

**A Qualitative Study of the Impact of Employee Brand
Perception on Motivation within the Tech Sector in Ireland.**

By

Desayo Iyinoluwa Isaac-Agbetunsin

**Dissertation presented in fulfilment of requirements for Master of
Arts in Human Resources Management.**

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2021.

ABSTRACT

Employee motivation is important in a disruptive industry like the Technology industry where innovations are rampant, and brands need to project a strong image to retain a clientele. Ireland has a fairly robust Technology sector, and the individual brands which make up the sector are considered. A brand has been noted to be the sum of perceptions by which the brand is differentiated from others, and it aims toward the fulfillment of promises about the brand experience. The awareness created by a brand can also be turned inwards - in this case the employees. This study examines the impact of brand perception on employee motivation.

The research questions were centered around the employees understanding of their brand, factors the employees consider important in the delivery of the brand promise, and how the employees access the organisation defined information on how they can deliver optimally in line with the organisations brand promise. A qualitative approach was used which entailed conducting semi-structured interviews among identified staff in the Technology Industry. Findings indicated that employees mainly maintained high levels of admiration for their respective brands. Top motivating factors included the respective brands' positioning and reputation. These perceptions were noted to affect their attitude to work and motivation - observed morale on the job was generally positive and more of them noted that they were on fruitful career path. The high levels of satisfaction observed was also noted to be the element that enabled the staff to identify with the objectives of their respective organisations on the personal level. Other factors considered extrinsic contributing to employee morale were also noted, some of these included external rewards, professional acknowledgement, and bonuses. The study made recommendations that would further inspire employee motivation.

Table of Content

ABSTRACT	2
DECLARATION	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	6
CHAPTER ONE	7
1.0 Introduction and Background to the study	7
1.1 Problem Statement	8
1.3 Purpose of the Study	9
1.4 Importance of the Study	9
1.5 Research Methodology Overview	10
1.6 Research questions	10
1.7 Structure of the Research	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Brand Perception	12
2.3 Importance of Employee Brand Perception	14
2.4 Brand Perception and Employee Experience	15
2.4.1 Motivation Theory	16
2.4.2 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs	16
2.4.3 Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory	17
2.4.4 McGregor's X Y Theories	17
2.5 Positive Organisational Practices	19
2.6 Challenges/Barriers to Employee Brand Perception	20
2.6.1 Value Incongruence	20
2.6.2 Poor Communication	21
2.6.3 Misunderstanding and Distrust of Brand Perception Management	22
2.7 Improving Employee Motivation through Brand Perception	22
2.8 Developing a Partnership Culture in the Organisation	23
2.9 Theoretical Framework: Social Identity Theory	25
3.1. Introduction	27
3.2. Research Questions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.3. Chosen Methodology	27
3.3.1. Interpretive Phenomenology	27
3.4. Methods	28
3.4.1. The Role of the Researcher	29

3.4.2. Sampling Methods and Participants Selection	29
3.5. Data Analysis Techniques	30
3.5.1. Reading and Taking Notes	30
3.5.2. Identifying Emerging Themes.....	30
3.5.3. Connecting Emergent Themes.....	31
3.5.4. Tabulating the Themes	31
3.6. Trustworthiness.....	31
3.7. Ethical Considerations.....	32
3.8. Conclusion	32
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS.....	33
4.1 Introduction.....	33
4.2 Participants.....	33
4.3 Research Question One:	35
4.3.1 Perception about Employer Brands in the Ireland Tech industry:.....	35
4.3.2 Appreciation	37
4.4 Research Question Two:.....	39
4.4.1 Recognition	39
4.4.2 Wellbeing	41
4.4.3 Participation	42
4.5 Research Question Three	43
4.5.1 Bad Leadership Traits.....	43
4.5.2 Poor Working Culture.....	44
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS	45
5.1 Conclusion	45
5.2 Practical and Actionable Recommendations	46
5.3 Implications of Findings	48
5.4 Personal Learning Statement.....	49
BIBLIOGRAPHY	51
APPENDICES	62
Appendix A: Interview Questions	62
Appendix B: Information Sheet.....	63
Appendix C: Consent Form	65

DECLARATION

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Desayo Iyinoluwa Isaac-Agbetunsin

Student Number: 20103018

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MA in Human Resources Management

Title of Thesis: A Qualitative Study of the Impact of Employee Brand Perception on Motivation within the Tech Sector in Ireland.

Date: 30 August 2021.

Material submitted for award

- A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself.
- B. I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA.
- D. Either *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my mum who has been my major support and has always encouraged me to go after my goals and achieve them, thank you. I would also like to extend my appreciation to my family members.

I would like to thank my supervisor Mira Dobutowitsch for her support, guidance, understanding and patience throughout the course of completing this research work.

I would like to thank the participants involved in the interview process; their participation is the reason for the successful completion of this thesis. It is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends for their constant encouragement and support throughout my master's degree and through the process of writing this thesis, especially in times I felt like giving up.

This achievement would not have been possible without everyone, and I am grateful to them.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction and Background to the study

It has been said that employee behavior is a crucial factor at the basis of any brand, and this points to their brand building and brand supportive behaviors as a factor contributing to the branding efforts of the organisation (Helm *et al.*, 2016; Samnani and Fard, 2014). This is not farfetched as customers' brand experiences are also noted to be dependent on frontline service employees (Xiong and King, 2015; Rehman, 2020). A brand can be defined as a set of perceptions by which other brands are differentiated from each other, it is also a combination of functional and emotional values aimed at bringing about the fulfillment of promises about the brand experience (Erkment, 2018; King and Grace, 2008). Branding on the other hand can be defined as the creation of mental structures targeted at a marketing segment with the aim of providing aid for organizing their awareness as regards a particular product or organisation (King and Grace, 2008). These perceptions determine if the customer expectation would be fulfilled in line with the promises projected by the brand (Yaniv and Farkas, 2005; King and Grace, 2008).

This aspect of brand perception as the literature shows can be turned inwards with regards to an organisation, and this would mean the perceptions of employees about the brand which is the focus of this study. This, in part, is noted to affect customer experience and hence the overall success of the brand in the market (King and Grace, 2008). The internal environment of an organisation is made up of 'human systems', and these are noted to require a 'binding element' in the form of a central agenda around which the employees can adjust their behaviors so that it aligns with the expectations of the customers and the organisation (King and Grace, 2008). There are other recommendations in the literature in this regard. Yaniv and Farkas (2005), point out the onstage and backstage representations of a company. The onstage representation is the organisation's corporate brand values while the backstage representation is its corporate values and culture. These must be in alignment otherwise the employees can see it as a lie leading to cynicism and ultimately a disruption to their identification with the corporate brand. This is further described as 'brand trust' – trust being the essential factor on the employees' part that will enhance the relationship and hence their

commitment to the brand (Erkmen and Hancer, 2015). Employees who have become brand advocates are noted to be the creators of brand differentiation - a direct consequence of internal branding by the company. These set of employees would be in the position to be able to understand the brand promise and would also be in the position to serve the customers better; their loyalty increases, and they remain on the job for longer periods (Du Preez and Bendixen, 2015).

A look into the impact of employee brand perception on employee motivation is therefore vital as it helps to examine and understand the position of the employees and may provide vital insights on how to better position them for optimal performance in line with the overall goals of the organisation.

1.1 Problem Statement

Ireland is noted to have one of the youngest populations in Europe with a forecast to increase to about 5.75 million by 2040. About 56.3% of its 30-34-year-olds have a third level qualification making the country one with the most educated and qualified workforces in the world (IDA Ireland, 2019). Despite this fact, pre-pandemic, the Technology sector was noted as one of the niches where there is a shortage of skilled people (Morris, 2020). Added to this, the Technology industry is a unique one in which innovations and disruptions are common, and the industry keeps creating the need for specialized expertise from time to time. This represents an ever-continuing shift in brand expectations in the market. According to Relocate Global (2021), over 150 million new technology roles will be created in the next 5 years, a global shortage of about 85 million tech workers amounting to about \$8.5 trillion in revenue could be lost. This is a scenario that could pose a problem. The global market has been reported as a competitive one with a dire need for differentiation among competing companies, disruptive technologies - often resulting from customer demands will require a continuous alignment of the employee base with the expected changes. This is especially important because, if brand differentiation is dependent on employee advocacy as a result of identification with and loyalty to the brand as has been explained, then Technology companies in the country are not just trying to remain competitive by their product differentiation in the market they may also be involved in the fight to constantly align their staff with the shifting orientations of the market. When companies cannot effectively manage their employee experiences within their own

organisation, it could affect customer experience and result in major shortages jeopardizing the company's chance of future success in the long run. Companies may try to prevent this by making sure they stay competitive enough and this can be done by examining the intricacies of internal brand perception on their employees who in most cases turn out to be the best brand advocates and hence agents that enhance product differentiation that may lead to competitive advantage for the company.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to gain insights into the impact of employee brand perception on motivation within the Technology sector in Ireland. The imperatives of seeing into the impact of brand identity on employees have been stated in terms of how it helps to modulate their behaviors and make brand ambassadors out of them when fully understood and imbibed. This allows customers' expectations as it concerns the brand to be met and enhances the market position of the organisation for the better. A brand that is strong in this way will often attract the right employees who in turn show affective commitment in a sense of pride to be associated with the organisation, this enhances their loyalty and commitment in the delivery of promised services to customers (Meyer *et al.*, 2012)

1.4 Importance of the Study

An understanding of employee brand perception across the board in the country's Technology industry could be of benefit to organisations that would gain insights into how employees are aligned with their various brand and organisational expectations. This could be useful information that could aid in developing strategies for employee brand alignment in a bid to bring out the best in them in line with the brand expectations as defined by the organisation and anticipated by the customers. Knowledge can be added as to what could increase a better identification of the employees with the brand, helping them become better frontline ambassadors and profitability for the organisation.

Participants in this study have the opportunity of becoming sources of useful wisdom as they may become a guide giving useful insights in a competitive talent market such as the one found in Ireland.

1.5 Research Methodology Overview

The study adopts a qualitative design based on phenomenology. Phenomenology is simply the study of phenomena. This philosophy traces its origin to the works of Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger and is often applicable in the study of organisations (Gill, 2020). Narrowing on the work of Sanders (1982), the phenomenological approach helps to make explicit structures and meanings in human experiences implicit by making bare the universal simple essence undergirding human consciousness (Gill, 2020). The benefit of this method in line with the propositions of Sanders (1982) is that it allows for a manageable number of individuals in eliciting information via semi-structured interviews (Gill, 2020). Adopting this method, there would be an opportunity to gain insights via the firsthand descriptions of the individual's experience in line with the objectives of the research as opposed to relying on theories.

1.6 Research questions

RQ1: What are the general perceptions about employer brands in the Tech industry in Ireland?

RQ2: What are the aspects of the employer brand behind employee motivation in the Tech industry in Ireland?

RQ3: What are the challenges towards effective employee motivation in Ireland's tech industry?

1.7 Structure of the Research

Chapter 1 – Introduction: This chapter introduces the study, sets its context by giving a clear purpose, its importance, and the research questions to be explored. The chapter also does a summary of the theoretical framework and a research design overview of the study.

Chapter 2- Literature Review: The second chapter aims to provide a theoretical foundation for the research. This will be achieved through a comprehensive review of existing literature on the impact of employee brand perception on motivation within the tech sector thereby providing a grounding and context for the current study.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology: The research methodology chapter lays out the proposed methodology for the study in line with the research questions of the study. The chapter details the research design, data sources, and analysis methods and the right justification for the chosen approach and sources.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Findings: In this chapter, an analysis of the data obtained is done.

Chapter 5 – Summary of Findings: This chapter summarizes the results of all the findings of the study, compares them with findings of previous studies, gives recommendations and possible areas of further research and finally a personal reflection is provided by the researcher.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There are several studies on the impact of brand perception on organisations (e.g., Cullinan *et al*, 2020; Anderson 2019; Celsi and Gilly, 2010), but many of these studies have focused on customer brand perception and not brand perception from the employees' point of view. Much research has focused on motivating customers through brand perception but there is the need to also understand how brand perception affects employees' needs and motivation. Therefore, this literature review critically examines the importance of brand perception, the dynamics of the relationship between employee brand perception and employee experience, the challenges, and barriers to employee brand perception and how brand perception can be effectively managed and optimised for the benefit of the organisation.

