "Identification in organizational contexts: linking theory and research from social and organizational psychology", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 3 No. 4, pp. 265-83.
- Vroom, V. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: John Wiley.
- Wanous, J.P., Poland, T.D., Premack, S.L. and Davis, K.S. (1992), "The effects of met expectations on newcomer attitudes and behaviors: a review and meta-analysis", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 77, pp. 288-97.
- Weiber, R., & Adler, J. (1995). Informationsökonomisch begründete Typologisierung von Kaufprozessen. *Zeitschrift für betriebswirtschaftliche Forschung*, 47(1), 43-65.
- Weiss, G. (2014) 'The Newest Threats to Employer Reputation and Branding' [Online]. Available from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140707065547-6028843-the-newest-threats-to-employer-reputation-and-branding> [Accessed 10th June 2015].



- Welsh, E. (2002, May). Dealing with data: Using NVivo in the qualitative data analysis process. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 3, No. 2).
- Wilden, R., Gudergan, S., & Lings, I. (2006). Employee-based brand equity. In Drennan, J. (Ed.), *Proceedings of ANZMAC 2006*. QUT, Brisbane (47).
- Wilden, R., Gudergan, S., & Lings, I. (2010). Employer branding: strategic implications for staff recruitment. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 26(1-2), 56-73.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Applications of case study research*. Sage.
- Yukl, G. (1989). *Leadership in organizations* (2nd ed.). New York: Academic Press. *Sandra Jeanquart Miles and Glynn Mangold 87*

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Guide for HR

- 1) What does employer branding mean to your organization?
  - a. The purpose/ aim/ Objectives to be gained from it
  - b. How long have you been practicing it?
  - c. What kind of brand image are you trying to convey and why?
  - d. Do you believe the intended image reaches the intended audience?
  
- 2) Why do you think current and potential employees find your organization attractive?
  - a. What is your organization's employer value proposition? What do you think makes your organization unique and attractive as compared to others?
  - b. What do you think current and potential employees find more attractive in your combination of employment offerings (monetary: salary and benefits or non-monetary: social and developmental needs (associations, culture, reputation, perceptions of employment image etc)
  
- 3) What are some of the employer branding programs/practices targeted at current and potential employees?
  
- 4) How would you describe the recruitment process? How is employer branding used in the recruitment process?
  - a. Which people within the organization are involved in the employer branding process and how?
  - b. What do you think are the advantages of using employer branding in the recruitment process?
  - c. What characteristics do you look for in potential employees? Do you ensure Culture –fit we look for it.

5) How would you describe the organizations relationship with its employees

- d. In terms of communication, in what way do you develop and maintain this relationship
- e. In light of your HR practices and organizational strategy
- f. Do you think you are meeting the promises, expectations and obligations made to your employees at that time of recruitment? in terms of performance management, rewards, training and development (can you give an example?)

6) Do you think there is any weakness the organization has with regards to the employer-employee relationship?

- a. What can be done to overcome it?

## Appendix B: Interview Guide for employees

Tell me little bit about yourself.

- Department:
  - How long have you been working in this organization :
1. Why do you find the organization attractive?
    - What does the organization offer, which you feel makes it unique and attractive

You may comment on the following:

Reputation of the company, Compensation, Benefits, Development opportunities and career advancement opportunities, Training opportunities, Working environment, Job security, Flexibility, Work life balance, Management and leadership, vision and values, reputation

ANS:

2. What do you think are the central and distinctive attributes of the organization? Do you feel you can associate with them?
  - Are you familiar with the organizations values/vision, Do you associate with the values (some/any) can you describe them how do you apply them in your daily work

ANS:

3. Do you feel pride in identifying with the company? Why is that so?
  - How would you describe how you feel about your job to your friends and family?

ANS:

4. Do you think the HR practices, culture, behavior of management and environment clearly communicate to you the organizational goals and expectations? Can you give an example
  - Would you say that the company via these means of communication encourages you to behave in a certain manner?
  - Do you think there is consistency in the values, practices and behaviours?

ANS:

5. What made you initially apply for a job here? What were your expectations about working here and have they been met? How do you feel about your job today?
  - How realistic or unrealistic was the information provided,
  
6. Can you describe what is like to work here? Working environment
  - Culture is also a means of communication, what does it communicate with you?
  - Do you see a future for the company?

## Appendix C: Interview guide for Potential Employees (Focus Groups)

I would encourage you to be very open about your views.

Average age group of focus group participants

- 18-22                      - 23-27                      -28 or above

Gender Ratio of participants

- Male                      Female

University name \_\_\_\_\_

What is your general perception about working in telcos?

If you had a choice, which telco would you like to work for? Why?

If you are deciding between two job offers, how important are the following factors in making your decision (1=not important at all; 5= extremely important)

1            2            3            4            5

- Salary (3-5)
- Benefits
- Training and career advancement opportunities
- The organizations reputation in terms of being market leader, profitability, attractiveness
- Your 'fit' with the organizations vision, culture and values
- Word of mouth through friends and family
- Working environment/ Culture
- An organization which sets realistic expectations and fulfills its promises and expectations
- Open clear consistent communication
- How important it is for you to feel pride in identifying with your employer
- How do you look/apply for jobs? What are the most effective methods?
- Do you use social media for the purpose? Is the method effective? Which Social media sites do you use?
- Do you think campus drives/Job fairs are effective?
- Do you show interest in workshops conducted by organizations? Do they make you interested in the organization in terms of career opportunities?

- Do you think applying through Career websites of companies effective?
- Do lengthy application processes discourage you from applying for a job
- Have you heard of rozee.pk? What do you know about it?
- How familiar are you with T1/T2 as an employer?
- What do you know about the culture of both?
- Do you perceive them as attractive employers?
- If you had to choose between the two, which would you prefer?
- How important is it for you to do Meaningful work? Would you do it for a lesser salary?
- How important is the culture of the organization to you?
- How would you like the ideal company culture to be?
- Does the physical working environment of the workplace matter to you? If so why? If not why not?
- What benefits do you think your company should offer you?
- What do you think about training and learning opportunities are they more attractive to you than salary? What about advancement opportunities.



<b>Telecom 1</b>	<b>Designation</b>
T1-HR1	Talent Acquisition and Employer Branding Manager
T1-HR2	Employer branding Executive
T1- E1	Sales Executive
T1- E2	Sales Executive
T1- E3	HR Officer
T1- E4	HR Executive
T1- E5	Marketing Executive
T1- E6	Communications Executive
T1-E7	Communications Manager
T1-E8	Business Intelligence
T1-E9	Business Intelligence
T1-E10	Technical Officer
T1-E11	Technical Officer
T1-E12	Finance Executive



<b>Telecom 2</b>	<b>Designation</b>
T2- HR1	Manager Talent Acquisition and Culture Transformation
T2- HR2	Executive Talent Acquisition and Culture Transformation



T2- E1	Project Management officer
T2- E2	Finance officer
T2- E3	Finance Manager
T2- E4	Supply Chain officer
T2- E5	Supply Chain officer
T2- E6	Marketing Officer
T2- E7	Sales Officer
T2- E8	Communications Officer
T2- E9	Marketing Officer
T2- E10	Marketing Officer
T2- E11	Sales Officer
T2- E12	HR officer
T2- E13	Finance Officer
T2- E14	Technical Officer

---