THE INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYER BRANDING 
ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

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In order to understand if and how employer branding influences employees’ work behaviours and enhances employees’ ability to contribute to organizational productivity, effectiveness, and competitiveness, one needs to examine its functionality and capacities beyond that of employee attraction and retention to that of employee development, engagement, and performance. This research aims to do that by answering the following questions:

1. What are the factors present in the content and delivery of employer brand promises and how might they influence employee performance?

2. What influence does employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment by their organization have on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances?

A mix method case study was conducted on one of Canada’s best-of-the-best employers. In total, 19 managers were interviewed and 316 employees were surveyed.

Five themes emerged to reflect the employer brand promise content factors that could influence performance. They are the factors of personal sustainability, personal connectedness and belonging, opportunities and growth, personal stake and influence, as well as significance and esteem. Three themes emerged to reflect the employment benefit materialization factors. They are brand championship, branding control, and stakeholder selection and interaction.

Quantitative results suggest that as a whole, statistically significant, positive, and generally weak to moderate influence exists between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfillment and their organizational citizenship performance. The influence on task performance is much weaker. However, there is stronger indication that employees’ perceived fulfillment of employer brand promises positively influences their perception of 1) their employment experience as being desirable and distinctive, 2) their organization as being a great place to work, 3) their happiness to spend the rest of their career at the organization, and 4) their lack of frequency in thinking of leaving the organization, and these positive perceptions, in turn, further influence employees’ organizational citizenship and task performances.
DECLARATION

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

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Problem Overview: Limited Empirical Evidence of a Link between Employer Branding and Employee Performance

Several years after the term “Employer Branding” was introduced by Ambler and Barrow in 1996, the concept caught the attention of those in the world of human capital management and much was made of it (Lievens, Van Hoye & Anseel, 2007; Moroko & Uncles, 2008). It was hailed as “the hottest strategy in employment” (Sullivan, 1999, no page #) and “the most significant development in recent times” (Thorne, 2004, p. 18). Business and practitioner articles (e.g. Thorne, 2004; Hunt & Landry, 2005; Smedley, 2007; Sharma, 2008), conferences around the world,1 consulting firm studies (e.g. Bernard Hodes, 2006; Robert Half, 2007i & ii; Nigel Wright, 2008; Employer Brand Institute, 2009), and management consulting service entities (e.g. The Employer Branding Consultancy, Employer Brand International, People In Business) centred on employer branding have mushroomed (Martin et al., 2005). Without a doubt, the concept of “Employer Branding” gained popularity and momentum among employers as the human capital management strategy of choice (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Thorne, 2004; Aurand et al. 2005; Robert Half, 2007ii).

Nearly two decades after the concept was introduced, there is no sign to indicate that Employer Branding is just a passing fad. A 20122 Google search on the exact phrase “Employer Branding” yielded 4,440,000 hits, up significantly from the 3,000 hits yielded in a 2003 search3 by the researcher. In fact, there are continuous indications4 (Robert Half, 2007i and 2007ii; Employer Brand Institute, 2009 and 2011; Manpower, 2009a; TMP Worldwide, 2011; LinkedIn, 2012) that the interest as well as organizational investment in employer branding is strong and will remain so in the foreseeable future. According to the employer branding global research study conducted by the Employer Brand International (formerly Employer Brand Institute) in 20095 and then again in 2011, employer branding is moving rapidly from being mainly an interest and responsibility of those in human resources and marketing departments to a key organizational objective that influences the direction of executive officer6 and corporate-level strategic efforts. Over 80% of employers7 surveyed indicated that they either have a clear employer branding strategy in place, are improving on what they have, or are working on creating a strategy. Over 60% of employers8

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1 For example: Employer Branding Summits around the world by Collective Learning Australia; Employer Branding Conferences by The Sunday Times, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, The Employer Branding Consultancy, and many more.
2 April 2012
3 Up from over 237,000 hits in July 2007 and over 3,000 hits in 2003 (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004)
4 A 2007 survey conducted by leading financial recruitment firm Robert Half (2007i and 2007ii) with over 2,200 finance managers across 17 countries yielded the following statistics on the adoption of employer branding strategies by organizations: 32% of companies globally, 49% in Australia, 44% in UK, 42% in Japan, 42% (awareness) in Asia Pacific, estimated 38% in USA, and estimated 32% in Canada.
5 Involving over 2,000 different sector employers from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe/United Kingdom, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates, and United States/Canada.
6 The study found only 2% executive officers were in their organizations’ employer branding strategies in 2009 and the number jumped to 15% in 2011. On the contrary, 43% of organizations indicated that employer branding was primarily the responsibility of the HR department in 2009 and the number dropped to 31% in 2011.
7 In both 2009 and 2011 studies.
8 In both 2009 and 2011 studies.
surveyed indicated that they would either maintain or increase the allocation of resources to employer branding initiatives. LinkedIn's most recent survey (2012) of over 3,000 recruitment professionals across the globe reveals that over 90% of those surveyed indicated that they were spending more in 2012 than they did the year before (2011) on employer branding initiatives.

Many vendors as well as some scholars and subscribers of employer branding claim that effective employer branding will [in addition to improving recruitment and retention] enhance employee satisfaction, commitment, engagement and ultimately, employee performance, which in turn strengthens organizational performance and competitiveness (e.g. Ambler and Barrow, 1996-ii; Ainspan et al., 2001; Fulmer et al., 2003; Harding, 2003; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Barrow and Mosley, 2006; Sartain and Schumman, 2006). Ainspan et al. went further and asserted in their Conference Board 2001 research report entitled, Engaging Employees Through Your Brand, that “Ultimately, employer branding can be a stimulus to improvement of all the people-related processes that create organizational excellence.” (pg. 10)

Such claim is undoubtedly powerful and enticing to employers. Many had struggled to compete for and retain good employees during the economic boom in the early 2000s when there was a sharp, thus unmet, demand for not only high-skill labour but also mid and low-skill labour (as per Hoffman, 1999; Mahroum, 2000; Brent, 2003; Universum Survey in Melin, 2005) that worked in industries such as production, hospitality, and construction. The struggle continued even with the subsequent global recession caused by the financial crisis in 2007-2008 and still so today, with the slow economic recovery in the majority of countries. Now, employers have to be extra financially prudent and be able to do more with less, including less employees. Employers have to generate more productivity and innovation from fewer employees and to do so, they have to find, retain, engage, and invest in the development of the “right” individuals for each position (ManpowerGroup, 2011).

Failure by organizations to attract and/or retain their targeted workforce has caused various hardships for organizations, from loss of investment (Becker, 1962) and ballooning replacement and retraining costs (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984; Phelan, 1991) to inability to execute organizational strategies, regular operational shutdowns or, worse, increase in hazards and risks to individuals served by the organizations, if poor attraction and/or low retention problems are evident in essential service fields such as healthcare (Hunt, 2009) and law enforcement (Phelan, 1991).

Caught up in the hype of such ‘war for talent’ (Martin, 2007) and eager to implement a human capital management solution that would provide one’s organization with an edge over its competitors in the recruitment and retention of skilled, value-adding employees, many employers
might not have scrutinized the outcomes of employer branding beyond employee attraction and retention⁹ (Carrington, 2007).

While the assumption of a positive relationship between effective employer branding and employee or organizational performance is well-publicized by employer branding vendors and well-received by employer branding subscribers, there is actually very little unbiased, empirically-based evidence currently in place to confirm the reality of this assumption as well as to offer insight into the intricate nature of employer branding that might make this assumption a reality.

Are employers actually getting satisfactory returns for their employer branding investment when it comes to employee and organizational performance (Martin, 2007; Rosethorn and Mensink, 2007)? Is there actual evidence to suggest a strong positive relationship between employer branding and employee performance? If so, how is this relationship formed and preserved? Are some employment benefits or factors of employer branding more influential on employee performance than others? What are the mitigating factors or variables that would enhance or threaten this relationship? For now, these questions have not been adequately answered. Very little relevant academic research can be found on the specific matter.

Considering the major assumption that is widely publicized about employer branding’s ultimate contribution to employee performance, organizational performance, and overall organizational competitiveness as well as considering the noticeable investment (Sullivan, 2007; Employer Brand International, 2011; LinkedIn, 2012) that employers have and intend to continue to put into the development and execution of employer branding to gain the assumed results, it is both significant and timely to acquire more empirically-based insight into the relationship between employer branding and employee or organizational performance.

With this understanding and in response to the existing knowledge gap in the area, this doctoral research will proceed to investigate the influence of employer branding on employee job performance. More specifically, the study aims to examine in depth the factors that might be present in the employer branding efforts of a recognized best-of-the-best employer and employer of choice in Canada that have influenced its employees’ performance. In doing so, the study will explore the intricacies and challenges of fulfilling one’s employer brand promises as well as the influence that employer brand promise fulfillment has on employees’ level of job performance. It is proposed that follow-up research be undertaken in the future to further examine the influence of employer branding on organizational performance.

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⁹ As indicated by the results of “most frequent employer branding expectations” identified by employers in the 2006 Bernard Hodes Global Employer Brand Study.
**Employer Branding is Here to Stay**

The accelerated interest in the concept of Employer Branding which began in the early 2000s when organizations experienced what was considered an intense ‘war for talent’ (Michaels et al., 1997; Cairncross, 2003) continues to remain strong today as a result of various factors including some overlapping conditions in the work market, as presented below.

First, the industrial economy shifted very rapidly into a knowledge economy. Unprecedented evolution in technology has affected many fields and industries (e.g. communication, health, education, etc.), causing an increased need for a workforce that is skilled, value-adding (Moroko & Uncles, 2008), and competent not only from a technical perspective but also from an innovation and problem-solving perspective (Mouritsen, 2000). More globalized operations and constant change has made the mobile and flexible human-intellectual capital (instead of the immobile and inflexible equipment and machines of the industrial economy) the principal determinant of business value and the dominant factor in organizational survival (Leonard, 1998; Conference Board of Canada, 2004). The real source of competitive advantage is now seen as people and their capabilities (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990) and organizations recognize the significance as well as urgency to recruit and retain skilled, talented, value-adding employees that could enhance their overall performance and competitive advantage (Chambers et.al., 1998; Zivnuska, Ketchen, & Snow, 2001; Martin, 2008; Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

The global financial crisis in 2007-2008 followed by the worldwide economic recession and sluggish recovery has weakened the employment outlook in many industrialized nations (Manpower, 2009a) but it has not eased the scarcity of talents in specific fields (Martin, 2008). A 2009(b) Global Talent Shortage Survey involving 39,000 employers in 33 countries conducted by the leading employment services firm, ManpowerGroup, revealed that globally, 30% of employers were having difficulty filling positions, most prominently those of skilled trade workers, sales representatives, engineers, technicians, production operators, accounting and finance personnel, drivers, administrative support personnel, and management/executive personnel - partly due to the lack of qualified people in these specific areas and partly due to employers’ inability to find people of the “perfect fit”, which was defined as people with “the precise combination of skills and experience - for those roles” (p. 1). Such difficulty has proven to be a noticeable barrier to the achievement of organizations’ business goals.

As mentioned before, the global recession has actually forced employers to generate more productivity and innovation with fewer employees and to do so through the procurement and investment in the “right” individuals for each position (ManpowerGroup, 2011). Presently, the deficit is not as much in the number of available bodies to work (Lenaghan & Eisner, 2005) as it is in the knowledge, skills, and ultimately the “perfect fit” sought by employers for their vacant positions and their organizations as a whole. Some experts predict this knowledge and skill shortage to be long term (Clarke, 2001; Ewing et al. 2002) and see the ability to hire, retain, and
effectively engage employees with the right skill and fit to be critical to business success and to the ability to survive the onslaught of an economic downturn (Sutherland, Torricelli, & Karg, 2002; Mamarchev, 2004; TMP Worldwide, 2011).

With economic recovery underway in key developed nations, there is indication of a re-emerging threat of skill shortage. The latest 2013 Global Talent Shortage Survey by ManpowerGroup reveals that the percentage of employers having difficulty filling their positions has risen to 35% globally. The areas that are most difficult to fill remain almost the same as those reported in the 2009 research report. In Canada, where this dissertation research is conducted, the figure looms at 34%. Occupations consistently exhibiting signs of labour shortage, with unemployment rate of just over 1% and an average annual wage increase of 3.9% - more than double the rate seen in Canada’s economy as a whole – are the skilled professionals and some less skilled workers in the fields of health-care and medicine, human resources and business services, finance and accounting, social and community service management, engineering, oil and gas, mining, as well as in natural, applied, physical and life sciences. These occupations account for 21% of total employment in Canada (CIBC World Markets Inc., 2012 – p. 2).

Adding to the labour and skill shortage concern is the anticipated mass exits of baby boomers from the workforce within the next 5 to 10 years without the assurance that there would be an adequate number of generation X’ers and Y’ers available to fill their and other emerging positions10 (Gandossy & Kao, 2004; Melin, 2005; Martin, 2008). A report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2006) indicates that over the next 50 years, there will be a sharp increase in the share of elderly persons and a sharp decrease in the share of prime working-age persons in the population of all OECD countries11 (p 9). It is estimated that the number of workers retiring each year in many countries will eventually exceed the number of workers entering the workforce, causing the ratio of older inactive persons per active worker to potentially reach over 70% (0.7:1) in 2050 and in some European nations, it may reach 100% (1:1) (p. 9).

As a whole, the outlook for labour supply, particularly skilled and knowledge workers, is worrisome for the new knowledge-intensive economy (Mahroum, 2000; Thibodeau, 2000; ManpowerGroup, 2012) where it is increasingly unavoidable for organizations to use more human-generated competitive differentiators and advantages to survive or stay ahead (Cairncross, 2000; Ewing et al. 2002). Consequently, the ‘war for talent’ will continue and distinguishing one’s organization as “the employer of choice” to attract and retain competent, value-adding people that could help their employer secure ongoing success will remain a top priority for organizations (Pfeffer, 1998; Stein, 2000; Ewing et al. 2002; Brewster, Sparrow & Harris, 2005).

10 For employment growth trends, see Statistics Canada, 2006; UK National Statistics, 2006; and US Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2005
11 The 30 member countries of OECD are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States (Accessed on OECD website on August 14th, 2009)
Employer Branding and Employee Performance - Recognizing the End Goal and the Need for Further Investigation

While some employer branding literatures do emphasize the ultimate goal of producing enhanced workforce capacity to deliver the organization’s product or service promises to customers and other stakeholders (Farrell, 2002; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Miles and Mangold, 2005; Ogilvie, 2006), most employer branding studies and literatures (e.g. McKenzie and Glynn, 2001; Berthon et al., 2005) focus almost exclusively on the end goal of yielding employment applications from qualified applicants and employment retention from existing employees.

From a management perspective, recognizing which end goal to pursue in employer branding is critical to corporate decision-making and resource allocation. If the end goal of employer branding is primarily to attract qualified applicants and retain existing employees, less or no effort would have to be placed on coordinating processes, activities and incentives that would specifically result in the shaping and maintenance of behaviours that support the delivery of the organization’s performance objectives. An organization can be highly successful in becoming an employer of choice by providing the prescribed employer brand package “of functional, economic, and psychological benefits” (Ambler & Barrow, 1996) that meet or surpass employees’ personal needs. None of the benefits need to be aligned with the corporate strategies or performance objectives in order for the organization to entice many qualified applicants to apply or to motivate the majority of good employees to stay. On the other hand, if the end goal is to ensure employees’ ability to deliver the organization’s corporate strategies, superior service, or other performance objectives, then employer branding processes, activities and incentives must not only result in the successful attraction and retention of desired employees but more importantly, must result in employees’ sustained delivery of targeted performance expectations.

To determine what end goal an organization should achieve, one may ask, “Ultimately, why do organizations want to recruit, develop, engage, and retain people?” The answer would likely not be “To meet people’s personal needs and satisfaction.” It would likely also not be as simple as “To attract them and retain them.” If it is, then we have failed to ask the important subsequent question of “For what reason or purpose?” Attracting and retaining employees as well as meeting their needs and satisfaction are in fact the decent, necessary, and effective means to the end. They are not, however the end goal or purpose. Human resource management scholars and researchers (for example: Schuler and Huber, 1990; Armstrong, 2000; Schwind et al. 2002; Bratton & Gold, 2003; Dessler et al. 2004) agree that the ultimate goal of human resource management strategies and initiatives is to maximize employees’ contribution to the organization’s productivity, effectiveness, and sustained competitiveness (while simultaneously attempting to attain other individual and societal objectives). While successful attraction and retention is essential for maintaining operational stability and may be a pre-requisite to improving organizational performance, it, on its own, does not necessarily transpire to improved performance.
(Martin, 2007) or increased ability to contribute to organizational productivity, effectiveness, and competitiveness.

At this time of clear economic fragility and slow recovery, performance and productivity rather than simply recruitment and retention would likely be employers’ primary human capital management focus. With the need to contain or cut costs and at the same time maintain competitiveness and viability, managers must demonstrate real value in the human capital management initiatives in which they have invested or in which they plan to invest (Martin et al., 2005; Manpower 2009b). Success in recruitment and retention alone would not deliver this value (Martin, 2007). Instead, such value would come from employees’ strengthened commitment and engagement, better performance, increased productivity, and ultimately, enhanced capacity to provide real competitive advantage to their organizations. As such, the demand for stronger accountability in organizational spending would compel managers to demonstrate noticeable bottom-line return on the investment made on an organization’s employer branding activities.

In order to understand if and how employer branding influences employees’ work behaviours and enhances employees’ ability to contribute to organizational productivity, effectiveness, and competitiveness, one needs to examine its functionality and capacities beyond that of employee attraction and retention to that of employee development, motivation, and performance. Without recognizing and incorporating these aspects, an organization’s employer branding program may only be partially developed, partially used, and partially effective.

**Research Objectives, Questions, and Activities**

In response to existing knowledge gap on the subject of employer branding, this study proceeded to examine how employer branding might influence employee performance. In order to do so, the study first explores the intricacies involved in employer branding and the factors that might exist to enable it to affect the enhancement of employee performance or of mediators of employee performance such as satisfaction, commitment, and engagement.

**Pilot Study**

The investigation begins with a preliminary small-scale pilot study, of which the main aim was to explore if recognized ‘best employers’ in Canada used different types of employment benefits and other possible elements to attract and retain employees when compared to employers that had never been recognized as best employers and, if so, what those differences might be. From there, the study examines the types of employment benefits used by these best and non-best employers to enhance expected employee behaviours.
The pilot study provides a preliminary insight into other elements that might be used in employer branding aside from employment benefits and the sort of work behaviours that employers aim to strengthen with each identified type of employment benefits.

In order to achieve this aim, the pilot proceeded to answer the following research questions:

1. How do best employers and non-best employers differ in terms of the types of employment benefits and other possible elements used in their employer branding efforts?

2. What employment benefits and other possible elements are used by organizations to enhance expected employee behaviours?

**Main Research**

The investigation then proceeds to the main research, which looks at the relationship between elements of employer branding and employee performance in depth. The investigation consists of a mixed-method single case study of the employer branding strategies and activities at an organization deemed to be one of the 'best-of-the-best' employers in Canada. The main objective of the case study is to uncover information and evidence to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the factors present in the content and delivery of employer brand promises and how might they influence employee performance?

2. What influence does employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment by their organization have on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances?

**Choosing to Explore the Employer Branding Practices of a `Best Employer`**

The investigations for both the pilot study and the main research for this dissertation will involve the examination of the employer branding practices of employers that have been recognized as Canada's top or best employers by two respectable Canadian employer competitions – *Canada’s Top 100 Employers*, as compiled and presented by Mediacorp Canada Inc. and *50 Best Employers In Canada*, as compiled and presented by Aon Hewitt (formerly Hewitt Associates) and Maclean's. *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* is the most recognized and prestigious employer award in Canada (Winnipeg Free Press, San Francisco Chronicle, La Presse, Brandon Sun, and more - Mediacorp Press Review, 2013), where winners are "the best in their classes" (as quoted by The Lawyers Weekly – Mediacorp Press Review, 2013) and seen as demonstrating the "the gold standard for best practices in recruitment and retention" (as quoted by The Western Producer – Mediacorp...
Press Review, 2013). While a space on the 50 Best Employers in Canada list is not as coveted, it is still a competition that is well-respected in Canada as it is presented by the leading global human resources consulting firm, Aon Hewitt.

The question is, what would be the value in examining the employer branding practices of a best employer and the value in comparing the employer branding practices of random organizations to those of best employers?

The best employer competitions associated with this study employ rigorous screening and selection processes\(^\text{12}\). Both also involve comprehensive survey responses from participating organizations’ existing employees and leaders as well as a review and comparison of the organizations’ employment provisions and human resource (HR) practices. In the case of Canada’s Top 100 Employers, winners are derived from a preliminary group of 75,000 organizations across industries, throughout Canada. Shortlisted employers are evaluated using eight criteria established by a blue-ribbon Academic Advisory Board. They are: (1) Physical Workplace, (2) Work Atmosphere & Social, (3) Health, Financial & Family Benefits, (4) Vacation & Time Off, (5) Employee Communications, (6) Performance Management, (7) Training & Skills Development, and (8) Community Involvement (Mediacorp, 2013). In the case of 50 Best Employers In Canada, winners are chosen among 280 organizations upon an assessment of each organization’s level of employee engagement and its performance across more than 20 HR factors that drive engagement, specifically in the areas of (1) Leadership, (2) Work processes and policies, (3) Performance management, (4) Recognition, and (5) Opportunities (Aon Hewitt, 2013).

Most organizations being assessed for a spot on either Mediacorp Inc.’s Canada’s Top 100 Employers list or Aon Hewitt’s 50 Best Employers In Canada list do not actually make the list. Employers that made the list were those that achieved the highest scores in the combination of number and level of employment provisions as well as in the evaluated human resources practices. One may assume that those few that do make the list are the ones that have outperformed their competitors in overall human capital management competencies, provisions, and/or activities (Boyd & Sutherland, 2006). In comparison to their competitors, one may perceive these best employers to have a noticeably stronger employer brand, much more relevant and appealing employment value propositions, proven commitment and trustworthiness in fulfilling their psychological contracts with employees. Whether such assumptions are true or not is still up for debate and there is great value in more empirical investigations to determine which assumptions might be true and which might not be so.

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Regardless of the truth, there has been much emphasis in employer branding as well as human resource management literature (e.g. Pfeffer, 1998; Martin et al., 2005) on the importance of gaining the ‘employer of choice’ recognition. In order to build a lastingly positive employer brand, the organization needs to not only establish but actually maintain the good reputation among its internal and external stakeholders of being a distinguishably great place to work. According to Fombrun (1996), an organization’s reputation is “a collective representation of a firm's past actions and results that describes the firm's ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders”.

From an employer branding perspective, one may say that an organization’s reputation as a best employer, a great place to work, or as an employer of choice is built on the organization’s ability to continuously and consistently fulfil its employer brand promises as well as administer innovative and compelling practices that make it a distinguishably great place to work. However, as summarized by the globally respected Reputation Institute (in Schulte, 2010, p. 30), “A company owns its brand, but stakeholders own its reputation” which suggests that an organization would likely need to ensure that its ability to fulfil promises or to execute compelling practices that make it a distinguishably great place to work is not only consistently experienced by stakeholders but is also regularly acknowledged and, better yet, shared with others by the stakeholders in order for the reputation be established and sustained. Since the best employer competitions such as Mediacorp Inc.’s Canada’s Top 100 Employers and Aon Hewitt’s 50 Best Employers In Canada both confirm and recognize the presence of this capacity, most notably by employees with direct experience working in the organizations, many organizations may consider winning a spot on these respectable, celebrated, and well-publicized best employer lists, especially if it occurs year after year, as one effective means to create and maintain their reputation as a distinguishably great place to work. Ultimately, a best employer is an organization that is already accepted as the employer of choice by its existing employees, so when an organization builds and maintains a reputation as being a best employer, it is also simultaneously building and maintaining a reputation as being an employer of choice.

In the study of employer branding, there would be strong value in understanding the strategies that these best employers might have used, challenges they might have overcome, and processes they might have engaged to become and remain an employer of choice.

Some research has shown that an organization’s good reputation as a best employer or an employer of choice plays a role in attracting not just more but also a higher quality workforce (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Rindova et al. 2005). A sustained reputation as a best employer or an employer of choice would also be a source of competitive advantage when it comes to establishing good public relations, enhancing positive corporate/customer image (Ainspan et al., 2001; Lenaghan & Eisner, 2005), and ultimately leveraging these positive effects to secure more business opportunities and achieve other sustainable business results (Hewitt, 2004; Manpower Inc., 2009b, p. 2). There is also some evidence that best employers are able to yield better
financial performance than their 'non-recognized' employer counterparts (Fulmer et al., 2003; Hewitt, 2004).

With all the perceived advantages, it is not surprising that some organizations would consider achieving the best employer or employer of choice recognition as an intentional business objective (Ashby & Pell, 2001). However, initiatives to achieve this recognition could cost as high as US$50 million in advertising and promotional activities alone (Walsh, 2001). It would also require a significant investment of human effort and time to coordinate materials and activities for the selection process (Lenaghan & Eisner, 2005). If an organization attempts to improve its chances of being recognized by enhancing or changing its existing human capital management programs, more direct as well as indirect human and financial costs will be incurred.

In the end, is the financial and human investment justified when it comes to producing better employee and organizational performance? Can an employer of choice expect a higher level of performance from all or a majority of their employees? How do their results compare to those organizations that have never been recognized as an employer of choice? Such questions have yet to be answered.

Phil Rosenzweig (2007i, 2007ii) has cautioned against the issue of 'Halo Effect' which was described by psychologist, Edward Thorndike (1920), as the tendency to make specific inferences on the basis of a general impression. Professor Rosenzweig asserts that there is tendency for the public and critics alike to perceive an organization's specific strategy, leadership, culture, and so on based on their overall impression of its economic and market performance. In short, when an organization achieves economic and market success, we perceive it to have great strategy, leadership, culture, and so on and when an organization experiences financial failure, we perceive it to have poor strategy, leadership, culture, and so on. To emphasize his point, Rosenzweig (2007i) offered examples of organizations such as Cisco Systems, ABB, General Motors, and Dell (2007ii), that were first hailed as having great strategy, leadership, culture, non-monetary capabilities, etc. when they were posting great financial returns and later, the same organizations were criticized for having poor strategy, leadership, culture, non-monetary capabilities, etc. when their financial and market performance declined - even when their strategy, leadership, culture, non-monetary capabilities, etc. improved or remained relatively unchanged. His conclusion is that ambiguous and hard-to-define items such as strategy, leadership, culture, etc. which we deem to be drivers (contributions) of a company's strong financial performance are in fact results (attributions) of the company's strong financial performance (2007i, p. 79 and 2007ii p. 8).

Rosenzweig’s opinion is that when one conducts a research by first gathering a list “successful” organizations (which he specified as organizations that have outperformed the market, 2007i, p. 81) and then tries to determine what traits, principles, or formulas they share in common that would result in them being successful, one is using data contaminated by halo effect. The primary flaw, according to Rosenzweig (2009), lies in researchers interpreting data that are shaped by an
organization's single known performance as data that drives the organization's overall enduring performance and reporting it as such in their research findings.

On the surface, this doctoral study appears to be gathering and analyzing its data in the same manner as those studies criticized by Rosenzweig. After all, this study did collect data from a list of “successful” organizations. However, based on Rosenzweig’s explanation of what constitutes contaminated data, one could argue that the situation in this study is not the same and that its data does not fit Rosenzweig’s interpretation of contaminated data.

First of all, this study did not seek and find the best employers from a list of market leaders, financial leaders, or a list of generally successful organizations as was done by the studies highlighted by Rosenzweig.

Secondly, based on Joo’s and McLean’s (2006) explanation below of the aim of best employer competitions, these organizations were labeled as successful only and specifically for their ability to offer and deliver on the types of employer branding practices and provisions examined by this study.

Joo and McLean (2006) quoted in their article, Best employer studies: A conceptual model from a literature review and a case study, that best employer studies (such as Mediacorp Inc.’s Canada’s Top 100 Employers and Aon Hewitt’s 50 Best Employers In Canada) “aims at identifying employers of choice from voluntarily participating organizations for the purpose of employer branding, using tools such as human resource practices inventory and employee opinion surveys that are geared toward measuring employees’ perceptions of human resource practices, culture, leadership, personal and professional growth opportunities, pride in work and/or company, fairness, work-life integration, compensation (pay/benefits), and so on” (pg. 234).

In short, these organizations’ employer branding provisions and practices contributed to their employer branding success and achievement as best employers and employers of choice.

Thirdly, evidence on these organizations’ employer branding practices and provisions were collected and put through the initial examination and verification in the best employer competitions before they were labeled as successful in this specific area. They were named best employers and employers of choice only after their employer branding practices and provisions had been investigated, corroborated and verified through multiple means as being in place as claimed, and as having higher quantity and/or quality than those of the thousands of other contenders. One key aspect of employer branding is the offer and fulfillment of employment value propositions by an employer. In this study, data on employer branding practices were gathered from organizations that had been 1) confirmed by the majority of their employees as being organizations that did provide or deliver on the identified employment values and 2) verified as having in place a higher number and/or level (compared to thousands of other organizations in the competition) of
employment provisions desired by employees and used by employees to gauge the organization’s potential as their employer of choice. Types of organizations that scored high and recognized as best employers were diverse, with some being non-profit organizations, government entities, small organizations, or organizations that few have heard of in the world of business.

Essentially, the doctoral study proceeded to a second level of investigation by taking the data from these organizations that had been verified for their employer branding success and assessing whether such successful employer branding practices and provisions would have any influence on employee performance.

Rosenzweig’s concern is with studies that took organizations that were first known to be a financial and/or market success and then attempted to identify universally applicable, non-financial performance-specific formulas, principles, or traits that these organizations shared, which the researchers then concluded and declared without sufficient evidence and measures, to have contributed to the organizations’ successful financial or market performance.

Another important distinction between this study and those identified by Rosenzweig is the fact that there was no pre-assumption made by the researcher that just because these employers had more superior employer branding practices and provisions, their employees would perform at a high level in general or at a higher level than those of organizations that were not considered as best employers. In fact, the uncertainty and interest in finding out whether deemed-successful employer brand practices have any noticeable influence on employee performance was the instigator and basis of this doctoral investigation.

While the general assertion of the positive relationship between employer branding and employee performance has been consistent, the empirical studies and evidence for this have been noticeably lacking. Hence, in addition to examining how best employers brand themselves as employers of choice, there is an even more important need to explore if and what performance enhancing factors might be present in their employer branding efforts, and how these factors actually influence employee performance.

The differences in the situation of this study as well as in how the sources of the data and the data itself were treated would reduce the possibility of this study being contaminated by halo effect. There are, however, other issues brought forward by Rosenzweig that would prompt questions on the long-term merit and/or value of findings on drivers of organizational performance. Such issues include the predictability of performance strategies or formulas and the notion of enduring success. In other words, can the employer branding strategies and practices of the best employers in this study be transferred and used in other organizations to achieve the same level of employer branding performance? If so, can enduring employer branding success be ensured if the strategies and practices be continually applied by these other organizations? These questions are further explored in the Discussions and Conclusions chapter (Chapter 7) of this dissertation.
As this study focuses its investigation on only one type of employer, “best employers”, it has taken into account the matter of one-direction bias as data errors would not be randomly distributed but rather would be systematically in one direction. However, this does not mean that results found would not be meaningful or valid but rather could be limited to the situation of this type of employer.

As a whole, no clear indication was found in extant literature on whether best or non-best employers should be researched for the subject of employer branding. Arguments can be made for the investigation of random organizations, organizations that have been identified as undesirable employers, pairs of deemed-opposite employers, organizations in a specific sector, or any other combinations. Ultimately, there are many options as there are many types and sizes of employers still unexamined in the field of employer branding. This doctoral research will highlight and try to put together some pieces of the large employer branding puzzle by first comparing the elements used by recognized best-employers and those that have not been recognized as such. Then, it will take an in-depth look at how a deemed best-of-the-best employer brands itself as well as attempts to influence employee performance through its employer branding practices. It is recognized that there are many more pieces to the employer branding puzzle and that more research involving many other types of organizations as well as many other dimensions of employer branding would be needed in order to gain a complete picture of employer branding and its relationship with employee or organizational performance.

Future research to determine whether there is significant difference in employee performance of best employers versus those of non-best employers as influenced by employer branding activities would certainly clarify many more questions and add further to the knowledge in this critical area of employer branding.

**Organization of Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into 7 chapters:

Chapter 1: This chapter offers an overview of the research problem, the factors that have contributed to the heavy interest in employer branding, the lack of research and empirical knowledge on the relationship between employer branding and employee performance, and the rationales for why this is a relevant and important issue for further research. This chapter will also outline the research objectives and questions. In addition, it will introduce the fact that the study intends to look at the employer branding practices of one of Canada’s deemed best-of-the-best employers and offer rationales for doing so.
Chapter 2: This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one presents literature and research on the subject of employer branding, starting with definitions, followed by the processes of employer branding, particularly in terms of employer brand promise fulfilment. The review then proceeds with examining some key research that currently exists and issues still outstanding for further investigation, with an emphasis on the relationship between employer branding and employee performance. Part two of the chapter presents literature and research on the subject of employee performance, starting with definitions and dimensions of employee performance followed by a review of the performance mediator of engagement, how it affects employee performance, and how it employer branding and employee performance together.

Chapter 3: This chapter will present a small-scale pilot study that was conducted to explore if and what difference exists in the employment benefits and other possible elements used in the employer branding efforts of seven recognized best-employers in Canada and those of eight employers that have never been recognized as best employers. The pilot study also examines the employment benefits and other possible organization-oriented elements used by organizations to enhance expected employee behaviours.

Chapter 4: This chapter outlines the objectives of the main doctoral research and explains the case method chosen for the research. It also offers a profile of the chosen case organization and an explanation of how the case was selected. It proceeds to identify and explain the design and facilitation of each data collection tool and exercise, which consists of materials review, managers interview and employee survey. Explanations on qualitative and quantitative data analysis as well as steps to enhance validities are also included in this chapter.

Chapter 5: This chapter presents the results, analysis, and discussion of the qualitative component as well as a small portion of the quantitative component of the research. The focus of the investigation is on examining the possible performance enhancement factors that are present in the case organization’s employer branding efforts. More specifically, the study explores the presence of these factors within the content of employment benefits offered as well as within the process of fulfilling these promised employment benefits. From the qualitative analysis, five themes for performance enhancement factors emerged within the content of employment benefits offered and three themes emerged within the process of fulfilling these promised employment benefits. The chapter also explores the challenges experienced by the case-organization in its efforts to fulfill these promised employment benefits.

Chapter 6: This chapter presents the results, analysis, and discussion of the quantitative component of the study. The focus of the investigation is on exploring the relationship between employer branding and employee job performance, and more specifically between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promises fulfillment by the employer and their reported level of organizational citizenship and task performances. Also examined were the relationships between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promises fulfillment and their perception of 1) the
distinctness and desirability of their employment experience, 2) whether the organization is a great place to work, 3) whether they would be happy to spend the rest of their career at the organization and 4) the frequency of their consideration of leaving the organization. Analyses includes looking at the performance results from the fulfilment of different clusters of employment benefits. Differences are present in the results of these clusters and groups. The chapter ends with a discussion of the quantitative results found.