2.2 Brand Perception

There are no agreed definitions as to brand perception, but a few scholars have conceptualised it to be a part of brand image (Van Rekom *et al*, 2006; Neijens and Smith, 2007). The earliest definition of the term is by Reynolds and Gutman (1984) and they defined brand perception as the psychological impression which the brand image has on the recipients, this could be the customer or the employee. Keller (2003) also explains brand perception as the meaning the consumer derives from a brand and the information surrounding it. With respect to these definitions, employee brand perception can simply be explained as the impression which the employee receives from the brand image. It can be argued that the employee brand perception is derived from the sum of interactions which an employee has with his or her employer's brand. It can also be described as the clarity with which the brand value is understood by internal and external stakeholders. Zhang (2020) conceptualises brand perception as the customer's cognitive process of brand awareness and how this influences purchase decisions and interaction with the brand and its services. Andreini *et al* (2018) describes brand perception as consumers' response to an organisation's deliberate attempt to create holistic customer value in order to develop and sustain competitive advantage. From these definitions, it can be stated that brand perception is what customers believe about an organisation's products and services and not just what the organisation advertises. Therefore, the customer is the focal point of brand perception. Brand

perception is created and sustained by reputation, recommendation, functionality and most importantly, customer use and experience (Andreini et al 2018; Zhang, 2020).

According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), perception of organisational brand can be classified into the following: Brand identification, Brand Pride and Brand commitment. Brand identification is derived from the social identity theory which proposes the idea of organisational identification. This suggests that the employee's emotional attachment to an organisation has a bearing on his or her self-evaluation (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). With respect to brand perception, brand identification describes the employees' sense of belonging to the brand (Piehler et al, 2016). In other words, brand identification is the feeling of being merged with the destiny of the brand and feeling confident in one's association with the brand and one's influence on the brand (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005). Brand identification possesses both cognitive and affective aspects (Hekman, 2012). However, the affective aspect is a more important measure of determining employee motivation. (Johnson et al, 2012). Piehler et al (2016) stated that brand identification has a positive impact on employees' commitment to the brand.

Gouthier and Rhein (2011) described brand pride as a positive emotion derived from performance. Helm et al (2016) also conceptualise brand pride as a feeling of great pleasure at identifying with a brand and its values. With respect to brand perception, it can be argued that for an employee to develop brand pride, he or she must be able to identify and understand with the brand values and relate to them on a personal level. Brand pride also has a positive impact on employee devotion to good customer relationship.

According to King & Grace (2012), Brand commitment represents the emotional attachment of members of staff towards the brand. Fullerton (2005) stated that brand commitment can be categorised as affective commitment which arises from common values and objectives. It can be deduced that brand commitment enhances the relationship between the employers and the employee. This is because brand commitment helps the employee to translate the organisational goals in a way that is relatable to him or her. Employees are more likely to display brand commitment when their work is in line with their personal value system and ambition (Xiong et al, 2013). Piehler (2016) postulated that the three factors are interconnected and that employees who display one of them are likely to display others; for instance, an employee who

displays brand commitment is likely to also possess brand pride and brand identification.

2.3 Importance of Employee Brand Perception

Having considered the popular consensus on brand perception, this study seeks to explore another aspect of brand perception, namely employee brand perception, which is basically brand perception from the employee's point of view. Ambler and Barrow (1996) define the employer brand as the totality of the economic, psychological, functional gains which a company provides for its employees. The employer brand is measured with four dimensions; job characteristic and work environment; physical and psychological, the feeling of belonging and emotional motivation, organisational reputation and image and finally, tangible remuneration like attractive salary and bonus (Amber and Barrow, 1996). This explanation of the employer brand is necessary because the employer brand is the major influence of the employee brand perception. To start with, the significance of employee brand perception needs to be highlighted and discussed. According to Abhari *et al* (2008), employees are the pillars of any organisation. They are important in the sense that they are in direct contact with the customers and so they are responsible for customer experience, making good on brand promises and pushing sustainable innovation. They are also of the opinion that employees engage with the organisation the same way the customers do, therefore it is in the best interest of the company not to ignore the employee experience and motivation as it comes to bear on the customer experience as well. For the employee to give their best service, they need to be properly engaged with the brand and have a good employer brand (Abhari *et al.*, 2008). This point of view is supported by research carried out by IBM business consulting service in 2005 when they discovered that 70% of brand perception is determined by employee behaviour and 41% of customer loyalty is a by-product of positive employee behaviour (Anderson, 2019). While the products and services of a company can be easily managed and tweaked constantly to keep up with customer needs and tastes, brand perception begins with the organisation and the employees. There is a need for employees to embody the principles and values of the brand for it to reflect in their services and translate effectively to the customers and clients. The brand perception should line up with the organisational values, organisational ethos and objectives should influence the employees. This is created and

imbibed by the founders and leaders, and it provides a sustainable, competitive advantage for the business (Harris and deChernatony, 2001).

Employee behaviour impacts on brand perception and the brand perception also influences employee behaviour. If this is not consistent, the integrity of the brand may be compromised (Harris and deChernatony, 2001). The employee aspect of brand perception has captured the focus of marketers in recent times (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Eid et al, 2019; Cullinan et al, 2020; Liejerholt et al, 2020). This is because they have realised the error of leaving employee management solely to Human resources. Henkel et al (2007) postulated that it is not enough to measure employee motivation by non-specific qualities such as competence or friendliness; employees must be trained and motivated to embody and deliver the brand promise (Schultz & deCheranatony, 2002). They must also act as representatives for the brand (Hulberg, 2006).

Piyachat et al (2014) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between brand perception and employee engagement. They carried out the study by observing employees from nine companies in the petroleum sector and it was concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between employee engagement and brand perception. There is a competition among organisations to attract the most talented and skilled employees and the first approach to achieving this is by improving brand perception. Herman (2001) also opined that the strong brands are those whose employees clearly reflect the brand values.

2.4 Brand Perception and Employee Experience

In discussions about brand perception as it relates to employees, the customers are substituted for the employees. This is line with O'loughin & Szmigin (2005) who believe that employees like customers, have an experience with the brand that they work for, and this experience directly influences their behaviour. From these postulations, identifying, analysing, and understanding employee experience and motivation will have an impact on improving customer experience. Hence, the major difference between employee brand perception and customer brand perception is that the former is internal, while the latter is external. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) state that employee brand perception can be viewed in two ways; instrumental which involves salary and job description and symbolic which refers to the image which the employee has of the employer.

The latter is subjective and cannot be easily measured. Edwards (2010) is of the opinion that improving these subjective attributes will have more influence on improving the emotional attachment of the employee to the brand. This is a valid argument in the sense that while salary and benefits may be seen by the employee as due compensation for skills and work done, perks such as reward and recognition, job security and a sense of belonging are extra, however non-tangible, subjective and they do more for the employee's motivation. This is based on theories of motivation which will be examined briefly.

2.4.1 Motivation Theory

Motivation is an important factor in keeping employees engaged and delivering optimum performance on their jobs. The factor behind motivation differs for different individuals, for some it may be money, while for others, it may be recognition or awards and it has been practically linked to employee productivity (Vinay, 2014). As cited by (Badubi, 2017) Locke describes motivation as the pleasurable or positive state of the emotion which is the outcome of the appraisal of an individual's job experiences. There are several theories that have been applied in the management setting, they include the following:

2.4.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's 'motivation to work' has been applied severally in the fields of organisational behaviour and management. His theory was noted to be based on personal judgement and it is described as the need hierarchy theory. Maslow believed people who grew up in an environment that deprived them of their needs would not be able to function as healthy and well-adjusted individuals. In his theory, people are noted to have 5 types of needs which are triggered in a hierarchical manner – ranking from the lowest to the highest (Kaur, 2013).

It would usually require that a person is located within the hierarchy to adequately motivate them, the hierarchy of needs is described below according to decreasing priority - Physiological (food, shelter, clothes), Security and safety, social needs (mingling with others), Esteem needs (the need for credit from others), Self-actualization (desire for achievement and legacy) (Badubi, 2017)

Maslow's theory provides the avenue for managers in organisational settings to help their subordinates achieve self-actualization (Kaur, 2013). For instance, the

organisation can make it a duty to try to identify employees' position within the hierarchy and provide fitting benefits that would improve their performance.

Asides from their basic needs, individuals can also be influenced by other factors such as the desire for self-fulfilment and self-actualisation - motivational factors, and factors extrinsic to the job like interpersonal relations, supervision, company policy etc - hygiene factors, this is well highlighted in the Herzberg's Two-Factor theory

2.4.3 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

This is otherwise known as the motivation-hygiene theory and is noted to have been influenced by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Alshmemri, *et al.*, 2017). The theory provides the distinction of separating motivation factors and hygiene factors which can both influence job satisfaction. Hygiene factors are known to be associated with the requirement to avoid horridness, while motivational factors are associated with the need for self-development and self-actualisation (Alshmemri, *et al.*, 2017). Tested on engineers and accountants who were asked to express their feelings about their jobs, Hertzberg discovered that positive motivation was usually tied to the job content and negative feelings were usually tied to the job context or hygiene factor. Job context was described in terms of factors inherent in the job like achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement. Hygiene factors were described in terms of factors extrinsic to the job like interpersonal relations, remuneration, supervision, and company policy (Herzberg, 1966) in (Teck-Hong and Waheed, 2011).

McGregor's X Y theory provides and even simpler link between the stance assumed by an employer and the employee's motivation to work,

2.4.4 McGregor's X Y Theories

This is a theory by McGregor where he classified managers under the theories X and Y. Theory X is the Authoritarian, while Theory Y is the Egalitarian. Theory X is noted to have originated in the Catholic church and the Military; its assumptions are as follows:

An average human being has an aversion for work and tries to avoid it as much as possible

Due to this human element of work most people must be compelled, controlled and directed to work and the threatened with penalties to make them work. Force then becomes the ultimate element in getting people to work in the place of rewards,

A review of the assumptions of theory X led to theory Y, and this assumes that people are not naturally lazy but that when adequately motivated they can be self-directed and productive (Ugah & Uduakobong, 2011).

The employer may not feel the need to go this extra mile, but it improves productivity in a sustainably, and these theories provide an angle to understand the imperatives of employee motivation.

Moving away from employee motivation, Poon and Low (2005) emphasised the need to ensure that excellent brand perception begins internally with the employees. O'Loughin and Szmigin (2005) also support this assertion by recommending training events, good communication and internal branding as part of positive experiences for employees. It is not enough for companies to gain the physical commitment of their employees it is also desirable that they are truly motivated and enthusiastic about their work in order to produce the best results (Schmitt, 2003). Critically analysing these ideas, employee experience can be said to be the sum of the employees' interaction with the organisation (Schmitt, 2003; Poon and Low, 2005; O'Loughin and Szmigin, 2005). Experience is derived as a result of sustained involvement in a particular activity or continuous exposure to a certain physical and psychological environment over duration of time which eventually bears influence on an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions. In short, employee experience can be conceptualised as a collection of psycho-cognitive sentiments about the interactions with the organisation (Schmitt, 2003).

Hulberg (2006), advocates a multidisciplinary approach to corporate branding. He also proposed that the theories of brand perception should involve both the Marketing and Human Resource departments in order to attract, recruit and train people who align with the brand. The model for enhancing employee brand perception includes four practices: Internal branding, emotional engagement, innovation engagement and social engagement. It also involves reward, training, and empowerment of employees.

There are many advantages to employees having a good perception of the brand (Sparrow and Otake, 2015; Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). These advantages include higher employee engagement and commitment, improved recruitment process and employee retention (Theurer et al, 2016). Brand perception as it relates to employees has been focused on, due to the need to apply the concept of brand perception to employees (Mosley, 2014). The purposes of brand perception of employees are

twofold; one to attract potential talent for the organisation and two, to effectively engage and motivate current staff in order to get the best out of them (Rampl & Kenning, 2014). From observation, there is still a dearth of research on the relationships between brand perception and employee performance and employee motivation.

Davies *et al* (2018), suggested that to utilise brand perception to improve the performance of employees, the staff should not be considered as a homogenous whole, rather, there should be deliberate effort to classify employees according to factors such as age, gender, ethnicity and whether the employee has direct contact with customers, so that their specific needs can be identified and met. James *et al* (2011), stated that age is a veritable factor to consider with respect to measuring employee performance. Lievens and Slaughter (2016), agreed with this opinion by postulating that age is relevant to brand perception and employee engagement. However, it can be argued that these points of views constitute discrimination and may be termed offensive as people do not respond well to gender bias. Ethnic categorization may also be misunderstood as racism by employees who do not really get the purpose for the classification. These issues are already a sensitive area in the workplace and the propositions of the above scholars might fan them. A solution to this challenge may be to communicate and educate employees properly on the motivations of the organisation and keep an open-door approach for them to air their concerns.

2.5 Positive Organisational Practices

For an organisational brand to achieve positive results with respect to employee brand perception, it has to meet three criteria; the brand has to be unique and original to the organisation, it has to be consistent with the values and goals of the organisation and it should be attractive to the employees (Piehler *et al*, 2016). Positive organisational practices such as open and effective communication and positive reinforcement are important to the motivation of employees through brand perception. These positive practices are important because they enable the employee form positive associations with the organisation and this improves motivation (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Cameron *et al* (2011), emphasise the importance of concentrating on strengths rather than weaknesses when trying to enhance employee brand perception. Organisational practices should be critically examined by employers while trying to enhance brand perception as it accounts for a large percentage of perception at the individual level (Melewar *et al*, 2012). Further research needs to be done on the organisational practices

which improve brand perception. Another challenge facing brand perception is the multiple and divergent expectations of internal and external stakeholders. The external stakeholders mainly refer to the customers and suppliers while the internal stakeholders are the employees, managers, board of directors and investors of the organisation. These two classes of stakeholders may have different expectations from the brand, and this can create some sort of confusion for employees who may feel pulled in different directions at the same time (Andersson, 2019). For example, customers want the best quality of goods and services at the lowest price possible whereas, the board of directors and managers are out to make maximum profit. Here is a clash of interest which affects the employees as they may feel like they are neither satisfying the customers nor their employees. Conflicts like these need to be managed effectively to arrive at a compromise which will favour both the customers and the internal stakeholders. Value congruence in internal communication enhances employee brand perception (Sharma and Kamalanabhan, 2012). King and Grace (2012) suggested that tools such as consideration, encouragement, respect, and trust induce significant positive outcomes on employees' brand commitment. Wallace et al (2013) also agree with this view by stating that excellent leadership enhances affective commitment amongst members of staff.

2.6 Challenges/Barriers to Employee Brand Perception

2.6.1 Value Incongruence

With respect to brand perception, value congruence represents the meeting point of the officially presented brand values and the personal values of the employees (Chernatony, 2003). Value congruence has the effect of increasing the likelihood of the employees being on the same page with the brand (Celsi and Gilly, 2010). Conversely, value incongruence is the inability of the organisation to unite its advertised values and organisational practice. For example, an organisation may advertise open communication in the workplace but in practice, it gives no room for the employees to make their opinions known. This may pose a problem for the employee and produce feelings of disappointment which can reduce motivation to work. Burmann et al (2009) have identified value incongruence as a major obstacle to employee brand perception and motivation. Yaniv & Ferenc (2006) state that a frequent challenge faced by organisations is the inability to bridge the gap between their brand values and their brand perception. The reason for this gap is the divergence between their self-acclaimed corporate values/culture and what the employees truly perceive. With this gap, there is

a mixed message sent out to the employees and confusion ensues as a result. An example of this kind of gap is a scenario where the brand publicly advertises a racially inclusive or gender inclusive profile but in actuality, the organisation refuses to employ people of certain races or genders. The employees will apparently know better and there will be a divergence between their perception of the brand and the brand values. A viable way to bridge this gap is by one, for the brand to maintain cohesiveness between their advertised brand values and what is practised. In addition, they can apply the concept of the Person-Organisation Fit (POF) (Yaniv & Ferenc). This is described as the fit between the brand values and employee values. The measures of the fit include the commitment to the company, dedication to the job, intention to leave and job satisfaction. This simply means that the organisation must make sure that their brand values are truly understood and accepted by the employees and a great way of ensuring this is by employing persons whose personality fit these brand values.

2.6.2 Poor Communication

According to Leijerholt *et al* (2020), internal communication has a huge impact on employee brand perception. Internal communication can be described as the sum of effort to build and maintain a good relationship between an organisation and its employees (Karanges et al, 2015). Effective communication is important to the achievement of value congruence between the organisation and the brand (King and Grace, 2012). This refers to both internal and external communication. External communications are the statements and behaviours which represent the brand values to the external stakeholders and outside world. External communication may be compared by the employees to the portrayed values of the organisation. Critically examining the above statements, it can be argued that external communication helps employees and prospective employees judge that their personal values are a good fit for the brand values which have been communicated. Celsi and Gilly (2010), noted that most employees have a hard time accepting external communication which does not accurately portray brand values. This can be seen as deceit and can breed distrust in employees. Therefore, it should be ensured that internal and external communications are matched to prevent misinterpretation and negative brand perception by employees.

Internal branding activities involve employees affective, cognitive, and behavioural reactions (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). Therefore, they need to be carried out with reference to these factors. Internal communication, where the brand values and

goals are communicated clearly, has been pinpointed as a key driver of the employee brand perception process (Punjari *et al*, 2008), so the first point of contact from which the employee perceives the brand is likely to be their interactions with the management and other employees (Dean *et al*, 2016). As a result, exposure to the brand and its values should be adequately managed by the employers who seeks to achieve positive employee brand perception. If this is properly managed, it increases the chances of employees understanding and embodying the brand values (Wallace *et al*, 2011). If a divergence exists between the brand values and organisational practices, the actual experience of the employee takes precedence in his or her brand perception (Dean *et al*, 2016). The non-existence of a divergence between brand values and organisational practice is important because internal communication is more than just verbal communication. This is a case of action speaking louder than words. From these statements, it can be argued that while internal communication has an influence on brand perception by employees, the actual organisational practices are more important. Employers should therefore make deliberate effort to unite their internal communication with their organisational practices.

2.6.3 Misunderstanding and Distrust of Brand Perception Management

There are several opposing views to the management of brand perception. These views claim that an attempt to manipulate employee brand perception is deceitful and is tantamount to an attempt to control the employee psychologically (Cullinan *et al*, 2020; Muller, 2018; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002). Muller (2018) also added that internal brand management tends to focus on what the brand benefits rather than what the employee stands to gain. Examples of internal brand management are constantly teaching the company mission and vision and encouraging employees to use the good or services provided. In addition, it intrudes into the employees' personal lives and attempts to convert them into branded robots at the risk of losing their individuality. As a result, attempts to micromanage employee brand perception may lead to suspicion and distrust on the part of the employees and may induce pretentious or lip service commitment to the brand, rather than loyalty and actual devotion to brand values.

2.7 Improving Employee Motivation through Brand Perception

According to Leijerholt *et al* (2020), organisational practices have a huge impact on employee brand perception. Employee brand perception is undoubtedly important because the roles of employees in building an excellent brand and influencing customer

perception has been highlighted by various scholars (Eid *et al*, 2019; Piehler *et al*, 2016; Burmann *et al*, 2009). A value-driven perspective of brand perception has gradually been derived from the ability of brands to transmit their functional and psychological values to their internal stakeholders, especially the members of staff (deChernatony *et al*, 2006). Lohndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014), suggests that this form of internal branding is what makes star employees who are productive in their capacities at work. In addition, Barlow and Maul (2000) proposed that companies should convert workday routines into positive experiences with display of respect for staff, job rotation, and opportunities for advancement, reward, and recognition. Positive emotions are a great way of creating excellent brand perception. However, putting these good practices in place all at once may prove too expensive and time consuming, therefore, management needs to be discretionary in focusing on overlaps between employee and customer brand perception. Barlow and Maul (2000) also opined that finding ways to meet employees' emotional needs is more beneficial in the long run than merely providing training and focusing on improving their work skills. Emotionally satisfied employees are more likely to be productive. Venkat (2005) also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the employees are keyed into the brand values, brand promise and identity and that they embody and act in ways that align with them, such that it translates to the customers. When employees are enthusiastic about their tasks and associate positive experiences with the organisation, this tends to increase motivation towards work and motivation, in its turn, increases productivity. Creating a work environment which provides more chances of contributing and exploring creativity makes employees more enthusiastic about work. Organisations which support and encourage creativity boost the experience of the employees.

2.8 Developing a Partnership Culture in the Organisation

Organisations which require employees to be active and innovative also prepare them for success. Employees are not merely dictated to, but they are active participants in decision making and how they conduct their daily activities. This produces a sense of belonging and freedom in employees that make the company a desirable place to work and increases the brand perception in a positive way. Employees should be educated and trained to see their job description as their own business which should be managed how they deem fit. This enables them to approach their work more proactively. This does not mean that managers and supervisors should not do their jobs, it simply means

that the entrepreneurial drives of the employees should be developed and harnessed to increase productivity. The management should not merely be viewed as order-givers but collaborative partners (Rampl and Kenning, 2014). This relates to brand perception in the sense that it builds positive feelings about the brand and since motivation is psychological, positive feelings increase motivation. When employees are happy, they are more likely to devote more time to their work and this increases productivity. The recognition of employees should not just be a factor of titles and status but people who constantly churn out productive ideas and make the most impact, irrespective of their position in the organisation (Rampl and Kenning, 2014). There should not be too much emphasis on leadership and their areas of responsibility to the exclusion of the realities of the daily business activities (Piyachat *et al*, 2014). Engagement of employees across all levels and departments allows for more inclusiveness and diversity. Thus, promoting a sense of belonging for all members of staff and they do not feel left out of the organisational processes. Therefore, they have a sharper awareness and understanding of the day-to-day challenges of the organisation and are in better positions to solve them.

Employees not only want to feel that they have an influence on their own careers, but they also want to feel like they can impact the future of the organisation with their unique contributions. The organisation should therefore consider migrating from the old-fashioned reward and punishment approach to performance management to collaborative methods of getting the work done. This can be achieved by focusing on three areas; setting the right objectives, pinpointing what could potentially assist or impede employee performance, enhancing the relationship between the employees and the managers (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005).

Changing the reward system for employees is another approach to developing partnership culture in an organisation. It appears counter intuitive, but it is pertinent to evolve from the concept of using bonuses, raises and promotions as rewards for impressive employee performance (Rampl and Kenning, 2014). This is because this practice may defeat the goal of setting up employees as entrepreneurs and can have that employees will always look to management for validation instead of taking initiative. With the entrepreneurial mindset, employees seek opportunities for fair trades, which mean they expect to be rewarded for out of the box thinking and extraordinary effort. Extraordinary effort may come in the form of collaborating with colleagues to increase

productivity or taking up added responsibilities. According to Piehler *et al* (2016), allowing employees to take responsibility for their decisions and rewarding them based on that has been found to improve motivation.

2.9 Theoretical Framework: Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979) introduced the idea that people define their identities with respect to their social groups and that such associations enhance self-identity. There is a need to classify one's 'in-group' as distinct from an 'out-group' and there is the tendency to believe that one's group is better or has certain advantages over other groups. The theory also focuses on inter-group behaviour and the ability of individuals to move from one group to another. It can be inferred from the postulations of this theory that individuals only stick with a social group if there are benefits to be derived. Applying this concept to employee behaviour and brand perception, it can be argued that employees are able to determine what benefits they can derive from associating with a brand and if the brand values match their personal values. This then influences their motivation to work with that brand and their consequent loyalty, commitment, and engagement to the brand.

Because organisations are a social group and employees feel a sense of belonging as part of that group, the social identity theory is useful for investigating the relationship between employee brand perception and motivation. The Social Identity Theory is useful for highlighting the differences between groups and understanding why one group (in this case, organisation) is more socially desirable than others. The concept of social identification raises questions about why people associate with certain groups to the exclusion of another and how devoted they are to these groups. The Social Identity Theory establishes a need for people to identify with a certain group due to the benefits they can get from this group. They then relinquish their individual identity for a collective identity because this is beneficial for them (Hogg and Williams, 2000). This theory can be applied to brand perception since brand perception is a factor which impacts employee engagement and involvement with a brand. When the brand perception convinces an employee of the benefits of associating with that organisation, he or she is likely to join the organisation or sustain a job.