Chapter 7: This is the final chapter and it presents a discussion and conclusion of the findings and discusses the implications for practice as well as the contribution to both practical application and knowledge and theory building. The chapter also discusses some of the limitations of study. This chapter ends with recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employer Branding: A Still-Evolving Concept

In spite of it being an increasingly influential human capital management approach (CIPD, 2007) with strong employer buy-in, published academic literature and research on employer branding is still noticeably limited (Ewing et al. 2002; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Melin, 2005; Lievens, Van Hoye & Anseel, 2007). There is still a lack of clarity and common understanding among practitioners and management scholars on the definition (Sullivan, 2007; Martin, 2007), underlying theoretical foundation/assumptions (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Carrington, 2007; Martin, 2007), purpose, framework\(^{13}\), elements, processes (Moroko and Uncles, 2005; Sullivan, 2007) and deliverables of employer branding. Fundamental questions on employer branding that have not been satisfactorily answered include but are not limited to: How is employer branding supposed to work in theory or practice (Martin, 2007)? What are all the aspects of workforce management that employer branding should address? How does it address them? What organizational, people, or process elements should make up the framework of employer branding? What outcomes can be expected of employer branding? How are the outcomes measured?

\(^{13}\) Indication lies in the many frameworks that currently exists – e.g. McKenzie and Glynn, 2001; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Mosley, 2004

Definitions and Value Propositions of the Employer Brand

Earlier cluster of academic literature on employer brand and branding focused on defining and conceptualizing the terms ‘employer brand’ and ‘employer branding’ (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Ainspan et al., 2001; Ewing et al. 2002; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). The most commonly cited definition for employer brand is the original one provided by Ambler and Barrow (1996) as “the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (pg. 8). This definition has prompted many further studies and discussions on the question of what is represented by or inherent in an employer brand.

Since the initial package of offerings or benefits introduced by Ambler and Barrow, other researchers and scholars have expanded on the descriptions of these offerings as well as added new types of offerings. The following chart shows some key developments to the original definition and offerings of the employer brand presented by Ambler and Barrow.
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<td>o Berthon et al., 2005 (Economic Value)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Above-average salary, attractive overall compensation package, job security and promotional opportunities within organization (pgs. 159 &amp; 162).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional or Development and Application</td>
<td>(Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Barrow and Mosley, 2005; Berthon et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Ambler and Barrow, 1996 (Functional Benefits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Developmental and/or useful activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Corporate Leadership Council, 1999 in Melin 2005 (Work Environment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Work challenge, cutting edge work, international mobility, role clarity, project responsibility (pg. 25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Berthon et al. 2005 (Developmental and Applications Values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Developmental Value: recognition/appreciation from management, feeling of self-worth and confidence (as a result of working for the org.), a career-enhancing experience, and a springboard to future employment (pgs. 161 &amp; 162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social, Interest or Psychological Values</td>
<td>Application Value: opportunity to apply what was learned from school, opportunity to teach others what one has learned, org. is customer-oriented, humanitarian organization – gives back to society (pgs. 161 &amp; 162)</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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</table>
| (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Cable and Judge, 1996; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Barrow and Mosley, 2005; Berthon et al., 2005) | o Ambient and Barrow, 1996 (Psychological Benefits)  
  ▪ Feelings such as belonging, direction and purpose; general corporate reputation – prestige and standing of the company; sense of job satisfaction and job security; elevated personal status, lifestyle, and prospect due to association with the organization; feeling honoured to be working for the organization.  
  o Corporate Leadership Council, 1999 in Melin 2005 (Work Environment)  
  ▪ Manager quality, co-worker quality, recognition, empowerment (pg. 25)  
  o Berthon et al., 2005 (Social and Interest Values)  
  ▪ Interest Value: an exciting work environment, novel work practices / forward thinking, org. values and makes use of its employee’s creativity (to produce innovative and high-quality products and services), org. produces high quality as well as innovative products and services, working in an exciting environment (pgs. 159 & 160)  
  ▪ Social Value: good working relationship with colleagues, good working relationship with superiors, supportive and encouraging colleagues, fun and happy working environment, a team atmosphere (pgs. 159 & 160). |
| Symbolic | o Ambler and Barrow, 1996  
  ▪ Employer brand personality  
  o Cable and Judge, 1996 (Symbolic)  
  ▪ Self-identity fit |
Scholars (e.g. Michaels et al., 1997; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Heger, 2007; Rosenthorn, 2009) have indicated that these offerings represent the organization’s ‘employee value proposition’, a term used to describe the set of attributes and benefits, like those identified above, that actual and potential employees perceive they would gain through their employment with a particular organization (Corporate Leadership Council, 2006). In order to establish a strong and successful employer brand, however, an organization’s employee value proposition needs to be distinct, relevant, and compelling (Minchington, 2006; Moroko & Uncles, 2008). Sustained ability to attract prospective employees as well as retain and engage existing employees is more likely if the value proposition resonates with employees (Moroko & Uncles, 2008), in response to their own worldviews, beliefs, priorities and/or needs, as well as uniquely characterizes the employer and distinguishes it from its competitors (Corporate Leadership Council, 2006). An article entitled Employee Value Propositions: A Key Marketing Tool for Talent Management, by Brand Learning (no date) further elaborates on this concept of distinction by asserting that an employee value proposition “captures the essence of what a company wants to stand for in candidates’ and
employees’ minds relative to competing employers” and as such, it is “a vital first step in the development of a compelling employer brand.” (pg. 1)

Ultimately, it is the organization’s ability to deliver on their employee value proposition that will form the true employee experience at the organization (Rosenthorn, 2009) as well as the foundation of the organization’s employer brand image (Corporate Leadership Council, 1999). Consistent and realistic messaging of those distinct and relevant values as conveyed by the employer brand coupled with consistent delivery of those values will solidify the organization’s positive reputation as an employer (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Corporate Leadership Council, 2006).

One of the recent definitions of employer brand presented by Martin, Golan, and Grigg (2011) reflects a similar understanding of the notion above. They describe the employer brand as “a generalised recognition for being known among key stakeholders for providing a high quality employment experience, and a distinctive organisational identity which employees value, engage with and feel confident and happy to promote to others.”

Scholars’ and subscribers’ interest in gaining a deeper understanding of how to effectively convey and deliver on the employee value proposition to create a unique and engaging work experience for employees has expanded research in this domain from the initial discovery and categorization of the contents of employer brand to now include the exploration of the mechanisms of employer branding.

**Definitions, Components, and Process of Employer Branding**

In a most fundamental sense, employer branding differs from employer brand in that it refers to elements, methods, and processes to: 1) develop compelling and relevant value proposition, 2) the value proposition to employees and targeted job seekers, and 3) on the value proposition made (Backhaus and Tikoo’s, 2004). Such elements, methods, and processes may be similar to or directly adapted from those used in marketing, branding, communications, and human resources management (Martin, Golan, & Grigg, 2011).

Some experts still see employer branding as a “slippery concept” (CIPD, 2007, p 7). Due to the lack of common consensus on and understanding of the framework, elements, and deliverables for employer branding, different definitional emphases, models, and formulations can be found for employer branding (CIPD, 2007). There is no single consistently cited or used definition, although some more commonly referred to include Lloyd’s (2002) “sum of a company’s efforts to communicate to existing and prospective staff that it is a desirable place to work”, Backhaus and Tikoo’s (2004) “the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity” and Sullivan’s (2004) “a targeted, long-term strategy to manage awareness and perceptions of employees,
potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm” and more recently, Martin, Golan, and Grigg’s (2011) “the process by which branding concepts and marketing, communications and HR techniques are applied to create an employer brand”.

The key difference in definition between employer brand and employer branding appears to be that employer brand focuses on the content and targeted impact of promised employment values or offerings while employer branding focuses on the process or aspects related to the process of establishing, communicating, and delivering the content and targeted impact of promised employment values or offerings.

Many existing definitions, some from scholars (e.g. Ewing et al., 2002) and mostly from consultants (Minchington, 2006; CIPD, 2007; Robert Half 2007ii), like Lloyds, focus primarily on the functions of communication, messaging, and image building (D’Arcy, 2003; Kateon & Macioschek, 2007), with little or no reference to promise delivery.

While there are variations to the definitions, models, and formulations for employer branding, there are some aspects of employer branding that seem to be quite consistently highlighted in extant literature. The first being that employer branding is holistic by nature (Ainspan et al., 2001; Ambler, n.d.; Gaddam, 2008), aimed at creating and maintaining a ‘total work experience’ that is distinctive and desirable for employees (Ewing et al. 2002; Ruch, 2002; Lloyd, 2002; Mosley, 2004; Robert Half 2007ii). The second aspect consistently highlighted is the 1) incorporation of the organization’s core ‘brand essence’ (Mosley, 2004) into relevant work activities and identifiers for existing employees (Barrow and Mosley, 2005) and 2) alignment of this core brand essence as experienced internally by employees with the external brand image and/or message that is disseminated to job seekers and other stakeholders (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Thorne, 2004; Martin et al., 2005; Knox & Freeman, 2006; Moroko & Uncles, 2008). An organization’s core brand essence includes its values, culture (Mosley, 2004; Martin, 2007), and defining attributes that signify "what it [really] is" and "the way things are done around here [in the organization]" (Martin, 2007, p. 19). An organization’s core brand essence can be interpreted as its ‘identity’ (Kateon & Macioschek, 2007, p. 24).

**Research on Employer Branding**

From the introductory definitions and conceptual frameworks, research in the subject expanded to the exploration of the relationship between employer branding and employee attraction and retention. Issues examined included: employer and employment features that applicants find attractive (McKenzie and Glynn, 2001; Berthon et al., 2005); brand equity approach to recruitment (Collins and Stevens, 2002); comparisons of external and internal employer brand images (Melin, 2005); effects of employer brand image on candidates’ job application intentions and decisions
(Collins and Stevens, 2002; Knox and Freeman, 2006), improving recruitment through employer branding (Kateon & Macioschek, 2007; Bhatnagar & Srivastava, 2008), and employer’s 14 instrumental and symbolic attributes and their importance to applicant attraction and employees identification with the organization (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens, Van Hoye & Anseel, 2007).

The increasing popularity of the employer branding concept has generated more interest and need to understand other aspects about it (Ainspan et al., 2001) such as environmental change effects (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), cross-cultural effects, post-employment dissonance (Berthon et al., 2005), integration of cross-functional processes and activities in employer branding efforts (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Aurand et al. 2005; Moroko & Uncles, 2005), and extending the employee as customer (McLaren, 2011). One aspect brought forward by a number of employer branding literature as deserving of attention and further investigation is that of the influence of employer branding on employee and organizational performance (e.g. Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Ogilvie, 2006, McLaren, 2011). In spite of the calls for further investigation on this aspect, very little relevant academic research has been found on the subject thus far. There are a couple of studies that are related to, but not directly on, the effects of employer branding on employee performance. The first by Fulmer, Gerhart, and Scott (2003) examined the relationship between employees’ sustained positive attitudes towards their organization (due to it being “a great place to work”) and the organization’s financial performance15. They compared the results of organizations on the 1998 list of 100 Best Companies to Work for in America and those in a match comparison group consisting of organizations that are not on the list. Their results indicate that there is a positive relationship between employee attitudes and organizational-level financial performance. They found that the organizations on the Best 100 list both 1) retain stable and positive employee attitudes and 2) maintain a better financial performance than the organizations of the matched comparison group. These Best 100 organizations outperform the broad market when it comes to cumulative (long-term) returns.

The second by Davies (2007) examined the influence of employer branding on what may be interpreted as the psychological mediators (differentiation, affinity, satisfaction, and loyalty) of employee performance. In this case, it reflects management performance as all respondents were managers. Davies found that satisfaction was predicted by agreeableness and affinity by a combination of agreeableness and interestingly, ruthlessness, which reflects characteristics such as aggressiveness, arrogance, and controllingness. Surprisingly, he also found that managers’ sense of loyalty, job satisfaction or affinity was not influenced by their perception of their organization’s competence.

14 In this case, it is the Belgian Army.
15 In this case, they are the organizations’ return on assets ratio, market-to-book ratio as well as annual and multiyear cumulative shareholder returns.
Yet Unproven Assumptions on the Relationship Between Employer Branding and Employee Performance

There are some anecdotal reports (such as those presented by Ainspan et al., 2001 and Barrow and Mosley, 2006) on the positive influence of employer branding on employee performance. However, these cases are few in number and, more importantly, their positive outcomes are mainly self-reported by the organizations’ representatives without any/adequate verification (Martin, 2007). As employer branding consultants continue to sell the ‘stronger commitment - higher engagement - better performance’ assurance (e.g. Nigel Wright, 2008; Lombardi for Aberdeen Group, 2009) and many organizations around the globe continue to buy it, management scholars, researchers, and likely also some current subscribers of employer branding have begun to question the assumption that employer branding will indeed deliver better results – be it in recruitment and retention (Moroko & Uncles, 2005), cost savings (Carrington, 2007), or employee and organizational performance (Martin, 2007; Rosethorn and Mensink, 2007).

There is certainly good rationale for the call and response to investigate in more depth, the influence of employer branding on employee performance.

The first rationale would be that the assumption of influence does not necessarily equate to the reality of influence; thus, more unbiased, empirically-base evidence is necessary to offer a clearer picture of reality. In their paper, Conceptualizing and researching employer branding, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) express a view shared by many other scholars and subscribers of employer branding, and that is, “the practice of employer branding is predicated on the assumption that human capital brings value to the firm, and through skillful investment in human capital, firm performance can be enhanced.” (p. 503). Most of the existing employer branding literature (e.g. Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Ainspan et al., 2001; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Miles and Mangold, 2005; Barrow and Mosley, 2006; Sartain and Schumman, 2006) theorize that employee performance will be improved with employees’ enhanced sense of satisfaction, commitment, and engagement developed through effective employer branding. It is worth noting here that the assumption of a positive relationship between effective employer branding and employee/organizational performance is indirect rather than direct. Effective employer branding initiatives might not directly affect employee or organizational performance; rather, they might affect *mediators* of employee performance such as satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, which is assumed to then positively influence employees’ work efforts, behaviours, and overall performance. Since many also conclude that an organization’s performance is the aggregate attitudes and/or performance of its employees (e.g. Ostroff, 1992; Fulmer, Gerhart, and Scott, 2003), it would be natural to assume that improvement in the performance of the majority of its employees would strengthen an organization’s performance and competitiveness.

Such assumptions are not surprising as there have been countless discussions and research over the years in the field of human resource management that support the notions that 1) effective
human resource strategies enhance employee performance and productivity as well as organizational performance, productivity, and competitive advantage (e.g. Milkovich et al., 1988; Boxall, 1998; Heneman et al., 1989; Priem and Butler, 2001) and 2) strengthened mediators such as employee satisfaction, commitment, and engagement would yield higher employee performance (for satisfaction: e.g. Herzberg et al., 1957; Motowidlo, 1984; for general or affective commitment: e.g. Mowday et al., 1974; Brett et al., 1995; Bauer & Green, 1998; for engagement: Morgan, 2004; Watson Wyatt, 2008/09). However, one should also not disregard the presence of arguments and research that offer evidence to the contrary and find that aspects such as higher employer satisfaction or loyalty do not actually bring about better employee or organizational performance (for satisfaction: e.g. Iaffaldano and Muchinsky, 1985; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Cote, 1999; for satisfaction and loyalty: Silvestro, 2002; for general or continuance commitment: Meyer et al., 1989).

With regard to the specific assumption of the positive influence of employer branding on employee performance, Martin (2007) questioned the definitiveness of such assumption by pointing out cases and studies that showed a decrease in employee and organizational performance for organizations that focused on hiring and developing 'stars' and on investing in individual human capital without other complementary capital investments. Martin alludes to the fact that in order to yield strong employee and organizational performance, much more is involved than just acquiring great employees.

Should we accept the assumption that effective employer branding would strengthen employee performance through the enhancement of performance mediators such as satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, the questions of what effective employer branding looks like in practice and how it actually strengthens these mediators remain unclear. What conditions or factors need to exist in employer branding to enable it to consistently attract its targeted job candidates as well as successfully foster employee satisfaction, commitment, and engagement? If employers offer many types of employment benefits or a higher degree of specific kinds of benefits, would that be enough to make it happen or would some other factors need to exist in the materialization of these employment benefits before they could effect change? Are these factors or conditions generalizable or organization-specific? What sort of challenges can an organization anticipate? Such questions are unanswered and should obviously be explored.

Another rationale for investigating the relationship between employer branding and employee performance would be the essential need to clarify the ultimate deliverable of employer branding. As indicated in an earlier chapter of this dissertation, most existing employer branding studies and literature (e.g. McKenzie and Glynn, 2001; Berthon et al., 2005) focus quite exclusively on the end goal of job seeker attraction and employee retention.

Martin provided examples of Enron and two unnamed studies.
The lack of consensus and common understanding of the end goal of employer branding can be partly attributable to the origin of the term of "employer branding". While employer branding is intended to be a human resource management concept, it did not originate from the field of Human Resource Management. Instead, it is a creative transfer of knowledge and application from the field of Marketing-Branding (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005) to address contemporary human resource management issues. Since the knowledge and application is transferred from another field, one may argue that there is inadequate understanding of the intricate and interrelated nature of the human resource functions and of their linkages to marketing activities such as brand building and reputation management (Kateon and Macioschek, 2007, pg. 16). One can also speculate that there is a difference in interpretation between Marketing-Branding experts and Human Resource Management experts on who or what the employee is to an organization and on how the employee affects his/her organization's bottom line. Is the employee the end target or a mean to the end target?

When it comes to the enhancement of corporate performance and bottom line, can an employee be seen as the same as a customer? According to the Compact Oxford English Dictionary (AskOxford, 2008), a ‘customer’ is “a person who buys goods or services from a shop or business”. One may conclude from this definition that an organization’s newly attracted customers are those that have just bought from the organization, and its retained customers are those that continue to buy (repeat purchases) from the organization (Stone & Liyanearachchi, 2007). When a person buys a product or service from an organization, the organization from which the purchase is made will automatically experience an improvement in its sales and revenue performance, and possibly also some other measures of performance. On a basic level, customers are automatic and confirmed contributors to corporate bottom line. Hence, when an organization is successful in attracting new customers and retaining existing customers, it is also successful, without exerting any additional effort, in increasing revenue and sales performance. As such, organizations can reasonably expect to address the issue of performance (at least for revenue and sales performance) by addressing the issue of customer attraction or retention. The resources from the improvement of this major performance will then enable the organization to address other resource-demanding concerns and performances.

If one concludes that customer retention will improve an organization’s sales performance and financial success (Storbacka et al 1994; Reichheld 1996), one may assume that the same conclusion can be applied to employee retention – that it will ultimately improve organizational performance and competitiveness. With deeper observation, however, one may realize that while retained customers can literally translate to better performance for an organization (repeat purchases over an extended period of time equates to better revenue and sales performance), the same cannot be said about retained employees. When a person is employed by a company, the company at which the employment is activated will not automatically experience an improvement in its sales or other performances. That is because there are many personal (e.g. health and family issues, personal motivation, etc.), professional (e.g. skills and knowledge issues), and
organizational (e.g. systems and leadership issues) inhibitors that can negatively affect an employee’s performance in spite of his/her successful retention. Hence, when an organization is successful in attracting new employees and retaining existing employees, it is not necessarily also successful, without exerting any additional effort, in increasing revenue, sales, or other performance. As such, organizations cannot expect to address the issue of performance by simply addressing the issue of employee attraction or retention. Organizations that wish to address the aspect of employee and organizational performance need to do so in addition to addressing the aspect of recruitment and retention.

Employee Performance

**Definitions and Dimensions of Task and Organizational Citizenship Performances**

Quite a few definitions exist for employee job performance (e.g. Campbell, 1990; Deadrick & Gardner, 2000; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). For the purpose of this research, job performance is defined as measurable\(^{17}\) actions and behaviours that are within employees’ control, in which they engage, and that are linked with, contribute to, or detract from organizational goals and their attainment (Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000, p. 216; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, p. 66). Many existing job performance discussions and research (e.g. Poropat, 2002; Parker, 2008) have been predicated on these definitional pillars. In addition to the multiple descriptions to define job performance are the many dimensions\(^{18}\) to categorize and measure job performance. However, in spite of the many dimensions that exist, there is a commonly held view (e.g. Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; Halldorsson, 2008) that job performance can actually be categorized in three broad dimensions that are generalizable across jobs and industries. They are task performance, citizenship performance, and counterproductive performance.

Borman and Motowidlo (1997) defined ‘task performance’ as the “effectiveness with which job incumbents perform activities that contribute to the organization’s technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process\(^{19}\), or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services\(^{20}\)” (p. 99). Williams and Anderson (1991) described it as in-role performance where employees perform the required duties and responsibilities of his/her job description. Task-performance is role-prescribed and may vary from job to job (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994). As such, this research will not assess employees’ job-specific behaviours; rather, it will assess employees’ perception of their job task performance.

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\(^{17}\) E.g. observable, scorable, etc. (Poropat, 2002)

\(^{18}\) See Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000, and Rotundo & Sackett, 2002, for the list and descriptions of different job dimensions.

\(^{19}\) According to Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994, p. 476), this involves transforming raw materials into goods and services in which the organization specializes: e.g. selling, machine operation, teaching, counter-service, etc.

\(^{20}\) According to Poropat (2002), this involves activities which support the core: e.g. supply, planning & coordination, maintenance, development.
In contrast to task performance is citizenship performance (Borman et al., 2001). Formerly known as contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), this dimension involves what Motowidlo & Van Scotter (1994) described as behaviours and activities that “support the organizational, social, and psychological environment within which the technical core of the organization must function” (p. 476). It is seen as extra-role performance, undertaken at the employee’s discretion, outside of one’s formal job requirements (George and Brief, 1992). It is interpreted by many as “going the extra mile” or “above and beyond what is required in one’s job”.

According to Poropat (2002), citizenship behaviours and activities are common to most if not all jobs. They may or may not be role-prescribed and may or may not be rewarded by the organization (Schmidt, 1993; Organ, 1997) but they do, according to evidence, contribute meaningfully to organizational effectiveness (George & Bettenhausen, 1990; Podsakoff & Mackenzie, 1994; Organ, 1997; Borman et al., 2001).

Almost thirty (30) behavioural categories have been introduced by various scholars for citizenship related performance; however, there is a great deal of conceptual overlap between these categories (Podsakoff et al., 2000, p. 516). Podsakoff et al., (2000) organized these categories into seven common themes: (1) Helping Behavior, (2) Sportsmanship, (3) Organizational Loyalty, (4) Organizational Compliance, (5) Individual Initiative, (6) Civic Virtue, and (7) Self Development. The original five (5) categories established by Borman & Motowidlo (1993) specifically for contextual/citizenship performances are included in these seven (7) categorical themes established by Podsakoff et al. It is argued that citizenship performance is of particular importance for customer-contact employees and employees in a service-producing organization (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997) due to the very reasons outlined in the Rationale for choosing an employer from the service sector paragraph of this paper.

Managers have reported to take both types of performances into consideration when assessing employees (Orr et al., 1989; Van Scotter et al., 2000). As a whole, it is both necessary and prudent to examine both dimensions of performance in one’s attempt to understand the influences of employee performance. This doctoral research has attempted to do just that.

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21 See Podsakoff et al. (2000) for the list of scholars and descriptions of different behavioural categories.

22 The five (5) contextual/citizenship performance categories are: (a) volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job; (b) persisting with extra enthusiasm when necessary to complete own task activities successfully; (c) helping and cooperating with others; (d) following organizational rules and procedures even when it is personally inconvenient; and (e) endorsing, supporting, and defending organizational objectives.
Employee Engagement: Linking Employer Branding with Employee Performance

Many studies over the years have highlighted the positive relationship between employee performance, particularly organizational citizenship performance, and deemed mediators and predictors of performance such as satisfaction and commitment (e.g. William and Anderson, 1991; Moorman et al., 1993; Organ and Ryan, 1995; Biswas, 2011). In recent years, attention has shifted to the relationship between employee engagement and both employee and organizational performance (Medlin and Green, 2008; Markos and Sridevi, 2010; Rashid et al., 2011) as it is considered as the much more superior predictor of employee performance (Erickson, 2005; Heger 2007). Research has consistently shown that engaged employees are more productive in various aspects (Richman, 2006; Harter et al., 2002; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). The shift in interest and focus from employee satisfaction and/or commitment to employee engagement as a mediator and predictor of employee performance appears to be grounded on the notion that: 1) criteria of engagement not only includes the presence of both satisfaction and commitment but it also includes the presence of actual effort from employees to help their organization succeed, and 2) it is a two-way mutual process between the employee and the organization (Rafferty et al., 2005) whereas satisfaction and commitment could be a one-way process.

Researchers (Kahn, 1990; Erickson, 2005; Fernandez, 2007; Heger, 2007) argued that satisfaction is not a sufficiently strong predictor of performance. While one may gain confirmation of employees’ perception of their work experience and level of needs fulfillment through the measure of their satisfaction, it in no way gives us insight into if and how they apply themselves intellectually and emotional in their daily work or in their efforts to advance the organization. Heger (2007) gave an example of the New Employer/Employee Equation Study which found that “while 45 percent of employees feel satisfied with their jobs, fewer of them are engaged. In particular, only 31 percent feel that their employer inspires the best in them, still fewer (20 percent) feel passionate about their jobs, and less than 15 percent feel energized by their work” (p. 122).

Engagement, on the hand, goes beyond employees’ satisfaction with what they experience or receive at their place of employment. It is, according to Erickson (2005), “about passion and commitment - the willingness to invest oneself and expand one’s discretionary effort to help the employer succeed” (p. 14). As the emphasis is employees’ discretionary effort, recent research has not surprisingly included the presence of organizational citizenship behaviours as part of employee engagement.

Like employer branding, there are varying versions of definitions for employee engagement, though as a whole, researchers appear agree with Kahn’s (1990) characterization of employee engagement as involving the interplay of three dimensions or measures: physical (energy), cognitive (absorption), and emotional (dedication). Hence, when employees are engaged, they
gain fulfillment by expressing themselves physically, cognitively, as well as emotionally in their work and in their place of work (May et. al., 2004). With these elements taken into consideration, The Conference Board (2006) offered a composite definition of employee engagement as “a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work.” (p. 5).

Robinson et al. (2004) went further and asserted a view shared by other researchers, "The organization must develop and nurture engagement, which is a two-way relationship between employer and employee" (p. 2). The two-way relation eludes to the fact that when an employer effectively engages its employees, its employees reciprocate by exerting extra discretionary effort to build the organization's success.

One aspect of employee engagement that is still encountering much debate and no consensus is that of how it is measured (Meyer and Gagne, 2008; Newman and Harrison, 2008). Some more commonly used measures include employees’ intention to remain with the organization, pride for being associated with the organization, satisfaction, and the highly popular engagement conditions introduced by Gallup in their Gallup Q12 Workplace Audit (See Appendix 5), which has been administered to 22 million employees in 189 countries (Harter et. al, 2013).

Another aspect that has received more consensus among researchers are some of the main drivers of employee engagement. Most of them are non-monetary in nature, as listed below:

- Sustained opportunities to develop and grow professional and intellectually – which would include but are not limited to career opportunities, challenging work, proper training (Towers Perrin, 2003; Penna Research, 2007; Markos and Sridevi, 2010)

- Supportive work relationships, teamwork, and collaborations (May et. al, 2004; Penna Research, 2007)

- Relationship with supervisor and organization – psychologically safe (Kahn, 1990), trusting, and supportive (May et. al, 2004; Olivier and Rothmann, 2007)

- Being valued and involved in decision making (Tower Perrin, 2003; Institute of Employment Studies in Robinson et al., 2004)

- Psychological meaningfulness - alignment of own values/goals and work values/goals, significance and purposefulness of task (May et. al, 2004; Rothmann and Rothmann) and how individual contribution impacts organizational performance (The Conference Board, 2006)
• Presence of necessary and adequate physical, emotional and cognitive resources to do work (Tower Perrin, 2003; Olivier and Rothmann, 2007; Markos and Sridevi, 2010)

• Pride about the organization – improved self-esteem from being associated with his/her company (Tower Perrin, 2003; The Conference Board, 2006)

• Clarity in performance expectations (Mone et. al, 2011)

• Overall perceived organizational support (Saks, 2006) – such as “having access to useful training on the job, providing rewards, considering the goals and values of employees, showing concern for employees, caring about the employees’ opinions, being willing to help the employees when they experience problems, and not taking advantage of them” (Rothmann and Welsh, 2013, p. 17-18)

Recent studies on employer branding have highlighted the significance of employee engagement as a mediator and predictor of both employer branding effectiveness and enhanced employee performance. Moroko (2009) found in her research on the characteristics of successful employer brands that high level of employee engagement, combined with a low level of unplanned turnover, reflected employees’ conclusion that their employment experience is desirable and their psychological contract is fulfilled (p. 51). Moroko further concluded that employees’ engagement deteriorates when their organizations’ fail to deliver on its functional and psychological benefits.

In his research on espoused and experienced employer brand congruency, McLaren (2011) offered evidence to show that employer brand gap negatively affected the level of employees’ engagement and that reducing the gap between espoused and experienced employer brand would increase employee engagement. Both researchers also highlighted, as have many other researchers (see former paragraphs), the role of employee engagement in mediating and predicting employee performance as well as organizational performance.

Ultimately, this leads to the inference that the improvement of employer branding, particularly in employer brand promise fulfillment, would increase engagement and increasing engagement would then improve employee as well as organizational performance.

**Verifying employee engagement in this doctoral research**

The quantitative component of this doctoral research would verify the influence of brand promise fulfillment on employees’ organizational citizenship and task performances rather than on a predictor of performance such as employee engagement. However, as employee engagement also consists of the presences of some organizational citizenship behaviours, particularly those reflective of organizational loyalty, individual initiative, and helping others (Markos and Sridevi, 2010), the quantitative investigation would in fact verify the influence of brand promise fulfillment on both
performance and engagement, as they relate to these organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

As the qualitative component of the doctoral research would identify the case organization’s key employer brand promises as well as examine the intricate nature of employer brand promise fulfillment and how employee performance might be influenced, it would offer a clear indication on whether drivers of employee engagement as identified in list above were in fact present in the organization. The presence or absence of these employee engagement drivers could possibly explain some of the outcomes of the quantitative results.
CHAPTER 3: PILOT STUDY

Prior to undertaking a more substantial investigation on the relationship between employer branding and employee performance, a small scale exploratory pilot study was conducted to identify the employment benefits and other possible elements used in the employer branding efforts of some of Canada's recognized best employers and employers that have never been recognized as best employers. The study also examined the types of employment benefits used by these best and non-best employers to enhance expected employee behaviours.

In spite of the fact that scholars and consultants have offered us various definitions on the term employer branding, we do not have much empirical information on how most professionals responsible for developing and executing the employer branding strategies within their respective organizations actually interpret or define the term employer branding. Some may not even recognize the term. How they interpret or define employer branding would directly influence what they would include in terms of employer branding objectives, activities, and targeted deliverables within their organizations. As well, while there have been studies on the types of employment benefits offered by specific organizations, little empirical evidence can be found on what employment benefits or other possible elements are actually employed by most employers and whether there are any similarities or differences between those used by recognized best employers and those used by employers that have never been recognized as best employers.

Do best employers offer more or different types of employment benefits to their employees compared to non-best employers? Do best employers use other elements aside from employment benefits? If these two groups of employers are found to be providing primarily the same types of employment offerings or applying primarily the same forms of employer branding elements, what could have made a difference that would result in a group of employers being recognized as best employers (or more specifically related to employer branding – being employers of choice) while the other group was not? These questions have not been adequately answered by existing studies.

A number of studies, as identified in Chapter 1, have already been conducted on the types or categories of employment benefits provided or could be provided by employers. Some also identified what candidates find appealing and seek out in employers. What is unclear is whether such employment benefits, once adopted, are enough to enable an employer to create a desired and unique experience for its employees, distinguish itself from other employers as an employer of choice or best employer, and shape targeted work behaviours? What would happen when, hypothetically, all competing employers in an industry adopt these employment offerings? Would their distinguishing characteristics or abilities diminish? If so, would employees’ performance be affected? Much is still not known about the specific employer branding factors or configuration of factors that solidify an employer’s uniqueness and sustainability as an employer of choice as well as enhance their employees’ performance.
While an organization's competitive advantage is increasingly reliant on the presence of a stable and superior workforce (Herman and Gioia, 2001), the inhibitive issue of recruitment and retention of the right, best, or perfect fit employees to produce this competitive advantage remains in the forefront of organizational concerns. With that, the well-hyped idea of employer branding as a solution continues to become more mainstream among organizations of all shapes and sizes across various industries. More consultants (Minchington, 2006) are emerging to offer prescriptions and services to organizations on the development of their employer brands and more employers are either starting or continuing to place valuable and finite resources into their employer branding efforts.

It is likely that effective employer branding is not gained through any one-size-fits-all set of employment offerings or employer branding approach due to the many differences that exist in a multitude of organizational aspects that may influence an organization’s employer branding efforts. These include but are certainly not limited to organizational culture, structure, leadership, and resources. As such, it is not only for theoretical interest but also for real-world necessity to investigate the specific factors of employer branding that might enhance an organization’s capacity to become an employer of choice as well as strengthen its employee and organizational performance. In practice, such knowledge would offer organizations insight into the intricate nature of employer branding and the possibly multi-layered hidden as well as obvious factors that they have to consider and coordinate or integrate into the development and execution of effective employer branding strategies for their specific organizations. To explore this matter in depth, multiple investigations of different forms with various organizations would likely be needed.

This small scale pilot study would not be able to clarify all the outstanding questions on what truly makes an employer an employer of choice or how employer branding may affect employee performance. However, it is a viable start towards finding answers to what truly makes an employer a best employer and thus, also an employer of choice. In order to do so, the researcher sought to uncover how professionals responsible for the employer branding activities within their organizations actually viewed and defined employer branding. This was followed up with an exploration of what employment benefits and other possible elements were used in their organizations’ efforts to deliver their employer branding strategies as well as to enhance expected employee behaviours. Participation were sought from two groups of professionals, those who, at the time of the data gathering for this pilot study, were working for best employer organizations and those who were working for organizations that were not best employers.
Pilot Study Objectives and Research Questions

The subject of employer branding, while still possessing many areas that are not fully explored or confirmed, is not so completely unfamiliar and without any theoretical reference. There are in fact overlapping theories from Marketing, Communication, Organizational Behaviour, and Human Resources Management that are in place to explain or predict some of the components, phenomena, and outcomes of employer branding. As such, the goal of this pilot study was not to form new theoretical models. However, it was intended to uncover information that could add to existing knowledge regarding the elements of employer branding and the types of employment benefits used by organizations that were best employers and that were not best employers.

Specifically, the pilot study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. How do best employers and non-best employers differ in terms of the employment benefits and other possible elements used in their employer branding efforts?

2. What employment benefits and other possible elements are used by organizations to enhance expected employee behaviours?

Methodology

This pilot study attempted to uncover common and different themes in the data yielded from recognized best employers and those yielded from employers that had never been recognized as best employers. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined a theme as information that "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set." (pg. 82). With the knowledge gained, hypotheses for further testing could be generated and valuable insight could be derived to serve as a reference for organizations in their consideration of the employment provisions and elements to use in their own employer branding strategies. In order to achieve these goals, this pilot study employed an exploratory qualitative investigation using the approach of thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as a method for "identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data." (pg. 79). Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013) further explained the process of thematic analysis as consisting of "reading through textual data, identifying themes in the data, coding those themes, and then interpreting the structure and content of the themes." (pg. 13). Such data could come in texts of different forms and lengths, from a single-word response to an open-ended question on a survey to an interview transcript consisting of many thousands of words (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). The ultimate priority was to present research participants’ stories and experiences thoroughly and accurately regardless of the theoretical and methodological perspectives from which the method might have drawn.
In this pilot study, data for analysis was gathered from an expert sample using the method of structured electronic and telephone interviews.

Unlike Grounded Theory that has a prescribed end goal of forming and presenting theoretical models from the analysis of the data, the output of data analysis from the thematic analysis approach is not confined to such a requirement (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Output may be used to build theoretical models or to generate some specific hypotheses for testing or to provide evidence-based reference or recommendations for the development of organizational policies and programs (Guest et al., 2013). As such, it is appropriate for the purpose of this small-scale pilot study.

**Sample Selection**

An expert sample consisting of human resources management professionals, marketing and communications management professionals, and general or operational management professionals who had direct knowledge and/or experience in developing and/or implementing the employer branding measures in their existing and former organizations were sought for participation in electronic and telephone interviews.

Expert samples have been used in past research to gain valuable insights for the advancement of knowledge and development of new theories (Grove et al., 2003; Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006) and it makes logical sense that in a preliminary investigation to answer an exploratory research question as the one that is presented in this pilot study, perspectives be first gained from people who know the matter or phenomenon the best, as they have been part of the creation and materialization of the matter or phenomenon. In the case of employer branding, individuals who had no direct knowledge and/or experience in developing and/or implementing the employer branding measures within their organizations might not have sufficient awareness of all the employment benefits provided by their organizations or sufficient understanding of all the elements employed by their organizations in their employer branding efforts. In short, these individuals have a higher likelihood of not being able to provide as comprehensive and as accurate an account of their organizations’ employer branding strategies and initiatives compared to the individuals with knowledge or direct experience in developing and/or implementing their organizations’ employer branding measures. Practitioners with different functional expertise were sought in the hope that this would offer a more well-rounded, multi-angled insight into the matters being investigated.

The researcher sought out personnel from two groups of employers. The first group consisted of employers that had been publicly recognized as either one of Canada’s Top 100 Employers as compiled and presented by Mediacorp Canada Inc. or one of 50 Best Employers In Canada as compiled and presented by Aon Hewitt (formerly Hewitt Associates) and Maclean’s. To allow for a
more objective comparison of information as well as to increase the opportunity for new insight, a sample was also drawn from a second group of employers that had never won any best employer awards and had never been recognized by Mediacorp Canada Inc. or Aon Hewitt as one of Canada’s or any other country’s top or best employers.

The targeted sample size for this pilot study was set at 12 functional experts, with six from each group of employers - consisting of two human resource management professionals, two marketing/communication management professionals, and two general/operational management professionals.

Even though “theoretical saturation” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) remains the guiding principle (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006) for determining the appropriate sample size for a qualitative investigation, the actual number of participants deemed appropriate continues to be debated by various researchers. The size may depend on various aspects such as type of research, the use of the data and the objectives of the analysis, sample homogeneity, and more (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006). A deemed appropriate range for the sample size of a phenomenological study has been identified to be between five (5) and twenty-five (25) (Morse, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) found in their study, *How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability*, that data saturation had for the most part occurred within twelve (12) interviews. They found that 94% of codes they categorized as high-frequency were identified within the first six (6) interviews and 97% were identified after twelve (12) interviews in their dual country, sixty-interview study. As a whole, they found 92% of the total number of codes for one country and 88% of the total number of codes for both countries after twelve (12) interviews. With reference to this finding, the researcher concluded that a sample size of 12 interview participants would be reasonable and appropriate for this pilot study.

Due to issues of feasibility and accessibility, functional experts were drawn from 380 organizations listed in a provincial human resource professional membership listing to which the researcher had access. The organizations spanned across industries and government departments in the Canadian province of Alberta. Over 2,700 certified human resources professionals were listed as employees or affiliates of these organizations and government departments. To identify the participants, the list of alphabetized organizational names was sorted in random order using Excel Random Formula. The first 10 organizational names on the resorted list confirmed to be best employers and the first 10 organizational names on the resorted list confirmed to be non-best employers were extracted for contact. While individual names of non-human resources professionals (such as Marketing, communication, etc.) were not on the database, identifying them was not difficult once their organizations were selected.

In total, 24 functional experts were invited to participate in the pilot study, 20 agreed to participate, and 15 responses were received by the researcher, as shown in Table C3-1 below:
Table C3-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Organizations</th>
<th>Best Employers</th>
<th>Non-best Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td>M/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Consulting Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Solutions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Consulting Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Solutions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Institution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Chain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Chain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Advisory Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                   | HR | M/C | G/O | HR | M/C | G/O |
| **TOTAL**         | 3  | 1   | 3   | 4  | 1   | 3   |

HR = Human Resource Management Professionals  
M/C = Marketing/Communication Management Professionals  
G/O = General/Operations Management Professionals  

As this was an exploratory study to capture the employer branding practices of various organizations within various industries, the researcher did not seek to match best-employers organizations with the exact kind or size of non-best employers. Future follow-up studies can be refined to compare characteristically matching best and non-best organizations.

**Interview Process and Questionnaire**

Upon identifying the organizations for contact, initial telephone contacts were made to seek participation. All individuals that agreed to participate were briefed over the telephone on the nature of the research project and on the researcher’s expectations of their participation. They were then sent a set of interview questions by e-mail and asked to provide an electronic response within one week. Upon receiving responses, some participants were contacted by telephone for the purpose of clarifying answers that were vague and/or too brief.
Before the interview questionnaire was distributed to the research participants, it was first pre-tested for clarity and flow with two faculty members from the Commerce and Management Department at the researcher’s academic institution. Suggestions were given on the order of the questions as well as on the approach of some questions. Adjustments were made in response to the feedback.

Only five questions were presented in the questionnaire:

1a. Based on your own professional experience and observations, how would you define employer branding?

1b. How does your current organization define employer branding?

2. What employment provisions and/or organizational activities, programs is your organization using to brand and distinguish itself as an employer of choice?

3. Is your organization using employment provisions and/or organizational activities, programs you have identified for question 2 to shape employees’ work behaviours? If yes:

   a. What are the employment provisions and/or organizational activities, programs used for this purpose?

   b. What employee work behaviours have the organization expected to shape and/or maintained?

Individual observations and experiences gained over years of employment with various organizations would likely have more variations, breadth, and possibly even depth than the observations and experiences gained from one single existing place of employment. For question 1a, respondents were asked to draw references from their professional experience gained throughout their career and answer the question as an experienced practitioner in their field. This would allow us to examine the cumulative observations and experiences of each functional management group in the matter of employer branding. For question 1b, each respondent was asked to draw references from only his/her current organization and answer the question as a representative of the organization, which would be either a best employer or non-best employer organization. In combination, the dual perspectives would enhance the breadth, depth, relevance, and significance of information gained.
Analysis, Results, and Discussions

The researcher analyzed the interview responses using qualitative analysis software, QDA Miner version 2.0 from Provalis Research and proceeded to explore, identify, and categorize common themes that emerged from the data.

Variables for analysis were set as follows:

- Employer Status – Best Employers (BE) and Non-best Employers (Non-BE)
- Type of feedback - Functional Experts, Employer
- Industry/Business Type

Results were analyzed and presented for the following issues:

a. Themes in the definition of employer branding.

b. Elements used by best-employers and non-best employers to brand and distinguish themselves as employers of choice.

Themes in the definition of employer branding

Themes that emerged for the definition of employer branding were as follows:

- Actions/Functions Across the Organization - to achieve targeted objectives
- Behaviours – expectations and portrayal of desired work behaviours
- Benefits – for employees
- Differentiation/Distinction – of the organization from other organizations as a workplace of choice
- Marketing and Communication – of the organization's intended messages
- Policies and Procedures – to achieve targeted objectives
- Promise to Employees – pledging of promises
- Public Image, Identity and Reputation of the Organization – development, maintenance and communication of image, identity and reputation
- Values/Moral Standing of the Organization – communication and demonstration of values and moral standing

Of the themes above, Marketing and Communication as well as Public Image, Identity and Reputation and Benefits received the most recognition from employers as well as from functional experts. The themes of Actions/Functions Across the Organization and Promise to Employees were identified by a couple of functional experts but not by any employers.
Some similarities were found in the definition of employer brand and branding presented by the three different groups of functional experts. Over half of human resource management professionals as well as the general/operational management professionals interviewed identified *Marketing and Communication* as a theme in their definition of employer brand and branding. The two themes, *Benefits* and *Public Image, Identity and Reputation*, were identified by all three groups of functional experts in their definition of employer brand and branding.

**Discussion**

From the responses of the interview, it would appear that many employers and functional experts still primarily associate employer brand and branding with marketing and communication of the organization’s public image/identity. Added to that was the theme of differentiation. It was not surprising to uncover these themes since the original and long held definition of the term ‘Brand’ endorsed by The American Marketing Association (in Keller, 2003) was “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (pg. 7). While this relatively superficial definition had been dissected, refined, and elaborated upon by various marketing experts since then (Aaker, 2004; De Chernatony and Christodoulides, 2004), the basic concept of identification and differentiation appeared to be firmly held by many employers that would still see employer branding as a practice of marketing and communicating the organization’s public image/identity to distinguish themselves from other employers as the ‘employer of choice’. These findings support some pre-existing definitions of employer branding. For example, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) defined employer brand as “a concept of the firm that differentiates it from its competitors” (pg. 502) and employer branding as “the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity”.

Many employers that responded to the interview also identified employer brand and branding with benefits for employees. This is in line with the pioneer definition of employer brand provided by Ambler and Barrow (1996). They defined employer brand as “the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (p. 8).

The identified themes of *Values/Moral Standing of the Organization, Policies and Procedures* and *Behaviours* were supportive of the content of employer brand provided by Ainspan and Dell (2001). They asserted that the employer brand “encompasses the firm’s value system, policies and behaviors toward the objectives of attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”. In this pilot study, however, the interview respondents did not express that these items were specifically geared towards the objectives of “attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”. We could only assume that this is the case.
One noteworthy finding of this component of the study was that while some functional experts identified the themes of *Actions/Functions Across the Organization* and *Promise to Employees* in their description of employer brand and branding, no employers did. One might speculate that while employers initiated actions to brand their organizations as a workplace of choice, they saw it as a single-function assignment (e.g. that of human resource or marketing) rather than a broad, cross-functional, organization wide mission. The non-identification of *Promise to Employees*, on the other hand, could be attributed to the possibility that employers still considered employer branding as primarily an act of marketing and communicating the organization’s public image. Here the focus was on cultivating and presenting an intended perception rather than on delivering the substance of the perception. A “promise” indicates an expectation “to fulfill” while the marketing and communication of a perception does not indicate similar expectation. This could be due to the assumption that the organization’s image/identity was made up of matters already in place or promises already fulfilled, thus there was no need to re-pledge the fulfilled promise.

Of the three functional expert groups, the human resource management professionals were most diverse in their definition of employer brand and branding. They identified the most variety of themes. As the concept of branding did not originate in the field of human resources management and human resource management professionals were only beginning to explore the integration of the concept in their professional practices, the result of such diversity likely signaled a lack of common understanding among human resource management professionals of the concept of employer branding.

**Themes in the elements used by employers to brand and distinguish themselves**

Aside from employment benefits identified in extant literature, additional elements were used by employers to brand and distinguish themselves as employers of choice. These consisted of communication, corporate direction and control, and performance management. Categories, as follows, were established to represent the specific items, provisions, and activities identified:

**Employee-oriented Element: Employment Benefits**

- Monetary
  - Bonus programs, company stock ownership program, profit sharing program, competitive salaries, competitive retirement matching or contributory plan, competitive health benefits, life insurance plan, disability plan, employee discount program, employee loan program.
• **Professional Development and Application**
  o Work improvement incentives, monthly staff meetings, employee training programs, coaching and mentorship program, team building programs, interesting international assignments, inter-branch transfer program, internship programs, educational subsidies.

• **Social and Psychological**
  o Employee events, informal celebrations (birthday celebrations, achievements in one job, etc.), formal employee recognition programs, work culture desired and valued by employees, respectful work relationships, fun and creative work environment, caring and supportive workmates, promote-from-within program, team decision-making.

• **Work-life**
  o Esthetically pleasing and comfortable work environment, flexible work schedule or telecommuting option, flexible paid personal days off, fitness facility or subsidy, wellness programs, free items (food, beverages, clothing, etc.), employee and family friendly policies (casual wear days, etc.), childcare support or subsidy, retreats, company owned recreational facilities accessible by employees and their families, transit program, family vacation programs, entertainment tickets/passes.

• **Symbolic**
  o Association with successful company – wearing company gears and logo, promotion of company achievements and awards to external parties.

• **Personal Influence and Involvement**
  o Employee referral incentive program (referring new employees to their companies), employee committees.

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**Organization-oriented Elements: Activities and Controls**

• **Organizational Communication**
  o Communication, Advertising and Promotion
    ▪ Consistent messaging in promotional materials, advertising in targeted mediums, promotion of company achievements and awards.

• **Public Engagement**
  o Community Involvement/Event Sponsorship
    ▪ Sponsoring public and community events, locating branches in every community being served.
• Organizational Direction and Control
  o Organizational Standards, Policies and Procedures
    ▪ Using codes of conducts, standards, and policies to regulate practices.

• Performance Management
  o Competitive Analyses and Actions
    ▪ Benchmarking one’s employee programs and provisions with those of other companies, reviewing and participating in employer surveys.
  o Performance Management Programs
    ▪ Client service teams.

The number of Best Employers (BE) and Non-Best employers (Non-BE) that confirmed using the employment benefits as well as organization-oriented elements in their employer branding efforts were as shown in Table C3-2 below:

Table C3-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Benefits</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>Non-BE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=7</td>
<td>n=8</td>
<td>n=15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development and Applications</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Psychological</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-life</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Influence and Involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate Activities and Controls</th>
<th>BE</th>
<th>Non-BE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Communication</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Engagement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Direction and Control</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Analyses and Actions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Management Programs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results indicated that there was a comparable, and in some cases, higher number and percentage of Non-BE than there were BE that used each of the employment benefit categories above.

None of the Non-BE interviewed identified the use of organization-oriented elements to brand or distinguish themselves as employers. This was in contrast to the result that all of the BE interviewed confirmed using one or more organization-oriented elements to brand or distinguish themselves as employers.
Discussion

It was not surprising that employment benefits was the primary change-affecting tool used in employer branding efforts. While the term and concept of employer branding was relatively new, many of its existing practices and provisions were those that had already been long-recognized in standard human resource management (Harding, 2003). Since the main focus of employer branding has thus far been workforce attraction and retention, the long-prescribed approach has been to offer desirable employment benefits.

Interestingly, when compared to BE, just as high a number of Non-BE used just as many categories of benefits in their efforts to brand and distinguish themselves as employers of choice. If this result is representative of the larger employer population, what could be the differentiating factor(s) between BE and Non-BE? A clue may lie in another set of results from this study. As revealed, none of the Non-BE interviewed identified the use of organization-oriented elements to brand or distinguish themselves. On the contrary, all of the BE interviewed confirmed using one or more categories of organization-oriented elements to brand or distinguish themselves as employers. In other words, BE used organization-oriented elements as well as the employee-oriented element of employee benefits to brand and distinguish themselves as employers of choice while Non-BE used only the employee-oriented element of employee benefits. If a much larger sample was used, one would likely find Non-BE that employed both the employee-oriented element of employee benefits and other organization-oriented elements to brand and distinguish themselves as employers. However, the disparity in the percentage of BE that use organization-oriented elements and the percentage of Non-BE that do the same may remain noticeably large, as suggested by the results of this pilot project.

Themes in targeted work behaviours and the employer branding elements used by employers to shape and maintain them

Themes that emerged for the employee work behaviours that employers most wish to shape and maintain were shown in Table C3-3 below. The table also showed the number of employers that identified each of the behaviour. Only behaviours identified by more than one employer were presented here.
Results indicated that both BE and Non-BE identified similar work behaviours they wished to generate among employees, though more noticeable number of BE appeared to place emphasis on Adherence to corporate values and standards of behaviours than Non-BE.

The employment benefits and organization-elements of employer branding used by employers to shape and maintain these targeted behaviours were identified in following Table C3-4:
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Non-BE: HR</td>
<td>Health Care Services</td>
<td>relationship building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>BE: G/O</td>
<td>Financial Consulting Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Non-BE: HR</td>
<td>Hotel Chain</td>
<td>Business Planning and/or strategy execution involvement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>BE: HR</td>
<td>IT Solutions</td>
<td>Demonstrated pride in working for the organization</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Non-BE: HR</td>
<td>Hotel Chain</td>
<td>Demonstrated passion for the employer’s business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>BE: HR</td>
<td>IT Solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Non-BE: HR</td>
<td>Grocery Chain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>BE: G/O</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 4 3 0 3 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

MN = Monetary  PD = Professional development & applications
SP = Social & psychological  WL = Work-life
SB = Symbolic  PI = Personal Influence & Involvement
OSP = Organizational standards, policies, and procedures

Results in Table C3-4 showed that in majority of the 16 cases, Non-Be as well as BE only identified one mean to shape and maintain the desired work behaviour, be it an employment benefit or an organization-oriented element. The use of more than one benefit or a combination of employment benefits and organization-oriented elements was evident in only three (two BE and one Non-BE) cases. Interestingly, different employers from varied industries, regardless of whether they were BE or Non-Be, used different means to shape and maintain the same desired work behaviour, with exception to superior customer service and relationship building, where professional development and applications was the only mean used by all three employers, and demonstrated pride in working for the organization where symbolic benefits were used by both employers. For each of
these two behaviours, an employer augmented their use of benefit with another organization-oriented element.

The results showed that all types of benefits identified in extant literature, except for work-life benefits were used to shape and maintain desired work behaviours. As well, the use of each employment benefit, in this case, also specific organization-oriented elements, was not limited to best employers. Non-best employers also used the same benefits to employees’ work behaviours. Once again, the usage of employment benefits was hard to distinguished between best employers and non-best employers.

From the above results, one could also see that of all five types of employment benefits used to shape and maintain desired work behaviours, monetary was the least used by employers. Three identified types of organization-oriented elements were used to support the development or maintenance of desired work behaviours, with organizational standards, policies, and procedures being the most used.

As a whole, the results reflected the likelihood that each targeted work behaviour could in fact be shaped and maintained using more than one employment benefit and/or organization-oriented element.

**Discussion**

While the specific work behaviours that an organization wishes to shape and maintain could be different than that of another organization, this pilot study offered an indication of some of the behaviours that employers appear to commonly desire. Further research in the future could uncover more common work behaviours that employers would wish to create and maintain among employees.

Other desired work behaviours identified by interview respondents but not examined in detail were: innovativeness, drive for advancement, loyalty, respect, and teamwork. Each of these behaviours were identified by only respondent.

One interesting question from the results is why some behaviours were more identified than others. Can one consider the more identified behaviours as more corporate brand-projective compared to those that were less or not identified? While most employee behaviours could in one way or another affect organizational performance and brand, some behaviours would have a more immediate and direct effect on fulfilling the organization’ performance goals and on strengthening the organization’s brand(s), be that the service brand, employer brand, or overall corporate brand.

Behaviours such as innovativeness, drive for advancement, loyalty, respect, and teamwork might ultimately enhance organizational performance but such effect and that on the organization’s corporate, service, and employer brand might not be direct or immediate. An employee’s
innovativeness could result in the generation of new products or new processes. However, the duration and timing for that result to materialize would be unpredictable. It could happen a few months after the employee starts his/her employment or it might not happen for a few years. An employee’s drive for advancement might or might not even result in positive organizational performance depending on the means the individual takes to achieve his/her advancement. Many organizational brands and reputations have in fact been damaged by employees’ zeal for advancement as they start behaving in unethical or even illegal manner to get ahead. Loyalty could result in stronger commitment and possibly better performance but again, such result could be long to come by. In terms of brand enhancement, unless they actively share their positive experiences with customers or job applicants as well as be able to turn that loyalty into engaging behaviours towards customers and job applicants, such loyalty might not contribute at all to the enhancement of service or employer brand. Similarly, respect and teamwork may improve work relations but again, may or may not have any immediate and obvious effect on improving the organization’s brand or on fulfilling organizational performance goals, particularly as they relate to the common goals of increasing sales or improving service.

On the contrary, behaviours that demonstrate adherence to corporate values and standards of behaviour, superior customer service and relationship building, community engagement, business planning and/or strategy execution involvement, pride in working for the organization, and passion for the employer’s business might have more immediate and obvious effect on increasing sales, improving service, and strengthening organization’s service, employer and overall corporate brand. For example:

- When an employee adheres to a set of prescribed corporate values and standards of behaviour, be they in sales, service, job applicant engagement, or other general practices - he/she would be directly displaying to co-workers, customers, potential job applicants, and the public, behaviours that characterize the organizational expectations and/or the organizational brand values and pledges.

- When an employee provides superior customer service and demonstrates superior relationship building abilities, he/she would be personally delivering the pledges of the organization’s service brand and this will likely have a direct effect on customer satisfaction and sales. Such superior customer service and relationship building abilities, when observed or personally experienced by job applicants will very likely strengthen their positive view of the organization as a whole, including as a potential employer. As such, the demonstration of superior customer service and relationship building abilities strengthens the organization’s service brand, employer brand and ultimately also the overall corporate brand.

- When an employee engages the community by participating in community projects and events, he/she would be directly exhibiting or promoting the values, essence, and message of his/her organization and its brand. Such engagements speak louder than advertised
words when it comes to demonstrating that the organization/employer is part of the community, is investing in members of the community, and is supporting causes that are important to the community. Such efforts would undoubtedly increase the community’s goodwill towards the organization as well as strengthen its perception of the organization as a business and as an employer.

- When an employee shows his/her pride in working for the organization by talking positively about his/her organization to others or simply by wearing clothing that displays the company logo and motto, he/she would be immediately and directly shaping the public’s perception of the organization, its products or services, and its viability as an employer of choice.

- When an employee demonstrates passion for his/her employer’s business and participates in the planning and execution of business strategies for the organization, he/she is directly involved in shaping, improving, transforming and/or delivering the values and pledges of the organization’s brand, be they service, product, employer, or overall corporate brand.

Compared to innovativeness, drive for advancement, loyalty, respect, and teamwork, the demonstration of behaviours above by employees appear to elicit more immediate and direct positive effect on employee’s performance and/or brand enhancement. As such, it make sense they are identified by more employers as work behaviours they wish to shape and maintain. Having an insight into some of the common work behaviours that employers appeared to want to shape and maintain among employees, it would be logical to explore the types of employment benefits and/or organization-oriented elements that could be used to holistically and effectively shape as well as maintain these behaviours. It is likely that more than one employment benefit or organization-oriented element can be or even should be used to shape or maintain each targeted work behaviour. For example, improving or maintaining superior customer service and relationship building could likely be done through more than just professional development and application activities. For the three cases in this pilot study, all employers quoted “coaching” as their mean.

Aside from coaching, customer service could be enhance through other means including but not limited to:

- Monetary mean - bonus in making sales to the customer or in presenting a customer service idea that has been adopted.
- Social and psychological mean – publisizing positive comments from customers about the employee’s service, praises, and public acknowledgement or award for excellent service.
- Personal influence and involvement – opportunities to offer input and to implement input on how to improve customer service.

The fact that most employers only reported one mean could indicate that these were their most obvious and immediate mean but upon a deeper look, not the only mean.
Limitations of Pilot Study

By interviewing a small and localized sample, the results in this pilot project were intended to be qualitatively informative but not quantitatively confirmatory. Any statistical results presented would be helpful in 1) offering more insight into the functional and employer perspectives in employer branding, 2) providing a general indication of the direction or emphases in present day employer branding activities, and 3) set specific hypotheses for further testing. However, due to the small sample size, the results might not be adequately representative of the actual employer branding practices in organizations as a whole or of the observations/experiences of the larger groups of functional experts in the general workforce. This is especially true for the results of the marketing/communication management professionals group as they were derived from the responses of only two participants.

The answers of the individual respondents might also not always be representative of the reality in their organizations. As well, only the views of employers (their representatives) were sought in this study. Had employees or job applicants be interviewed as well, it was realistic to assume that one might gain different results or different degrees of the same results.

Aside from concerns with the small and localized sample, there was always the possibility of making mistakes in the coding and interpretation of data. While subjectivity might be reduced with the use of tools like surveys with fixed choice answers, interview answers are derived from more free-flowing personal observations and opinions. Here, subjectivity is more likely to exist with both the respondent who offers the personal observations and opinions as well as the researcher who has to use his/her own personal understanding and judgment to code and interpret the respondent’s personal observations and opinions.

The interview component of the study was limited to Alberta employers, hence, the findings might not be representative or transferable to employers in other parts of Canada or in other countries. Alberta’s economic status, work culture, government incentives, and other characteristics might cause Alberta employers to behave differently than employers of other regions and countries when it comes to the activities of workforce recruitment and retention. As a whole, Alberta employers might have more resources to deliver more comprehensive employer branding initiatives than employers in New Brunswick, Florida, Wales, Tasmania, or Sumatra. What was found to be effective in Alberta might also not be effective in Singapore or even realistic in Hunan. Each organization’s characteristics might also make the results of the study not highly transferable. Each might possess unique organizational conditions that were not shared by other organizations. In short, the results of the study might be transferable only to organizations that shared similar characteristics to those of the samples used here.
Conclusion and Moving Forward to Main Doctoral Research

As highlighted in the Chapter 2 of this document, there has been much discussion in extant literature on the types of value proposition or employment benefits extended by employers to potential and actual employees. However, there has been extremely few comparisons between the benefits offered by best employers and those offered by non-best employers. This pilot study took on the challenge of comparing the two groups, in a small scale, and offered a valuable preliminary insight into the likelihood that best and non-best employers actually used the same variety of employment benefits to brand themselves as employers of choice as well to shape and maintain desired employee work behaviours that impact performance. Such results led to the question, “If it is not the variety of employment benefits used, what therefore, truly differentiates best employers from non-best employers when it comes to delivering effective employer branding and shaping employee performance?” One revelation was the intentional use of other organization-oriented elements by best-employers to augment or support the fulfillment of their promised employment benefits. Are there any other factors, such as the manner in which promised employment benefits are coordinated and delivered, or the culture within the organization, or the segmentation of job applicants, or something else that make best-employers more successful in not only attracting and retaining employees but most importantly, in enhancing employee performance?

In order to answer the questions above, more in depth investigation needs to be done. It is not sufficient to simply verify on a superficial level if other elements or factors are present even if a larger sample is employed as that would not explain how differentiation is achieved or how performance behaviours are shaped or maintained by these different elements and factors. In fact, to get a true sense of what other possible elements or factors might be present (aside from those identified in this pilot study) to influence employee performance there is good reason at this exploratory stage to conduct detail case studies of organizations that have not only consistently proven themselves as employers of choice for their targeted workforce but have also distinguished themselves as leaders or winners in their respective industries in terms of performance, which depending of the types of business and industries they are in, could include but not be limited to: service superiority, product quality, innovation, profit margin and stakeholder return, organizational reputation as well as growth and long-term sustainability.

Consistent ability to maintain such achievements would serve as an indication of the organizations’ proven success in differentiating themselves as the best among many, as both an employer and a highly productive organization. Uncovering the true elements or factors that make them continually successful would bring genuine value to the understanding of employer branding, particularly in how it is used by distinguished employers of choice to shape and maintain employee performance, which ultimately impacts the broader organizational performance.

With this understanding, the researcher proceeded to complete her doctoral research by seeking such an elite organization and conducting a comprehensive case study on its employer branding practices, specifically as they related to the shaping and maintenance of employee performance.
The case study also went on further to verify whether a positive relationship was in fact present between these winning employer branding strategies and employee performance.
CHAPTER 4: MAIN RESEARCH PROJECT
METHODOLOGY

While the pilot study offered a preliminary glimpse into the use of employment benefits and other organization-oriented elements to shape employees’ targeted work behaviour, the main research project went further to explore if and how employee performance, specifically organizational citizenship and task performances, was influenced by employer branding, particularly the fulfillment of employer brand promises. The investigation was focused on answering the following key questions:

1. What are the factors present in the content and delivery of employer brand promises and how might they influence employee performance?

2. What influence does employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment by their organization have on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances?

Data to answer question # 1 on the factors present in the content and delivery of employer brand promises that might influence employees’ performance was gained using the qualitative method of material analysis as well as in-depth interviews of managers to explore the factors and intricacies of the organization’s employer branding exercise and its association with employee performance enhancement.

Data to answer question # 2 on the influence of employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances was gathered using the quantitative method of employee survey and statistically analyzed to determine the influences that the fulfillment of different types of employer brand promises might have on employees’ organizational citizenship and task performances. The key hypotheses tested in the quantitative component were:

Hypotheses 1a and b:

Employees’ reported level of a. overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and b. overall task performance is positively co-related with their perceived level of overall employer brand promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment by their employer.

Hypotheses 2a to j:

Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the following employment benefit content factor clusters will report a higher level of a/c/e/g/i. organizational citizenship performance and b/d/f/h/j. task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster:

i. Factor of personal sustainability
ii. Factor of connectedness and belonging
iii. Factor of opportunities and growth
iv. Factor of personal stake and influence
v. Factor of significance and esteem

Hypotheses 2k and l:
As a whole, employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will report a higher level of k. organizational citizenship performance and l. task performance than employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer.

Hypothesis 3:
Employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will concur more strongly with each four of the following notions when compared to employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer:
   a. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).
   b. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
   c. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
   d. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

Hypotheses 4a and b:
Employees who concur (CC) with each of the four notions below will demonstrate a higher level of a. organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and b. task performance when compared to employees who do not concur (DNC) with the notions:
   a. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).
   b. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
   c. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
   d. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).
Research Paradigm Considerations and Influences

A researcher’s paradigm or basic set of beliefs on the nature of reality (ontology) as well as on the types of knowledge that can be generated from this reality and on the relational intervention that exists in the generation of the knowledge (epistemology) will unavoidably influence the research methodology that he/she uses to uncover or generate the knowledge (Willis, 2007; Roulston, 2010; Tuli, 2010; Ciao, 2011). The methodology in turn affects what and how data is collected, managed, and interpreted (Lowe, 2001; Buchanan and Bryman, 2007; Roulston, 2010) and as whole, the researcher’s position can have a significant bearing on the outcome of the investigation (Wiersma, 2000). Without exception, the design of this doctoral research is influenced by the research paradigm of its researcher.

Extant literature indicates that there are two oppositional paradigms that dominate the research field. They are those of positivism and interpretivism. Other noted variations and/or deviations that have evolved from these two main paradigms include post-positivism, critical theory, and idealism.

Positivism is underpinned by a realist ontology where the reality or facts exist apart from personal thoughts and are observable, stable as well as verifiable through conventional scientific means (Bassey, 1995; Lincoln & Guba 2000, 2005; Neuman, 2003; Rhein, 2013; Taylor and Medina, 2013). In this case, the epistemology would be objectivity and empiricism, hence, conventional scientific methodology would mainly involve quantitative methods (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Pring, 2000; Tuli, 2010; Ciao, 2011; Taylor and Medina, 2013) such as experiment, where the goal is to i. test hypotheses for causal links, ii. measure effects, and iii. uncover or verify “truth” (Neuman, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005; Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005). The researcher in such a setting would see him/herself as an objective controller of the research process, which is separate and detached from what or who he/she is researching (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Lincoln & Guba 2000, 2005; Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Tuli, 2010; Taylor and Medina, 2013). When it comes to the study of social phenomena such as the one in this doctoral research, positivists would see it as the same as natural phenomena and would see a need to treat it as such, using the same scientific methods to verify or predict what would be deemed stable, law-like patterns of behaviours and cause-and-effect relationships (Neuman, 2003; Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005; Ciao, 2011; Taylor and Medina, 2013).

Growing disillusionment with the quantitative methodologies and limitations in studying social phenomena led to the emergence of Interpretivism (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interpretivists felt that there are clear differences between the natural world and the social world (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989) and that quantitative approaches are inadequate for thoroughly and effectively examining complex social phenomena (Scott and Usher, 1999) where human actions, motivations, and many other variables may interact simultaneously and cannot be isolated or reduced to independent components (Weirsma, 2000; Ciao, 2011). Contrary to Positivism, Interpretivism is underpinned by a relativist ontology where there are multiple realities (Pring, 2000; Sale, et al, 2002; Rhein, 2013).
constructed and interpreted by individuals in a social context (Sale, et al, 2002) through their observation of as well as interaction and experience with other individuals (Guba and Lincoln, 1985; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Pring, 2000; Maxwell, 2006; Tuli, 2010).

With a subjectivist epistemology, “reality” is therefore seen by interpretivists to exist not apart from but solely within the subjective mind of the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Ciao, 2011) and that there is in fact no external reality outside of the researcher’s mind (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Pring, 2000; Ciao, 2011) and no external reference to compare the researcher’s claim of reality (Smith, 1983). In this case, the researcher is interactively engaged with the subjects being researched and he/she cannot be independent of the research process or the presentation of the “truth” (research findings) because such truth is in fact mutually and subjectively created between the researcher and his/her research subjects within the social context of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Pring, 2000; Sale, et al, 2002; Buchanan and Bryman, 2007; Phiri, no date). As such truth is subjective as well as context and human dependent, it changes over time and space (Pring, 2000; Ciao, 2011) with different researchers and participants involved in the research.

Interpretivist researchers typically employed qualitative methodologies (Bassey, 1995; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Tuli, 2010; Rhein, 2013) such as unstructured interviews and observations to conduct their investigations where the goal is to generate holistic, in-depth, and rich local understanding of the social phenomena within the research context (Fincham, 2002; Huxham & Vangen, 2003; Neuman, 2003; Taylor and Medina, 2013). Criticism in the research community has always been that such finding is not generalizable to the broader population (Ciao, 2011), which interpretivist researchers appear to recognize and counter with their alternate research goal above as well as with the suggestion that theoretical rather than statistical generalization could be possible (Eisenhardt, 1989; Qu & Dumay, 2011).

In spite of the long-held debates among some scholars on the superiority of one paradigm over another, there appears to be more consensus among present day researchers that no single paradigm is in fact most ideal or superior over others and that each paradigm presents strengths and limitations that might make it more applicable in certain types of investigations but not necessarily in another type of investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Schulze, 2003; Bryman, 2007; Taylor and Medina, 2013). As a result, there also appears to be more acceptance in the research community for the incorporation of multiple perspectives (Lincoln and Guba, 2000) and the use of methods from both paradigms in research studies (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; 2008; Bryman, 2007; Denzin, 2008; Creswell, 2009), though this is not to suggest that paradigm discourse and controversy no longer exists (Bryman, 2007).
Paradigmatic foundation of this doctoral research

The "paradigm wars" (Bryman, 2007, p. 14-15) highlighting the oppositional assumptions about qualitative and quantitative research is not just a debate between researchers in each camp but can often also be an internal struggle experienced by a researcher, particularly a doctoral student and novice researcher who is still at the early stages of learning about the different paradigms and of exploring how he/she truly sees the nature of reality and the procurement of knowledge. The following questions by Ruto-Korir and Lubbe (2010, pg. 104-105) in their article, Locating the doctoral study in the 'paradigm skirmishes': Challenges and prospects for adopting a paradigm cradle, eloquently reflect the challenges faced by many doctoral students and novice researchers:

“Although researchers are invited to view "blurred" boundaries (Denzin, 2008:16) between qualitative and quantitative approaches, I reflect on several questions: Does an idea hold because it originates from an acclaimed identity? If that is the expectation, where does the doctoral student’s originality fit? In the space of paradigm discourse, what are doctoral students to do in the interim before such [paradigms] debates become conclusive? For example, if their stance contrasts with that of the acclaimed identities in discourse, does the academic community still sustain their contribution?"