Ashforth and Mael (1989) used the social identity theory to investigate how people identify with organisations and why they support certain organisations. They suggest that when an individual's search for meaning and connectedness is satisfied by an

organisation, this will enhance motivation to work, socialisation within the organisation and conflict management. Stets and Burke (2000), also opined that a social identity is an individual's sense of belonging to a particular group and this influences his or her expectations from said group. According to Stets and Burke (2000), social identity contributes to a meaningful relationship between a person and the group he or she belongs to, and people behave in accordance with the values of group to which they belong. Harwood (2020) used Social Identity Theory to explain intergroup behaviour and stated that people place premium value on their social groups and tend to be favourably prejudiced towards their groups. Harwood (2020) also used the Social Identity Theory to explain the links between media ownership and media content and concluded that internet media is challenging because these prejudices reflect in mass communication.

These are some of the research which have utilised the Social Identity Theory in their studies. However, there has been no research, to the best of my knowledge, which uses the Social Identity Theory to study employee motivation. Hence, this research will do just that.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative study which examines the impact of employee brand perception on motivation within the Technology sector in Ireland. The study is based on phenomenological theory. This is due to the nature of the research which is a discovery process. This approach, it is hoped, will allow for an opportunity to gain insights via the firsthand descriptions of the individual's experience in line with the objectives of the research as opposed to relying on theories. Other aspects treated include the methodology, study participants, ethical considerations, data collection and analysis.

3.2. Chosen Methodology

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study. There are lots of evidence in the literature on the imperatives of using a qualitative approach. According to Palmer and Bolderstron (2006) qualitative research methods are designed to aid researchers in the understanding of people and their social and cultural contexts. It is an approach that helps examine how people make sense of their experiences in real time, using their own minds and their own words (Cropley, 2021). This is considered appropriate for this study as it sought to examine the impact of employee brand perception on employee motivation. The qualitative method is one of two types of research, the other being quantitative research. Quantitative research is a method of measuring the quantity of a thing as opposed to its quality. The method employs a number of statistical instruments, causal relationships are measured and analyzed in the context of a value free framework (Khan, 2014). Quantitative studies work under the positivist paradigm while qualitative studies are mostly interpretivist. The positivist paradigm is inappropriate here as this research takes cognizance of subjective values – an attempt to understand individuals from their own realities taking note of different contexts and their relations with others in it. This is in direct opposition to the positivist paradigm which deals in real world mechanisms in a scientific manner (Khan, 2014).

3.3. Interpretive Phenomenology

The study is based on phenomenological philosophy. Based on the works of Husserl and Heidegger, phenomenology provides a means to explore the reality of life and living – a study of 'lived experience' which is considered ideal in this instance (Lopez & Willis, 2004). It helps to give a description of phenomena through the eyes of the

individual experiencing the phenomena. The focus here, however, is interpretive phenomenology. Interpretive phenomenology focuses on the experiences of designated participants – the being is a situated activity, the situation consisting of experiencing and managing encountered things (Lopez and Willis, 2004). This is based on the work of Heidegger who believed that there is a ready meaning in the world in which we are embedded (Lopez and Willis, 2004). In this approach, the researcher is an essential part of the research and the world of the participants. Having conducted earlier literature review and drawing up suitable research question, the researcher is armed with ideas on how to go about interviewing the participants and this is an aspect of the interpretive philosophy that makes it ideal for this study (Lopez and Willis, 2004)–This approach will help in building meaning from the responses gotten from the participants.

There is also descriptive phenomenology based on the work of Husserl which aids in the description of a phenomenon in terms of its general characteristics but leaves out the individuals' experiences (Christensen, *et al.*, 2017). Aside from this, descriptive phenomenology makes consciousness its object, consciousness being the medium between people and the world. In this philosophy there is an underlying rule of intentionality where everything experienced typically has a 'meaning' - loving means loving something, seeing means seeing something (Christensen, *et al.*, 2017; Khan, 2014). Descriptive phenomenology also does not take account of time and space which are important in interpretive phenomenology, its prime focus is consciousness, and this is at the expense of the context where the experience takes place (Khan, 2014) thus, is not considered a good fit for this study.

3.4. Methods

The main method adopted for data collection was semi-structured interviews. This was considered because it makes the obtaining of large amounts of data possible within a short period (King and Grace, 2008). The interviewer and the interview questions were instruments of data collection. With a defined aim to explore the issues concerned with the impact of employee brand perception on employee motivation, semi-structured interviews were considered as the best way to obtain data in view of the adopted methodology. About 21 questions developed from the literature review were developed to assist with data collection. With the aid of the questions, the interviews went on until the point was reached where the responses were not yielding any new details – an

approach known as convergent interviewing (Dick, 2012). The obtained data was transcribed and subsequently made ready for a systematic analysis.

3.4.1. The Role of the Researcher

The researcher acts as the data collecting medium by which data is collected and interpreted (Khan, 2014). In the interpretive phenomenological approach, this would imply that the researcher takes the position of trying to make evident what would normally be hidden in human experience and relations in the individual's experiences. These meanings which do not appear immediately evident can be extracted from the narratives provided by the respondents (Lopex and Willis, 2004)

3.4.2. Sampling Methods and Participants Selection

Interpretive phenomenological analysis always seeks to create a purposive and homogenous sample; this is done in a bid to ensure that the outcome of the study is relevant and significant to the respondents (Noon, 2018). This also provides room for the researcher to take account of all possible information from a group of individuals who share common experiences of a defined phenomenon (Noon, 2018). For this study, a limited number of people (7) were chosen for convenience, this is because the phenomenon being studied is specific.

The sample of respondents were drawn from the workforce population of the Technology sector employees in Ireland. A total of 7 interviews were conducted. Some of the participants were contacted first through known acquaintances via LinkedIn. These acquaintances helped to find people suitable for the study who were all also reached on the LinkedIn platform while the rest of the participants were contacted directly by the researcher via LinkedIn. A brief introduction was sent first to the respondents to get their attention, after which a more detailed information sheet was later sent to them after confirming interest in taking part in the research. Consent forms were sent over, duly signed and returned and a day was set for the interviews. Interviews were conducted using the Microsoft Teams virtual conference medium. It was ensured beforehand that the respondents were fluent in English language, their range of professions included programmers, product designers, customer services representatives, recruiters and software engineers associated with different brands. Thus, the sample was considered homogenous in that they all worked with identified brands in the Technology sector in the country.

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

In the interpretive phenomenological approach, data analysis begins with a thematic analysis. The steps taken are itemized as follows:

3.5.1. Reading and Taking Notes

At the initial stage of the data analysis, the transcribed data was read thoroughly to gain access to the full extents of the data. At this stage the text is annotated with different ideas. Notes were created illustrating the researchers' thoughts, observations and reflections as it concerns the respondents' descriptions. At this stage, extra care is taken to take note of underlying mannerisms and tones in the things that were said in a bid to get a feel of the lived experience and enhance a deep interpretive analysis. Coding was open and annotated - this basically allows for question asking and making comparisons. Though this process clear patterns emerged from the respondents' accounts. Coding was done by representing whole sentences, concepts or ideas by a general word most of the time taken from the respondents account – known as in-vivo codes (Manning, 2017). This was necessary for the peculiarity of the Technology context where words may be used that may differ from their implication in ordinary parlance. Where a word is not sufficient to capture the entire idea, notes are made in a separate memo about the idea. An example of note taking is shown below:

Transcribed Data	Notes
Interview Question: 8. How would you describe your organisation's brand and what do you feel about it?	Aware of several distinctions/brands within the Tech industry.
Respondent: 'Yeah — the Tech industry is quite different when you compare it to other industries. The categorizations in tech are seemingly endless, because it is leveraging the benefits of technology to every possible endeavor, it may be in finance, logistics and so on. I work in the Fintech industry (finance). My perceptions are broad based, the more critical the solutions are to people's real needs, the better chances for the brand, we do a fairly good job here.'	Attributes the success of a brand to how well it meets the needs of the market. Thinks his company does well in terms of its product offering.

Table 1. Example of Note Taking from Transcribed Data. Source: Author's Analysis

3.5.2. Identifying Emerging Themes

Open coding led to the identification of emergent themes, from the mark-up done earlier. Emergent themes from the notes taken were identified. Initial mark ups were transformed into more precise phrases and observed for similarities. In this way the meanings in the respondents' narratives were brought out as themes. An example of this is shown below:

Notes	Emerging Themes
Aware of several distinctions within the Tech industry.	Possibility of large number of brands in the industry
Attributes the success of a brand to how well it meets the needs of the market.	The most successful brands provide the best tailored fit products for the market
Thinks his company does well in terms of its product offering.	Workers are positively confident about their brand offerings

Table 2. Emerging Themes Example. Source: Author's Analysis 2021

3.5.3. Connecting Emergent Themes

At this stage, the researcher looked for links between the emergent themes. This involved arranging all the themes as they emerge from the transcribed data to examine the links between them. This process also led to the elimination of supposed themes that did not have sufficient associations with others and were thus considered unnecessary. This left superior themes, and subthemes all grounded in the respondents obtained narrative

3.5.4. Tabulating the Themes

The clustering of emergent themes produced superior themes and subthemes and a compound description of the experience. This is arranged in a table placing the subtheme under the superior theme along with quotes from the transcribed data relevant to each. In this way, the voice of the individual respondent was not lost. This also allowed the data to be tracked back to its primary source.

3.6. Trustworthiness

This is a criterion attributed to Lincoln & Guba (1985) and it helps to determine the soundness of qualitative research. It includes four main criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. It should be mentioned that the study will be made generally accessible to aid its trustworthiness.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

The study is a qualitative one which makes the consideration of ethical issues paramount as it involves an incursion into other people's lives and activities. A researcher must therefore take good cognizance of the issue of ethics (Khan, 2014).

Efforts were made to reveal all possible implications to respondents before information was collected from them. Harm was not caused to the respondents in any way, it was ensured that the risks to the respondents are minimal. Consent was sought from the respondents before the interviews were carried out as each participant was provided with an Information Sheet and an Informed Consent Form. The information sheet provided details of the research, how the interview will be recorded and stored in accordance with the NCI ethical guidelines and contact numbers in case the respondents required additional information and clarification. Added to this, the respondents were intimated with all aspects of the study beforehand with the option to withdraw their consent at any time they so wish.

Since the study considered the staff of Technology companies, efforts were made to prevent the interference of the actual organisations that the respondents work for. This was ensured through the method by which the participants were contacted.

Efforts were also put in place to conceal the actual identity of respondents and to ensure their confidentiality. This was achieved with the use of appropriate pseudonyms to depict different individuals and categorize their responses. The participants were reassured that all data collected would be stored on a password-protected computer and information procured will be treated with strict confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection Act and would be deleted after the research has been approved.

3.8. Conclusion

The overall aim of this chapter was to detail the research method adopted for the answering of the research questions. So far, there has been a description of the methods adopted, participants selection, data collection, and analysis techniques describing in detail how the study will be conducted. The study which is expected to detail the impact of employee brand perception on employee motivation in the Technology industry adopted an interpretivist phenomenological approach to help expose all relevant issues. The designated respondents helped with understanding the salient issues involved by providing insights from their lived experiences of the impact of their brand perception on their motivation.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the key findings from the exploration of employees in the tech industry in Ireland on the impact of employee brand perception on motivation and employee experience. The findings proceeded from the interview sessions that were conducted using Microsoft Teams. The interview sessions featured a spontaneous exchange of information regarding employee brand perception, employer branding, and motivation in the case study of the Ireland tech industry. Exactly seven research participants were interviewed while pseudonyms are used to protect the identity, and personal information of the researchers, in line with the consent and ethical forms that were shared before the interview sessions.

The analysis proceeded from the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the general perceptions about employer brands in the Tech industry in Ireland?

RQ2: What are the aspects of the employer brand behind employee motivation in the Tech industry in Ireland?

RQ3: What are the challenges towards effective employee motivation in Ireland's tech industry?

4.2 Participants

A total of seven study respondents were selected to provide their unique experiences and perception of the research problem. Before this, a participant information sheet form and consent form were prepared to brief the potential participants. The participants hail from different organisations in the Ireland Tech industry. However, information about the participants and the organisation were not obtained to protect the identity of the participants. The interview sessions were conducted via Microsoft Teams, while the interviews lasted for about 30-40 minutes. The raw data was then transcribed, organised, and prepared for data analysis.