Nonetheless, clarifying one’s research beliefs in a research project is essential regardless of the researcher’s readiness to do so as such beliefs, conscious or otherwise, shape how he/she selects his/her research methodology and methods for the project as well as influences how he/she treats and interprets data and findings from the project.

Doing so is also in line with the practice of reflexivity advocated by many modern day researchers, where a researcher is open about factors or positions that influence his/her methodological choices and is also engaged in some critical degree of self-appraisal (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Buchanan and Bryman, 2007; De Loo and Lowe, 2011). Green and Preston (2005) as well as De Loo and Lowe (2011, pg. 28) caution that the engagement in reflexive practices would not suddenly transform understanding to explaining social phenomena. However, it does provide an understanding of why a researcher might have made the methodological choice he/she did and the presumptions, suppositions, and/or interpretations that might have influenced the research (Saunders et al., 2007). De Loo and Lowe (2011, pg. 29) argued that without reflexivity and acknowledgement of one’s own role in affecting the research, we risk losing the possibility and credibility of building a coherent and trustworthy knowledge base.

The methodology for this doctoral research project is informed by the following research beliefs:

1. The discovery of information and knowledge should not be restricted to the use of methods prescribed by only one paradigm or another because the methods of each paradigm have limitations that can be addressed by those of the other paradigm, and
together, they offer different, complementary, and comparably potent ways to examine data from different angles, for different purposes.

2. As social science research such as this doctoral dissertation examines complex phenomena within a unique real-life setting and context involving many human actors, it is very difficult if not impossible to avoid human subjectivity and imprecision, especially in the provision (by research participants) as well as analysis and interpretation (by the researcher) of the qualitative data. However, there needs to be as much objectivity as realistically possible in such a setting and that a researcher should not feel at liberty to inject self-interpretation into the data without some noticeable and/or triangulated evidence to support that interpretation. Where the procurement of evidence or additional knowledge through quantitative analysis is possible, it should be sought for further verification and/or support of any qualitative interpretations.

The research beliefs above lean closer to that of post-positivist. This research, like those based on post-positivist view, still sees a need for the attempt to seek objective and generalizable knowledge about social patterns (Trochim, no date) but at the same time recognizes the complexity of social phenomena and the presence of subjectivity in the researchers, the research participants, and their interpretations of the truth (Taylor and Medina, 2013). Post-positivists reject the notion of total scientific objectivity and the pursuit of absolute truth devoid of context (Bohman, 1991; Eagleton, 2003). Instead, post-positivists see researchers as being able to observe only a limited amount of evidence (Ciao, 2011) and that observations and measures are in fact fallible in deriving at theories that can be revised (Allmendinger, 2002; Trochim, no date) when someone presents evidence that are contrary to them (Ciao, 2011). Hence, there is a shift in the research emphasis among post-positivists from that of causal reasoning to discovery and confirmation of meaning (Moore-Milroy, 1991).

Since post-positivists still aim to get at the truth in as objective a manner as possible within a subjective setting where observations and measures are fallible, many: 1) see it as their professional and ethical responsibility to recognize and put aside their own biases and beliefs (Trochim, no date) and make every effort to objectively observe, extract, and present reality as is present in the minds of research participants (Ritchie and Rigano, 2001) and in the phenomenon being studied and 2) advocate for the use of multiple methods and measures to triangulate across different sources to try and gain a clearer picture of the truth of the situation or phenomenon (Trochim, no date). Such methods may be quantitative in nature or qualitative in nature and can include quasi-experiment (Taylor and Medina, 2013), survey, interview, participant observation (Creswell, 2008), and more.

As there is recognition that “truth” or “reality” is likely to be subjective and as argued by interpretivists, to also be varied depending on the specific interpretation of the specific researcher within the social context of the research, this doctoral research:
1) Sees truth or reality as information and assertion that is supported by reasonable and/or verifiable evidence. In the case of this doctoral research, such evidence can be objective, such as actual employment benefits given to employees, or can be subjective yet true in the minds of employees, such as employees’ own experience and resultant motivation upon receiving or not receiving a promised employment benefit. While there is merit in the general argument that “reality” may not be true reality, there is certainly also merit in the argument that reality is what one experiences. It is his/her very true reality, thus might have very real impact on his/her motivation and actions. Such reality, along with those that are verifiable, and the possible impact of these combined realities on employees’ performance, is what was explored in this research.

2) Acknowledges that it is unlikely to be able to uncover the whole truth of what employees’ experiences or views may be with their organization and/or the organization’s employer branding efforts and/or their actual performance in response to these employer branding efforts. This is in recognition of the fact that many aspects could have influenced an employee’s ability or desire to share the truth about his/her experience and observations, and the fact that one might only be able to verify some information but not others.

3) Accepts that the interpretation of what would be deemed as truth or reality would be based in part on evidence when it exists, and in part on logical deductions when strong evidence does not exist.

4) Concedes that the interpretations of truth or reality might be applicable only within the context of this research, within this or very alike organizations, within a specific point in time, and maybe even only with this specific group of employees.

The philosophical leaning of the doctoral research has two key implications on the study, one is the decision to apply a mixed-method case study where both quantitative and qualitative means are used to collect, cross-verify, and analyze data, and second is the mixed view of interview and treatment of data. The implications are explained in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.
Context, Content, and Process Considerations

In addition to ontologic(al and epistemological views, the choices of one’s research methodology and data collection methods are also determined by not only the research objectives but also by the overall nature of the inquiry and phenomenon being investigated.

In social sciences, researchers have mainly presented their scientific explanations through one or both of the core approaches of variance theory and process theory (Mohr, 1982), though there are indications that variance theory is the dominant approach used (Mohr, 1982; Ledford, Jr., 1985; Chiles, 2003; Langley et. al., 2013) due to the continuous calls for evidence-based management decisions and actions (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2006; Rousseau, 2006).

Mohr (1982) describes variance theory as oriented towards explaining the variance of a dependent variable (pg. 9) that resulted from its relationship with and thus variance of the independent variable(s) (Langley, 1999; Chiles, 2003). He distinguishes variance theory from process theory by describing the latter as a series of events in a sequence over time that explains how the phenomenon or outcome materialized. Langley et. al. (2013) further explained that process studies “address questions about how and why things emerge, develop, grow, or terminate over time,... thus, focuses empirically on evolving phenomena and draws on theorizing that explicitly incorporates temporal progressions of activities as elements of explanation and understanding.” (pg. 1). Aside from temporal progression, Mohr (1982) and Langley et. al. (2013) also emphasize the significance of probabilistic interaction between entities that leads up to the phenomenon or outcome.

This doctoral study will call upon both variance theory and process theory to offer a more comprehensive insight into the relationship between employer branding and employee performance.

A key goal of this study is to determine if and in what manner influence exists between employer branding, particularly the fulfillment of employer brand promises, and employee performance. The mainly quantitative investigation to achieve this goal was grounded on the variance theory. However, the revelations of such investigation would not be sufficiently meaningful without the accompaniment of insight into how the organization actually attempts to link their employer branding efforts to employee performance and how such attempts might in fact yield a direct or indirect relationship between employer branding and employee performance. The investigation and explanation of such know-how type knowledge (Langley et. al., 2013, pg. 4) consisting of the sequence of employer branding activities as well as the interactions between different entities and factors in the process that could lead to the anticipated outcome of better employer performance is, in general, in line with that of the process theory.
While the variance of performances, resulted from the relationships and changes in employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfillment, can be statistically tabulated in a relatively black and white manner, the same cannot be said about the execution of employer branding itself and how it might enhance employee performance.

Existing literature defines employer branding as a process or aspects related to a process of establishing, communicating, and delivering the content and targeted impact of the employment values promised by the organization to its potential and actual employees. The qualitative component of this doctoral study will specifically examine what factors exist in the process of delivering the content of the employment values promised by BOB to its employees and how these factors and the process of employer branding itself might produce positive change in employees’ performance.

How a process or factors within a process influence performance can often be affected by forces and conditions in which the process exists. Pre-existing forces or conditions in an organization’s external and internal environment that impact the success or failure of an organization’s change efforts (Johns, 2001) and performance (Al-Shahi, 2008) are called context (Walker, Armenakis, and Bernerth, 2007) and much has been written about the impact of context on both the content and process of change. External forces or conditions include governmental regulation or deregulation (Kelly and Amburgey, 1991), competitive pressure (Meyer et al., 1990), technological innovations (Haveman, 1992), or social expectations (Pettigrew, 1987), for which organizations often have little control and must respond accordingly. Internal forces or conditions, on the other hand, include managerial attitudes toward change, technical knowledge, and slack resources (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999), organizational strategy, structure, culture and management processes (Pettigrew, 1987) and experience with previous change (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999).

In BOB’s case, there were various unique as well as less unique forces and conditions that had likely shaped not only its employer branding process but also the management of human resources as a whole. The first of this example being its 100% employee-owned structure, which was and still is not the norm even among the variety of employee ownership structures. For one, being a fully employee-owned organization could mean that power in decision making would be genuinely rather than artificially more decentralized and dispersed, thus employees would have input on the sort of employment benefits or services that the organization would offer its employees. This appeared to be the situation at BOB. It would certainly mean that the organization could offer shares as a benefit to employees while non-employee-owned organizations would not be able to do so. Being members of a 100% employee-owned structure could mean that employees saw themselves as full business owners and partners rather than employees and this could affect how they viewed the contribution and outcome of their decisions and their work. It could mean that employees would demand cost-consciousness on the part of the organization and in return would be willing to take lower monetary benefits in exchange for some other non-monetary benefits. This
would likely not be the case with employee in non-employee-owned organizations or in a unionized setting. It could also mean that employees expected specific programs to be in place to enhance the development and productivity of everyone in the organization so that the organization (and they as the owners of the organization) would do well as a whole. Its 100% employee-owned structure had likely contributed to the high value the organization placed on maintaining a long term relationship with its employees, as reflected by their "cradle to grave" philosophy to employee relations management. Ultimately, the 100% employee-owned structure could shape many other decisions and actions that employees in non-employee-owned or partially-employee-owned organizations might experience differently.

Other conditions that could have affected how BOB designed and/or executed its employer branding processes included:

- The fact that around ¾ of its workforce came from an engineering, environmental, or technical background, thus they might have very specific needs, particularly in development.

- The employees in this research were all located in the highly competitive and prosperous energy-focused province of Alberta, Canada, thus competition for professionals with engineering, environmental, or technical background would be particularly high. This would increase the pressure for BOB to have effective mechanism to attract, retain, and develop its human resources.

- It had a strong culture of employee participation, likely due in large part to the fact that it was 100% employee-owned and this resulted in consistently longer and more tedious process of decision making.

- The fact that at the time of data gathering, the organization was undergoing rapid growth and had an incoming workforce in its Alberta sites that were young, educated, and motivated. Rapid growth and change could have affected the time and ability the organization had in adapting its programs, services, and resources to accommodate a quick and large influx of new employees. As well, the age bracket of the new employees were noticeably lower than existing long-time employees and such age or generation gap could pose various issues in terms of differences in worldviews, work ethics, work attitude, work-life needs, technical and technological abilities, leadership expectations, and more.

In combination, these and other less evident conditions could shape the types of employment values BOB offered, the manner in which it saw and communicated about the sort of employer it was, the manner in which it delivered its employer brand promises, and the manner in which it developed and engaged its workforce. In terms of how or why these occurred was investigated in the qualitative component of the study.
The organization’s context was rich, complex, and unique to itself and most importantly, the conditions that formed the context could have either constrained or enabled the materialization of the organization’s intended change and outcome through how and why they shaped the organization’s decisions and actions (Pettigrew, 2012). Among these would be its human resources management strategies and practices, including its employer branding strategies and practices. This in turn would have likely affected in some manner and/or to some degree, the changes or outcomes thought to be yielded by these strategies and practices, such as employee performance.

In this study, the examination of how change in employee performance could have occurred as a result of factors in the employer branding process or of the process itself is one of a-slice-in-time rather than longitudinal with time series data. As continued observations to record change in employee performance was not possible, the focus turned to analyzing and interpreting how the history, patterns, factors, and process identified at that slice-in-time could have likely enhanced employee performance.

Aside from existing context, changing context would further affect processes such as the process of employer branding. The interesting distinction among process scholars is that those who subscribe to the Democritus ontology view organizations and the world as a whole as made of stable substances and those who subscribe to the Heraclitus ontology view organizations and the world as a whole as made of up of processes or a dynamic bundle of qualities (Rescher, 1996; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). One might interpret that in a Democritus view, an organization’s performance is a stable substance impacted by the organization’s processes, entities, players, or other performance relevant factors. When emerging external or internal forces disrupt or change the original capacity of the processes, entities, players, or other relevant factors to shape the organization’s performance, such organizational performance is then affected.

In a Heraclitus view, an organization’s performance is itself a series of activities and events combined with regular interplay that exists among entities. Together, they bring reality into being (Langley et. al., 2013). This series of activities and events as well as the entity interplay continually morph and reconstitute over time through interactions with one another. Over time, some qualities, which might include some part of the organization’s performance, endure longer than others but none can remain unchanged forever (Langley et. al., 2013).

The view of changing processes due to imposing forces or through organic metamorphosis could also apply to BOB’s case. Over time, BOB’s existing practices, processes, and relevant entities of employer branding that one concludes, at the time of the research, to have a positive influence on some employee performance, might naturally change, might no longer be effective, or might be even more effective due to the gradual evolution or sudden change in its: targeted or entering...
workforce and their needs; organizational priorities and corresponding performance expectations: leadership personnel and direction; and many other reasons.

This leads to the recognition that whatever configuration of strategies, processes, and entities that might work effectively at one point in time to yield an organization’s targeted outcome or reality will likely not work the same sometime down the road due to the organization’s responses (or lack thereof) to the external or internal forces that it will encounter over time as well as due to the continuous interactions among the different entities, players, and factors within BOB’s existing processes and systems.

As a whole, the context that affects the process and content of employer branding at BOB makes the entire phenomenon of employer branding at BOB and its potential relationship with employee performance a complex, intricate, and exciting case to study. A mix-method single case study was deemed the appropriate methodology to frame and execute the investigation of this complex phenomenon due to reasons explained in the next section of this chapter.
Using a Mixed-method Case Study

Kathy Eisenhardt (1989) defined a case study as “a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present in a single setting” (pg. 536). This study intended to do just that by exploring the “what” the “how” of employer branding and its relationship with employee performance within the dynamic setting of one deemed best-of-the-best employer in Alberta, Canada. The reasons for why and how this organization was chosen was already explored in depth in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

A case approach allows the researcher to take the necessary steps and pay the necessary attention to explore in a flexible, in depth, and triangulated manner, the complex phenomenon of employer branding and its relationship with employee performance, within a dynamic setting framed by a unique context. Due to the intent to explore both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of employer branding and its relationship with employee performance, a case study using mixed methods was deemed the appropriate choice for the investigation.

Complexity of phenomenon

Extant literature in employer branding and human resource management offers indication of the complex, cross-functional, and mixed-element nature of employer branding. In addition to its own complex nature, employer branding exists within an organic structure (the organization) with many stakeholders and even more complex interactions. As discussed in the literature review section of this proposal, current knowledge on employer branding is still superficial. Its elements, processes, and deliverables or even its underlying theoretical foundation/assumptions, purpose, and framework remain vague and open to a wide range of interpretations. The complex nature and interactions of employer branding need to be understood before any viable theories of relationships can be derived and further tested.

The case study was deemed an appropriate research method to investigate and offer empirical insight into such complex phenomenon. According to Yin (2002, p. 4 and 2003, p. 13), the case study method allows the researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context where complex interactions occur between the phenomenon and its context, making the boundaries between these two entities not readily evident. Anderson (1998) indicates that a case study is concerned with why and how things happen. It allows for investigation of differences between what was planned and what actually occurred. In this study, the researcher will be examining the phenomenon of employer branding as it is executed within its real-life organizational and human capital management context. It aims to explore if and how employer branding influences employee performance. How does the employer link its employer branding efforts to employee performance? How does influence occur? The research will attempt to answer these questions.
One aspect that might have added to the complexity of the phenomenon was the unclear contextual boundaries that exists. One of the primary outcomes to be derived from branding, be it corporate, product, service or employer branding, is “distinction” and “differentiation from its competitors” (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). In the case of employer branding, it is the distinction of the organization as the employer of choice for applicants and employees, thus also the differentiation of the organization from other employers. Each organization’s employer branding efforts as well as employer brand values, identity, and image may differ greatly, in response to the organization’s vision, mission, culture, human capital management philosophies and other influential factors. The number of combinations of employment benefits, identity, image, and many other values that make up an organization’s employer brand would be astronomical and every organization may have its own unique combination.

While this situation does not prevent large scale confirmatory investigations to be carried out on some aspects relevant to employer branding (e.g. finding out what most job seekers find attractive in a workplace), it does make it very difficult to explore the complex nature of employer branding and the relationships that are influenced by its many brand values, identity, or image, unless the investigation of the phenomenon is done within a bounded context (Miles and Huberman, 1994) such as a specific organization using its own specific set of employer brand values and promises, identity and image. When repeated case studies are done across various types of organizations over a reasonable period of time, patterns may emerge to confirm or refute proposed theories.

At this stage in the field of employer branding, no academic research has been found by the researcher on the relationship between employer branding, as represented by employer brand promise fulfilment, and employee performance, as represented by the dimensions of task performance and organizational citizenship performance, although there are likely some related human resource management studies. As such, it would be appropriate for the researcher to initiate her exploratory investigation with a specific organization that meets the research criteria, using the case study method.

**Triangulation of data**

The third reason why the case method was deemed an appropriate research method for this project was that it allowed for triangulation of data through the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The main research project was done through a single case study that used the following mixed-methods:

1. Qualitative method of in-depth interviews of managers to explore the intricacies of the organization’s employer branding exercise and its association with employee performance enhancement. It was used to answer research questions 1 and 2.

2. Material review to verify the presence of items or incidences asserted by managers in their interviews as well as to corroborate assertions by managers regarding work practices.
3. Quantitative methods of employee survey to determine the types of relationships that might exist between different aspects of employer brand promise fulfillment and employees’ organizational citizenship and task performances. It was used to answer research question 3.

In spite of the paradigm wars (Bryman, 2007, p. 14-15) that still exist between positivists and interpretivists, many researchers today are more accepting of paradigmatic diversity (Buchanan and Bryman, 2007) and contending that qualitative and quantitative methods can be combined and used in a pragmatic and mutually-enhancing manner (Eisner and Peshkin, 1990; Phillips, 1990; Schofield, 1990; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Buchanan and Bryman, 2007) to 1) triangulate data and offset the shortcomings of either paradigm (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) as well as strengthen the validity of research (Rhein, 2013), 2) allow for “methodological pluralism or eclecticism, which frequently results in superior research” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; p. 14), and 3) fulfill the mutual aim of better understanding of the realm in which we function (Haase and Myers, 1988).

According to Buchanan and Bryman (2007), such increased openness to paradigmatic diversity and methodological innovation is due to the fact that the field of social science (in which this doctoral research is grounded) is a meeting point for numerous disciplines including psychology; social psychology; sociology; economics; history; anthropology; and the business areas, and each of these disciplines and related sub-disciplines brings its own distinct perspectives and traditions that cannot be ignored (pg. 486). Ultimately, such mixed-methods “provides opportunities for greater insight than can be achieved by one approach alone” (pg. 487).

In this study, the researcher will not simply attempt to determine if and to what extent relationships exist between the studied dimensions of employer branding and the studied dimensions of employee performance. She will also endeavour to uncover why and how the relationships materialize and how they are preserved within its complex and organic environment. The increased depth in the investigation will likely enhance both the scholarly insight and practical use of the knowledge gained.

To gain the intended information, both quantitative and qualitative exercises have been used to collect data from various sources in the organization. These sources consist of managers who represent the organization and employees. Many employer branding studies thus far have been done solely from the perspectives of the managers or personnel responsible for developing and executing employer branding efforts in organizations. This is not surprising or unreasonable considering that much is still unknown about different aspects of employer branding and that it would make sense to first investigate these aspects (reference) with those who develop and/or deliver employer branding. However, in a study to determine the relationship between employer branding and employee performance, one would need the employees’ perspectives to generate a
more accurate, two-sided picture of this relationship. As such, this case study will seek responses from both managers and employees for this component of the study.

A mixed-method case study method allows for multi-angle investigation with different methods and sources. Yin (2003, p. 14) indicated that in a case study, the richness of the context may pose more variables of interest than data points, making it necessary to use multiple sources of evidence to seek converging data. There are certainly multiple variables of interest in this study, thus a combination of qualitative (document/material review and management interviews) and quantitative methods (employee survey) will be employed to 1) collect the information sought from the different sources, 2) determine overarching themes and 3) enhance validity of results (Yin, 2003).

With a leaning towards a post-positivist view, the researcher recognizes that the rich, valuable, and in depth information on the organization and its employer branding practices provided by the research participants is likely highly subjective, hence, sees a need to counter-balance and reduce this subjectivity through methods that would produce more objective evidence to verify, support, and/or provide further indications of the supposed truths gathered from the research participants. Rossman and Wilson (1985) indicate that the use of mixed methods would accomplish three critical feats, first being *corroboration* or convergence of findings, second being *elaboration* or provision of richness and detail, and third being *initiation* or prompting of new insight, interpretations, and areas for further exploration. As a whole, the researcher sees the use of mixed-methods to gain and analyze data from multiple relevant sources as a research approach that would allow the study to gain a more comprehensive and better substantiated insight into the matter under investigation.

This acknowledgement is not an indication that the researcher sees her chosen methods as the only methods that would accomplish the balancing act or that the mixed methods would eliminate all subjectivity from the research process and findings. It does, however, explains the researcher’s perceived need to counter-balance subjective thoughts with more objective measures and findings in order to get closer to whatever truth that define the phenomenon under investigation.

**The use of a single case**

The study of a single case was deemed a suitable choice to frame and execute the quantitative and qualitative methods. As identified in the literature review much is still unknown and need to be explored in detail about the intricate nature of employer branding. Ultimately, the more cases of employer branding that are examined, the richer and possibly more concrete the information one would likely obtain. However, in order to allow for a proper and detailed exploration of such phenomenon in a doctoral study, one has to take into consideration the limited resources, restricted timeframe, novice research capacity, and academic-research boundaries that confines a doctoral project. In an attempt to produce quality investigative work within the constraints of a
doctoral study, it is concluded that a thorough investigation of a single, purposefully chosen case would be appropriate. This can be followed up in the future with broader investigations involving more organizations, more research participants, and possibly more dimensions of employment branding.

**Case Selection**

In order to allow for the testing of the assumption and to yield rich and meaningful information that could truly enhance both theoretical and applications knowledge in the relationship between employer branding and employee performance, the researcher set out to find a case organization that has proven to have successfully branded itself as a great place to work, as confirmed year after year by its employees and recognized publicly as such by prestigious national best employer rankings and other media. As the number of such organizations was still considerable, the researcher further refined the search by narrowing the criteria to the following:

1. Have been recognized at least seven times by either one or both of the two rankings, Mediacorp Inc.’s *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* and Aon Hewitt’s *50 Best Employers in Canada*, for the seven year period from 2005, when both rankings began to exist simultaneously (*Canada’s Top 100 Employers existed before 50 Best Employers in Canada*) to 2011, when data collection for the case study began.

2. Have been recognized in other major Canadian national or provincial choice/top/best employer rankings and/or have articles written about their success or innovativeness as an employer. Have also won other awards for organizational, service, or operational excellence. These additional recognitions will strengthen the confirmation of the organization being not only a distinguished employer of choice but congruently also a distinguished organization in its operation, service or as a whole.

3. Have confirmed that it currently has an employer branding strategy in place and, more importantly, that it links its employer branding initiatives and activities to employee performance.

4. Is a service-oriented organization. Rationale for this criterion is provided below.

Employers that met criteria 1 and 4 were shortlisted for consideration. A review of criterion 2 was done on the shortlisted organizations. In the end, two organizations that also met criterion 2 as well as have head offices within accessible distance by the researcher were contacted for verification of criterion 3 and inquiry about participation in the research.
In the end, one organization was chosen due to meeting all criteria, willingness to participate, and having had a history of supporting different human resource and operational research within their organization.

In total, the search started with the consideration of 365 organizations that have won a ranking in either Mediacorp Inc.’s *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* or Aon Hewitt’s *50 Best Employers in Canada* from the period 2005 to 2011. Then the list was reduced to 33 employers (9%) that had met criterion 1 and further reduced until organizations that met all four criteria and were readily accessible by the researcher were chosen.

The organization selected for the research not only met but actually surpassed the criteria set. Well-respected and a multiple award winner in the environmental field in Canada and abroad, this organization is known as an innovative, high performance, high integrity organization. It is not only recognized as a great place to work but also as a great and trustworthy organization with which to do business. The organization would have been an ideal case organization regardless of whether it was or was not accessible by the researcher. The fact that it was accessible to the researcher was an added advantage.

**Profile of Chosen Case Organization and Research Sites**

The chosen organization, herein known as BOB (Best of the Best) has achieved the following recognitions:

- Has been recognized for a combined total of 10 times by *Canada’s Top 100 Employers and 50 Best Employers in Canada* rankings between 2005 and 2011. Of the 365 employers that have been recognized by either *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* and/or *50 Best Employers in Canada* from 2005 to 2011, only 23 have ever made both lists. Of those that have ever made both lists, only five have made them for a combined total of 10 times of more. That puts BOB in the top 1.37% of recognized best employers in Canada. BOB continues to remain on one or both lists for 2012 and 2013. Ultimately, BOB is not just one of Canada’s best employers but is, in this situation, one of the very, very small number of Canada’s best of the best employers.

- In Canada, BOB has also been recognized as one of *Canada’s Top Employers for Young People, Canada’s Best Managed Companies, Province of British Columbia’s Top 55 Employers, Alberta’s Top 60 Employers*, and *The Financial Post’s Ten Best Companies to Work For*. Outside of Canada, BOB has been recognized as one of *Sunday Times’ 100 Best Companies to Work For – United Kingdom*, *Deloitte Best Company to Work for – Africa*, *Hewitt’s Best Employer Awards Finalist* (for five consecutive years) – Australia, and *CE News Best Environmental*
BOB’s ongoing and multiple recognitions as a great employer reflects not only the effectiveness of its human resource management practices but also the success of its ability to strengthen and maintain its employer brand through repeated participations in such competitions and then the publicities of its many public recognitions. It is realistic and conceivable that employers that have but do not publicly compare or confirm their effective and innovative human resource management practices are not as well-known to the Canadian workforce as a whole or even to the workforce within their own industries. The creation and maintenance of an employer brand requires the organization’s conscious and continuous effort to not only build superior human resource programs and practices but also to keep the organization and its practices known and relevant in the eyes of job seekers and job holders. It appears that BOB has been able to do both very successfully, making this best of the best Canadian organization a worthy case study.

BOB is a 100% employee-owned, global company that provides independent environmental consulting, design, and construction services. Each year BOB manages over 30,000 projects for its clients in various regions of the world. BOB was founded in 1960 by three partners and, according to the organization’s most recent annual report (2012), it currently has over 9,000 employees in 180 sites in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North America and South America.

Over 90% of BOB’s workforce is full-time and the largest group of professionals, consisting of over 2,700 personnel, are engineers, followed by about 1,900 personnel in administration. The majority of BOB’s workforce is between 20 to 50 years old, with the largest group between 30 to 40 years old. As well, over 60% of BOB’s workforce is men. BOB has experienced a 76% employee growth since 2007. BOB has between 400 and 800 job postings globally at any given time. In 2012, it hired 1,200 new employees in Canada alone. In 2012, BOB’s Canadian operation also maintained a retention rate of 88%, with the retention rates for its core group of 20 to 50 years old ranging from 81% to 89%.

BOB has over 3,600 personnel in Canada, representing the largest percentage of its 9,000 strong workforce. It was not feasible for the organization to coordinate the participation of all Canadian sites for this case study, hence, the investigations for this case study were conducted at two of the organization’s key Canadian sites, Calgary and Edmonton. Both sites are located in the province of Alberta and are within 300 km of each other. Calgary, with 750 employees (2012), has the largest workforce of all of its global sites, while Edmonton has 180 employees (2012). While BOB considers itself as not having a specific global headquarters, Calgary was seen as the organization’s unofficial global headquarters, with key leaders, including the CEO, located at that site. For this specific case study, Calgary was an ideal site as it has served as the organization’s unofficial incubation site for human resource management practices and initiatives. Various human resource initiatives have been designed, developed, and trialed before being rolled out to other sites in
Canada and beyond. This site has also been instrumental in establishing and enhancing the organization’s employer brand. Their employer brand communication and enhancement efforts include ensuring the organization’s continual participation and recognition in *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* and *50 Best Employers in Canada* rankings. Edmonton is the closest ‘large’ site to Calgary and was approved by the organization as a second investigation site. Adding another key site to the investigation was particularly useful in the researcher’s assessment of whether the organization’s employer branding efforts and outcomes remain consistent outside of what might be deemed as the nucleus site for the organization’s employer branding initiatives.

BOB conducts an annual employee engagement survey using the Gallup Q12 employee engagement questionnaire. In 2012, its mean employee engagement score for the Edmonton and Calgary sites, where the case study was conducted, was 80%, a score that had steadily gone up from the previous years. The mean employee participation rate was at over 90%. BOB’s employer branding and overall human resource practices that led to its best employer and employer of choice status was explored and is discussed in detail in the results and analysis component of this dissertation.

**Rationale for choosing an employer from the service sector**

While the pilot study that informed this research did not distinguish between service and other sectors, this research will focus on an employer in the service sector. In Canada, where this research was conducted, 75% of its workforce and 70% of its Gross Domestic Product is attributable to the service sector (Industry Canada, Jul 2009 & Aug 2009). From extant branding literature, one would conclude that the understanding and enhancement of employee performance within the service sector is of major importance (Martin *et al.*, 2005; Bodderas *et al.*, 2011). That is because a service-producing organization’s performance is mainly or solely affected by employee performance, which is unlike a goods-producing organization, where performance is affected less by people and more by products and their support systems such as delivery time, warranty, bundle discounts, etc. (Zerbe *et al.*, 1998).

For a service-producing organization, employees’ expressed views, behaviours and actions can 1) be taken as a direct projection of the organization’s corporate/service brand values (Ind, 2001; Nguyen & Leblanc, 2002; Punjaisri *et al.*, 2008), 2) have significant influence on customers’ impression of the organization (de Chernatony, 1999), 3) directly impact customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention (Keaveney, 1995; Zeithaml *et al.*, 2006), and 4) noticeably affect the organization’s overall reputation (Lloyd, 1990, p. 182). As there may be little perceived difference between service offerings (McDonald *et al.*, 2001), employees’ performance would become the key generator of distinction and value for their organization and its corporate or service brand (Pfeffer, 1994). Employees’ poor performances in such a setting can literally destroy their organizations’
reputation and/or brand image (McEwan & Buckingham, 2001) as well as bottom line. The direct effects that employees’ performance have on the competitiveness and survival of service-producing organizations combined with the significant numbers in employment and GDP attributable to this sector makes a service-sector-focused research relevant, essential, and valuable.

Data Collection
Data for this case study was collected through multiple sources and activities, namely documents and materials review, managers interviews, and employee survey. The value of having a chain or multiple sources of evidence has been highlighted by a number of scholars (e.g. Yin, 1984; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The researcher was able to verify both organizationally-written, and interviewee-verbalized claims by cross-referencing documents and survey results throughout the data collection and data analysis period. Such triangulation reduces bias (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and increases the reliability of information gained in the case study (Yin, 2003).

Materials Review
The data collection exercise began with the gathering and review of relevant organizational documents and materials. Materials reviewed included:

- Global and Canada Website Content
  - Purpose, vision, and values; leadership structure, organizational foci (health and safety, sustainable development), history; career information – recruitment programs, compensation and benefits overview, job postings, highlights of being an award winning workplace; types of services offered, featured clients and projects; news, awards listing, newsletters, professional publications, annual reports, and fast fact sheet.

- Intranet Content (the intranet is an employees-only site)
  - Employee engagement survey reports, exit interview reports, training options and schedule, internal occurrences, organizational updates.

- BOB’s 50th Anniversary book

- Organizational or service Promotion materials not on the website

- Orientation materials
  - Code of conduct, career pathing, organizational policies, benefits listing
Starting the investigation by reviewing the organization’s documents and materials provided the researcher with a foundational understanding of some key aspects of the organization including its governance structure, operational structure, history and evolution, types and magnitude of services offered, employee activities, general characteristics of its workforce as well as its declared organizational values and priorities. In addition, materials such as the code of conduct and organizational policies provided the researcher with an awareness of the specific human resources management processes and practices within the organization. Materials such as the group benefit listing and the organization’s training options and schedule on its intranet were useful in confirming the presence of specific employee provisions, and materials such as employee engagement reports and exit interview reports allowed the researcher to get a sense of how engaged employees were within their departments and the organization as a whole, reasons for employee exits, and issues of concern to employees.

As a whole, information gained from the materials review had allowed the researcher to establish an initial knowledge framework and preliminary themes that were used to inform the subsequent managers interviews. The information provided a background understanding and context to certain assertions made by interviewees as well as to the data gathered in the interview. The researcher was also able to verify certain claims made by interviewees by referring back to the materials present.

**Managers’ Interviews**

After the gathering and review of the organizations’ documents and materials, the data gathering continued with one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with:

Sample 1: Five managers who were responsible for designing, planning, developing, implementing, and overseeing the employer branding efforts and initiatives in the organization.

Sample 2: Fourteen managers who had no official responsibility for planning and overseeing the organization’s employer branding efforts or initiatives but were involved in delivering some of the initiatives, as directed.

The ultimate goal of this case study is to determine the extent of influence that employer branding has on employee performance. However, prior to verifying the presence and extent of such a relationship, the investigation started with the exploration of how this best-of-the-best employer in Canada linked employee performance to employer branding and how it attempted to enhance its employees’ performance through its employer branding efforts, particularly the delivery of its brand promises. The complexities and challenges faced by the organization in its employer branding efforts were also examined.
As much complexity is present in the consideration, selection, execution, and on-going management of an organization’s employer branding strategies, an in-depth semi-structured interview would allow the researcher to thoroughly probe the subject with the participants - delve into perceptions that might not have been readily or easily shared, explore the basis for unanticipated assumptions, seek evidence for claims, and ultimately extract information that might not have been readily present and would otherwise not be extractable with a more restrictive method like survey.

Along with existing literature as well as results of the pilot study and document/material review, the insight gained from this exercise informed the development of the employee survey questionnaire.