In the process of analysing the interview sessions, several codes and themes were discovered. The themes that appeared in the course of reading and coding the data include positioning, and reputation, leadership and work culture, recognition and

reward system, liberty, wellbeing, direct command, and participation. Some of the themes share a lot of similarities with each other and the themes were developed mainly from individual participants whose opinions have more similarities with others although the choice of words were different. With this in mind, the researcher interrelated the themes with each other by applying the research questions to relate the themes with one another. The following themes were derived from the research questions:

Theme One: Perception About Employee Brands in the Tech Industry in Ireland

Sub Theme1: Employee Admiration: Two major codes are associated with this: positioning, and reputation)

Sub Theme2: Appreciation (Working Culture, Leadership, And Resilience)

Theme Two: Motivating Factors Behind Employee Branding in the Ireland Tech Industry

Sub Theme1: Reward System

Sub Theme2: Participation

Sub Theme3: Wellbeing of Employees

Theme Three: Challenges of Employee Branding in the Ireland Tech Industry

Subtheme1: Bad Leadership

Sub Theme2: Bad work culture (Progression and Work-Life Balance)

The table below shows the participants gender, duration of employment so far with their organisation, and the codes used to identify them.

Participants	Gender	Code	Duration of Employment
Participant 1	Male	E1	3 years
Participant 2	Male	E2	1 year 3 months
Participant 3	Female	E3	2 years
Participant 4	Male	E4	3 months

Participant 5	Female	E5	2 years
Participant 6	Male	E6	7 months
Participant 7	Female	E7	6 months

4.3 Research Question One:

What are the general perceptions about employer brands in the Tech industry Ireland?

As clearly stated in the previous chapters, one of the primary questions that this study intends to provide answers to is the general perceptions about employer brands in the Ireland Tech industry. The research participants offered their perspectives and experiences in this regard while the major theme that was derived from their discussions is tagged and labelled ‘Perception about Employer Brands in the Ireland Tech industry’. The theme comprised of various sub-themes as discussed under 4.3.1 below:

4.3.1 Perception about Employer Brands in the Ireland Tech industry:

The participants related their individual experiences with their respective organisation while answering the first research question. Their perception about employer brand is highly influenced by the way they are treated and their observations about the company they work for. Their responses show that there is some degree of emotional attachment with their respective organisations.

4.3.1.1 Employee Admiration

Some of the participants perceived their organisation to have a positive standing and good reputation in the industry and this influences their willingness to remain and grow at the company. The discussion held with some of the participants reveals that employee admiration goes a long way in motivating employees to grow their careers in the organisation. Two major codes are relevant to this theme mainly positioning and reputation.

Positioning emerged mainly from the interview session with participant one, who stated that *“the organisation I work with has a very good position in the industry and the organisation is a top-notch brand”*. Specifically, the main point mentioned by participant one is that *“the organisation has chosen and maintained a point of difference in the industry as a result of the uniqueness of the product”*. The participant

also stated that the market positioning influenced his decision to start working in the organisation and is also the main reason why he is still working in the organisation.

On the other hand, reputation was a key point raised by nearly all the participants. The majority of them stated that reputation was the first and primary driver behind their current working status. The reputation of the company served as the first impression for them to pursue a career within the organisation. Participant four mentioned that *“my current company has a wonderful reputation and this was in fact the reason why I pursued a career in the organisation and also a drive for me to progress and improve my career path.”*

Participant five explained that reputation is a key factor for proper brand representation. The participant explained further that organisations need to put extra effort into keeping the media in check. From his experience in his current organisation, the participant noted that *“one primary factor I admire in the organisation is how they manage the media since the media contributes a lot to brand representation in any industry.”*

It can be concluded from the participants' narration that the positioning and reputation of an organisation is a major motivation factor for employees, particularly in creating brand pride. In line with Helm et al (2016) who stated that brand pride is a feeling of great pleasure at identifying with a brand and its values, it can be observed that the participant shows satisfaction from identifying with his brand positioning and this goes a long way in influencing his perception of the brand representation. Studies on brand pride believe that for an employee to develop brand pride, he or she must be able to identify and understand the brand values and relate to them on a personal level. Participant one noted that one of the reasons he had chosen a career path in the organisation is the good positioning of the brand in the industry, it can therefore be concluded that the employee relates with the brand on a personal level. Likewise, a good reputation can create brand pride among the employees. Gouthier and Rhein (2011) noted that brand pride is a positive feeling that is derived from job performance. Helm et al (2016) postulate the same stance by expressing brand pride as a feeling of great pleasure at identifying with a brand and its values. Concerning brand perception, a good reputation can help an employee to identify with the brand easily on a personal level because employees and potential employees desire to build a career path in an organisation with a strong reputation.

4.3.2 Appreciation

Participants praised the working culture, leadership, and resilience of their employers and this was a major hallmark for them in the way they perceive their respective organisation. Concerning working culture, participants six and seven discussed the importance of a good working culture to their perception of employee branding. According to participant six *“Apparently, when an employee's perception of work culture is fit, he tends to have a better understanding of the brand representation especially in the context of employee experience”*. Going further, the participant stated that *“the work culture experience is mainly the feeling of working with hard-working people who hail from different cultural and national backgrounds.”* On the other hand, participant seven expressed the work culture of her organisation in this manner: *“I am happy in a work culture that is inclusive and where I am appreciated for what I am doing, and my performance is appraised”*. Going further, the participant expressed the work culture of the company by noting that *“there is a reasonable number of women in my company and this gives me the feeling that my company is a very inclusive culture for my gender”*

The participants also expressed the need for fairness. Participant three indicated the need for organisation to include checks and balances when awarding rewards and bonuses. The participant stated this: *“some employers can decide to bend the rules to ship in more products because of the desire to accumulate bonuses whereas rather than shipping in quality products, these set of employees bring insignificant inputs. This can be prevented when proper checks are introduced to ensure that employees do not get bonuses on a platter of gold but rather based on their performances.”*

This observation shows that fairness is a critical component of good work culture. Additionally, participant six expressed the need for freedom and liberty by allowing employees to use their innovation and discretion without feeling too controlled by the top-ranking officials or superiors. When asked if the participant feels any toxicity in the organisation he currently works in, participant six gave more credit for the way the organisation allows its employees to have enough freedom and autonomy in the discharge of their duties which makes the working environment healthier. While describing the situation, the participant stated that *“the organisation I work in ensures that employees have enough freedom to engage their creativity and innovative skills rather than being controlled or bossed around all the time.”*

Rampl and Kenning (2014) mentioned that organisations who avoid commanding or dictating orders and processes to their employees but rather engages them actively in the decision making processes and also allows them to have the autonomy to conduct their daily activities make the company a desirable place to work and positively increases the brand perception. Kumar (2016) shared the same thought. Kumar (2016), in a similar study, found out that autonomy gives employees the freedom to make decisions without feeling like their actions are being imposed on them every time and this increases their brand perception positively. Aleksić et al (2019) complemented this stance by stating that autonomy helps to enrich any given task.

Participant two appreciated the leadership of their company. From the conversation held with the participant, it was evident that the participant's employee brand perception stems from his observations of the leadership style of the company. the participant noted that *“the leadership of my organisation has played a huge role in this regard by the way it always encourages the workforce to obey guidelines and comport well to promote the reputation of the company”*.

In a similar vein, participant three complimented the way the management of her organisation manages difficult situations such as the impact of the covid-19 crisis. Drawing upon the severity of the covid-19 on other organisations, participant three stated that *“maintaining positive employee brand impossible without managing the impact of the covid-19 crisis. Therefore, organisational resilience makes an employee feel like the organisation is here to stay and makes them more confident about building their career path in the organisation.*

The findings from this theme indicate that work culture and leadership can also create emotional bonding and attachment of the employees towards their organisation and its brand. One major conclusion that can be drawn from both participants' narrations is that leadership affects brand commitment. According to participant one, leadership that ensures the workforce obeys guidelines can stimulate brand commitment. In the presence of leadership, a unified objective can be created within the workforce and when employees share a common value and objectives, brand commitment is created (Fuller, 2005). Studies such as Piehler (2016) argued that brand commitment helps to smoothen the relationship between employers and the employees mainly because brand

commitment allows employees to relate with the organisation objectives and goals on a personal level.

4.4 Research Question Two:

What are the aspects of the employer brand behind employee motivation in the Tech industry in Ireland?

Another crucial question this study aims to answer deals with the factors that employees consider a necessity in the delivery of their brand promise. As usual, the study examines this by discussing the question with the research participants who offered different insights based on their unique perspectives and experiences. Their answers were divided into themes and presented below:

4.4.1 Recognition

The participants noted that showing employees positive recognition is important for positive employee branding because it gives employees the feeling that the organisation is conscious of their needs. Main codes that were derived from this theme include having a competitive salary, stock ownership, awarding bonuses, and professional acknowledgment.

One of the major themes derived from conversations with participant one was the necessity for a competitive salary. The participant claimed that *“paying money to employees is not enough to keep them motivated. I believe that there is a need for organisations to pay employees what is equal or greater than what is being paid by other organisations”*. Also, participant two considered stock ownership as a crucial factor towards motivating employees in delivering their brand promise to their respective organisations. The participant advised that *“organisations should give employees a stock share in the company based on their delivery and performance”*.

Similarly, participants five and seven stressed the need for organisations to acknowledge the professional achievements of their employees. Unlike the previous participants who highlighted and discussed extrinsic motivational factors, participant five emphasised the need to recognise and acknowledge the effort that employees are putting into their job.

In participant’s five words *“one major factor that keeps me going in an organisation is when my work is recognised and praised by the management and leadership of the company. It makes me feel like I am making quality contribution to the organisation.”*

Participant seven shared a similar thought on this, her words were *“I perform better when I know my inputs are being recognised and appreciated than when my contributions are hardly given any recognition.”*

Bawa (2017) in a similar study also noted that positive recognition and praise make an individual enjoy his or her job better which increases job motivation, performance, and satisfaction. Similarly, Kuranchie-Mensah *et al* (2016) opined that organisations can consciously develop intrinsic motivation by ensuring three psychological states are present within their employees namely purpose of each task, ability to bear responsibility for the outcome of the task and staying cognizant of the actual result of the task. It, therefore, follows that when employees exhibit behaviour that shows that they understand the purpose of the task and take it up on a personal level through the process of brand identification, brand pride, and brand commitment, and show a willingness to bear responsibility for the outcome, an organisation should offer praise and positive acknowledgment and recognition for such employees to further boost their motivation and brand perception.

Studies such as Rampl and Kenning (2014) also indicated that recognition of employees should be based on how much impact has been made by each worker rather than using status and title to recognise employees. This allows recognition to not be based on position in the organisation. Also, different Studies on motivation have examined the importance of tangible rewards in employee motivation. For instance, Bawa (2017) described extrinsic factors such as salaries, benefits, and job security, as factors that increase job satisfaction when they are present in positive degrees and factors that might reduce job satisfaction when absent or not present in positive degrees. Different theories of motivation also support this stance. Herzberg's theory for instance postulates that staying aware of the needs and desires of an employee is critical for their motivation towards every task, obligation, and responsibility. Similarly, Maslow's hierarchy of needs identifies basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter as the primary factors of motivation before self-actualisation needs. Extrinsic factors such as monetary rewards are therefore needed for an employee to derive the needed satisfaction in these areas.

Another point of view was postulated by Robescu and Iancu (2016), who regarded employees based on their types namely, status seekers, income maximisers, loyalists,

formalists, and autonomists. Status seekers and income maximisers tend to be more extrinsically motivated than others. It is possible that participants one, two, and three fall within these two classes because they emphasize more on extrinsic motivation than the other participants. Therefore, when the interest of an employee is on increasing and accumulating more monetary rewards, it naturally follows that organisations should focus effort towards that area i.e., extrinsic motivation

4.4.2 Wellbeing

Participant four explained the need for employees' wellbeing to be a primary concern for organisations regarding employee branding and motivation. The participant believes that *“taking care of the wellbeing of their employee by introducing recreation, vacations, therapy, etc, and also paying them during the wellbeing period is critical towards positive internal marketing and employee motivation”*. Going further, the participant defined wellbeing as any form of activity aimed at improving the physical, emotional, and mental health of their workers. These may include organising seminars on wellbeing, hiring health and wellbeing coaches to train and review the health of workers, health screenings, among others. The participant hammered on the need for organisations to pay their workers for this program such as providing some incentives for orders who participate in the programs. According to the participant, this act is a crucial factor for employees because the stress of the daily routine can take a toll on the emotional and mental health of employees and might hinder them from delivering their brand promise to the organisation.