**Paradigmatic influence on the view of interview and data handling in this doctoral research**

Corresponding to the main research paradigms of positivism and interpretivism are the neo-positivist and romanticist views of interview. In line with the positivism, neo-positivists see interview as a tool or a set of strict protocols used to establish context-free truth about reality in a manner that minimizes the researcher’s influence and other biases (Alvesson, 2003; Alvesson, 2011; Qu and Dumay, 2011). Neo-positivists see interview participants as truth tellers and assume that their interview responses mirror reality (Alvesson, 2003) and accurately reflect their experiences as well as the observed condition of the phenomenon being studied (Alvesson, 2011; Qu and Dumay, 2011). Hence, under this view, a researcher’s role is to be neutral (Qu and Dumay, 2011) and in some way detached, and to objectively use the interview process as a “pipeline for transmitting knowledge” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997, pg. 113). Neo-positivists prefer the use of structured interview as it asks the same list and order of questions of each interview participants. Such approach is assumed to minimize interviewer interference (Alvesson, 2003) as well as evoke more rational (Qu and Dumay, 2011) and directly comparable interview responses (Berg, 1998).

Contrary to neo-positivist is the romanticist view of interview. Romanticists see the interviewer as an empathetic listener (Qu and Dumay, 2011), treat the interviewer and interview participants as equals and emphasize the "interactivity and closeness“ to participants involving the development of mutual trust and commitment (Alvesson, 2003, p. 16). Romanticists often use unstructured interview, where there is no pre-set questions presented to each participant as such fixed set of questions are seen as tainting or priming the participants’ minds. Instead, they try to make participants feel relaxed and unassessed (Hannabuss, 1996) so that real conversation where “give and take” and “emphatic understanding” can occur (Fontana and Frey, 1994). It is assumed that this would make it possible for the interviewer to activate the participants’ interpretative capabilities (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997), access the participants’ own non-interviewer-influenced perspective on the phenomenon being studied (Green, 1998), and ultimately, as Miller and
Glassner (1997) put it, gain "deeper, fuller conceptualizations of those aspects of our subjects' lives we are most interested in understanding" (pg. 103).

While neo-positivist and romanticists may differ greatly in their view of the roles of the interviewer and the participant, or of how best to gain information from participants, they appear to share the same perception that data they gain mirrors reality as well as share the same goal of getting the "truth" from the interview participants. Both neo-positivism and romanticism have been criticized for: treating interview participants as passive vessels of answers; ignoring the subjective nature of the social interactions between the interviewer, the participants, and other parties in picture such as the employer; not taking into account power differentials and factors that might influence interview responses such as the differences between the interviewers and the participants in terms gender, age, professional status, ethnicity and appearance (Qu and Dumay, 2011). Both have been faulted for likely producing superficial, cautious, and possibly even untruthful responses from interview participants (Alvesson, 2003).

The management interview in this doctoral research is informed by the belief shared by many researchers and that is, no matter how well-informed and substantiated one’s interpretation of data and findings may be, it is still not possible to fully escape one’s own subjectivity (De Loo and Lowe, 2011), be they resulted from the interviewer or the interview participants or as in most cases, from both parties. In the case of this doctoral research, the researcher recognizes the possibility that she had injected subjectivity into the interview, either during the development of the interview protocol, selection of interview questions, delivery of the interview sessions, and/or interpretation of the data and evidence. The researcher also recognizes the likelihood of subjectivity in the responses provided by interview participants. In particular, an interview participant’s account of his/her personal experience with the organization’s employer branding efforts could be very different than that of another person. His/her own actual experience could in fact be different than that which he/she described to the researcher. This could be due to various factors (Lowe, 2001) including but not limited to: his/her personal desire or the organization’s expectation for him/her to tow the party line (Covaleski et. al., 1998), his/her lack of personal awareness of what he/she experienced or felt, his/her lack of organizational awareness of what was really happening in the workplace, his/her interest to appear supportive of the organization’s employer branding efforts, his/her distrust of the research motive, assurance of confidentiality (Qu and Dumay, 2011), and/or of the consequences of telling the truth. Together with the interviews of other participants, the recorded experiences could be a large or small variation of the facts (Lowe, 2001) in the organization’s overall situation or even in each participant’s own situation. They could also be an indication of impression management (Alvesson, 2011; Qu and Dumay, 2011) or indoctrination.

The recognition of the large amount of subjectivity that is possibly present in the interview process and in the data it yields prompted the researcher of this doctoral research to be more skeptical but at the same time not dismissive of the responses gained from interview participants. Where
possible, the researcher made effort to find evidence and/or counter-evidence to substantiate or refute information gained. In spite of the effort, it was almost impossible to yield fully objective conclusions about the phenomenon being studied. As stated by Riessman (1993), the best that one can achieve is a “credible, trustworthy account of specific events or phenomena, occurring or witnessed, in a particular context” (in De Loo and Lowe, 2011, pg. 25).

While the above might be true, the management interview in this doctoral research is also informed by the belief that the there is great importance in ensuring that accounts presented by researchers are in fact credible and trustworthy and that the recognition of the existence of subjectivity in the interview process and/or responses does not give a researcher the liberty to increase subjectivity by presenting his/her own interpretation without adequate reference or counter-reference to the original materials gathered. Society has often considered research conclusions as something that people can use as reliable references to guide their actions and decisions. Such people might be corporate leaders, government officials, policy and law makers, educators, physicians, scientists, parents, guardians, and many more. They regard, rightly or wrongly, research as an exercise done by experts who would help to shine the light on the “truth” – credible and trustworthy accounts of things and situations. Some of these actions and decisions based on the reported findings of the research can have serious consequences on the lives of those on the receiving end of the decisions and actions. As such, one can argue that researchers have a professional and moral obligation to present to the best of their ability, interpretations and conclusions supported by reasonable and verifiable evidence or counter-evidence. Doing so does not inhibit researchers from presenting their opinions or speculations as just that - opinions or speculations. In the case of this doctoral research, the truth is defined not as absolutely truth independent of context but rather interpretations or accounts founded on evidence or counter-evidence. Without evidence or counter-evidence, relevant and speculation forming accounts will still be presented but they will be done so as participant assertions or speculations that are not substantiated.

Thirdly, the management interview in this doctoral research is additionally informed by Mat Alvesson’s (2003) explanation of the localist view in that interview statements need be examined and understood in their social context and that interview should not be treated as just an instrument for collecting data in some independent setting outside of the empirical situation.

Ultimately, the management interview in this doctoral research does not fully subscribe to any one of the most common views of interview and instead, is informed by a combination of the researcher’s own ontological-epistemological worldview and acknowledgement of some logical and pragmatic operational and methodological tenets within each view of interview. In this, the management interview in this doctoral research leans towards the reflexive view of interview (Alvesson, 2003; Roulston, 2010; Alvesson, 2011; Qu and Dumay, 2011).
Alvesson (2003) explained in his article, Beyond neopositivisms, romantics and localists: a reflective approach to interviews in organizational research:

A reflexive approach does not privilege a particular ontology but can in principle be combined with various paradigms and specific theories, although reflexivity in action may well mean that various “substantive approaches” are not left intact, since reflexivity means challenging and reconsidering assumptions and beliefs of what data are all about.

(Original text on pg. 25-26)

Reflexivity operates with a framework that stimulates an interplay between producing interpretations and challenging them. It includes opening up the phenomena through exploring more than one set of meanings and acknowledging ambiguity in the phenomena and the line(s) of inquiry favored, and it means bridging the gap between epistemological concerns and method.

(Original text on pg. 17)

Alvesson (2003, pg. 27-30) explained that this would result in implications for:

- Methodological practice: Recognizing the influence of organizational politics on interview participants’ ability participate honestly or effectively; relying less on interview to be the only or central form of data collection; and understanding the limited ability of the interview to translate a theoretical understanding into a set of technical rules.

- More rigorous and reflexive approach to the use of interview materials for conventional purposes: Recognizing that the validity of interview responses may not be high, thus the need to be skeptical and challenging but not rejecting of the responses; being more modest about empirical claims; and using the interview materials for inspirational or illustrative purposes instead of claiming them as basis for the truth and/or for development of theory.

- Novel research questions and new line of interpretation: Recognizing that the interview itself aside from the documented interview responses as an empirical situation to be studied, particularly in terms of organizational discourse – for example, understanding the dynamics of the interview situation, the participant’s view of him/herself in the organizational context, the forms of language used, and/or how stories can give deeper insight into what participants may be truly thinking, feeling, and doing in comparison of what he/she said, not said, or said in a redirected manner in the interview, of what he/she is thinking, feeling, and doing.

As highlighted in earlier paragraphs in this section, the researcher of this doctoral study shares the sentiments expressed by Alvesson regarding implications on methodological practice and the need for more reflexive approach to the use of interview materials. In addition, the management
interview in this doctoral research took note of the need to be aware of the different factors that can shape the answers of an interview participant and in response, incorporated where possible, some of the proposed actions to gain a more accurate picture of the reality of the managers’ experiences and observations regarding their organization’s employer branding efforts.

**Sampling for the Managers Interviews**

The population of managers in two Alberta branches approved by the organization for this case study consisted of 42 individuals, with 35 working in the Calgary branch and seven working in the Edmonton branch. This number did not include the organization’s highest level (Global) of executive officers.

Firstly, a purposive sample of managers who were responsible for planning, implementing, and overseeing the organization’s employer branding efforts and initiatives were assembled for the interview. The sample for this group was not drawn on a random basis. As the population was expected to be small and the aim was to gain as much insight as possible into the organization’s employer branding strategies and efforts, the researcher requested the assistance of the case organization in identifying for the interview, individuals with the most significant involvement in the planning, execution, and direction of the organization’s employer branding strategies and efforts.

In total, five managers were selected by the organization due to their direct involvement in planning, implementing, and overseeing the organization’s employer branding strategies. They included the Managing Principal of the Prairie Region, the Regional Human Resources Leader (called Human Development Leader), The National Recruitment Leader, The Corporate Communications Manager as well as the Corporate Marketing Manager. These five individuals represented the entire population rather than a sample from the management group. All five individuals were based in the Calgary branch.

The second sample of managers invited to participate in the interview consisted of individuals who did not have any official responsibility for planning or overseeing the organization’s employer branding efforts or initiatives but would, simply by the nature of their role as managers, be involved in delivering and maintaining some of the initiatives. The sample from this group was drawn randomly from a total population of 37 remaining managers (after five individuals were drawn from the original total of 42 managers for the first purposive sample).

Using Excel Random Sort, the participants were drawn on a random basis from a list of managers provided by the organization. In total 14 individuals were drawn, representing over 1/3 (38%) of the 37 remaining managers. Ten (10) of the participants were drawn from the organization’s largest branch in Alberta as well as Canada, which is their Calgary branch. The other four participants were drawn from their second major office in Alberta, which is their Edmonton branch.
There were a couple of key reasons to include two different samples of managers in the interview component of this investigation. First of all, in such an exploratory case study, it would be essential to gain information and insight from individuals directly involved in creating and intensifying the phenomenon being investigated. Such individuals would have firsthand knowledge of a majority, if not all aspects of the phenomenon including goals and objectives, decisions that were made, the rationale behind those decisions, actions that were taken, challenges that were encountered, and outcomes of their efforts, etc. Individuals not directly involved might have some degree of knowledge in one aspect or another of the phenomenon but they would likely not have the overall picture and, in the case of employer branding, a lower level of understanding of the complexities within the different elements and processes of employer branding. Some of these complexities include challenges in materializing certain employer branding initiatives, efforts to effectively align employer branding strategies to corporate values and strategies, ability to use employer branding initiatives to shape employee performances, and so on. In order to explore the employer branding efforts within a specific organization thoroughly, it would make logical sense to seek the insight of those that know the most about the employer branding efforts within the organization.

On the other hand, there is also noticeable value in gathering information and insight from individuals not directly involved in creating and intensifying the phenomenon being investigated but who experienced as well as aiding in the intensification of the phenomenon. In this specific case, the individuals would be managers, who, while not involved in planning, implementing, or overseeing the organizations employer branding efforts, would be expected to deliver or maintain established initiatives, simply by the nature of them being in a position where managing and motivating employees was a daily part of their role. Most importantly, their reflections would allow the researcher to assess the degree of consistency, in various aspects of employer branding being investigated, between what was intended by the employer branding architects in sample 1 and what was subscribed and delivered to employees by these managers in sample 2. Were there any gaps between what was intended by the organization (as represented by sample 1) and what was delivered to employees by this management group? If so, what might have contributed to the gaps and how have these gaps impacted what was received by employees? In addition to secondary data such as organizational materials and documents, information gained from this second sample of managers also served as a source of triangulation for the data collected from sample 1.

The 19 participants in samples 1 and 2 spanned across technical and non-technical departments. There were no participants from the same department. Eleven of the participants were males while eight were females. Years of service range from two to 17, with the median being eight years. Five of the participants were categorized as Associates (3 males and 2 females) while another two were categorized as Principals (1 male and 1 female). The remaining 12 were managers but were neither Associates nor Principals.
Interview Questionnaire Design, Development, Validity Assurance, and Execution

The format of the interview was semi-structured, with questions being open-ended, allowing participants the opportunity to elaborate on their answers. Qu and Dumay (2011, pg. 246) identified the semi-structured interview as involving “prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses”. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) hailed it as the most effective and convenient means of gathering information since it provides the interviewer with the flexibility to adjust his/her style, pace, and ordering of questions. Such flexibility is believed to be crucial: 1) in giving interview participants’ the autonomy to respond in their own terms and in the way that they think and use language, 2) in generating the richest response from the interview participants, and 3) in allowing the interviewer to better understand the way the interview participants perceive the phenomenon being studied (Qu and Dumay, 2011, pg. 246).

Questions were designed to collect participants’ observation and perception of the following:

- Departments and personnel involved in shaping, planning, developing, communicating, implementing, and evaluating BOB’s employer brand and branding efforts.
- The types and significance of employer brand promises extended by BOB to its employees.
- Methods of verifying and communicating the attractiveness of the organization’s employer brand promises.
- The key goals that BOB wishes to achieve with its employer branding efforts and how the results were measured.
- How BOB links its employer branding efforts to employee performance and the creation of a distinctive and desirable employment experience.
- The means through which BOB fulfils its employer brand promises and how the processes or outcomes influence performance mediators or actual performance of employees.
- Managers’ perception of whether BOB’s overall work environment is distinctive and desirable and, if so, how so and how that was materialized.
- Barriers and challenges encountered by managers and/or the organization as a whole in their employer branding efforts.

The Management Interview Questionnaire is included in this dissertation as Appendix 6.
The main questions to yield the information above were augmented by sub-questions that the researcher would ask to probe for further and more detailed responses from a participant who had not adequately answered the main questions.

The process to enhance the validity, clarity and comprehension of the interview questionnaire started with the researcher’s discussion of appropriate interview content with her academic supervisor, based on the research and interview objectives. The researcher added, deleted, and revised the interview questions several times upon further review of literature, further discussions with her academic supervisor, and a deeper consideration of the types of information that needed to be gained in order to address the research objectives and questions. Once completed, the draft of the interview questionnaire was then reviewed by the researcher’s academic supervisor and tested by two of the researcher’s academic colleagues, both of whom have completed their own doctoral dissertation and conducted regular research in their academic career, thus having a firsthand understanding of some of the challenges involved in developing appropriate interview questions and questionnaires. Clarity, validity as well as redundancy of questions were examined. Ideas of how to ensure common operational understanding of critical but subjective terminologies (such as the term ‘employer branding’) were also discussed. In response, some interview questions were re-phrased to improve clarity and information-yielding intent.

A following draft of the questionnaire was tested by four of the researcher’s academic colleagues from two academic institutions: 1 DBA, 2 MBA, 1 PHD – all from the fields of Business and Management.

In addition to further refinement of the questions, an interview protocol was developed where interviews would start off with a brief explanation by the researcher of the well-referenced definitions for ‘employer brand’ and ‘employer branding’, as are found in extant literature. Other definitions offered during interviews included ‘employer identity’ and ‘employer image’. In addition, a list of examples of employment benefits or values, as are present in extant literature, was also made available for participant reference. This list was prepared to accompany one of the main questions to inquire about the employment benefits or values provided by the organization to its job applicants and employees. In order to avoid leading or biasing participants, this list was only offered when a participant appeared fully unknowing or unsure of the meaning of employment benefits or values, as intended in the subject of employer branding.

The final draft of the questionnaire was sent to the researcher’s liaison at BOB, who was its Regional Human Resources Lead Officer for a final review, testing and feedback. No further revisions were made thereafter.

The interviews were carried out, first in the Calgary branch and then in the Edmonton branch, within a one month duration. Each interview took 60 to 90 minutes to complete and were recorded using a digital recorder. The interview protocol was used to facilitate the interviews. As the
interviews were semi-structured, some deeper probing of particular scenarios or questions as well as some deviations from the main questions did occur. The purpose of doing so was to allow the researcher to seek further insight that would otherwise not have been made readily available. This was particularly true when a participant was explaining some intricate processes, successes, frustrations, or challenges related to specific employer branding and/or employee engagement or commitment enhancement activities. Probing further yielded explanations and examples that served as further evidence to claims made or yielded reconsideration of statements made as no sufficient explanation or examples could be provided.

**Employee Survey**

Following the management interviews, two surveys were conducted, one with employees at the Calgary and Edmonton branches and another with individuals that applied for employment at BOB though its web application system.

The employee survey was created to verify if and to what degree relationships exist between the fulfilment of employer brand promises and employees’ organizational citizenship and task performances. Employees from all levels and departments at the Calgary and Edmonton sites were invited to participate in the survey.

The survey method was employed for this mission because it is versatile, inexpensive to administer, and allows for consistency in the information sought and compared (Check and Schutt, 2012). In addition, the anonymous nature of the survey makes it easier for participants to answer the questions honestly.

The survey was set up as a self-administered questionnaire on www.surveymonkey.com, a web-based survey centre that is accessible 24 hours a day from almost anywhere around the world. As applicants for jobs at BOB’s Calgary and Edmonton sites come from all parts of Canada and around the world and as BOB’s workforce was geographically dispersed, either because they were at different sites, out working on environmental projects in the field, or away from their sites for business purposes, the web-based method would be ideal in that it would allow the researcher to reach the sample with ease, regardless of an individual’s location (Kiesler and Sproull, 1986; Sproull, 1986). When compared to the in-person pen-and-paper method, mail-out method, or phone method, a web-based tool like Survey Monkey has several other key advantages. First of all, there would not be any need for manual mail-out of the surveys or manual seeking-out of participants as participants could directly access the survey online. Therefore, the researcher could reach potential participants within a very short period of time. A web-based tool like Survey Monkey is also relatively low-cost and time efficient to use (Kiesler and Sproull, 1986; Sproull, 1986; Goree and Marszalek, 1995; Schmidt, 1997). No additional mailing cost would be incurred.
and no extra time would be needed to engage in phone or face-to-face interactions with participants. One significant advantage of using a web-based tool like Survey Monkey is the reduction or even elimination of the need for manual coding and entry of data (Zhang, 2000). Reducing or eliminating this potential human error would have a direct impact on the accuracy of data being analyzed.

In spite of many advantages of using a web-based system to administer the survey, there are also disadvantages that need attention. In this case study, the researcher consulted with the organization on the possibility of a web-based system biasing the sample and data collected (Zhang, 2000). After all, participants had to be technologically and web proficient, be able to access a tool where they could open up the survey online to participate, and be sufficiently knowledgeable on how to fill out and submit an online form (Kiesler and Sproull, 1986; Sproull, 1986). Those with limitations might not want to or be able to participate in the survey and should this be the case, their view would not be represented in the data collected for analysis (Zhang, 2000). BOB acknowledged that a very small number of employees might not be as technologically or web savvy and an example of these would be employees for janitorial or cafeteria positions as such abilities were not part of their job requirement. As such, it was possible that their views would not be sufficiently captured in the surveys.

The concern regarding the time required to complete the web-based survey and the corresponding risk of survey abandonment was also considered. This concern is addressed in subsequent paragraphs of this dissertation.

**Sampling for Employee Survey**

The researcher received permission from BOB to survey its employees at the Calgary and Edmonton sites. At the time that the survey was facilitated, BOB reported that it had 750 employees in Calgary and 180 employees in Edmonton, totaling 930 employees. Based on a confidence level of 95%, margin of error of 5%, and degree of variability of 50%, it was calculated that a minimum of 272 responses would be needed. When the employee survey closed, 316 survey responses were received.

**Employee Survey Design, Development, Validity Assurance, and Execution**

The survey was designed to assess the relationship between employees’ perceived level of expectation fulfillment by their employer for employment benefits or values promised to them and their perceived level of frequency in their own demonstration of positive performance. Specific types of performance chosen for evaluation in this case study were organizational citizenship performance (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993) and task performance (Borman and Motowidlo, 1997).
In order to gain the data required for analysis, the employee survey questionnaire was broken down into five sections of inquiry:

Section 1 - Employee demographics:
In this section, employees were asked for their gender, age bracket, highest level of education, tenure bracket, branch and division in which they were employed (there were two branches\(^{23}\) and eight divisions\(^{24}\) for selection) as well as their employment category\(^{25}\).

Section 2 - Employees’ perception of how well BOB had fulfilled their expectation for each of the employment benefits or values promised:
A scale consisting of 20 employment benefits or values were listed for this section of inquiry. These were the 20 employment benefits or values most cited by the 19 managers in the management interviews as being BOB’s key offerings to employees. Every item included had been cited by at least three interview respondents. For each employment benefit, employees were asked to rate using a Likert-type response system, whether they had no expectation for the benefit or whether their expectation for the benefit had been not at all, not adequately, adequately, or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer.

Factor analysis was performed on this 20 item employer brand promise scale, which revealed that the degree of common variance among the twenty variables was “marvelous” (KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy) = 0.923). Results of the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2=2485.96; \text{df}=190; p<0.001$) showed that the sample inter-correlation matrix did not come from a population in which the inter-correlation matrix was an identity matrix. As such, the factors extracted will account for substantial amount of variance. Reliability analysis revealed the Cronbach’s alpha to be 0.907, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the employer brand promise scale with this sample. Specific items for the scale are presented in Appendix 2: Employer Brand Promises.

Section 3 – Employees’ work experience and employment intention:
In this section, employees were asked how much they agree that BOB had provided them with an employment experience that was both desirable and distinctive compared to what they knew or had experienced with other similar organizations in the industry. They were also asked how much they agreed that BOB was great place to work, a place in which they would be happy to spend the rest of their career, and a place they would frequently think of leaving.

There has not been any consensus on the definitive measures of employer branding success. However, among those that have been proposed are recognition of the

\(^{23}\) Calgary and Edmonton
\(^{24}\) Environmental Project Management, Information Management, Corporate Services, and 4 technical, environmental, and engineering related divisions. These divisions are not specifically named in order to maintain BOB's anonymity.
\(^{25}\) Principal/Associate vs. non-Principal/Associate and Manager vs. non-Manager.
organization as being a great place to work (McLaren, 2010), confirmation of the provision of desirable and distinctive employment experience (Moroko, 2009), and to some degree, also turnover intention. Employees’ confirmation of their presence offers an indication that the employer has been successful in fulfilling its part of the psychological contract, thus strengthening employee trust and engagement and these in turn affect performance. As such, it would be appropriate to assess whether such is achieved by an employer that is deemed to have a highly and consistently effective employer branding program. For each expressed notion, employees were asked to rate using a Likert-type response system, whether they strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the notion.

Section 4 – Employees’ acknowledgement of how frequently they have demonstrated ‘positive’ organizational citizenship performance behaviours as well as task performance actions in the last 12 months of their employment at BOB:

Existing studies on organizational citizenship performance have introduced several organizational citizenship behavioural scales or expansions to the scales to capture the performance (George and Brief, 1992; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Fetter, 1993; MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 1994; Moorman and Blakely, 1995; Borman and Motowidlo, 1997; Podsakoff et al., 2000; Lee and Allen, 2002; Vey and Campbell, 2004; and more). In combination, these different scales introduced over 45 behavioural descriptors that represent the seven common organizational citizenship performance themes highlighted by Podsakoff and his colleagues (2002): (1) Helping Behavior, (2) Sportsmanship, (3) Organizational Loyalty, (4) Organizational Compliance, (5) Individual Initiative, (6) Civic Virtue, and (7) Self Development.

In order to have a scale that contains a reasonable but not excessive number of behavioural descriptors that would capture all of the seven themes identified as well as be relevant to BOB’s work setting, the researcher coordinated a scale for this survey that was made up of 17 behavioural descriptors presented in different past studies, as outlined in Table in Appendix 3: Organizational Citizenship Performance Scale

All of the behavioural descriptors used in this case study had been applied in previous studies published in peer reviewed academic journals. Some descriptors had been applied in more than one published study (see Table in Appendix 3: Organizational Citizenship Performance Scale).

Factor analysis was performed on the 17 item organizational citizenship performance scale, which revealed that the degree of common variance among the seventeen variables is "meritorious" (KMO=0.859). Results of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2=1582.24; df=136; p<0.001$) showed that the sample inter-correlation matrix here also did not come from a population in which the inter-correlation matrix is an identity matrix. Reliability
analysis showed the Cronbach's alpha to be 0.862, indicating a high level of internal consistency for the OCP scale with this specific sample.

The task performance scale used in this survey contained seven behavioural descriptors. The scale was directly adopted from the in-role behaviour scale used by William and Anderson in their 1991 study entitled *Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviours*. The behavioural descriptors used are as outlined in Table in Appendix 4: Task Performance Scale.

Factor analysis was also performed on this 7 item task performance scale, which revealed that the degree of common variance among the 7 variables is "meritorious" (KMO=0.835). Results of the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2=694.56; \text{df}=21; p<0.001$) showed that the sample inter-correlation matrix did not come from a population in which the inter-correlation matrix is an identity matrix. As such, the factors extracted will account for substantial amount of variance. Reliability analysis revealed the Cronbach's alpha to be 0.781, indicating an adequate level of internal consistency for the task performance scale with this specific sample.

A Likert-type response system more akin to a Behaviour Observation Scale with a rating of 1 to 7, with 1 being *Never engaged in the behaviour* and 7 being *Always engaged in the behaviour* was used in this section of the survey.

Similar to the process to enhance the validity, clarity and comprehension of the interview questionnaire, the process for the survey started with the researcher’s discussion of appropriate survey content with her academic supervisor as well as with her liaison at BOB, based on the research and survey objectives. While the establishment of the employment promises scale was relatively straightforward, the coordination of the organizational citizenship performance scale was more complicated due to the large number of behavioural descriptors that were present for consideration. Decision on which behavioural descriptors to use for the survey was based on these criteria:

1. Representation of one of the seven performance themes identified by Podsakoff and his colleagues (2000).

2. The description of the behaviour was not too vague that it would cause confusion or too much subjective interpretation. An example of such vague behavioural description:
   - Help others who have been absent.

3. The description of the behaviour was not easily attributable to an employee's position, personality, or background as other employees not in those positions or do not have those personalities or backgrounds might not be able to relate to the situation or have the opportunity to respond to such situation. Examples of such behavioural descriptions:
• For issues that may have serious consequences, I express my opinions honestly even when others may disagree.
• Turns in budget, sales projections, expense reports, etc. earlier than is required.

With the first example, many frontline employees might not be privy to or be in the position to speak out about issues of serious consequences in their organization. With the second example, many employees might not ever need to work on a budget or sales projection in their job and might not ever have a requirement to submit expense claims.

4. The description of the behaviour was not highly leading and would therefore result in a strong likelihood of participants responding to it biasly. Examples of such behavioural descriptions:
• I avoid making mountains out of molehills (making problems bigger than they really are).
• At work, I avoid complaining about trivial matters.

With both examples, it is very likely that most people would think of themselves positively and thus would see themselves, rightly or wrongly, as not making mountains out of molehills and not complaining about trivial matters. Such leading descriptors could yield biased responses that would then distort the real picture of employees’ citizenship performance.

In the end, behavioural descriptors chosen for this survey’s organizational citizenship performance scale were the ones that:
1. Represented one of the seven performance themes identified by Podsakoff and his colleagues (2000).
2. Clearly described the expected behaviour.
3. Offered a scenario that would realistically be encountered by an employee, regardless of their position, personality, and background.
4. Neutral and non-leading.

There were noticeably less number and variation in the choice of task performance scales or behaviour descriptors. Two were considered for this survey (Williams and Anderson, 1991 as well as Bettencourt and Brown, 1997). As a whole, the behavioural descriptors for both scales seem general and superficial. This might be due to the possibility that task performance is highly position-specific. The behavioural descriptors for a universal task performance scale would have to be general and superficial rather than specific and detailed as specifics might fit one position but not another. Williams and Anderson’s seven-item scale offered descriptions that fit this criterion and was therefore chosen for this case study.
Aside from ensuring clarity and accurate intent in the terminologies and language used in the survey, another key challenge in the design of the survey was finding the right balance between incorporating a sufficient number of appropriate questions in each section of the survey to yield the necessary amount of research-worthy data and keeping the survey as concise as possible in order to minimize fatigue and abandonment of the survey by participants. This balance was enhanced through broad testing and refinement of the survey questionnaire. The survey was tested by 11 of the researcher’s academic and professional colleagues: 2 DBA, 3 MBA, 1 MA, 3 PHD, 2 BA – from various fields including Business and Management, Environmental Science, Theological Leadership, and Education. Feedbacks from the testers indicated a common concern with the time needed to complete the questionnaire and this prompted the researcher to reduce the number of items in certain scales as well as reduce the number of words in survey statements where possible, divide questions into manageable sections, and improve the format of the questionnaire for easy reading.

Upon making necessary adjustments, the link to the final draft of the employee survey questionnaire was sent to the participants of the management interview for a final round of testing. Feedbacks from three respondents were received. Minor changes were made to sentence formats and certain words to improve clarity. No further changes were made thereafter.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the survey was set up as a self-administered questionnaire on www.surveymonkey.com, a web-based survey centre that is accessible 24 hours a day from almost anywhere around the world.

The organization sent out an initial invitation to all of its employees at its Calgary and Edmonton sites to participate in the survey. In order to boost the response rate, a follow-up reminder of the survey was also sent to the employees mid-way through the survey period. The invitation and reminder were sent out via the organization’s group e-mail distribution process and the link to the survey was directly present in the invitation as well as in the reminder e-mail.

The survey questionnaire took between 10 to 12 minutes to complete and was opened for participation over an initial duration of two weeks, which was later extended for another two weeks to allow for more participation. As indicated in an earlier paragraph, when the employee survey closed, 316 survey responses were received.
Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis
The management interviews from all 19 participants were transcribed and, in total, 441 single space pages (167,294 words) of verbatim interview transcripts were analyzed and coded by the researcher using QDA Miner version 4.0.4.

To ensure accuracy of the interview content transcribed, the researcher conducted a verification exercise, as follows, prior to the start of the data analysis:

1. Contacted each participant via e-mail to request permission to forward to the participant, his/her interview transcript for content thoroughness and accuracy verification. Only two participants responded to the request and neither directed for any changes to be made to their interview transcripts. As these were verbatim interview transcripts instead of interview notes from the researcher, one may conclude that the content accuracy of the transcripts is very high as the likelihood of content and assertions being left out would be very small, though not impossible, due to transcription error.

2. Selected three random transcripts for transcription accuracy verification.

The researcher started her analysis with a read through of each interview transcript to get a general sense of the direction and themes for the research objectives, particularly in terms of how employee performance or performance mediators were enhanced through the organization’s employer brand promise fulfilment activities. Many of the answers to how this occurs is not very direct or readily obvious, such as - we did this and it leads to the improvement of this employee behaviour or to the enhancement of employee commitment in this way or employee engagement in that way. As such, many inferences still had to be drawn and in some cases, from the revelations of different aspects of a same activity from either different parts of an interview or different interview participants altogether.

After a read through and taking of some conceptual notes of the transcripts, the transcripts were loaded on to QDA Miner version 4.0.4. for analysis. Data was coded and analyzed for specific themes as they relate to the research objectives of uncovering performance enhancing factors in the content or delivery of the organization’s employer brand promises. Five (5) themes emerged for employment benefit content factors and three themes emerged for employment benefit materialization factors.

Detailed examination was done to determine specifically how employee performance or mediators of performance were potentially enhanced by each of the factors, particularly employment benefit content factors.
Quantitative data analysis

All data were directly downloaded from Survey Monkey to SPSS 17 for analysis. After collection, data were first cleaned and edited in order to obtain accurate summary estimates of statistical quantities. Further conversion of data was done in preparation of the analyses to be done to test each of the hypothesis.

In order to determine the presence and size of effect or influence that the following independent variables would have on the dependent variables of organizational citizenship performance and task performance, a quasi-experiment was set up whereby employees who responded to the research survey were divided into groups for each analysis, based solely on their reported ratings for the following independent variables:

i. Employees’ perceived level of fulfilment of their employer brand promise expectations by the employer.

ii. Employees’ perceived presence of a desirable and distinctive experience, a great workplace, a desire to spend the rest of their career with their organization as well as non-presence of frequent thoughts of leaving their employment at the organization.

For independent variable i. employees’ perceived level of fulfilment of their employer brand promise expectations by the employer, employees were divided into two groups:

Group HF: High Fulfilment - Employees who perceived their employer brand promise expectations as having been adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by their employer.

Group LF/NE: Low Fulfilment or No Expectation – This is a group that combined employees who perceived their employer brand promise expectations as having been inadequately or not at all fulfilled and employees who had no expectations for that the investigated employer brand promises. For certain examinations, this employee group was further broken down into two independent groups – Low Fulfilment group and No Expectation group:

Group LF: Low Fulfilment - Employees who perceived their employer brand promise expectations as having been inadequately or not at all fulfilled.

Group NE: No Expectation - Employees who had no expectations for that the investigated employer brand promises.
For independent variable ii. employees’ perceived presence of a desirable and distinctive experience, a great workplace, and a desire to spend the rest of their career with their organization as well as perceived non-presence of frequent thoughts of leaving their employment at the organization, employees were also divided into two groups:

Group CC: Concur – This group consisted of employees who responded “agree” or “strongly agree” when asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the notions in hypotheses H4a and H4b.

Group NC: Do Not Concur – This group consisted of employees who responded “neutral”, “disagree” or “strongly disagree” when asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the notion above. While it was unclear as to exactly how much employees who answered “Neutral” disagreed with the statements in hypotheses H4a and H4b, it was clear that they could not and did not confirm agreement with the notions. As such they were placed in the Do Not Concur group.

Organizational citizenship performance mean scores as well as task performance mean scores of these employee groups were then compared to determine statistically significant differences in their reported levels of performance. The sizes of statistically significant effects were then also examined.

In all cases, no other criteria was used in the division of employee groups except for the respondents’ answers (ratings) to questions pertaining the independent variables identified above. Each group contained employees from different ages, gender, education, tenure, divisions, branch, and employment ranks.

The following tests and analyses were carried out to yield relevant results:

1. Testing for statistically significant differences in performance mean scores:
   For hypotheses 2a to j, 2k and l as well as hypotheses 4a and b, t-test was used to establish and compare the difference in mean scores between two employee groups (High Employer Brand Promise Expectation Fulfilment versus Low Fulfilment/No Expectation and Concur with notion versus Not Concur) for organizational citizenship performance and task performance.