It is noteworthy to point out that some studies have also identified the advantages of introducing wellbeing programs to an organisation. Lisa (2013) stated that the advantages of wellbeing programs can either be attitudinal or behavioural. Lisa (2013) further explained that wellbeing programs can affect the way people feel about their working environment (attitudinal) and change the way people perform their work (behavioural). Both positive attitudinal and behavioural changes increase employee's commitment towards a brand. Lisa (2013) stated that companies who expect a strong commitment from their employees must also be willing to show their employees that they are committed to them as well. One of such commitments is improving the wellbeing of their workers.

Furthermore, studies like Fullerton (2005) mentioned that brand commitment by employees is a form of affective commitment which is derived when employees share

the same values and objectives with their respective organisations. Drawing from participant four's discussion, wellbeing programs serve as a good way for employees to be aligned with the organisation values and objectives because it arouses the feeling that the employer is committed to the employees. Piehler (2016) also noted that an employee who displays brand commitment is likely to also possess brand pride and brand identification.

4.4.3 Participation

Participant one mentioned that employees can obtain the required information needed for them to deliver their brand promise by being active in the decision-making process. The participant cited his personal experience, by expressing that *“working with likeminded people where information flows naturally from the top to the bottom without creating a sense of command is an optimal way to communicate information and instructions in a working environment”*. As an example, the participant explained that *“in the first month, my monthly target was slow, but the superior called me and made me understand that I have not been called to be scolded but to be offered a helping hand to meet up and go beyond the monthly targets which have really increased my motivation and positively influenced my brand perception”*

Participant four expressed similar thoughts concerning this aspect. Engaging employees in the decision-making process is believed by the participant to develop positive feelings about the brand because happy employees make committed employees. Participant four strongly believes that when employees are treated like they are a part of the decision-making, it allows them to develop positive brand perception, identification, pride, and commitment.

Rampl and Kenning (2014) found out that engagement of employees across all levels and departments allows for more inclusiveness and diversity. This can promote a sense of belonging for all members of staff and they do not feel left out of the organisational processes. Therefore, they have a sharper awareness and understanding of the day-to-day challenges of the organisation and are in better positions to solve them. Similarly, Aleksic *et al* (2019) stated that it is important for management to not impose procedures on their employees but trust them to use their initiative when developing a technique that can be successfully applied to the task.

4.5 Research Question Three

What are the challenges towards effective employee motivation in Ireland's Tech industry?

During the interview, all participants were asked about the challenges towards effective employee motivation. The themes derived from this discussion were mainly bad leadership qualities, work-life balance, and progression challenges.

4.5.1 Bad Leadership Traits

Participant two stated that direct command and coercive monitoring by some superiors create fear in employees' minds. He stated that *"when supervisors or top officials use direct command to engage their workers, the work environment will become dominated by fear"*. However, the participant noted that command and control are an aspect of the chain of command within an organisation. In this case, the higher the position held in the chain of command, the more power, and authority vested in such. The participant further noted that large organisations usually employ this model to enforce compliance. Similarly, participant three explained that most organisations use either flat organizational structures or vertical organization structures. Participant three explained a flat organisation structure as the type where managers control a lot of employees, this kind of structure eliminates middle management and therefore allows freedom and creativity for employees. This kind of structure has been supported by several studies. For instance, Kuranchie-Mensah *et al* (2016) noted that this kind of management structure allows the employees to have an increased skill variety because it ensures that each task comprises of various activities which allow employees to employ a variety of skills and talent when executing the task. This is mainly due to too little to no middle management. In addition, task identity and task significance are also added benefits to the structure. Since there is little to no middle management, employees can understand the clarity of their task and relate better with it on a personal level, and also understand how their tasks affect other employees.

On the contrary, vertical organizational structures allow little to no freedom and autonomy because manager manages few workers which creates a lot of middle management and constant supervision.

4.5.2 Poor Working Culture

Poor work culture such as over-tasking workers and progression challenges were the main codes that featured in this theme. The participants noted that it is often a challenge for employees to maintain a balance between work and personal life and this imbalance often affects the motivation of employees. Participant one noted that “*Organisations need to ensure that workers are not choked with their responsibilities. Workers should be given enough space to take care of their personal and family life.*” The participant noted further that when workers are constantly being overwhelmed by day-to-day tasks in the organisation, it could seriously hinder their motivation to put in their best efforts in delivering their brand promise to their respective organisation.

Another major point raised was progression, participant three disclosed the difficulty often faced by some workers in defining their career path in a start-up organisation. In cases where workers are unable to define their career path, they might lose morale and motivation when it comes to fulfilling their responsibilities.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study is drawn upon three main research questions discussed and stated in the introductory chapter. From the research questions, different codes and themes were revealed and discussed from the participants' perspectives. The discussion began with establishing the employee perception about brands in the Tech industry in Ireland. The discussion reveals that the sampled employees show a lot of admiration and appreciation for their respective organisation. The admiration expressed by the interviewed participants was directed towards two main factors namely positioning and reputation. The participants expressed solidarity for the positioning of their organisation. They believe that the organisation is well-positioned and has a reputable standing in the industry. This perception influences their working culture, and motivation because it serves as morale and extra motivation for them to build their career path in the organisation. The same implication can be said of the way they praised the resilience, working culture, and leadership qualities of their respective organisations. The perception held by the employees also allows them to relate with the organisation objectives on a personal level. The responses of the participants reveal that employee brand perception determines the motivation of employees in the workplace because the more the employees admire the reputation and positioning of their organisation, the more motivated they become. The same is also true for a company that promotes a healthy work culture, resilience ability, and good management style.

While most studies focus on extrinsic factors such as monetary rewards and bonuses, and intrinsic factors such as positive recognition, appraisals, career development, among others (Kumar, 2016; Bawa, 2017; Kuranchie-Mensah et al, 2016), the participants have revealed that how the organisation is perceived by its employees affects their motivation and performance. The employer's goal should be to produce the best perception possible through a formidable brand personality. It is often the case that employees' attitudes and behaviour are a function of their brand perception (Lisa, 2013). Whereas attitudes displayed by employees are the main brand builders to the consumers since their attitude is what translates corporate culture to the public. Therefore, in a situation where the attitude of the employee is not aligned with the organisation values and objectives, then a lot is at stake. The employer must

communicate a good brand image, not just to the consumers but to their employees as well. And the best strategies to ensuring a good brand image can be derived from what the participants have outlined in the findings. For instance, other discussions with the participants feature the factors behind employee brand perception, and the participants mentioned three themes: recognition, well-being, and participation. Concerning recognition, external rewards, professional acknowledgment, and awarding bonuses are the main points raised by the participants. The points raised were able to capture both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Participation was also mentioned by the participants. The participants expressed the need for employees to be carried along in the decision-making of the company. Studies such as Bass and Avolio (1994), Ahmad (2018) explained that leaders can stimulate creativity in their followers by challenging the norm and taking a risk than asking for contributions and ideas from their followers. This element develops and trains the followers through learning from unexpected situations as they arise regularly.

Finally, challenges about employer branding were discussed by the research participants. Their responses indicate that bad leadership style, progression challenges, and work-life balance are negative factors that can hinder positive employee brand perception. While, employee brand perception is crucial to employee motivation, a negative feeling towards the brand can reduce job motivation, satisfaction, performance, and productivity. Therefore, implementing the right strategies is very critical towards maintaining a positive employee brand perception. It is in due consideration of these challenges coupled with other relevant discussions with the research participants that the following actionable recommendations are given:

5.2 Practical and Actionable Recommendations

The challenges cited by the research participants include bad leadership style, poor working culture specifically progression challenges, and work-life balance. In relation to leadership style, the following strategies can be implemented to augment leadership challenges:

1. Organisations can adapt better leadership styles that ensure employees are not micromanaged, stifled, and leave room for improvement at all stages. Managers should be able to demonstrate different leadership styles tailored to fit every individual in accordance with the organisation's goals. A

personalised approach of leadership can be beneficial to employees, managers, and the organization at large. Ahmad (2018) defined individualised consideration as the process of joining employees' priorities with the organisation's goals. Thus, it has to do with the degree to which leaders can understand the follower's needs and address it through mentorship, coaching or other ways of satisfying the need in question. Communication is also a very important factor in this regard.

2. Employees need to feel like they are part of the decision-making process and key decisions in the organisation, hence the need for them to be carried along. Suggestions, opinions, recommendations, and innovative ideas from the employees should be encouraged and sought after by the management and organisation at large. Knowing that your input matters in the grand scheme can be a motivation booster for the employees and further impact their perceptions of the brand positively.
3. Jakopec (2012) explained that leaders need to set long-term objectives, using emotional intelligence, hope and optimism. When employees relate to the organisational objectives on a personal level, they tend to feel more motivated. It is important that managers and leaders in the organisation are emotionally intelligent and are aware of the disparities in culture in a diverse workplace.

Another challenge cited was working culture particularly in progression and work-life balance.

1. Companies need to evaluate the existing working culture. It needs to be determined whether the working culture is healthy, fit, and suitable for the employees. Research and fact-finding can be carried out by interviewing or sending questionnaires to the employees to determine whether the working environment is healthy. The responses derived from the research can be used to evaluate the existing work culture and make necessary adjustments.
2. While one of the participants mentioned competitive salary, organisations should make every treatment competitive by ensuring that the treatment they give their employees is far superior to that of other competitors. This has to be done with due consideration of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Internal and external rewards should be strategically implemented to ensure optimal employee treatment and benefits.

5.3 Implications of Findings

To implement the recommendations above, organisations can introduce performance appraisal. There are different types of performance appraisal. One popular one is the 360 Degree/Multi-Rater Performance Appraisal, which encompasses the perceptions of different performance reviewers who interact with the organisation's employees. The group of reviewers comprises of employee's superiors (managers and supervisors), co-workers/peers and customers. This kind of system allows information about an employee to be sourced from different angles. Performance Appraisal, and management has a crucial role to play in improving employee motivation. For instance, Idowu (2012) noted that in the process of performance appraisal, the evaluators examine and evaluate an individual's performance and then use a performance number, which is then used to develop a level performance number (LPN). The LPN is a useful tool in determining rewards. Kumar (2012) cites as instance a situation whereby there are new job openings which are above the entry level, the LPN can be employed as a method of internal promotion, which will boost the morale of the employees because they will have the idea that the organisation cares about their employees' past performance rather than overlook them. Performance appraisals and reviews can be conducted every three to six months, however, the peculiarities of every employee should be taken into cognizance. For example, new employees may need reviews more often to enable proper ease into the organisation and its culture. Taking from the example of participant seven who explained how the review from the manager on his performance when he was a new employee further improved his performance and eased him better into understanding the brand values.

Another importance of performance management is in determining salaries and bonuses. This can be done by using the reinforcement theory, which states that rewards in the form of money, can be used as an extrinsic motivator by setting targets for employees. Therefore, employees are paid some incentive, and bonuses based on their ability to meet up with the performance level. Stringer et al., (2011) cite the instance of determining bonus payments on performance level such as number of sales. Individuals who exceed expectations will also be given an extra reward.

In addition, performance appraisal can also be used to motivate staffs by recognizing their achievements, thus fulfilling their growth needs. Therefore, the use of non-monetary rewards such as “giving of praise through compliments; awards such as certificates of achievement and private budgets; and ceremonies such as public celebrations and speeches” (Idowu, 2012). Some studies believe that this kind of appraisal encourages innovation and application of attitudes that cumulates to good employee performance. A major disadvantage of performance appraisal stems from social comparison theory which states that recognition can lead to negative effects (Pearson & Porath, 2005). This is because employees also witness their co-worker’s recognition which may create an atmosphere of losers and winners.

Although these policies can attract additional costs compared to what the organisation may have budgeted, it is essential that they are carried out as it can be beneficial to the organisation. A motivated workforce determines the performance which could in turn boost the services rendered by the organisation and cause an increase in profit. This could eventually balance out the additional cost as the organisation could recoup the amount spent.