   Some investigations where employee groups were further broken down into three groups (Low Fulfilment/No Expectation group divided into Low Fulfilment group and No Expectation group), one-way ANOVA was used to establish and compare the difference in mean scores among the three groups.
Where differences existed between groups, Scheffe Post-Hoc test was then used to ascertain the location of the difference between the groups.

For results where multiple employer brand promises were shown to have statistically significant influence on employees’ organizational citizenship and/or task performance, stepwise regression was conducted to determine the relative influence of each employer brand promise.

Prior to analyses, required assumptions of data to qualify for the use of one-way ANOVA were checked and verified. As part of the verification process, Levene’s tests for homogeneity of variances were conducted and in all cases, the assumption of equality of variances was not violated.

1. Testing for sizes of influence as well as for strength of relationships:
   
   Hypotheses 1a and b predicted a positive relationship between employees’ level of organizational citizenship performance as well as task performance and their perceived level of overall employer brand promise fulfilment by their employer. Pearson’s correlations were conducted between the performance variables and the employer brand promise variables to ascertain the direction and strength of relationships. Additionally, scatter-plots were used to ensure that linearity was present.

   Pearson’s correlation coefficient was also used in hypotheses 2a to j, 3, 4a and 4b to assess the sizes of influence by the independent variables on the dependent variables.

**Data Conversion**

The following data collected were converted to allow for ease and clarity of one-way ANOVA and t-test:

1. For employer brand promises (EBP), original responses were divided into five groups:
   
   0 = You have no expectation for this promise
   1 = BOB has not fulfilled your expectation at all
   2 = BOB has partially but not adequately fulfilled your expectation
   3 = BOB has adequately fulfilled your expectation
   4 = BOB has more than adequately fulfilled your expectation

   In preparation for ANOVA, the EBP responses were converted into the following groups:

   0 = No Expectation (You have no expectation for this promise)
   1 = Low Fulfilment (BOB has not fulfilled your expectation at all AND BOB has partially but not adequately fulfilled your expectation)
3 = High Fulfillment (BOB has adequately fulfilled your expectation AND BOB has more than adequately fulfilled your expectation)

In this case, code 0 was retained to represent the “No Expectation” responses instead of having this group of responses lumped together with “Low Fulfillment” for analysis. This is due to the fact that no expectation of an employment benefit is significantly different than having expectation that is not at all or not adequately fulfilled. The researcher concluded that lumping together the two groups of responses would yield less accurate results in the analysis. Instead, the “No Expectation” responses were included in the analysis as an independent group. This way, analysis could be done to determine if there were in fact significant differences in the organizational citizenship performance and/or task performance levels between the three groups and if so, where the significant differences would lie.

2. For organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and task performance (TP), original responses were divided into seven groups. Using a Likert-type response system, rating went from 1 to 7, with 1 being “Never” engaged in the specified organizational citizenship performance behaviour or task performance action in the last 12 months and 7 being “Always” engaged in the specified organizational citizenship performance behaviour or task performance action in the last 12 months.

As the levels of performance were presented in the survey as frequencies of demonstrating specified organizational citizenship performance behaviours or task performance actions, from Never to Always, the term “high level of performance” would be taken in this case study to mean high frequency of demonstrating specified organizational citizenship performance behaviours or task performance actions, whereas “low level of performance” would be taken in this case study to mean low frequency of demonstrating specified organizational citizenship performance behaviours or task performance actions.

In preparation for ANOVA, the OCP and TP responses were converted into 2 groups:

0 = Low Level of Performance (Ratings 1, 2, 3, and 4)
1 = High Level of Performance (Ratings 5, 6, 7)

In this case, the response of “Never” was lumped together with the first lower half of the frequency ratings to form Low Level of Performance (essentially low frequency of demonstrating specified OCP behaviours or TP actions).

3. The original responses to capture employees’ level of concurrence with the following notions were divided into five groups.

i. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive.

ii. Their organization is a great place to work.

iii. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization.
iv. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization.

Original responses:
SD = Strongly Disagree
D = Disagree
N = Neutral / neither agree nor disagree
A = Agree
SA = Strongly Agree

In preparation for the t-test, responses for the level of concurrence were converted into two groups:
0 = Do not concur (neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree)
1 = Concur (agree or strongly agree)

While it was unclear as to exactly how much employees who answered “Neutral” disagreed with the each of the four statements, it was clear that they could not and did not confirm agreement with the statements. As such they were placed in the Do Not Concur group.
CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS – RELATING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE TO EMPLOYER BRANDING

The key intent of the qualitative component of the research is to explore the factors present with the content or delivery of employer brand promises that could influence employee performance.

As is presented in the literature review, there have been studies and revelations on the types of employment benefits or values that may be or have been offered by organizations in their employer branding efforts. Confirming what a best-of-the-best employer in Canada offers would add some value to practical knowledge. However, the value of simply confirming that BOB offers competitive compensation, specific development and applications opportunities, or specific social and psychological benefits would not be that significant. Instead, this case study will shed a different light on how such employment benefits are viewed and presented to employees. There are meanings and associations behind what is offered and such meanings and associations are precisely the factors that appear to create significance for employees. This, combined with other organizational elements that are present in the delivery of these employment benefits, appear to have strengthened employees’ commitment as well as engagement with the organization. Such commitment and engagement in turn appears to have influence on some employee performance. The analysis of the qualitative data will offer an indication of what these factors would be.

Employment benefits or values and employer branding efforts will likely vary from one organization to another due to many reasons, including but not limited to organizational context, available resources, types of targeted workforce, competitive forces and so on. However, the conclusions in this case study of the sequence of employer branding activities and events as well as of the entity interplay and association that could lead to enhanced employee commitment, engagement, and ultimately performance, would offer another set of revelations that organizations can take into consideration in the planning of their own employer branding strategies and efforts.

The qualitative data and analysis will also offer insight into the challenges experienced by one of the best-of-the-best employers in Canada in their efforts to fulfill their employer brand promises. Employer branding is in fact a complex undertaking due to the various obvious and non-obvious organizational, operational, and human aspects involved. It is likely that organizations would encounter some if not lots of challenges in their efforts to deliver effective employer branding. Recognizing the challenges would be of significant value to employers in terms of the anticipation and preparation to effectively minimize, contain, or address them.
Employment Benefits Reframed: Employee Need-centred Perspective

With reference to extant employer branding literature on the employment benefits, the following figure shows the top 20 employment benefits that BOB had identified as its employer brand promises. Each of these employment benefits were mentioned by at least three managers in the management interview. The figure shows the number of managers out of 19 that identified each of the employment benefit or value listed:

Figure C5-a. Top 20 Employment Benefits Identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Benefit</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A work environment that supports work-life balance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment to technical excellence</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive compensation and benefits</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be involved or contribute to the organization’s community building</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment to treat employees with honesty, fairness, and respect</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following employment benefits were also identified but would not be included in the analysis due to the fact that they were mentioned by only two or less management interview respondents:

- Working with and learning from the best
- Organizational commitment to sustainability
- Organizational commitment to integrity in work and relationships
- A fun work environment
- Stability of organization
- Work autonomy

The types of employment benefits identified by the managers did fall within the categories identified in extant literature and research:

**Table C5-1: Current view and categorization of employment values and benefits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories Based on Existing Literature</th>
<th>Specific Employment Benefits Identified</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Combined Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity to be involved or contribute to the organization's community building and engagement efforts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
<td>Organizational commitment to technical excellence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic/Monetary</td>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive compensation and benefits</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some of the benefits, such as those in the Economic/Monetary category and also most of those in the Functional or Development and Applications category could be quantified but most of the rest were more subjective, psychological, and perception based, thus harder to quantify in terms of the actual amount that was offered within each benefit.

Not unlike many employers, managers at BOB indicated that it offers various types of employment benefits and multiple items within each type. On the surface, it is difficult to determine what is inherent in the employment benefits offered or how they are delivered that would make them significant to the targeted employees, create a distinctive and desirable work experience, and ultimately make BOB an employer of choice. For example, if economic benefits are identified as material rewards, attractive compensation, and stock options, what elements have to be present within these economic provisions or the delivery of these economic provisions to make them particularly desirable or worthwhile for employees? After all, from existing research as well as from the pilot study, one can see that most organizations, regardless of whether they are best employers or not, claim to offer this and other similar types of benefits as identified in Table C5-1 above.

The qualitative findings of this case study offer a deeper insight into the factors that exist in the coordination, presentation, and delivery of the employment benefits that generate significance and value to employees.

The challenge faced by many organizations in their employer branding efforts is not in announcing or promising what employment benefits they have to offer, what employer values they hold dear, or what organizational culture they have in place. It is more in ensuring that the promised benefits are fully delivered to and meaningfully received by employees. This includes delivering on promised employment benefits, demonstrating promised values or commitment in the organization’s decisions and actions, and exemplifying the promised culture within the organization’s interactions and operation.
In fully and effectively delivering on one’s employer brand promises, an employer is in fact proving its trustworthiness in fulfilling its part of the psychological contract that it has established with the employee (Robinson, 1996). Research and literature has presented strong evidence to show that this act of trustworthiness would strengthen an employee’s commitment to its employer and engagement with its employer, which in turn also strengthens their work performance, particularly organizational citizenship performance (Coyle-Shapiro, J. and Keller, 2000).

**Looking at employment benefits from an employee need-centred perspective**

Interview data suggested that leaders and managers at BOB did not see the employment benefits BOB promised to employees simply as benefits that employees might desire. In reality, around ¾ of the employment benefits offered by BOB, while competitive, were not particularly distinct or unique. However, BOB’s ability to establish purpose and meaning behind the employment benefits that were offered and how they were fulfilled might be the reason why they were affirmed over and over again by their employees as an employer of choice as well as repeated recognized in the industry as an innovative, high performing organization.

As a whole, interview and material review evidence suggested that BOB’s leaders saw the content and fulfilment of their promised employment benefits as channels to:

- Engage employees in different and continuous ways.
- Strengthen employees’ professional capacities and ability to deliver value to the organization’s clients.
- Strengthen employees’ identification with, commitment to, and preservation of BOB’s values, standards, and culture.
- Acknowledge and maintain employees’ influence on the organization’s decisions, actions, and progress.

More interesting was the indication that these benefits worked inter-connectedly and in tandem to both develop and engage employees.

Interview responses offered the indication that BOB saw the development and enhancement of employee performance as a holistic and continuous endeavour. It did not see performance enhancement as a stand-alone human resources management function geared towards the achievement of specific performance targets. Instead, BOB saw its many employment benefits and programs to continually engage and develop employees as the way to simultaneously enhance not just employees’ work-specific performance but also their overall capability and commitment to the organization.
Intentional efforts were made to both engage and develop employees from the day they started work to the day they concluded their employment with BOB. According to interview respondents, the organization’s engagement of employees would not end there. When employees left their employment with the organization, BOB did not see that as an end to their relationship. Instead, BOB saw that as an opportunity for the employees to further develop and advance themselves in a manner that BOB might not be able to provide at that time. According to some interview respondents, BOB actively encouraged employees to consider coming back to BOB if things did not work out at their new place of employment or if they felt that they might want to come back to work for BOB at a later point in their career. BOB maintained a safe and open door for these employees to remain in contact. In general, BOB was said to treat employee departure as a non-permanent exit for further self-development. Should an employee returns to work for the organization, BOB viewed it as a gain for the organization because the employee would be returning with more and possibly different knowledge, skills, and experience.

BOB’s leaders called their continuous engagement and development of employees the “cradle to grave” philosophy. In maintaining continuous engagement and development of employees, the organization saw itself as building a committed, capable, flexible, and consistently high performing workforce that would be ready to work competently and effectively with their colleagues to tackle any emerging organizational challenges and achieve organizational goals.

While not articulated by BOB in any formal way, themes that emerged for BOB’s employer brand promises put in place to continuous engage, develop, and enhance employee performance appeared to have some semblance to the pillars in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1970). They include factors of sustainable employment (safety), connectedness and belonging (Love/Belonging) as well as development and growth, significance of work, and personal influence (Esteem). The fulfillment of these employer brand promises was then predicted to bring about full engagement and performance competency (self-actualization).

The search of extant literature revealed that such clustering, while not a standardized practice, is not completely unknown. In his article, Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work, Kahn (1990) linked the factor of employee motivation and engagement with the theory of needs fulfillment presented in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. In its 2007 research report on employee engagement entitled Meaning at Work Research, the global human resources services group, Penna, actually adapted Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs into a model of employee engagement it called “Hierarchy of Engagement”, as shown below:
The key intent with the use of hierarchy of needs or engagement appeared to the emphasis on the need for employees’ basic needs to be fulfilled, before they could truly be ready for the provision of other initiatives to enhance their motivation and engagement (Kahn, 1990; Markos and Sridevi, 2010)

Instead of looking and categorizing employment benefits in the more conventional forms of economic, functional, interest value, organizational environment, social, psychological, and/or symbolic offerings, the information gained in the qualitative component of this doctoral research led to both the interpretation and proposal that they be examined and categorized in an employee need-centred manner.

The researcher was able to divide the themes that emerged into categories, which the research had labeled as Employment Benefit Content Factors:

**Employment Benefit Content Factors**

- Factor of personal sustainability
- Factor of connectedness and belonging
- Factor of opportunities and growth
- Factor of personal stake and influence
- Factor of significance and esteem

These were factors that the organization saw as being personally important or meaningful in addressing the needs of the employee as a whole human person, thus allowing the person to develop in a holistic manner. This would include the enhancement of not only the employees’ work-specific performance but also their overall capability as well as commitment to and
engagement with the organization. As such, they should be present in the design and/or content of employment benefits offered to employees. As subsequent quantitative analyses will show, these factors, when materialized, appeared to have a positive association with employees’ performance as well as with commitment and engagement, the mediators of performance.

**Organizational process plays a role in ensuring effective delivery of employment benefits**

The offer and presence of employment benefits does not equate to the effective delivery or provision of these benefits. Processes would have to be developed and executed in order to have the offered employment benefits properly communicated and delivered to employees. Information gained from the qualitative component of this doctoral research suggested the presence of factors within the organization’s employer branding process that ensured the effective delivery of the organization’s proposed employment values or benefits to its employees. The researcher was able to divide the themes that emerged into categories, which the researcher had labeled as Employment Benefit Materialization Factors:

**Employment Benefit Materialization Factors**

- Factor of brand championship
- Factor of branding control
- Factor of stakeholder awareness, selection, consultation

These were factors that the organization deemed to be important to facilitate effective promotion and delivery of its promised employment benefits and thus should be present in the design of its employer branding process. These factors might or might not have a direct influence on employee performance, however, their absence or inadequate presence would have a direct impact on BOB’s ability to effectively fulfill its employer brand promises and this, in turn, would have a direct influence on the enhancement of employee performance and mediators of performance.
### Employment Benefit Content Factors

Themes that emerged with the content of BOB’s promised employment benefits are as shown below in Table C5-2.

#### Table C5-2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes of Factors</th>
<th>Employment Benefits that Contribute to Theme</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
<th>Combined Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Sustainability</strong></td>
<td>A work environment that supports work-life balance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive compensation and benefits</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational commitment to treat employees with honesty, fairness, and respect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connectedness and Belonging</strong></td>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities and Growth</strong></td>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Stake and Influence</strong></td>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significance and Esteem</strong></td>
<td>Organizational commitment to technical excellence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor</td>
<td>Rating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be involved or contribute to the organization's community building and engagement efforts</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each factor was explored in the following parts of this chapter in terms of what the employment benefits within each factor entail, how they were delivered by BOB to its employees, and how BOB attempted to link each factor and its benefit contents to employee performance.
**Factor of Personal Sustainability**

<table>
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This factor reflected the organization’s efforts to effectively design and manage benefits that could be deemed as the employees’ basic personal needs. Such needs include:

- Compensation that was fair, adequately competitive within the industry, and allowed employees to earn an income that would meet their living expenses (Markos and Sridevi, 2010).

- Group benefits, particularly basic benefits such as health, dental, disability, retirement, and life insurance, etc., that were sufficiently comprehensive to cover employees’ health care needs and address their and their family’s financial security needs in the event of disability, retirement, or death (Rappaport, 2013).

- A work environment that was physically and psychologically safe (Rothmann and Welsh, 2013).

- Work-life flexibility that would enable employees to fulfil their work responsibilities and adequately attend to family or personal obligations (Sheridan and Conway, 2001).

An employee who is unable to earn sufficient income to meet his/her and his/her family’s living expenses or does not have the necessary health care coverage to take care of his/her and his/her family’s basic health care needs or feels that he/she is in an unsafe work environment or does not have the flexibility at work to take care of his/her family and personal obligations would find it difficult to remain employed in the organization for any extended duration of time regardless of other exciting benefits and values that the organization might offer. These employment benefits share the common theme of being the essentials for an employee’s sustainability in any employment.

On a primary level, one might equate such needs to Hertzberg’s hygiene factors (1959), where if unfulfilled will create dissatisfaction and if fulfilled, might alleviate dissatisfaction but would likely not be sufficient to lead to a sense of satisfaction or motivation to do a better job. One might question whether the same needs, when fulfilled beyond expectations or beyond what is needed to
meet one’s defined needs, could in fact lead to satisfaction even it does not generate motivation. The adequate fulfilment of such needs is an antecedent to job satisfaction, which has been repeatedly found in past research to be a mediator of employees’ job performance (Petty, McGee and Cavender, 1984; Judge et al., 2001). As such, if an organization wants to strengthen its employees’ job performance, it first needs to ensure that benefits that are deemed necessary for meeting employees’ essential needs are adequately and effectively fulfilled. This section of the dissertation will reveal how BOB attempts to do so.

The employment benefits identified above were relevant to this case organization. Research involving more organizations might lead to the conclusion that there are more employment benefits that could be deemed essential needs for employees.

In comparison to other Canada’s Top 100 Employers of 2012, Mediacorp Canada Inc. (2012) had rated BOB’s compensation and financial benefits as above-average and its health and family-friendly benefits as very good. The ratings for employers that have won a place on the Canada’s Top 100 Employers’ list would typically be average, above-average, very good, or exceptional. However, none of the six participants who identified competitive compensation as one of their offerings indicated that they lead the industry in terms of salaries. All asserted that BOB offers either competitive or fair compensation:

“We offer a competitive wage. I don’t think we’re the highest, I don’t think that we lead, but we certainly don’t lag. And we do go out and assess the markets in that we are fair, we pay at the fiftieth and above percentile, so I think knowing that, I mean, that’s really great.” (Participant # 11)

From the six managers’ responses, the fact that 13 of the 19 managers did not identify competitive compensation as one of their offerings, as well as from a review of the organization’s career promotion literature, one might speculate that while BOB offered fair compensation to ensure that employees did not feel unfairly or inadequately paid compared to most of their peers in the industry, compensation was not one of the organization’s primary tools or strategies for employee attraction and retention or for performance enhancement.

One might assume that while BOB’s basic compensation and standard benefits provisions were not exceptional, they were competitive, thus adequately satisfying employees’ sense that they had been remunerated fairly compared to their peers in other organizations. This might in turn reduce employees’ inclination to seek similar opportunities elsewhere for the reason of gaining better compensation or benefits, especially if other provisions offered by BOB were highly appealing to them.

Four of the managers interviewed did acknowledge that BOB had lost some employees, not to their competitors but to their clients, which are mostly in the oil and gas industry, the highest paying
industry in Canada (Huffington Post Alberta, 2013), particularly for technical and engineering positions. Interviewees felt that it would be difficult for BOB to compete directly in salaries but that it could distinguish itself from these employers through the offer of other provisions and a more desirable work environment.

"I think we do pay competitive salaries. We have good people in the organization and they wouldn't be here if we weren't paying competitive salaries, but it's not just for salaries, it's a very whole employment experience. And so we purposely don't try and compete with the salaries at AA [client company] and BB [client company] and these other guys, but then, again, we don't wear suits and we have a more relaxed working environment. And we have maybe better work life balance and there are just cultural differences that some people value." (Participant # 10)

When it came to general wellness and work-life balance for employees, it appeared that BOB had made efforts to foster not so much of an equal work and life balance but a healthy and sustainable work and life integration.

Since many of BOB’s employees worked on projects, the demand for their time and attention fluctuated with the type, duration, complexity, and even location of projects they were working on. At times, they might be expected to work long hours to get a major project done on time while at other times, they might be able to work less than a standard eight-hour workday. As well, employees had different personal and family obligations that would affect the demands of their time and attention. Recognizing these factors, BOB offered its employees flexible working hours as well as the options of telecommuting, compressed work week, shortened work week, and phased-in retirement. As long as employees were still available for contact, can get their work done on time, and their requests did not pose undue hardship on their work coverage or operations, they could readily access the options BOB has in place.

"You can come in to your manager and say, well, I'd like to work from home every second Friday, it fits with my job and, you know, you can go and do that. I wanna change my hours, I wanna work 7:30 to 4:00, or 7:30 to 5:00, okay, if it works with the team and, you know, we don't have coverage on Tuesday, for sure you can do that it's a good thing, that's a positive thing that they do follow through with." (Participant # 1)

It was understood that positions that were schedule-bound, such as a receptionist that had to make sure that the organization’s telephone lines were answered during the peak 9 am to 5 pm work schedule or a cafeteria worker that had to make sure that the cafeteria in a particular BOB location was open from 7 am to 3 pm for employees to access food, might not have the privilege of flexible work hours or telecommuting. However, such employees might still be considered for compressed work week, shortened work week, and phased-in retirement.
From the management interviews, it appeared that employees’ “work-life balance” was an area that was being informally monitored and addressed by managers as well as being formally discussed in employees’ annual performance review and goal-planning sessions. Managers used the feedback to determine if intervention or motivation would be needed to ensure employees’ employment sustainability and success.

"We know who's overworked, who's overwhelmed, and we try to find, and it doesn't always work, somebody to help them or help ease their workload or encourage them to take vacation days as soon as they can. We do a lot of individual lunches. Managers will take somebody out for lunch and find out how they are doing. We try to take someone every couple of weeks. You know, how's it going? Are you happy? How's your workload? You know, where do you see things going? So it's not a review per se, it's just where are you at right now? Are you overworked, are you happy? Those types of things really, I mean, it shows that we do care. We want you to stay at BOB, we want you to be happy here." (Participant # 15)

"I work way too much. And other places that I've worked at, they say, oh, yeah, you know, we know that you work too much, but we need you to keep that up so, you know, it's fine. But here, every year in my review, one of the things that they're trying to work very hard with me on is improving my work life balance. One year, just doing a project, I worked an insane amount to make a deadline and they ended up giving me a gift certificate to a bike store because they knew that I was wanting to get back into biking and that was one of the ways to kind of push me into, you know, getting back into something that I liked that would improve my work life balance. If they see that I'm working a ton, they'll sit down and we'll try to work out a solution. It doesn't always work but they try." (Participant # 19)

In addition to flexible work arrangement options, BOB provided employees with other health and wellness enhancing benefits including an Employee and Family Assistance program and various on-site provisions such as a gym, massage therapy, workout sessions and/or other wellness programs. BOB also actively encourages its employees to participate in activities such as corporate challenges, marathons, and various in-house competitions.

Aside from fostering personal wellness and sustainable work-life integration, there were strong indications that BOB also paid much attention to occupational health and safety. BOB’s success in becoming and being recognized as a safety conscious organization in derived from its efforts to incorporate safety into every aspect of its operation as well as most aspects of its communication to employees as well as to clients. It had become not just part of its regular practice but also part

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26 On-site provisions are not available in all locations but program subsidies are provided instead.
of its organizational culture, thus ingraining the concept of safety, be it at work or at home, in employees’ consciousness.

"They [BOB] really have taken seriously anything that can be implied as health and safety, whether it's in the office or out in the field. Obviously, they do a lot of field work so that's generally where people concentrate on because when you're going to a client's worksite, you need to make sure you're following exactly their guidelines. Here [BOB] they've made a lot of changes, especially two, three years now, they really want to know anything and everything that may or may not be safe. They want to know about it. They want it in their database. They have people that review it, they give us updates once a month, they find out what's been going on. Let's say, winter's coming up, they'll send notice to beware of the snow. There's going to be ice, this kind of stuff. It's in our culture so that even when we go home, we don't forget about it. (Participant # 4)

"Our health and safety motto, "work safe, home safe," applies to every employee, regardless of job function and whether working in the office or the field. It reflects both our strong culture of supporting and mentoring employees, and represents our high expectations for safety at all times. BOB employees know they are expected to call the company’s attention to any potential health and safety concern and to do the right thing in the face of health and safety breaches by clients or partners, no matter how difficult that may feel." (BOB Sustainable Development Report 2011)

As a whole, there was strong evidence to substantiate BOB’s success in creating an overall healthy and safe work environment for their employees and in making health, safety, and wellness as part of their brand, their daily operation, and their culture. This was verified through the results from the interviews as well as a review of the organization’s health and safety policies and plan, sample investigation and inspection records, safety committee meeting minutes, historical data as well as established programs, controls, and processes. 13% of BOB's offices around the world also had health and safety systems accredited to OHSAS 18001. According to BOB’s 2011 Sustainable Development Report, their injury and accident case rate was reduced by 26% in 2011 alone and they reported an 83% health and safety engagement score from their 2011 global employee health and safety survey. As well, a total of 14,565 health and safety learning sessions taking over 25,000 hours were facilitated in 2011. That year, BOB won six health and safety awards from different parts of the world for their outstanding safety initiatives and record.

BOB’s occupational health and safety provisions did not appear to be limited to individuals’ physical health and safety only. BOB also promoted itself as an employer that emphasized psychological safety and treated employees with honesty, fairness, and respect.

"Making it a safe place to go and talk to your senior people. Making it, communicating that it's okay if you have a problem to go and ask for help that's, yes, if you face-plant,
that happens and as long as you learn from it don't repeat the experience with the same mistakes, you know. Yes, it's not very tangible but I think our leaders and our senior people provide a safe environment for people to be able to come to them.” (Participant #3)

"I often hear our very senior leaders state that, you know, it's okay to make a mistake because that's how we learn. You're not criticized or reprimanded for it. It's more of what did you learn from that. And I think that's an awesome learning environment, an awesome environment to work in.” (Participant #11)

When employees were asked in the employee survey how well BOB had fulfilled their expectation for the statement, “Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful treatment of employees” 83% of the 298 employees that responded to this question indicated that their expectation had been adequately or more than adequately fulfilled.

The promise to treat employees with honesty, fairness, and respect appeared be fulfilled through the organization’s: 1) emphasis on the importance of employee input, 2) highly consultative approach to decision making, 3) multi-mode of organizational communication and employee interaction, 4) relatively flat organizational structure and good access to senior managers, and 5) the organization’s Principal and Associates structure, all of which will be explored in detail in a latter part of this chapter.

While job security was not an employer brand provision directly identified by managers interviewed, the issue was brought up by a manager in the discussion of how BOB provided a distinctive and desirable work environment for its employees. Like satisfactory income and a safe workplace, the issue of job security contributes equally to most employees’ sense of sustainability in their existing employment. In this case, in spite of the fluctuating economy and the somewhat cyclical nature of the business, at least in countries with snowy winters like most parts of Canada, BOB appeared to have been able to maintain noticeable work stability and job security for its employees:

"BOB values its employees and wants to see people through, you know, move them up and keep them, we're not the kind of consulting firm that hires when we're busy and lays off when we're slow. Like, we try to keep our employees and provide as much job security as possible. A lot of the small consulting firms, if they're slow, they lay you off. There's a high, really high turnover rate, whereas BOB is trying to really care about its employees and, you know, hire to meet our needs and not do the masshirings in the spring and then layoffs in the fall, which happens a lot in the consulting business, especially with the smaller firms.” (Participant #15)
Challenges encountered in fulfilling the factor of employees’ personal sustainability

One challenge presented by two managers interviewed had been the organization’s difficulty in maintaining consistency of practice across all eight divisions and many more groups within. Employees in a small number of groups were expected to work consistently long hours and for them, the promise of work-life balance or sustainable work-life integration had not been as adequately fulfilled.

Another challenge presented had been the fluctuating project load. When the economy was flourishing and the organization continued to procure a large number of projects, employees needed to work long and hard for an extended period of time until such time that sufficient new personnel were hired and deployed to offset the workload. Ironically, similar challenges also occurred when the business was affected by an economic downturn and fewer employees were needed and retained to work on existing projects. Those that remained would also need to work long and hard for an extended period of time until such time that business improved and more personnel could be hired. According to one manager, such challenges had resulted in some employee departures from BOB.
**Factor of Connectedness and Belonging**

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This factor reflected the organization’s emphasis on creating an environment where employees felt they belong and connected with others and could see a possibility of a long-term, productive relationship with their colleagues and the organization. Managers saw a strong sense of connectedness and belonging as the glue that attached an employee to his/her co-workers, team, and the organization as a whole. They felt that this fostered team work, collaboration, genuine care for one another and willingness to go out of one’s way to help others succeed.

BOB’s efforts to create a sense of belonging for employees were not limited to the offering of a 100% employee ownership program, a highly consultative and community approach to decision making, and its Principals and Associates system. On a day-to-day basis, such effort appeared to involve the intentional creation of regular functions, consistent rituals, and common causes where employees got to connect with one another and engaged one another in causes or activities of mutual interests. For BOB, that included but was not limited to their community support and engagement initiatives, corporate challenges, events surrounding the type of work they do, or their bi-monthly ‘Weekend Attitude Adjustment Meetings’. BOB also encouraged informal employee gatherings.

"It's really well attended, at least by my group, and I just see a lot of people doing things like volunteering for the BOB Trust for Orphan events, volunteering at the corporate challenge that we have here in Calgary, going to things like that. We have an employee event where people in the company, in this office, get together and form bands and they rent a bar on a Friday night and we go and we have the bar from, like, four in the afternoon until eleven o'clock at night and the bands get on stage and play and people come and have a couple of drinks and eat dinner and, you know, cheer the bands on and those kinds of things are really well attended. And I think part of that is people really buying into BOB. Like I look at attendance at those kinds of things and interest in the sustainability committee and interest in Earth Day as evidence of the fact that clearly at least some people are really enjoying what we're doing." (Participant # 16)

"We have this thing called the WAAM - the Weekend Attitude Adjustment Meeting. We do that every other month at the last Friday of the month and it's beer and appetizers and all that. The entire office is invited, it's in the cafeteria over there and then we have a couple of announcements that are light, fun and things about our involvement in the community to share that with the staff. This is what we do, this is how we can get involved, you
know, fun stuff that’s happening in the company and all that and that we’re doing. And it’s a great place for the staff to be able to mingle and meet people that they wouldn’t otherwise necessarily because they’re on different floors, different divisions, different departments, so that gives them an opportunity to mingle and meet people that they would not necessarily bump into at the coffee machine otherwise.” (Participant # 3)

The necessity as well as the opportunities for employees to work as a team with co-workers from within one’s group or from other groups also increased the interaction among employees and likely hasten the development of connections, bonds, and team spirit between co-workers.

"Even though we’re a massive office, the groups are all fairly small. They are 12 to 20 people, so you really develop this little sense of community and you get to know each other really well. You start to develop friendships and relationships and then we have all these other groups that we start to work with on an interrelated basis, so you just kind of start expanding, you know, expanding your network. But it’s never overwhelming, like it can be in other offices because you still have this base group that you get to come back to.” (Participant # 16)

"The groundwater people having to work with the service water people and having to work with the fish people and, you know, it doesn’t become overwhelming because you’re only working with a couple people from those groups, but it forces you to start realizing how your disciplines interrelate and interact and it expands your horizons to realize how what you do is affecting other people.” (Participant # 16)

As well, BOB created physical work spaces that allowed for close-proximity interaction among members of each group or department.

"We wanted to have a community. So you have, you know, close offices and then in the middle you have work stations and we try to have the teams that work together to be in this sort of community so that they can be close to the people they work with, it makes it easier for them to share and exchange and work together and all that. So these are some of the all sorts of different considerations or things that we would do concretely to try to get them to have better teamwork.” (Participant # 3)

One aspect that might have eased the facilitation of relationship building at BOB was what had been described by four managers as a more relaxed, open-door culture of interaction within the organization. Another aspect would be the organization’s relatively flat organizational structure with fewer hierarchal barriers to communication and interaction, as was highlighted by managers in a former page of this report.
"I would say at times BOB feels like a very, very big mom and pop shop...It seems like there's not a lot of companies that you can just, I don't know what's the right word, go see their VP and kinda, I mean, sit down and just kinda chat about anything and everything. It doesn't matter. Like, say, oh, did you see the hockey game? You know, be able to just kinda be casual with no matter what layer of management you're talking to. Everyone, there's a very friendly atmosphere, when it comes to that. So even though you're talking to someone who's been here for thirty years, they'll still just hang out with you like you're just the same as them, type of idea. So I find that a little bit different. That there's not all this, a whole bunch of different layers of management and, well, if you're way up here then you don't associate yourselves with the people that are one and two years, you know, experience like I do. So it feels very comfortable.” (Participant # 4)

"We're very relaxed here. We're not a suit-and-tie kind, we allow you to be who you want to be.” (Participant # 9).

As a whole, BOB appeared to foster an environment of a 'tight-knit family', where managers, as parental figures, cared about and supported their employees and employees cared about one another, and collectively, they wanted to do what was best for the family:

"I do feel that BOB does feel like a family. And people generally are interested in doing the right things because they want to, not because they are asked to. It's because they want to improve the organization, they want to move things forward.” (Participant # 10)

"I think BOB's very much a family and we look after each other.” (Participant # 2)

For BOB, creating a sense of family and belonging appeared to start from the moment an employee was hired. The following was one example.

"Even before starting in the company, my husband got a package that says, here's the taxi numbers if you need a taxi, here's the train and the bus and how to get to the office if you're coming from downtown. A lot of information, just to get them going and get them comfortable coming to work and a lot of people are kinda saying, wow, the company really cares about, you know, the employees that are starting, new employees, and probably cares about the employees that are already there, which it does.” (Participant # 1)

There is evidence to indicate that BOB's efforts to create a sense of belonging and connectedness among employees is part of it broader strategy to establish and maintain a long term relationship with its employees. The term "Cradle to Grave" was used by three managers to describe the way BOB views its approach to employee relationship management:
"..employing the best and following them through their career until retirement." (Participant # 5)

"Cradle to grave concept now is rallied out, it’s active, it’s a life process." (Participant # 17)

It reflected the organization's intentional efforts to support an employee's holistic development, general well-being, and whole career progression, from the moment they were hired to the time they fully concluded their employment at BOB and beyond. The intricate maintenance of such long-term Cradle to Grave employment relationship was not identified by any manager as a specific employment benefit or brand promise. However, it appeared to involve either creating or taking advantage of opportunities throughout an employee's life cycle at BOB for the organization to demonstrate and provide the employees with the many employment benefits promised.

Seven managers interviewed also offered insight into two noteworthy unwritten policies that BOB applied in its efforts to preserve these long-term employment relationships.

The first unwritten policy claimed by managers was selective hiring. This was to ensure that candidates hired are those that subscribed to the organization's values and priorities and would fit in well within the BOB community.

"Because of our focus on people, we hire a lot of like-minded people with similar values...... We hire people that care. And when they care, they care about the environment, they care about the business, they care about work life balance, these are all very important [to us at BOB] and that sort of comes back to that mutual respect, again, the caring for one another....and I can say for the team that I've built, most of the people on that team enjoy coming to work so that they can interact with the people." (Participant # 17)

"We will recruit people that, I mean, people used to call it, or we still call it like that, or you hear that, where someone fits or doesn't fit. So there's definitely some of that but you fit in the culture and you fit in the values and all that or you won't last because you're going to get frustrated and all that. So you attract people that are like-minded...... we've had some troubles, we've made some mistakes in terms of hiring people that were not as typical as we would've liked them to be. But we learn from that. " (Participant # 3)

The assumption here was that employees who shared or embraced the values and culture of the organization and fit well with existing employees of BOB would likely have a better work experience and higher chance of successful employment at BOB, which in turn would increase the duration of their employment with BOB.
The second unwritten policy claimed by managers was their sincere support of the employees’ holistic development and overall career progression, regardless of whether such support would yield direct or immediate benefits for BOB. Managers claimed that the focus was on the employee’s best interest. While 82% of employer survey respondents confirmed that their expectation for the employer brand promise of a supportive and caring work culture was adequately or more than adequately fulfilled, the researcher was unable to verify this specific claim.

"I think one of things I like about BOB is that BOB’s not afraid to say, your career could end at some point here and you could go off somewhere else and gain some better experiences that you couldn’t get here and then come back to BOB for a position. So you could be an assistant and then work to a coordinator role and then, well, there’s no management role for you at that point, you hit a ceiling, but, you know, we still like you and stuff like that. And, you know, if you want to go somewhere else, it’s still a positive thing. We don’t look at it as negative. Maybe in a few years there’s a management role that suits you, that you’ve gained some experience, and you come back, right?" (Participant # 1)

"...once somebody has someone good they want to hang on to them, but at the same time, we, I think it’s part of our values that we want to provide opportunities. I mean, I’ve been in a situation where I’ve heard of an opportunity and I’ve told one of my staff members, even though I would prefer that they just stay in our group and I’m fine with that and I think people have to be provided an opportunity." (Participant # 2)

Managers’ view appeared to be that looking out first and foremost for the employee’s best interest (instead of first and foremost for BOB’s best interest) would create long-term goodwill between the employee and BOB and that such goodwill would eventually have a positive return for BOB. While not mentioned, such return might include increased loyalty to the organization, tendency for re-employment at the organization after the employees have gained more knowledge and skills elsewhere, or positive word of mouth from the employees to others on BOB’s supportive work environment.
**Factor of Opportunities and Growth**

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<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
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<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
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<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
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<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
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<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
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This factor reflected the organization’s active efforts to secure opportunities for employees to take on challenging and diverse work, enroll in continuous learning as well as have noticeable paths for career growth. Managers believed that this would not only enhance or expand employees’ professional and technical skills but would also keep them stimulated and engaged on an on-going basis.

By offering a wide range of engineering and environmental services to clients in 180 offices worldwide, the idea of innumerable opportunities to work on diverse projects, explore innovative ideas, learn from the best, take on international assignments, and continually grow one’s career was strongly emphasized to potential and actual employees. It appeared to be one of BOB’s strongest features as an employer.

The following sentiments expressed about opportunities for employees were well shared by the managers:

"(Employees come to BOB)...Not necessarily for more money, but the fact that they might be getting a different challenge, different opportunity, something that they’ve always wanted to do but they haven’t had an opportunity in their previous company, so they want to come to BOB because we are promising them that they will be doing that, what they want to do. (Participant # 18)"

"One of the biggest drivers for our employees is challenging work and new opportunities. In a company like ours, with the variety of work we do and the way we work around the world, I think a lot of our employees see that as a big driver for them." (Participant # 12)

"You know, and when I say the ability to keep interested, there are always new and exciting and innovative challenges that we’re working on as part of our product to clients, so it does promise the opportunity to be very involved and very motivated. I guess, interested, motivated would probably be some key trigger words that, it gives you an overall sense of, I really want to go to work.” (Participant # 9)
As one of the larger and better resourced global players in the industry, BOB bid for and procured bigger and more complex projects around the world. This offered their employees the opportunities to not only work on diverse projects but also on big, complex, challenging, and presumably more rewarding projects:

"Many people don't have the opportunity outside of a big consulting organization to be able to work on large international projects, you know, oil sands projects, that kind of thing, these multi-million dollar projects, which are our bread and butter, to some sense. I mean, we've built a business around being able to service big clients, big projects, big stuff, right? At the outset, that looks like a big and challenging, complex opportunity. And certainly we promote that ..[to our employees].” (Participant # 6)

In its operational model, BOB’s employees worked on different projects at different times with different team members and often also different departments. While employee participation in projects were generally assigned by department and project managers based on the skills necessary for the projects, the availability of employees, and also the consideration of development opportunities for targeted employees, employees themselves were also encouraged to bring forward ideas for projects or to seek participation in projects that are of interest to them, even for the purpose of learning and apprenticing. In such cases, the employee’s supervisor and the project manager27 would determine the feasibility of the employee’s request and, if deemed possible, would work out a plan with the employee on how he/she might successfully participate in the project without negatively impacting his/her existing work obligations. As BOB had eight divisions and multiple groups within the divisions, there were opportunities for employees to learn different jobs and tasks outside of one’s program and division:

"We have a technical staff whose role is to work under a certain person and assist him with different projects. On the other hand, the tech is given opportunities to meet other people so that he can work on their projects as well. And so then, which is what's happening in our group, we have a tech who’s primarily supposed to be working on XX [name of one group] stuff but he was interested in doing YY [name of another group] work and so our project manager said, well, here's the project managers in the WW [location] office that do the YY work. Call them, see if they have capacity to use you. So he called them up and they did. So, yeah, we made allowances in his schedule so that he could also do that work.” (Participant # 15)

"It was more, I think from the perspective of allowing people to branch into other groups, like we will allow people to, if there is an opportunity to go work in another group, to help with a different project in another group, they don't get much ties to that project, it seems

27 If he/she is not the supervisor
to some of our competitors, once you get a job, that's your job. There's very little leeway to be involved in other groups or in other projects where with us, we will allow that. “ (Participant # 18)

BOB enhanced its menu of challenging work by adding the possibility for employees to pursue international opportunities. In order to ensure that international opportunities were accessible to employees, BOB operated an International Employee Exchange Program where employees could apply for internal postings of employment or secondment opportunities at other BOB locations around the world. Employees, particularly those with unique skills or experience could also be offered opportunities to work on interesting and challenging projects at domestic or various international BOB locations. Some also had the opportunity to assist in the start-up of new branches:

"The prospect for those that are interested in international work. Because BOB is worldwide and our projects are throughout the world as well. So a lot of engineers will come to us because we have those projects and we have the exchange program between offices." (Participant # 5)

"You know, I don't, I'm not sure how many of our competitors in Canada have the footprint that we have in Asia, Australia, we're pretty much, South Africa, every continent and we have people who move and mobility is a big thing." (Participant # 7)

BOB also had a comprehensive employee training and development program that was made up of a combination of its internal "BOB University", generous tuition subsidies of up to $6,000 per employee for external courses related to one’s position, scholarships to help employees continue their education, frequent lunch-and-learn sessions, a mentorship program, cross-training opportunities, and career planning services. As a whole, BOB dedicated 1% of its net revenue to employee training initiatives. Managers were particular proud of their BOB University, where learning sessions were offered regularly on various targeted topics as indicated in the interview statement below and as verified through their workshop calendar:

"Yeah, professional development is definitely something that is near and dear to everybody's hearts here on the leadership teams that they're ready to grow people and growth for each person is different. But we have BOB University here and we offer an assorted training to our professionals. We have communications, we have project management, we have manager excellence training, actually I just completed that on Friday, it’s an excellent course. We have a lot of managers that grow into these positions and need these tools or resources because, you know, you don't know everything that a manager should do or what they shouldn't do. There's technical writing, there's BOB 101 which is an introductory to how BOB became BOB, you know, and what consulting means and how that ties into charging our clients. Everybody has a good understanding. Health
and safety is very big here, as well. But then there's, you know, throughout our performance reviews with our employees, we also look at smaller goals than just professional development on the BOB University track, but also helping them grow within their own role and providing training and helping them look at career path options and doing cross-training so that's starting to happen." (Participant # 11)

Interview statements also suggested that managers saw their mentorship program as a successful and highly valuable part of employee development and engagement. Aside from nurturing young talents and contributing to the strengthening of organizational values and culture, the mentorship program was also held in high regard due to the understanding that new or junior employees got to work with and learn from some highly respected, world-renowned experts. The mentors and mentees did not necessarily work in the same department or group. Such mentorship broadened the new employees' understanding of the operations of other departments and groups within BOB and of how different departments and groups related to or impacted one another.

"We have an informal mentoring program here, which is another aspect, actually, that we do talk to our candidates about because we have a lot of people here who mentors. We don't say, okay, here you go, here's your mentor. Our managers all encourage their employees to go and find a couple different mentors for different reasons. And they learn from them, they have, you know, they talk about learning in the meetings, they do lunch and learns, so that's them. And then we have the mentor appreciation program so that they can also come and select a gift from human development at that point to recognize their mentor... it's big. I think in terms of the technical side, they would be a part of a very highly educated technical team with world-renowned skills, world-renowned reputations and be privy to learning from these folks who, you know, we have XX [name withheld] here, who is well known around the globe for his work. People would fall over themselves to get time with him, to work with him and to learn from him." (Participant # 11)

With repeated recognitions and multiple international awards\(^{28}\) to acknowledge its innovation, excellence and effectiveness in services and solutions rendered, one might assume that BOB operated an environment that encouraged a reasonable degree of calculated risk-taking and the generation of new and innovative ideas from employees. Employees having a sense of psychological safety that they were not only allowed but encouraged to generate, propose, and test out new ideas would likely also strengthen their engagement and fostered their creativity, learning, and growth. Such sentiments were in fact brought forward by four of the 19 managers interviewed:

"It's part of someone's psychological contract here, they expect to be given the opportunity to play to their strengths, if they see an area of business that they'd like to

innovate in or move in to or develop a service offering to our clients that we haven’t done before, I think BOB’s reputation is that you have the ability within BOB to develop those ideas and assume entrepreneurial initiatives.” (Participant # 10)

“Risk-taking, I often hear even our very senior leaders state that, you know, it’s okay to make a mistake because that’s how we learn. You’re not criticized or reprimanded for it. It’s more of what did you learn from that. And I think that’s an awesome learning environment, an awesome environment to work in.” (Participant # 11)

It was interesting to note that while managers expressed a commitment by BOB to procure, build, and offer definite development and career growth opportunities for employees as well as to assist and support them in acquiring those opportunities, most also emphasized the notion that employees were the captains of their own future and destiny at BOB, thus are expected and strongly encouraged to actively manage their own development and career growth:

“BOB is a place where everybody makes their own destiny. So if you are a person who is a little bit more proactive, you want to take your career in your own hands, you will be much more successful at fulfilling some of these promises by yourself.” (Participant # 18)

"With our culture being that very intimate structure, unique, people have that autonomy to work but they also have that ability to improve themselves through the project work. That support level is there when they need it. At the same time, our culture is very open in terms of allowing people to take a path in their career that they want to choose. And I say that to some of my team members on a regular basis. You have the ability to choose your own career path. To develop in the way that you feel is best suited for you. I'm giving you an example. One of my team member, after doing a 360 review, recently said that she would have some interest in project management. In fact, I was the one who suggested that project management might be an area that complemented her current skill set. So after doing so, I set up a subsequent lunch with a project manager so they could learn first-hand from a project manager what are some of the types of daily activities a project manager engages in. After that luncheon, she took the time to follow up with some other project managers and some other team leads and, as a result, now she's working towards becoming a project manager. She's doing some of the courses necessary and she's doing other shadowing activities so she can learn more about that activity so that when an opportunity comes up, she could make a smooth transition into a new role.” (Participant # 17)

The organization’s multiple efforts to encourage and support employees’ development as well as interest in pursuing diverse opportunities appeared to stem from the understanding that in a line of business where the organization’s success was largely dependent on the ability, efficiency, and agility of its people to handle different projects, possibly under unfamiliar environment or
circumstances, in various parts of the world, it was critical to ensure that the organization’s workforce, particularly its core service delivery personnel, were regularly-trained, well-trained, diversely-trained, and highly adaptable. Ultimately, the employees have to be able to wear different hats at different times:

"The variety of work is very important because most of our opportunities as a consultant, you have to wear many different hats to really function properly in these roles and I think if you just wanna be a desk person, that’s great, there are some opportunities for people like that, but the majority really need to want to have their hand in and be a part of everything.“ (Participant # 11)

Managers believed that it was also precisely the presence of the many opportunities for employees that created a distinctive and desirable work experience for them and that made BOB different than its competitors:

"So, I think as far as consulting engineers go the ownership model, the variety of work that we have, the variety of geographical locations, the ability to move within that. I think we pretty much can distinguish ourselves from our competition on that.” (Participant # 7)

"In other organizations that I have worked for, you will only ever be this one thing. You don’t necessarily get a change to expand beyond that. But in this office, with the variety of different projects and the variety of different groups and the interaction between the groups, fairly often you’re pushing the boundaries of your skill set a bit more and it keeps people more engaged instead of doing the same thing day in and day out and getting bored out of their minds.” (Participant # 16)

Such distinctness was well communicated by BOB’s recruiters to potential job applicants at university recruitment and professional fairs, during job interviews, on the organization’s website and whenever they did public presentations regarding the organizations. Employees present and past also passed on word of mouth regarding what was offered by BOB. Data on this is presented under the factor communication later in the chapter.

**Challenges encountered in fulfilling the factor of opportunities and growth for employees**

Two main challenges were identified by managers within this factor. The first being the organization’s ability to consistently and continually supply interesting and challenging projects to as broad a population of their workforce as possible and the second being some employees’ lack of realistic expectation in terms of the pace of their career growth or the lack of capacity to manage their own professional development.
Unavoidably, the Canadian economy as well as the economic conditions of the countries in which BOB operates has an impact on the quantity and size of projects that BOB can procure. Like many in the industry, BOB and its workforce were, to some degree, impacted by the 2007-2008 global financial crisis. As a result, BOB had, for a period of time, more challenges in procuring as many large or complex projects during economic downturns. This in turn yielded less opportunity for interesting or challenging projects for employees:

"You get a slowdown in the industries, you know, a lot of our bread and butter for a while was the mining industry and when things slowed down, they hold off and it does create a bit of a hole. So certainly a lot of it is driven by the markets and industry. If the industry is not developing then a lot of the time we’re not getting involved in the work. [Question by researcher, "so what would that mean in terms of project variety for employees?"] So that would mean less project variety and also less training as we have to cut back on extras” (Participant # 8)

A total of six out of the 19 managers interviewed expressed some frustrations with the sense that some employees are not as self-directed in steering the development of their careers or not as realistic in their expectations, which then resulted in the employees’ disappointment for not getting the opportunities they hoped or expected to get:

"Whether you’re going to travel anywhere or whether you’re going to change from a group to group, it’s up to you. If you express quite often your desire to go somewhere or where you want your career to go, your career will go there, but if you are a quiet person who sits and waits for somebody to come and say, okay, now, next step, you might not get there. There’s no other company where I have worked that does that for you. You have to make your own career.” (Participant # 18)
**Factor of Personal Stake and Influence**

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<th>Factors</th>
<th>Employment Benefits</th>
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<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
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<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
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<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
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<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
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This factor reflected the significance that BOB placed on employees’ collective ownership and voice in maintaining the organization’s continued operation and brand success. In this collective ownership model, employees not only owned company shares but also had a genuine and strong influence on the direction and activities of the organization. Managers believed that having personal stake and influence in the organization strongly strengthened employees’ commitment to the organization, which in essence, was their organization. Managers also believed that with an ownership mentality, employees were more motivated to not only work hard and produce great work themselves but also saw to it that others gained the support, tools, resources, and abilities to produce great work so that the organization as a whole might excel.

Of all the employment benefits identified by the managers interviewed, one that was of particular pride to them, was the opportunity for all full-time employees to be a shareholder in their private, 100% employee-owned organization. A total of 16 out of the 19 managers interviewed identified this and the accompanying Principal and Associates system as BOB’s key unique, signature provisions. While thousands of organizations in Canada offered their employees some form of stock ownership plan, the number of Canadian organizations that were 100% employee-owned was very small and BOB was one of an extremely limited number of 100% employee-owned environmental engineering and consulting organizations in Canada. Managers felt that this provision differentiated BOB from other comparable organizations:

"We are an employee-owned business and we need employees to own shares in the organization for the company to remain sustainable in this model. Share ownership is available to everybody and that is a simple fact. It is an absolutely feature of our employee brand. I mean, it's what this business is based upon and lots of people talk about it outside of the organization....Lots of people, when they come here for jobs, they already know that." (Participant # 10)

While employee share ownership plan has been identified as a form of employment benefit in existing literature, there has been almost no discussion on it. It has primarily been viewed as one option of economic/monetary benefit that employers have offered to employees. In BOB’s case, this structure was much less about economic gain than it was about the gain of individual ownership and the right to participate in organizational decision making as an owner. In fact, none
of the managers interviewed stressed the financial return of owning company shares. The emphases had been on being an owner of the company, having personal stakes in organizational decisions and actions, and cultivating an ownership mentality:

“It’s not just the monetary. It’s the empowerment to become an owner. You can be an accounting clerk and become an owner in our company. You don’t have to be a very senior engineer to start to become an owner in our company. We value all those positions are very important and they play an integral role in each other to make BOB, the company, work.” (Participant # 11)

"Employee ownership is definitely something they push, well, all the time, but they want people to have the ownership mentality because, again, this is an employee-owned company, right? So, I mean, just even from a shares perspective, they want you to be invested in the company. They want to see that you want to purchase shares from BOB, I mean it’s all private shares, so they want to see that you’re putting money into it which, of course, makes you more invested in your own company, which makes you want to work harder, of course. They want you to have the mentality of whatever decision you’re making that, don’t forget, this is your company so. As an owner, would you be making that choice? Is that the right decision, being an owner? So, yeah, that’s definitely something they very much push.” (Participant # 4)

Each full-time employee with three or more months of employment with BOB, regardless of rank, was eligible to purchase company shares either through the annual general offering or through enrolment in the organization’s payroll share purchase plan. At the close of 2012, 54% of BOB’s full-time workforce owned BOB shares. According to managers, this provision created an “ownership culture” where employees were:

- Personally invested in the company and its progress.
- Given the right to participate in collective decision making for most moderate to major issues.
- Rewarded with more shares by the company as well as given the right to personally buy more shares when they demonstrate good work performance as well as when they are inducted into the Principals and Associates system.

Five of the managers interviewed also highlighted the notion that as a private, 100% employee-owned organization, as opposed to a publicly-traded organization, BOB did not have and did not need to have ‘profit maximization’ as its ultimate goal. It could make decisions that might yield lower profit but higher client and employee satisfaction or lower environmental impact. Examples of decisions provided include allocating a higher percentage of their profit to support employee development programs, rejecting lucrative projects that might contradict the organization’s values, and preserving a compensation structure that rewards employees for their participation and accomplishments in areas other than the procurement of billable hours. These managers emphasized the value of independent and flexible decision making, the creation of an organization
of which they were proud to be a part, and maintenance of BOB’s good reputation for the long term.

“They’re [a competitor] publicly-traded so they have a lot of external influences directing business. They live by quarterly results, right? As do we, but owing shares in the company allows us to be responsible for how the performance is, right?” (Participant # 9)

“...the fact that we’re not publicly traded, and so the decisions we make are tempered by the fact that we are not only here to make some money for shareholders but we have to work here every day.” (Participant # 12)

“.the other difference I see is we’re not answering to shareholders in the same way that our competitors are. So if we think something’s important, like putting on some courses, and we want to invest in that and make a little bit less profit, we can make that decision, whereas our competitors who are publicly owned don’t have as much freedom, I suspect.” (Participant # 2)

BOB’s employee ownership structure was directly linked to its interesting peer-nominated Principals and Associates system (PAS). While the PAS system was only mentioned by three managers in their responses to the interview question, “What are the key employment promises reflected in BOB’s employer brand?” it was actually mentioned or discussed in other parts of the interview by every manager interviewed. In fact, managers interviewed shared the sense that this system was highly unique and truly distinguished BOB from other employers within as well as outside of their industry:

The principals and associates structure of BOB. That’s one thing that truly distinguishes BOB. (Participant # 5)

With this system, all employees could, in principle, aim to be an Associate and eventually a Principal by fulfilling a set of criteria that had been established by BOB for its PAS nomination process. Such criteria included having consistently exhibited BOB’s core values of integrity, excellence, teamwork, caring, and ownership, as well as having demonstrated other abilities such as strong business acumen, technical and professional excellence, leadership, etc. in their work. The criteria also included the ownership of a specific number of shares. The performance and abilities of employees that were in the early stages of their career at BOB would be monitored by their respective managers, who would rate their performance as would be typical in most organizations. Employees who performed well would be awarded with more shares as well as with the right to buy more shares. Eventually, employees that had demonstrated strong performance and the desired attributes as well as own a certain number of shares would be eligible for nomination to become an Associate. It could take an employee several years to demonstrate his/her performance and abilities before being eligible for nomination.
In order to become an Associate, the eligible employee had to be nominated by other Principals and Associates. As this was a privately held firm, the minimum number of shares required to be eligible for a PAS nomination as well as the specific PAS criteria were not shared with the researcher. However, the following explanation provided by an interviewee who was part of the Principal and Associate team would best summarize the foundation of the system:

"We have a document that describes the criteria that we are looking for and its hits attributes like business acumen, leadership, health and safety, living our core values, those kinds of things. When we go through the nomination process each year, we actually have to write a detailed nomination paper that actually speaks to all those attributes and the principal and associate body has to agree that that person meets those values to be named an associate in the firm. They also need to have a minimum shareholding level. But you can reach that level and never become an associate. You can't buy your way in. You can't do it through years of experience. You have to live those attributes. And so that, along with our shareholding model, is kind of the conveyor belt that constantly moves the next generation into leadership positions and describes what's important to us as a firm. That model was set up when the company was very young and has held true to today, worldwide. So these conversations happen in South Africa, they happen in England, they happen in the United States, and they follow the same attributes. So when you become a principal in the firm, you are a principal in a global company, not just here."

In order for an Associate to become a Principal, he/she had to be nominated by other Principals and this might take some years of dedicated service and “living the BOB attributes” to achieve. As mentioned by one of the participants, the Principals and Associates were the organization’s brand:

"They are the brand…..collective body that maintains that (the BOB attribute).” (Participant # 12)

Approximately 12% of BOB’s workforce is either an Associate or a Principal. Some of them are managers while others are not. While one does not have to be a manager in order to be an Associate or a Principal, it does appear that almost all senior managers are either an Associate or a Principal.

Any employee that met the PAS criteria was technically eligible to become an Associate and from there, to be further considered for the rank of a Principal. However, the system’s formal annual selection process and existing 12% ratio did indicate that it was still a selective and relatively exclusive entity. In this case, relative exclusivity did not necessarily equate negativity. As BOB had expressed in its 2011 Sustainable Development Report, BOB’s Principals and Associates are “the guardians of the organization’s culture and are responsible for achieving their purpose, vision, and strategic goals in keeping with their charter.” It further stressed that the Principal and Associate community “provides valuable succession planning and reinforces the employee ownership
structure.” The intricate selection process allowed existing Principals and Associates to carefully select individuals that they believed truly embrace and reflect BOB’s values as well as truly possessed the abilities and attributes required to ensure the organization’s continued success. As all members were owners of the organization, everyone’s stake was impacted by the selection decisions and it would naturally be in everyone’s best interest to be diligent and selective in choosing the right partners for this critical team of “guardians”.

In their role as the guardians of the organization’s culture, a manager had equated the Principals and Associates as the brand of the organization (participant # 12). How then might the culture change as long-term Principals retire or leave the organization? From responses directed to this specific question as well as others related to the integrity and sustainability of the organization’s values and practices, it appears that the preservation of the organization’s core knowledge, values, and culture over the years had been made possible by their consistent Principals and Associates nomination criteria, active mentorship of employees, succession planning, shared ownership, communal decision making approach as well as mutual accountability and peer monitoring of one another’s behaviours and deliverables. As a result, BOB had been able to maintain its core knowledge, values, and culture in spite of the exits of Principals over the years.

Question by Researcher: “If the P and A and senior leaders are the brand, in the event of departures or retirement or something like that, what happens then to these attributes that are associated with the person now, because they are the brand?” Answer by Participant # 12: “When I say the attributes, I don’t think they’re associated with any one person, they’re emulated by those people but it’s the collective body that maintains that. So we’ve gone through several generations, or, the company was founded in 1960, those original owners are not in the company any longer.”

As the Principals and Associates were deemed the guardians of the organization’s culture, another question worth asking was how BOB would ensure that new senior managers hired or transitioned over from an acquired or merged organization could be relied upon to effectively serve as a guardian of a culture which they may not be familiar. A manager had shed some light on the matter:

"On some occasions when they [BOB] actually bought and merged with a company, we will take some of those senior owners straight into the P and A community, when we believe and we are confident that they meet those attributes. But for somebody that just joined, for example, if I was to just join the firm today, you know, during the interview it would be described to me the process, the attributes, and often times I would be mentored and guided by a principal in the office who had an interest in seeing me succeed in an established community. They would help me build some of the networks and the trust that I need to build because you have to be known by enough people that they can
stand and say, we trust this person, they would help me make those connections. And generally, it would take a couple years.” (Participant # 12)

In short, BOB expected new senior managers to have met the established criteria for its Principal and Associates model before being offered or nominated for the roles.

There appeared to be transparency and openness in the process of becoming an Associate or a Principal. Employees who were interested could readily inquire about the process and criteria for becoming an Associate as well as explored their prospect with a member of the Human Resources Development team and/or another Principal or Associate. Those that showed interest and initiatives were encouraged, mentored, as well as supported to work towards becoming an Associate. For new employees, this served as a development and achievement goal that they could realistically strive to attain.

Once attained, it appeared that one’s status as an Associate or Principal had to be maintained through continual demonstration of attributes and delivery of performance outcomes expected of an Associate and a Principal. While an Associate and a Principal who had failed to do so might not be stripped of his/her status, his/her employment could be terminated:

“To become a principal or associate you’re supposed to reflect all those values. But, you know, people change as they get older, things happen in their personal lives that may reflect that. I know one associate in the [location] office and one in the [location] office that have been let go in their late years. From my understanding, there were committees of principals and associates dealing with it and it [the attempt to work through the concerns with the individual] went over a really long time.” (Participant # 15)

As indicated by the interview response above and verified by other managers interviewed, BOB made extended efforts to work through concerns with Associates or Principals that were facing challenges before resorting to termination of employment. Managers indicated that such practice was also extended to employees who were not an Associate or a Principal, though it was unsure whether the effort or time taken to address concerns with an employee who was not an Associate or a Principal would be comparable to that received by an employee who was an Associate or a Principal.

Collectively, Principals and Associates represent about 76% of BOB’s share ownership and in order to ensure continual accessibility of shares by subsequent generations of Principals and Associates, existing Principals and Associates were required to sell their shares at a certain age, as expressed by an interviewee:

“We also have to sell our shares at a certain age. So that, again, I mean it doesn’t maybe speak to some of the employer branding, but what it says is, we are a multi-generational
firm and, as a senior person, I can't get in the way of the next generation. They will make me sell my shares and those shares that I sell will become available to the next generation. So we have principals who have sold all their shares, in some cases they've retained the title of principal and work with us in retirement or in another fashion. But you aren't allowed to say, you know what? I kinda want to stay until I'm 70 so I'll sell my shares then. Because what happens is your shareholding and the ownership and control of the company will stay high up in the organization with a handful of people. And so requiring the shareholder to sell down ensures that those coming up will get access to ownership in the company. And it self-perpetuates.”

As well, no employee, regardless of rank, could own more than 1% of the organization's shares. As of the end of 2011, BOB reported that no single shareholder owns more than 0.6% of its outstanding shares. The following response from an interviewee explains the reason behind this policy:

"Because no one person has an ideal majority so no one could influence decisions in an ideal way.”

Aside from owning more shares, the strongest advantage of being a Principal or an Associate appeared to be the right to have a formal voice on almost all levels and categories of organizational decision making. Particularly for a Principal, that could range from the selection and approval of new Principals and corporate partners to the selection and approval of individual contracts and training programs.

The norm of collective decision making did not appear to be limited to those in the ranks of Principals and Associates. While not identified as an employment benefit, seven (7) out of the 19 managers interviewed indicated that consultative and community decision making was an aspect that made BOB's work environment distinctive and desirable. Leaders wanted employees to share in the decision making and to own the decisions they made. According to these managers, such decision making approach was a result of their employee ownership structure and fairly flat management structure:

"It comes back down to our corporate culture. We're very flat from a hierarchal, obviously the principals and associates and the major shareholders in the company are the major business decision-makers in the company, but there's transparency of flow of information to the non-P's and A's ......it is a community decision that's helping us move our business. And I think that is the corporate culture that works. Others may emulate it and say that they're an employee-owned company but you still have five major shareholders or six major shareholders, and then everyone else.” (Participant # 9)
“In my experience with people who have come from competitors, they tend to be a little bit more authoritarian than we are, where, you know, we definitely, as managers or project managers tell our employees what they need to do but it’s generally not in the same way. The typical style is well, okay, I need you to do this now go off and do it, whereas we have more of a conversation. Okay, this is my problem and I need your help. Do you think that you could do something like this? So the person actually owns that task and agrees to it themselves. I’ve noticed that difference. It’s very subtle but it’s a difference I’ve noticed because some of our competitors who are now employees from competitors that are working for us tend to be more direct, like, I’m a higher level than you therefore you do this for me and we don’t really do that at BOB.” (Participant # 2)

Personal influence and involvement in decision making has been presented in multiple articles as being one of the key drivers of employee engagement. In BOB’s case, employee collective decision making and employee voice were indicated by some management interview participants as the cornerstone of BOB’s approach to operation. A majority of 77% of employee survey respondents indicated that their expectations for this employer brand promise was adequately or more than adequately fulfilled. Quantitative results showed significant positive influence on this employer brand promise on multiple organizational citizenship performance behaviours but not task performance actions (results discussed in more detail in quantitative section).

Challenges encountered in fulfilling the factor of employees’ personal stake and influence
At the same time that these managers were pleased with the organization’s consultative and collective approach to decision making, they were also troubled by the time that it took for decisions to be made through such approach.

“The only frustration with that is that BOB takes a very long time to process information and make a decision. [Question by researcher: "When you say very long, is that longer than other organizations in the industry?"] Absolutely. BOB’s decision-making process is very slow because we have ownership model the way we do. And because we don’t have a hierarchy.” (Participant # 10)

“...you get a sense that decisions are delayed because of interests of a few and we have to get collective agreement or else the structure doesn’t work...I think part of our success of being a very flat organization and having a number of owners and voices also hinders us from being able to make conclusive decisions in a timely fashion.” (Participant # 9)

Ultimately, as indicated by the following interviewee, BOB had continued to thrive for over 50 years with such ownership and leadership structure along with its consultative and collective approach to decision making. While quicker decisions might save the organization some opportunities and
expenses, the result of strong collective buy-in when decisions were made had served the organization very well. As such, the structure and approach would be preserved for the organization’s foreseeable future.

“And because we don’t have a hierarchy. So everyone is empowered to have an opinion, which is wonderful, and everyone has the perceived right to contribute...They believe they have the right to contribute and what’s more, their opinions will matter...Consulting every possible stakeholder in every possible decision makes the decision-making cycle slow and sluggish. But what I want to say is, once the decision is taken, wow, it’s a good one. It’s a strong buy-in, and everything has been considered. It’s been looked at from every possible angle that it’s a good one...Making autonomous decisions here is quite rare. Everyone needs to be consulted. Unless there’s a very short amount of time in which to make a decision, and very defined, but you need to make sure you use the time you have as effectively as possible still consulting people...I keep reminding myself that BOB has been in business fifty years with these same systems and has got by very well. ......There is maybe a greater expense of cost because we didn't make a decision quicker, but in the grander scheme of things, I’m not going to challenge the company's culture just to make a small incremental saving like that.” (Participant # 10)

Another interesting challenge presented by a manager about BOB’s Principals and Associates program was the notion that a manager who was not or not yet an Associate or Principal could get into a quandary when they were supervising non-managers who were Associates and Principals. After all, their continued employment or potential to become an Associate or a Principal could be impacted by the feedback provided by these subordinates to the manager’s superior(s) and other Principals and Associates. In various organizations around the world, managers have made decisions that are, for one reason or another, not supported by some of their employees or might even cause anger among employees. As an individual’s view of his/her manager’s decision contradicts that of his/her manager or an individual’s interest is infringed upon by a manager’s decision, conflict could easily arise in that relationship. In the case of BOB, should a decision made by a manager be contrary to that which was expected or desired by some Associates or Principals in the manager’s group, how would these Associates or Principals view or respond to the decision? Should a manager’s performance be contingent upon the successful execution of such a decision and this was not possible due to the lack of support by these Associates and Principals, how would the manager’s performance be evaluated? Most importantly, would such challenges bias the Associates’ and Principals’ view of the manager’s judgment, ability and, ultimately, suitability to be an Associate or a Principal? While such concerns had been expressed by the following participant and there was a reasonable likelihood that biasness could materialize under such circumstance, the actual situation at BOB was unknown.

"I'm the manager of my group, but the associate in my group carries more weight. So for me to tell my associate [who is not a manager], hypothetically, that, you know, he's not
behaving the way he's supposed to? It's really awkward. Because he identifies how much I make. And where my career goes. But because he's the associate that I work most closely with, at that table, he's going to be listened to more than, say, the ones that don't work with me closely. Or, take for example, [name of an employee] is our [particular department/group] manager, right? The person also an associate. So then, technically, the person is in charge of the whole [particular department/group]. The person got a few principals in there. So for the person to tell them what to do, I mean, these people decide the person's career path. They will decide if the person becomes a principal. Right? So it's kind of a bit circular, a bit awkward. I've always pushed that your group manager should not actually belong to the group they're managing. So that, if they do burn some bridges and, you know, have a few awkward positions, it doesn't really affect their career for a long time.” (Participant # 15)
**Factor of Significance and Esteem**

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<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
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<td>Opportunity to be involved or contribute to the organization's community building and engagement efforts</td>
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This factor highlighted the sense of pride and esteem that BOB attempted to foster within its workforce for their collective accomplishments as well as for their mutual efforts in creating significant social and environmental impact beyond their organization and individual work.

In BOB’s case, their collective accomplishments would include being recognized and respected as the group that provides technical excellence and ensures high integrity in their deliverables as well as in their dealings with stakeholders. Their mutual efforts in creating significant impact beyond their organization and individual work would entail generating outcomes that would have lasting positive impact on society or the environment. Such outcomes could also be seen as collective accomplishments. In BOB’s case, such outcomes would include large-scale community support and engagement programs as well as sustainable environmental solutions in their deliverables to clients. Through these committed efforts, the organization establishes its relevance and significance to communities in which it operates as well as to the communities it serves and impacts.

From an employee performance enhancement perspective, managers give the impression that this sense of pride that employees feel for the great accomplishments they achieve collectively is bolstered by the accompanying external recognition, admiration, and respect that comes with it. In turn, employees' bolstered pride intensifies their desire to continually deliver the standards, innovation, or calibre of performance that would garner them further recognition, admiration, and respect from within and outside of their industry.