5.4 Personal Learning Statement

My interest in workplace motivation was the inspiration for this research. Drawing from my personal experience in a startup organisation and the progress of my motivational level at each stage of my previous employment, alongside my desire to pursue a Human Resources career with a focus on Tech Organisations.

Undertaking this research has been eye opening, thought provoking, challenging but immensely rewarding. Beyond learning from Professors in the academic environment, I got to speak with employees and learn from their various firsthand experiences in the field.

One of the major challenges I faced during completion of this research was getting employees of Tech Organisations to conduct interviews with. Reaching out through various mediums and not getting favorable responses at the initial stages of the research was very discouraging but I did not give up, I went back to check that I was reaching out the proper way, reconstructed my words and continued to reach out. This experience taught me the importance of going back to the drawing board when I hit a roadblock in whatever I do, further adding to the skills I can leverage in my career.

Another challenge was combining a full-time summer job, personal challenges and working on this research but pulling through has helped me realise I can do anything I set out to do regardless of the circumstances. My confidence, people skills and interactions have also improved tremendously due to the research, and I have been able to develop meaningful relationships.

Finally, with the help and support of my supervisor who always provided the best possible feedback and a deep level of understanding during the most challenging time in the completion of the research, I can say that I have gained a deeper understanding of carrying out academic research.

I immensely enjoyed carrying out this project, conducting interviews and learning more about motivation, a concept that has always been especially important to me.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abhari, K. M., Saad, N., and Haron, M. (2008). "Enhancing Service Experience through Understanding Employee Experience Management" Conference: International Seminar on Optimizing Business Research and Information Technology, Jakarta. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325967966>.
- Aleksić-Glišović, M., Jerotijević, G., and Jerotijević, Z. (2019). "Modern approaches to employee motivation." *Ekonomika*. 65(2), pp.121-133.
- Alshmemri, M., Shahwan-Akl, L., and Maude, P., (2017). "Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory". *Life Science Journal*, 14(5), pp. 12-16.
- Alvesson, M., and Willmott, H. (2002). "Identity Regulation as Organizational Control: Producing the Appropriate Individual." *Journal of Management Studies*. 39(5). 619-644.
- Ambler, T. and Barrow, S. (1996). "The Employer Brand" *Journal of Brand Management*. 3, pp. 85-206.
- Anderson, R. (2019). "Employees as Ambassadors: Embracing New Role Expectations and Coping with Identity-Tensions." *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*. 24(4), pp.702-716.
- Andreini, D., Pedeliento, G., and Zarantonello, L. (2018). "A renaissance of brand experience: Advancing the concept through a multi-perspective analysis" *Journal of Business Research*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.05.046
- Armstrong, M. (2009). *Armstrong's Handbook of Performance Management: An Evidence Based Guide to Delivering High Performance*. London: Kogan Page Publishers

- Ashforth, B. and Mael, F. (1989). "Social Identity Theory and the Organization." *Academy of Management Review*. 14(1), pp. 20-39.
- Badubi, R., (2017). "Theories of Motivation and Their Application in Organizations: A Risk Analysis". *International Journal of Innovation and Economics Development*, 3(3), pp. 44-51.
- Barlow, J. and Maul, D. (2000). *Emotional Value: Creating Strong Bonds with your Customers*. San Fransisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Bawa, M. A. (2017). "Employee motivation and productivity: a review of literature and implications for management practice." *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*. 12, pp.662-673.
- Boukis, A. and Christodoulides, G. (2020). "Investigating key antecedents and outcomes of employee-based brand equity." *European Management Review*. 17(1), pp. 41-55.
- Burmann, C. and Zeplin, S. (2005). "Building Brand Commitment: A Behavioural Approach to Internal Brand Management." *Journal of Brand Management*. 12(4), pp. 279-300.
- Burmann, C. and Zeplin, S. (2005). "Building Brand Commitment: A Behavioural Approach to Internal Brand Management." *Journal of Brand Management*. 12(4), pp. 279-300.
- Burnmann, C., Zeplin, S., and Riley, N. (2009). "Key Determinants of Internal Brand Management Success: An Exploratory Empirical Analysis." *Journal of Brand Management*. 16(4), pp.264-384.
- Burnmann, C., Zeplin, S., and Riley, N. (2009). "Key Determinants of Internal Brand Management Success: An Exploratory Empirical Analysis." *Journal of Brand Management*. 16(4), pp.264-384.
- Cameron, K., Mora, C., Leutscher, T., and Calarco, M. (2011). "Effects of Positive Practices on Organisational Effectiveness." *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*. 47(3), pp. 266-308.

- Celsi, M. and Gilly, M. (2010). "Employees as Internal Audience: How Advertising Affects Employees' Customer Focus." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*. 38(4), pp.520-529.
- Christensen, M., Welch, A., and Barr, J. (2017). "Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology: A Review of Intentionality, Reduction and Natural Attitude." *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*. 7(8), pp. 113-118.
- Cropley, A. (2021). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Practice-Oriented Introduction for Students of Psychology and Education*. 3rd edn. Hamburg: s.n.
- Cullinan, J., Abratt, R., and Mingione, M. (2020). "Challenges of Corporate Brand Building and Management in a State-Owned Enterprise." *Journal of Product & Brand Management ahead-of-print*.
- Davies, G., Mete, M., and Whelan, S. (2018). "When employer brand image aids employee satisfaction and engagement" *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness people and Performance*. 5(3), pp. 2-42.
- Dean, D., Arroyo-Gamez, E., Punjaisri, K., and Pich, C. (2016). "Internal Brand Co-creation: The Experiential Brand Meaning Cycle in Higher Education." *Journal of Business Research*. 69(8), pp. 3041-3048.
- deChernatony, L., Cottam, S., and Segal-Horn, S. (2006). "Communicating Services Brand: Stages, People and Orientations." *The Services Industries Journal*. 26(8), pp. 819-836.
- Dick, B. (2012). *Convergent Interviewing Essentials: An Introduction to the Key Features of a Combined Interviewing and Data Analysis Technique*. S.I UTS.
- Du Preez, R. & Bendixen, M. T. (2015). 'The Impact of Internal Brand Management on Employee Job Satisfaction, Brand Commitment, and Intention to Stay'. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 33(1), pp. 78 - 91.
- Edwards, M. (2010). "An integrative review of employer branding and OB theory". *Personnel Review*. 39(1), pp. 5-23.
- Eid, R., Al Zaabi, A., Alzahmi, R., & Elsantil, Y. (2019). "Integrating Internal Branding Antecedents, Customer and Job Satisfaction in the Public Sector." *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 27(5), pp.1480-1503.

- Erkmen, E. & Hancer, M. (2015) 'Linking Brand Commitment and Brand Citizenship Behaviours of Airline Employees: The Role of Trust'. *Journal of Air Transport Management*, 41, pp. 47-54.
- Erkment, E. (2018). Managing your Brand for Employees: Understanding the Role of Organizational Processes in Cultivating Employee Brand Equity. *Administrative Sciences*, 8(52), pp. 1-15.
- Fullerton, G. (2005). "How Commitment both Enables and Undermines Marketing Relationships." *European Journal of Marketing*. 39(11/12), pp.1372-1388.
- Fullerton, G. (2005). "How Commitment both Enables and Undermines Marketing Relationships." *European Journal of Marketing*. 39(11/12), pp.1372-1388.
- Gertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gill, M. J. (2020). Phenomenology as a Qualitative Methodology. In: 1st, ed. *Qualitative Analysis: Eight Approaches*. Oxford: Sage, pp. 73-94.
- Gouthier, M. and Rhein, M. (2011). "Organizational Pride and its Positive Effects on Employee Behaviour." *Journal of Service Management*. 22(5), pp.633-649.
- Gouthier, M. and Rhein, M. (2011). "Organizational Pride and its Positive Effects on Employee Behaviour." *Journal of Service Management*. 22(5), pp. 633-649.
- Harris, F. and deChernatony, L. (2001). "Corporate Branding and Corporate Brand Performance" *European Journal of Marketing*. 35(3), pp. 441-456.
- Harwood, J. (2020). Social Identity Theory. In J. van den Bulck (Ed). *International Encyclopedia of Media Psychology*. Wiley. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.iemp0153>
- Helm, S. V., Renk, U., and Mishra, A. (2016). 'Exploring the Impact of Employees' Self-Concept, Brand Identification and Brand Pride on Brand Citizenship Behaviors'. *European Journal of Marketing*, 50(1/2).
- Helm, S., Renk, U., and Mishra, A. (2016). "Exploring the Impact of Employees' Self-Concept, Brand Identification and Brand Pride on Brand Citizenship Behaviours." *European Journal of Marketing*. 50(1/2), pp. 58-77.

- Helm, S., Renk, U., and Mishra, A. (2016). "Exploring the Impact of Employees' Self-Concept, Brand Identification and Brand Pride on Brand Citizenship Behaviours." *European Journal of Marketing*. 50(1/2), pp.58-77.
- Henkel, S., Tomczak, M., Heitmann, M., and Hermann, A. (2007)." Managing brand consistent employee behaviour: relevance and managerial control of behavioural branding" *Journal of Product and Brand Management*. 16(5), pp. 310-320.
- Herman, D. (2001). *The Guide for Brand Builders*. Tel Aviv: Cherikover Publishing.
- Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and Nature of Man*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company.
- Herzberg, F., (1966). *Work and Nature of Man*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company.
- Hogg, M. and Williams, K. (2000). "From I to We: social identity and the collective self." *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice*. 4(1), pp.81-97.
- <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2020.00549>.
- Hulberg, J. (2006). "Integrating corporate branding and sociological paradigms: A literature study" *Brand Management*. 14(1/2), pp.60-73.
- Idowu, A. (2013). "Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal System and its Effect on Employee Motivation." *Nile Journal of Business and Economics*. Available at: <http://journal.nileuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/NileJBE/>.
- James, J., McKechnie, S., and Swanberg, J. (2011). "Predicting employee engagement in an age-diverse retail workforce." *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*. 32(2), pp. 173-196.
- Johnson, M., Morgeson, F., and Hekman, D. (2012). "Cognitive and Affective Identification: Exploring the Links Between Different Forms of Social Identification and Personality with Work Attitudes and Behaviour." *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*. 34(3), pp.1142-1167.
- Karanges, E., Johnson, K., Beetson, A. and Lings, I. (2015). "Optimizing employee engagement with internal communication: A social exchange perspective." *Journal of Business Market Management*. Freie Universitat Berlin, Marketing-

Department, Berlin. 7(2), pp. 329-353. Available at: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-jbm-v7i2.903>.

- Kaur, A. (2013). "Maslow's Need Hierachy Theory: Applications and Criticisms." *Global Journal of Management and Business Studies*, 3(10), pp. 1061-1064.
- Keller, K. (2003). "Understanding Brands, Branding and Brand Equity". *Interactive Marketing*. 5, pp. 7-20.
- Khan, S. (2014). "Qualitative Research Method - Phenomenology." *Asian Social Science*. 10(21), pp. 298-310.
- King, C. and Grace, D. (2008). 'Internal Branding: Exploring the Employee Perspective.' *Journal of Brand Management volume*, 15(1), pp. 358-372.
- King, C. and Grace, D. (2008). "Internal Branding: Exploring the Employee Perspective." *Journal of Brand Management volume*. 15(1), pp. 358-372.
- King, C. and Grace, D. (2012). "Examining the Antecedents of Positive Employee Brand-related Attitudes and Behaviours." *European Journal of Marketing*. 46(3/4), pp.469-488.
- Korstjens , I. and Moser, A. (2018). "Series: Practical Guidance to Qualitative Research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and Publishing." *European Journal of General Practice*. 24(1), pp. 120-124.
- Kotler, P. and Lane, K. (2012). *Marketing Management*. Pearson International Edition.
- Kumar, J. (2012). Performance appraisal and promotion process: A measure approach." *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology*. 1(1), pp.1-6.
- Kumar, V. and Rensan, A. (2016). "Measuring the benefits of Employee Engagement." *MIT Sloan Management Review*. 64 (4), pp. 67-72.
- Kuranchie-Mensah, E. B. and Amponsah-Tawiah, K. (2016). "Employee motivation and work performance: A comparative study of mining companies in Ghana." *Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management (JIEM)*. 9(2), pp.255-309.
- Liejerholt, U., Biedenbach, G., and Hulten, P. (2020). "Branding in the Public Sector: A Systematic Literature Review and Directions for Future Research." *Journal of Brand Management*. 26(2), pp. 126-140.

- Lievens, F. and Highhouse, S. (2003). "The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer" *Personnel Psychology*. 56(1), pp.75-102.
- Lievens, F. and Slaughter, J. (2016). "Employer image and employer branding: What we know and what we need to know" *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behaviour*. 3, pp. 407-440.
- Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985). *Nationalist Inquiry*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Lohndorf, B. and Diamantopoulou, A. (2014). "Internal Branding: Social Identity and Social Exchange Perspectives on Turning Employees into Brand Champions." *Journal of Service Research*. 17(3), pp.310-325.
- Lopez, K. A. and Willis, D. G. (2004). Descriptive Versus Interpretive Phenomenology and their contributions to Nursing Knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research*. 14(5), pp. 726-735.
- Luthans, F. and Youseff, C. (2007). "Emerging Positive Organisational Behaviour." *Journal of Management*. 33(3), pp. 321-349.
- Manning, J. (2017). In Vivo Coding. In: *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 235.
- McClelland, D. C. (1985). *Human Motivation*. Illinois: Glenview.
- Melewar, T., Gotsi, M., and Andriopoulos, C. (2012). "Shaping the Research Agenda for Corporate Branding: Avenues for Future Research." *European Journal of Marketing*. 46(5), pp. 600-608.
- Mosley, R. (2014). *Employer brand management: Practical lessons from the world's leading employers*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, UK.
- Muller, M. (2017). "Brand-Centered Control": A Study of Internal Branding and Normative Control." *Organization Studies*. 38(7), pp. 895-915.
- Muller, M. (2018). "Brandspeak: Metaphors and the Rhetorical Construction of Internal Branding." *Organization Studies*. 25(1), pp. 42-68.
- Neijens, P and Smith, E. (2007). "Effects of TV Brand Placement on brand image." *Psychology and Marketing*. 24(5), pp. 403-420.

- Noon, E. J. (2018). "Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis: An Appropriate Methodology of Educational Research?" *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 6(1), pp. 75-83.
- O'Loughin, D. and Szmigin, I. (2005). "Customer perspectives on the role and importance of branding in Irish retail financial services." *International Journal of Bank Marketing*. 23(1), pp. 8-27.
- Palmer, C. and Bolderstron, A. (2006). "A Brief Introduction to Qualitative Research." *The Canadian Journal of Medical Radiation Technology*, 37(1), pp. 16-19.
- Piehler, R., King, C., Burmann, C., and Xiong, L. (2016). "The Importance of Employee Brand Understanding, Brand Identification, and Brand Commitment in Realizing Brand Citizenship Behaviour." *European Journal of Marketing*. 50(9/10), pp.1575-1601.
- Piehler, R., King, C., Burmann, C., and Xiong, L. (2016). "The Importance of Employee Brand Understanding, Brand Identification, and Brand Commitment in Realizing Brand Citizenship Behaviour." *European Journal of Marketing*. 50(9/10), pp.1575-1601.
- Piyachat, B., Chanongkorn, K., and Panisa, M. (2014). "The Mediate Effect of Employee Engagement on the Relationship between Perceived Employer Branding and Discretionary Effort." *DLSU Business & Economic Review*. 24(1), pp. 59-72.
- Poon, W. and Low, K. (2005). "Are travellers satisfied with Malaysian hotels?" *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 17(3), pp.217-227.
- Punjari, K., Wilson, A., and Evanschitzky, H. (2008). "Exploring the Influences of Internal Branding on Employees' Brand Promise Delivery: Implications for Strengthening Customer Brand Relationship." *Journal of Relationship Marketing*. 7(4), pp. 407-424.
- Rampl, L. and Kenning, P. (2014). "Employer brand trust and affect linking brand personality to employer brand attractiveness." *European Journal of Marketing*. 48(1/2), pp. 218-236.

- Rampl, L. and Kenning, P. (2014). "Employer brand trust and affect: linking brand personality to employer brand attractiveness." *European Journal of Marketing*. 48(1/2), pp. 218-236.
- Rehman, A. (2020). 'Awareness and Usefulness.' *Governance and Management Review*, 5(1), pp. 89-112.
- Reynolds, T. and Gutman, J. (1984). "Advertising is Image Management" *Journal of Advertising Research*. 24(1), pp. 27-36.
- Robescu, O. and Iancu, A. G. (2016). "The effects of motivation on employee's performance in organizations." *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies*, 7(2), pp.49-56.
- Royle, T. and Hall, A. T. (2012). "The Relationship between McClelland's Theory of Needs, Feeling Individually Accountable, and Informal Accountability for Others." *International Journal of Management and Marketing Research*. 5(1), pp. 21-42.
- Sanders, P. (1982). Phenomenology: 'A New Way of Viewing Organizational Research.' *Academy of Management Review*, 7(3), pp. 353-360.
- Schmitt, B. (2003). "Brand experience: What is it? How is it Measured? Does it Affect Loyalty?" *Journal of Marketing*. 67(3), pp. 52-68. DOI:10.1509/JMKG.73.3.52.
- Schultz, M. and de Cheranatony, L. (2002). "The challenges of corporate branding." *Corporate Reputation Review*. 5(2/3), pp.105-112.
- Semnani, B. L. and Fard, R. S. (2014). 'Employee Branding Model based on Individual Organizational Values in the Iranian Banking Industry.' *Asian Economic and Financial Review*, 4(12), pp. 1726-1740`.
- Sharma, N. and Kamalanabhan, T. (2012). "Internal Corporate Communication and its Impact on Internal Branding: Perception of Indian Public Sector Employees." *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*. 17(3), pp. 300-322.
- Sparrow, P. & Otaeye, L. (2015). "Employee Branding: From attraction to a core HR Strategy" White Paper. Lancaster University: Management School.

- Stets, J and Burke, P. (2000). "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychological Quarterly*. 63(3), pp 224-237.
- Stringer, C., Didham, J., and Theivananthampillai, P. (2011) "Motivation, pay satisfaction, and job satisfaction of front-line employees" *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management*. 18(2), pp.161 – 179.
- Swayze, J. S., and Burke, L. A. (2013). "Employee wellbeing program outcomes: A case study." *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*, 28(1), pp. 46-61.
- Tajfel, H. (1978). The achievement of inter-group differentiation. In Tajfel H. (Ed.). *Differentiation between social groups*. 77-100. London: Academic Press.
- Tajfel, H., Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of inter-group conflict. In Austin, W. G. and Worchel, S. (Eds.). *The Social Psychology of inter-group relations*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Teck-Hong, T. & Waheed, A., 2011. Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene and Job Satisfaction in the Malaysian Retail Sector: Mediating Effect of Love of Money. *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, 16(1), pp. 73-94.
- Theurer, C., Tumasjan, A., Welpel, I. & Lievens, F. (2016). "Employer branding: A Brand Equity-based literature review and research agenda" *International Journal of Management Reviews*. Vol. 42(3) 112-133.
- Ugah, A. D. and Uduakobong, U. O. (2011)." Personnel Management Theories and their Implications for Libraries." *Library of Philosophy and Practice*. pp. 1-7.
- Van Rekom, J., Jacobs, G. and Verlegh, P. (2006). "Measuring and managing the essence of a brand personality". *Marketing Letters*. Vol. 17(3). 181-192.
- Vinay, G. C. (2014). "Motivation in the Workplace to Improve Employee Performance". *International Journal of Engineering Technology, Management and Applied Sciences*. 2(6), pp. 221-230.
- Wallace, E., de Chernatony, L. and Buil, I. (2011). "How Leadership and Commitment Influence Bank Employees' Adoption of their Bank's values." *Journal of Business Ethics*. 101(3), pp. 397-414.

- Wallace, E., de Chernatony, L., and Buil, I. (2013). "Building Bank Brands: How Leadership Behaviour Influences Employee Commitment." *Journal of Business Research*. 66(2), pp 165-171.
- Xiong, L. and King, C. (2015). 'Motivational Drivers that Fuel Employees to Champion the Hospitality Brand.' *International Journal of Hospitality Brand*, Volume 44, pp. 58-69.
- Xiong, L., King, C., and Piehler, R. (2013). "That's not my job": Exploring the Employee Perspective in the Development of Brand Ambassadors." *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 35, pp.348-359.
- Yaniv, E. and Farkas, F. (2005). 'The Impact of Person-Organization Fit on the Corporate Brand Perception of Employees and of Customers.' *Journal of Change Management*, 5(4), pp. 447-461.
- Yaniv, E. and Ferenc, F. (2006). "The Impact of person-organization fit on the corporate brand perception of employees and of customers" *Journal of Change Management*. 5 (4), pp. 447-461.
- Zhang (2020). The Influences of Brand Awareness on Consumers' Cognitive Process: An Event-Related Potentials Study. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*. School of Management, Southwest University of Political Science and Law, Chongqing, China.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working in your organisation?
2. Why were you interested in working at your organisation?
3. How would you describe the working conditions in your organisation?
4. In your experience, what motivates your best on-the-job performance?
5. How would you describe the work environment or culture you are most productive and happy in?
6. What do you like and dislike about the organisation?
7. How would you describe your organisation's brand and what do you feel about it?
8. How did you feel about the brand before you started working in your organisation?
9. Has your perception about the brand changed since you started working there?
10. What influenced the change in your perception?
11. What branding activities do you think are necessary to keep employees motivated?
12. How would you describe your company's organisational practices?
13. What would you say is your main motivator at work?
14. How would you create a work environment that employees find motivating?
15. Have you ever had a manager/peer who created a toxic workplace? What actions did you take to motivate yourself and others, despite the toxicity?
16. How would you describe your level of motivation presently in comparison with when you first started in your organisation?
17. Has there been any change in motivation? Could you explain why if there has?
18. Has your perception of the brand impacted your motivation?
19. What techniques have you learned or discovered that make your job easier, or make you more productive?
20. Has your perception of the brand had an impact on your performance? Would you explain how?
21. What is one idea you think brands can implement today that would make employees more motivated to work?

Appendix B: Information Sheet

Research Title: “A Qualitative Study of the Impact of Employee Brand Perception on Motivation within the Tech Sector in Ireland.”

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

I am currently a Masters in Human Resources Management student at the National College of Ireland and as part of my degree, I am carrying out a research study into the impact of employee brand perception on motivation with a focus on employees in Tech organisations.

This process involves taking part in semi-structured interviews and you will be asked questions which seek to gain information on your experience of motivation within your organisation. Questions will be tailored towards your thoughts or perception regarding the brand of the organisation before and after you joined. The interview will be recorded using audio software and the overall estimated time for the interview should take between 30 and 40 minutes.

The objective of this Research Study is to gain new knowledge that will enable the Human Resources and Organisational functions develop strategies more aligned to motivational levels for their brand, so your participation is highly valuable.

Participation in this Research Study is completely voluntary. You have the right to decline answering any question, withdraw from the study at any point and have all your information removed from the study.

I do not anticipate any risks to participants because of involvement in this Research Study.

All information procured during the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality and stored securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act and NCI ethical

guidelines. Participants names, organization information will not be recorded and in cases where it is mentioned, will be omitted in the final report to protect participant's identity. Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained on a password-protected computer to which only the lead researcher will have access. A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after this. Under freedom of information legalisation, you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

The results of the study will be solely to submit the dissertation to the National College of Ireland for grading, I will not be using data gathered and stored for any other reasons.

If you require additional information or clarification, you can contact the researcher and supervisor with the following details:

Researcher – Desayo Iyinoluwa Isaac-Agbetunsin

0899606317

X20103018@student.ncirl.ie

Supervisor – Mira Dobutowitsch

Mira.Dobutowitsch@ncirl.ie

Appendix C: Consent Form
A Qualitative Study of the Impact of Employee Brand Perception on Motivation
within the Tech Sector in Ireland.

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves the researcher conducting semi-structured interviews and asking questions in relation to brand perception before and after joining the organization and motivation.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in researcher's dissertation.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's password-protected computer until the exam board confirms the

results of the dissertation, after this the audio recordings and consent forms will be deleted.

- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Desayo Iyinoluwa Isaac-Agbetunsin, Student of National College of Ireland, Masters in Human Resources Management.

Signature of research participant

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Signature of researcher

Date