One of BOB’s declared values was the pursuit of excellence in technical solutions and services. Seven (7) of the managers interviewed identified the organization’s commitment to technical excellence as both a corporate and employer brand promise.

"They [new employees] will work in a well-respected company when it comes to technical skills." (Participant # 18)

"Our technical skills and abilities. We're known for being very good at what we do." (Participant # 16)
In order to deliver on such a promise, BOB employed a consistent process of reviewing all final work (e.g. workplan, reports, etc.), regardless of the producers’ ranks in the organization, before they were released to clients. The final work was reviewed by a Principal and possibly also other members not directly involved in the project. If the work is produced or led by a Principal, that work would be reviewed by another Principal and possibly also by additional reviewers not directly involved in the project:

"When it comes to technical quality, how do we fulfill that? We have a coach and a practice of senior review so every employee’s work is subject to review, even senior people we hire. Nothing goes out without senior review. That sometimes can be very difficult, especially for senior people who come to join us when they are used to being the people who review. There is a process of senior review and the underlying principle of that it is a quality assurance mechanism." Follow-up question by researcher, "Who reviews the senior people?" Answer from interviewee, "A peer. So if you are the most senior person, if you’re a principal, you will either have a peer and two or three subordinates who would look at it. So there is always a mechanism for making sure of what goes out. Now, ultimately, the project director, who is a principal, will have final signing off but there is this, it’s more a culture than a process." (Participant # 7)

Another key organizational value declared by BOB was integrity, whereby BOB pledged to be honest, reliable, ethical and trustworthy in its work and relationships.

While integrity in work and relationships had only been formally identified by two managers as an employer brand promise, all managers interviewed have indicated at one point or another throughout their interview that BOB was an organization that had integrity in its work and in its relationships. The sentiment expressed by the interviewee below was reflective of how other interviewees felt about their organization:

"Number one is integrity. We want to make sure that we are doing the very best work possible in a very professional manner, in a manner that is compliant with local laws, regulations and suits the client’s needs. So, integrity is number one." (Participant # 17)

The reality of whether BOB had delivered on its commitment to technical excellence as well as integrity in work and relationships could be more accurately verified through its actions and outcomes. BOB has won multiple international awards\(^\text{29}\) for technical, engineering and overall

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excellence as well as had produced, presented\textsuperscript{30}, published\textsuperscript{31} a significant number of technical papers and articles. While evidence for integrity could not be as easily found without further inquiry of BOB’s clients, one might assume that integrity would be present in its deliverables and dealings in order for the organization to gain its positive reputation and long-standing success in an industry that is both competitive and has stringent guidelines.

The opportunity to be part of such a successful and highly respected organization was one of the employer brand promises identified by three managers interviewed.

“The company has a very positive reputation. One of the reasons they want to come here is for the work atmosphere.” (Participant # 17)

While only five of the 19 managers interviewed mentioned “opportunity to be involved in community building and engagement” as an employment benefit offered by BOB, there were in fact noticeable indications that BOB paid much attention to community building and engagement and that a large number of employees do get involved in the organization’s initiatives through financial donations and/or volunteer services.

BOB built and engaged communities through four noticeable avenues: 1) a major Trust for capital projects to benefit families and children orphaned or displaced by the AIDS pandemic in Africa, 2) an employee-promoted charity program where employees take part in the selection of the charitable organizations or initiatives to support each year, 3) a full commitment to find and hire talent from local communities in which BOB operates, and 4) participation or leadership in professional and industry-specific associations as well as partnerships with academic institutions for the purpose of sharing knowledge and best practices.

Many employees not only made financial donations to BOB’s Trust for Orphans and their charities or causes of choice, they also volunteered their time in the projects funded by the trust as well as in other employee-chosen charitable projects or functions. BOB’s 2011 Sustainable Development Report indicated that 1/3 of BOB’s employees have supported their Trust for Orphans since its inception in 2003 and the Trust, in turn, had contributed USD$1,000,000 to 11 projects in Africa since then. The report also highlighted other outcomes including the fact that BOB’s employee-promoted charity program contributed close to USD$183,000 in 2011 to two global crises.

Managers made it possible for employees to participate by providing various internal accommodations such as work schedule adjustments for volunteer activities, payroll deductions for donations, time off to organize fundraising events or participate in charitable projects, and more.


“People are encouraged to get involved in the community. It’s one of our core values and I think it’s also in the code of conduct that we want to give back to the communities we work in. So, in any given month, we have so many events which involve the community. There’s the kid’s cancer care, Cancer Care Foundation of Alberta, which I think this is the eleventh year our employees are shaving their heads to raise money. I know there was one scientist who was sent to Afghanistan to give his skills to the people there in the rebuilding effort and global farming part of it. So there’s a community involvement support program, CISP, which considers such requests. So if there’s an organization in the community that I think is worthwhile, I can recommend that to the CISP and they will evaluate and see if it’s aligned with BOB’s values and, if so, they will donate part of their resources.” Question by Researcher: “So employees can recommend your choice of non-profit or special cause? Now, what about if you are participating, let’s say you decided to run for cure of cancer or something, what do they do to, would they readily say, okay, we’ll donate x dollars for your pledge?” Answer by Interviewee: “Yeah, they communicate this internally so people have a chance to make their pledges online and in many cases, the company matches it to a certain amount. That’s done every year for the shave your head event.” (Participant # 19)

As for BOB’s commitment to hire talent from local communities, the organization has reported that 97% of its 2,500 new employees that joined the organization in 2011 were for local positions in locations where BOB operates and 71% of managers are from the region they actually lead.

BOB’s leadership and participation in professional and industry-specific associations was also quite evident with its current involvement and support of over 100 industry associations globally. BOB’s personnel led or participated in such associations as well as collaborated with academic institutions to cultivate and share information on best practices in various domains including community engagement.

As a whole, community building and engagement appeared to be an integral part of BOB’s operation as well as strategy to engage its own employees. It was not an isolated or small program to show that they practice some form of corporate social responsibility. Instead, it formed part of the organization’s overall sustainable development plan, along with the core areas of human capital, operations, client services, and governance.

From an employee performance mediator enhancement perspective, many employees’ identification and engagement with the organization was noticeably strengthened through their direct involvement in what could be deemed as causes of mutual importance. This solidified the employees’ commitment to the organization and the causes they mutually care about. Such strengthened commitment, along with other factors that further enhance the employees’ identification and engagement with the organization would be predicted to influence the employees’ overall job satisfaction and performance (Markos and Sridevi, 2010)
Challenges encountered in fulfilling the factor of work significance and esteem

It appeared that the organization’s strong commitment to technical excellence posed some challenges, mainly when they tried to balance between ensuring superior technical quality and delivering the finished product on schedule and within budget.

“When it comes to doing things on time and on budget, our culture of technical quality is so strong that sometimes our people aren't as afraid or as enthusiastic of getting something on time or for the right price, and saying, well, we need one more week to do this so that it is, unmistakably technically brilliant….It's just, you know, when you have two beliefs that don't always coincide, one of them has to compromise a little bit and we tend to compromise more on that side to keep our technical quality because that's a big part of our brand. Now we want to do both and that's our big challenge. How can we have high technical quality and deliver on time and on budget, not either.” (Participant # 7)
Employment Benefit Materialization Factors

Factors deemed essential to the effective materialization of the organization’s employer brand promises have been found to be:

- Factor of brand championship
- Factor of branding control
- Factor of stakeholder awareness, selection, consultation

The delivery of the Employment Benefit Content factors of employer branding appeared to have been made possible largely through the presence of certain organizational activities and factors. These activities include determining:

- Who would be accountable for leading and managing the organization’s employer branding initiatives.
- What processes, policies, structures, rewards, and other possible mechanisms would need to be put in place to facilitate the effective delivery of the organization’s employer brand promises.
- What approaches would need to be taken to ensure that the targeted potential and actual employees are not only being made aware of the organization’s brand offerings but are also being consulted for their improvement and changes.

The factors identified in this case study were relevant to BOB. It is likely that further studies of the employer branding practices of more organizations will uncover more Employment Benefit Materialization factors.

Factor of Brand Championship

This factor reflected the significance that BOB places on having its employer branding strategies and initiatives led by its senior leaders.

A 2011 employer branding global study by Employer Brand International reported that an organization’s Human Resources team is the key group responsible for delivering the organizations’ employer branding strategies. The study, conducted through a survey of 1789 respondents from organizations worldwide reported that 31% of respondents identified their Human Resources Department as responsible for managing their employer brand (2011b). This was followed by the Marketing Department at 18%, executive team at 15%, and CEO alone at 13%. While both USA/Canada (152 respondents) and Europe/United Kingdom (544 respondents) had the Human Resources Department on top of their list of department(s) or group(s) responsible for managing
their employer brand, USA/Canada identified the executive team as second on their list while Europe/United Kingdom identified the Marketing Department as second on their list. One noteworthy aspect of this part of the report is that the percentage of executive team and CEO responsible for managing their organizations’ employer brand had gone up from 2% and 1% respectively from their 2009 Study.

When asked what departments or employee groups were involved in planning, developing, and executing the employer branding strategies at BOB, all three major groups were identified by managers interviewed – senior management, the Human Resources Department, and the Marketing Department. All managers interviewed identified senior management and/or the organization’s Principals and Associates, with 14 of those interviewed identifying both senior management as well as Principals and Associates. These individuals were involved in developing the organization’s employer branding through leading discussions on branding strategies and offering feedback and guidance in the actual development and execution of the organizations’ employer branding efforts.

As noted earlier, while one did not have to be a manager in order to be an Associate or a Principal, it did appear that almost all senior managers were either an Associate or a Principal. Managers felt that these individuals directly delivered the organization’s employer brand by not only shaping the provisions and work environment represented by the organization’s employer brand but also by personally promoting and exemplifying the values projected by the organization’s employer as well as corporate brand (which share the same key values).

"It is our partners, our senior partners and associates that tend to the face of BOB in those instances. They're the ones projecting our services and our culture and our sustainable programs. And so in short, our partners are the ones that promote our brand and our marketing team support the activity but don't lead it.” (Participant # 10)

"It's through them [the Principals and senior leaders] that a lot of the culture of the firm and the brand of the firm from an employee's perspective is felt.” (Participant # 12)

"Senior leaders absolutely play a significant role in shaping the organization's employer brand.” Follow-up question by researcher, "How do they shape BOB's employer brand?” Answer by interviewee, "One of the ways that they do is through our BOB University. They are facilitators for the courses. We try to capture some of the most senior people to come in and help with the BOB orientation, to tell stories about the history of BOB and talk about some of the innovative solutions that we've come up with in the past, to allow their persona to come across to the individuals in terms of creativity, how they've worked independently, so that new recruits feel that they have that autonomy to follow the examples of some of the senior leaders.” (Participant # 17)
Nine (9) of the managers also recognized the role of the Human Resources team (called Human Development team at BOB) in working with the organization’s senior leadership team to develop their employer branding strategies as well as their direct role in leading the actual execution of the initiatives. The Marketing team’s role in ensuring consistent messaging in the communication and promotion the organization’s employer brand as well as corporate brand in general was acknowledged by seven of the managers interviewed.

The essential question here is whether there is value in having senior leaders play the leading or at least a larger role in championing the organization’s employer brand strategy. There has been ample research and literature that argue for the significance of senior leaders in championing organizational initiatives.

Should employees truly see their senior leaders as representatives of the organization’s values, then it would be even more important for them to champion the organization’s employer branding strategies and initiatives to ensure that the values promised and communicated are in fact the values that are demonstrated in the organization.

**Factor of Branding Control**

This factor reflected the organization’s use of structures, programs, policies, processes, and defined practices to ensure the effective delivery of its promised employment benefits.

Many specific examples of the organizations’ existing structures, programs, policies, processes, and defined practices were provided by interviewees in the employee-centred factors section of this document to substantiate the presence of proper controls with which BOB’s employer brand promises are delivered. Further verification of the presence of structures, programs, policies, processes, and defined practices as indicated by the managers were done by the researcher through the review of the following materials:

- the organization’s policy and procedures manuals
- organizational materials and documents on employee intranet
- internal documents and reports provided by the organization’s Human Development team
- fact checks with members of the Human Development team
- organization’s public reports and promotional materials

Examples of the organization’s verifiable structures and programs to fulfil promised employment benefits included:

- Employee share ownership program
- Principals and Associate System
- BOB University and comprehensive training calendar
• International Employee Exchange program
• Mentor Appreciation program
• Community engagement programs
• Sustainable development plan, targets, and supporting resources

Examples of the organization’s verifiable policies, processes, and defined practices to fulfil promised employment benefits included:
• Varied mediums of employer brand communication and promotion
• Flexible work schedule and work arrangement options
• Comprehensive occupational health and safety policies and procedures
• Highly consultative and community approach to decision making
• Varied and regular employee social events and activities
• Physical work space that allows for close-proximity interactions – verified only on the locations approved for this case study.
• Involvement and support of professional and industry associations.
• Industry and client recognition for sustainable and innovative technical solutions.
• Industry and client recognition for technical excellence as well as quality assurance policy and procedures.
• Detailed Code of Conduct to guide employee and organizational behaviours in work and professional interactions.

Unverifiable claims from management interviewees of the presence of the following structures, programs, policies, processes, and defined practices:
• Criteria for Principal and Associate nomination.
• Business development agenda and data – to verify claims that BOB procure or receive challenging projects.
• Managers do encourage or allow employees to work with members from other groups on joint projects.
• Employees receive coaching and learning from senior technical experts.
• Employees are allowed to take risk in their work.
• Competitive (at 50th percentile of industry rate for benchmark positions) base compensation.
• Work-life balance practices
• Job security actions
• Senior leaders’ open-door policy
• Unwritten policy of selective hiring
• Unwritten policy of supporting employees’ best interest in career progression

As a whole, much of the management interviewees’ claims of the presence of structures, programs, policies, processes, and defined practices to materialize the organization’s promised employment benefits were verifiable through materials outlined above. The claims that were not
verifiable are largely due to the fact that they are unwritten codes of practice or norms that the researcher was not able to observe at the time of data collection. Another reason why some claims were not verifiable by the researcher was because they would require the review of what the organization deemed as sensitive documents such as the specific criteria for the nomination of Principals and Associates, the organization’s business development agenda and data, and the organization’s salary structures.

**Factor of Stakeholder Selection and Interaction**

This factor reflected the organization’s focus on stakeholder selection and interaction in its employer branding efforts. BOB used various methods of communications and interactions with stakeholders to promote the organization’s brand offerings as well as to seek their input on different aspects of their employment offering. At the same time, BOB focused its efforts on recruiting job applicants that not only have the technical and professional skills suited for the kind of employment it had to offer but more importantly, were attracted to and aligned with the values, culture, and priorities it held. BOB believed that such applicants, when hired, would be better received by its existing employees and would also be able to integrate more smoothly into its operation.

To actively communicate and interact with its stakeholders about its brand offerings, BOB used both external and internal mediums.

**External communication and interactions**

Organizational materials and website review as well as the manager interviews revealed the following mediums of communication and interactions used by BOB to promote its employer brand to potential job applicants and/or to seek their feedback on the attractiveness of the organization’s brand offerings.

- Recruitment events: universities, career fairs, professional conferences and tradeshows

  "I was just at the university career fair last week and a couple people specifically came up because they had heard about BOB and they wanted, they were interested in working for us when they're done school." (Participant # 13)

- Advertising and communication materials: organizational website, job posting, broader organizational advertisements, news releases, professional magazine articles

  "Let's assume that they're applying for an opportunity. Well, first thing, there's a job posting. There's an advertisement. I mean, within the advertisements we have
our logo, we have some pieces of information on the company. The advertisement would inspire people to visit our website and there's more information on the website.” (Participant # 15)

"We have done some poster campaigns and depending on what we are trying to do, if we're just advertising broadly our services, we'll have engineering, your future, preserving the earth, integrity. So that will appeal to people who want to be involved in resource management but also have a social conscience or environmental conscience and we, I think we position ourselves as a company that is involved in resource engineering, in getting oil out of the ground or gas, but we're also, we're involved in that to the extent that we're trying to make sure that that happens in the most environmentally sustainable way possible. And that is a brand, I think, that appeals to a lot of our new employees.” (Participant # 7)

- Selection activities: responses to job inquiries, interviews, job offer discussions

"When we're pre-screening our candidates, our recruiting team will actually talk about these things [organizational provisions, values, etc.] in our pre-screening portion of the recruitment process.” (Participant # 11)

- Established organizational reputation and word-of-mouth: current and former employees, members within the industry

"Probably one of our biggest ways right now in our group has been word of mouth and colleagues. So, for example, we'll have an individual that started, somebody that they knew in school situation, they're looking for work, they come in for an interview, and, you know, if they have the skills that we're looking for, I'll get them in on as well. One of our recent hires, she tried to get on with BOB out east, thinking that there wasn't a big environmental employment out there and she was kind of directed from our colleagues in the east to come out west. So she's tried to get on with BOB before, so she's, you know, she's looked at the website, she's talked to colleagues in the east, following up and was interested and joined us here a couple of months ago. So I would say that's probably one of the biggest ways, just that networking, that word of mouth type of thing. I would probably give it as probably more effective than the website.” (Participant # 8)

"From my actual experience and from people who have worked here and have gone elsewhere, have been, like, oooh, like it really was better there [BOB], type of thing. Or maybe BOB, being a consulting firm, isn't able to pay, you know, what I can get from a big oil and gas firm but look at the other benefits that I have, you know, kinda that work/life balance, it's a little more comfortable, it's a little more thought-
out atmosphere, that sort of thing. So I hear it from departed employees and, you
know, like I said, I hear it from [someone the participant knows well] who works at
one of our competitors, I hear it from her all the time, right? Like, what she has to
go through, and I'm scratching my head, going, wow, you have to do that, that's
tough, right? (Participant # 1)

- Publicity from community engagement activities and events

"Some of the things that we do in the community. We were just involved in a
legacy project here. Like that, you know, getting local news exposure and things like
that really do promote you well. And also some of the high profile projects that
we're involved in. Really goes to a lot of exposure, too. So when people do apply,
they've already had a lot of exposure, whether they know it or not. And they
recognize the BOB logo." (Participant # 9)

- Multiple and repeated recognitions for being one of Canada's best employers

Of the mediums above, the three that were most mentioned by 19 respondents as being used by
BOB to communicate and promote its employer brand to potential job applicants were company
website (14), interviews (14) and word-of-mouth from current and former employees (9).

Aside from job advertisements and specific recruitment materials, BOB appeared to have also
begun using broader organizational advertisements to simultaneously promote its corporate and
employer brand. Anecdotally, this move appears to have yielded positive effects in terms of
generating public awareness and recognition of the organization.

"We work on a site and you'll never or rarely see the BOB name on a construction site,
even though we work there, which is something that we're doing more now than we used
to. We didn't, our marketing people have helped us get in that minBET. We used to be a
very niche company, technical experts that, you know, word of mouth would be good
enough for us. And over the last couple of years, we started putting our names out there a
bit more and branding ourselves a bit differently. Tends to be a big sign on the building,
you know? ..........A couple years ago, in the boom of things here in Alberta, our marketing
staff said, I could get your name on the billboard at the airport. And then some of our
senior people asked why would we want do that. And we did it and what we did was we
wanted to brand ourselves as a health and safety focused company, so we had some of
our people that took the pictures in the field and what we do and
all that, with the PPE
[personal protective equipment] and everything, and then we had this big billboard at the
airport that was saying, we're honoured at BOB. And that was quite interesting to see,
like, I had people after that saying, I saw your billboard. I didn't know, so what do you
do? And asking questions. Or we see new people, they say, where do you work, I say
BOB Associates, and they say, oh, isn't there something at the airport? So they noticed, but oh my God, it took us all our energy to be convincing people [at BOB] that it was a good idea at the time to do that. Well we do now Globalfest, they should also see our logo will be on all sorts of different things associated with that so we do a bit more of that. Still not in a big way, like if you look at some of our competitors, I mean, you see their names all over the city, you see their names all over the place, we're still nowhere on those billboards.” (Participant # 3)

**Internal communication and interactions**

Organizational materials and website review as well as the managers interviews revealed the following mediums used by BOB to communicate and promote its employer brand to existing employees.

- **Orientation**

  "I've seen people come in to the company as a new employee and they get this amazing package of, here's the benefits, here's the dental and medical and contact this person and contact that person. You know, I've just recently seen the new employee package, and it's amazing. From where we've been to that and also the presentation that's put on by the human development team, saying you're a new employee and here's your career path, type of thing, and welcome to the company, we're a family and we want you to be a part of our family, type of thing” (Participant # 1)

- **Internal advertisements**

  "We have digital signage. I don't know if you've seen then when you've walked around the elevator lobby, video screens.” (Participant # 19)

  o Messages include upcoming events, fast facts about the organization, the organization's values, key projects, etc.

- **Face-to-face meetings and workshops**

  o Learning sessions through BOB University, mentoring sessions, staff meetings, etc.

- **Employee events and activities**

  o Such as the Weekend Attitude Adjustment Meetings, community service projects, Globalfest, corporate challenges, etc.

- **Employee intranet**
The intranet allows BOB to post messages, facilitate discussions, and share information (e.g. employee engagement survey results, internal reports, benefits plan) with employees. It also allows employees to access organizational materials, forms, and resources.

In addition to the mediums above, employees were also exposed to many of the same mediums used by the organization to communicate and promote its employer to external parties. These included the organization’s website, job advertisements, broader organizational advertisements, news releases or magazine articles, publicity from community engagement activities, and repeated recognitions for being one of Canada’s best employers.

Verifying the desirability of provisions offered
Aside from creating employer brand awareness, one key purpose of BOB’s effort to communicate and interact with its potential and actual employees is to seek their input on the desirability and value of the employment provisions offered to them by BOB.

Managers interviewed provided several methods on how they extract such information:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Methods Identified</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual internal employee engagement survey (BOB uses Gallup Q12) as well as other surveys</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual performance review and goal setting sessions with each employee</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face bi-weekly orientation, meetings, and workshops</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal feedback (through casual conversations, mentorship sessions, and messages relayed by third parties)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Interviews</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online blogs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career fairs and conferences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While BOB did not directly list down the employment benefits offered or asked existing or potential employees to rate each employment benefit, managers indicated that they did ask potential actual and potential job applicants (in selection interviews and career fairs) and new employees (in orientation) why they chose to work for BOB as well as what they were looking for in terms of benefits and overall employment expectations. As for existing employees, managers inquired (through casual conversations or through meetings and goal setting sessions) as well as monitored their interest and responses to employment benefits offered. Managers also sought feedback on new and different ideas through methods identified above. Whenever an employee exits the
organization, an exit interview is conducted. The following statement by a research participant reflected the types of information sought in the exit interview:

“Whenever there is a person leaving the company, we do an exit interview with that person, to find out why they are leaving the company. Was it something we could have done more to improve the quality of their work experience? To improve how we treat people? Has everything been the way we promised? That kind of stuff.” (Participant # 18)

While all managers interviewed confirmed that different methods were being used to seek employees’ feedback on the desirability of the employment benefits offered, six of the 19 managers also stressed that BOB had a set of core values and employment benefits that were dear to the organization. Instead of trying to discover and respond to what might be desirable to potential or existing employees, managers were more concerned about finding out whether potential and existing employees would embrace what BOB was already offering and would in fact thrive in the environment BOB has already built:

“I don't think it's as conscious as us saying, this is a brand we want to be, so let's go and try to be that brand. We have core values and things that guide us and ownership structure that lives and breathes in the company and that is who we are and that would be our brand. It's maybe a different way of looking at it, but I've never sat in a room and had a conversation around, with senior owners, saying, what's our brand? To our employees. We talk about what kind of company do we want to be. What's our values? Where are we going? What are the things that are important to us, and I think that's what we focus on. So the brand, maybe, is more of a lagging indicator of those conversations, I guess.” (Participant # 12)

“So it's the other way around. Not so much as saying, okay, we're trying to see if you like what we offer, but more to say, this is what we offer, is that what you're looking for? Here's our environment. This is our working environment. Do you feel that you would be compatible with that working environment? Would you excel in that environment?” (Participant # 17)

The key inference of the sentiments above was the notion that BOB was not interested in only hiring capable employees. It was interested in hiring and retaining capable employees that shared BOB’s values and were welcoming of the employment benefits that BOB was already offering:

“It’s really our role to make sure that we protect the BOB brand. We don’t bring people in that don’t align with our values and our brand and our promises.” (Participant # 11)

“I can't speak for anybody else’s, is the person we're interviewing a fit for our team? Do they have the same values that we have as a group or as an office? And that's really big,
because we promote the team thing so much, it's a really big deciding factor when we hire. Does this person fit? Are they going to promote the things that we promote?” (Participant # 15)

“We don't create the environment that everyone wants to come and join us because we have pool teams everywhere or foosball teams everywhere, you know, we create a working condition that that type of individuals can flourish and fit into.” (Participant # 10)

Seeking and branding to the right candidates

Being a specialized environmental engineering and consulting organization, a large majority of BOB’s existing positions, employees, and job applicants were those with specific engineering and technical background. An interviewee shared her observation that while BOB was a well-known employer, it was mainly so to job applicants from the engineering and related technical fields.

"You wouldn't know of BOB if you weren't in the field. When I did my master's degree, I was looking at who are the top firms that I would like to work for. Well, BOB was at the top because, I'm a [name of profession] by training, and I do [name of a professional field]. If you look at, so, okay, who are the firms that you would really want to work for? BOB was at the, like, one of the top five. So in the field and all that, I would talk to my teacher at University and then he would say, oh, yeah, BOB is a good firm and good reputation and all that.” (Participant # 3)

It was likely that there were more opportunities for an environmental engineering and consulting organization like BOB to directly or indirectly promote itself as an employer of choice to students and members in the engineering and related technical fields. The following respondent provided an example of how such promotion would take place in an academic institution even when the respondent was not a member of BOB’s recruitment team and was not specifically going to the institution for the purpose of promoting BOB or recruiting candidates.

"I'm going to give a talk at [name] college in February regarding careers for people with a forestry biology background, so I'll be selling BOB there.” (Participant # 15)

As a whole, there might be some evidence to support the earlier respondent’s claim that BOB was not as well-known to those outside of the engineering and related technical fields. In Canada, BOB had repeatedly made the prestigious Mediacorp Canada’s list of Canada’s Top 100 Employers and the well-recognized Aon Hewitt’s list of 50 Best Employers in Canada. The data collected by both competitions for evaluation were from the organization’s employees, leaders, and the Human Resources Department. Data for both rankings was collected from individuals who were already employed at the organizations. It was assumed that this population would be able to offer direct observation and confirmation of their organization’s practices and provisions as well as of their own
personal experience with the organization. These surveys did not, however, offer any revelation on their perception of the organization before they were employed by the organization.

BOB had never made the list of Randstad Award for the *50 Most Attractive Employers in Canada*. Randstad was a global staffing and human resource service firm that claims to be the second largest human resource service provider in the world with 90% of the global human resource services market. The first Randstad Award was launched in Belgium in 2000 but in Canada, the Award started in 2011 and is therefore much newer that the other two Awards. Unlike the other two surveys, the Randstad survey gathered data from 7,000 members of the general public, some of whom might be looking for employment while others might be existing employees of various organizations, possibly including organizations that had been shortlisted for the Award. Referring to a shortlist of 150 organizations in Canada with 1,000 or more employees (a group in which BOB belongs), the survey asked respondents the key question, “Would you like to work for this company?” Respondents were also asked for their opinion on the main factors that define an employer’s attractiveness as well as the top five factors that are most important them personally. The factors presented for consideration are: (1) Financial health, (2) Good training opportunities, (3) Long-term job security, (4) Opportunities for career advancement, (5) Strong management, (6) Interesting job content, (7) Pleasant and stimulating working environment, (8) Competitive salaries and employee benefits, (9) A good work-life balance, and (10) Progressive policies concerning the environment and society.

Randstad’s website very clearly associated its Most Attractive Employers Award with the practice of employer branding. Randstad provided the following elaboration on employer brand and branding:

> An ‘employer brand’ is a complex concept based on various intangible factors, including perception, image versus identity, and the ability to differentiate between them. In a nutshell: An employer brand represents the image a company projects as a potential employer. If you have a strong employer brand, then your company is considered a distinctive place to work, with attractive brand values and career prospects. ......Employer branding is a crucial tool for attracting and retaining the right kind of talent. It helps you recruit highly-skilled and promising new employees and it enhances their loyalty by increasing their identification with the company. It also raises an organization’s visibility in the job market and makes it stand out from the competition.

The fact that BOB had not made this list in spite of its year-after-year repeat placements on two well-respected best Canadian employers lists above as well as its many other international recognitions for being a best employer begs the question of “Why has BOB not made this list?” Is it

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true that BOB’s reputation as a great employer is known mainly to those in the engineering and related technical fields but not so much to the broader job seeking public? If so, what would be the implication of this to BOB’s efforts to attract and recruit suitable candidates?

It was very possible that due its highly technical and specialized business nature, the average job seeker would not be paying attention to such an organization, be it BOB or some other similar organization. Around 80% of BOB’s workforce was skilled technical or engineering professionals. Only 20% were categorized as ‘Administration’ (2012) and a noticeable number of these personnel, while taking on administrative roles, could in fact be a skilled technical or engineering professional by trade. As such, the percentage of jobs within BOB that could accommodate applicants with a more general and transferable skill set was small. BOB’s workforce consisted of 90% technical or engineering professionals. In this situation, the fact that it was not known to the broader have not appeared to have a negative consequence on its ability to recruit and retain targeted employees.

It should be noted that none of the other four employers that have won a total combined placement of 10 or more times on the Mediacorp’s and Aon Hewitt’s best employer listings have ever been on the Randstad Award list. These are employers that have been confirmed year-after-year by their employees as great employers, yet none of them made it to the Randstat list of most attractive employers in Canada. Of the organizations that have made the Randstat Award list, only 27% have ever made the Mediacorp’s and Aon Hewitt’s lists of Canada’s Top/Best Employers. This observation is critical as it raises questions on several fronts including the merit of such surveys in confirming an organization’s employer branding success. This will be explored in the discussion section of this Chapter.
Proposed Employer Branding Process Model

The rich data and detail analysis led to the development of the following proposed process model for employer branding. In this proposed model, factors work inter-connectedly and in tandem to continually engage, bind as well as develop employees in order that enhancement occurred not only with employees’ work-specific performance but also with their overall capability.
Summary of Results and Analysis of Performance Enhancement Factors of Employer Branding

When asked if BOB had linked its employer branding efforts to employee performance and if so, how so, respondents offer the following insight.

Thirteen (13) of the 19 respondents either answered a direct yes to the question above and provided examples of how BOB links its employer branding efforts to employee performance or did not answer a direct yes but provided examples of such. The remaining number of respondents had indicated that they were not fully certain of whether BOB has linked its employer branding efforts to employee performance. However, from the analysis provided, one could see that BOB had clearly incorporated the element of employee performance as well as performance mediator enhancement in almost every aspect of its efforts to develop and fulfil its employer brand promises, as summarized below:

- Ensuring that employees’ basic employment sustainability needs were met so that they need not worry about these life essentials and instead could focus on other employment and development priorities.

- Expanding or improving employees’ work-related knowledge and skills through BOB University learning sessions, on-the-job coaching and learning from top industry experts, mentoring program, cross-training and inter-departmental project opportunities, and international exchange opportunities.

It is predicted that expanded knowledge and skills would increase an employee’s ability to perform their existing tasks better or perform more tasks and take on additional responsibilities to those he/she was originally hired to do. Strengthening and increasing the depth of existing knowledge and skills is predicted to enable an employee to be more efficient, creative, and/or effective in doing their work. Research has shown that broadening and deepening of work knowledge could improve employees’ and ultimately also organizations’ performance (Arthur, Bennett, Edens, & Bell, 2003; Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005; Sultana, Irum, Ahmed, Mehmood, 2012). In addition, there is empirical evidence to suggest that cross-training and completing diverse tasks increase employee motivation and satisfaction (Gawali, 2009). Enhanced employee motivation and satisfaction in turn has been found to improve employee and organizational performance.

- Motivating stronger employee effort and performance yield through the following rewards and recognition:
  - More organizational shares
“If you are a high performer, you have more opportunity to buy shares than if you’re not a high performer. But any more than a hundred shares that you want to purchase in a year, you’ve got to be a high performer and they have to be offered to you because you’re a high performer... We evaluate someone’s performance based on what we’ve seen over the last twelve months.” (Participant # 10)

- Advancement into the Principals and Associates structure

“It’s a very obvious one in, like you do want to achieve an associate status, well, you’d better be working hard so that people offer you more shares and you work your way up.” (Participant # 4)

- Peer recognition for employees’ mutual care and support of one another. This is indicative of rewarding out-of-role or organizational citizenship performance.

“We have a reward and recognition program where a colleague can go and, it’s recognized that you’re our colleague so, ROC program, we call it, so if one of your colleagues does something to help you and you’re really happy and grateful and all that, you can go to HD [Human Development Office] and get a card to say thank you for doing this for me and all that. And either you just get the card or a little gift certificate for coffee at Starbucks or whatever it is, and then you give that to your colleague to say thank you and the company pays for that.” (Participant # 3)

- Mentor Appreciation Program to recognize the efforts and value of the organization’s mentors

“We have the mentor appreciation program so that they can also come and select a gift from human development at that point to recognize their mentor... it’s big.” (Participant # 11)

- Monitoring and verifying the delivery of promised employer values within employees’ performance - through observation, feedback as well as formal balance scorecard and 360 employee performance reviews. In this case, it appears that the organization makes effort to verify whether managers and leaders are demonstrating the corporate values and virtues as well as fostering the work environment that are reflected in their employer brand. This forms part of their performance expectations.
“An example would be senior persons should be sharing their knowledge with people. And they’d actually be rated on that. Either they’re doing it or they’re not or they’re doing it well, that type of thing.” (Participant # 1)

“And I would say we do so through our feedback process, our 360 reviews. When we do our reviews with individuals it can be part of a 360 review but it can also be separate, we are specifically talking about some of our key core values, such as integrity and innovation and sustainability. We’re always referring back to those core values.” (Participant # 17)

- Strengthening employees’ sense of commitment and accountability to their work, colleagues, shared values, chosen social and environmental causes, and ultimately to BOB as a whole through BOB’s promoted and demonstrated corporate values as well as its multiple employee and community engagement programs and activities. It is predicted that when an employee shares the same values and priorities as his/her organization, he/she would be more committed and accountable to these values, priorities, and the organization as a whole. Increased commitment and accountability in turn is predicted to improve employee productivity and performance.

"Where I’ve seen it is people who are involved in community projects, when they start doing things like, you know, using the BOB system to apply for grants for that project, then they seem to get really excited about it and they’ll, we’ve had a couple people in our group put on a lunch-and-learn. You know, people bring in their lunch and they talk about the charity or the, not necessarily charity, but the organization that they’re involved with and what it means and supporting it and I think realizing that BOB will help support their interests and community involvement, they really start to pick it up and to really become more invested in BOB because they realize BOB’s more invested in them.” (Participant # 16)

- Strengthening employees’ sense of engagement with the organization, its priorities, activities, and progress through active consultation with and participation by employees in decision making. Employee engagement has been found to be a major mediator of employee performance (Markos and Sridevi, 2010) and by strengthening employee engagement, employees’ performance were very likely also affected.

Interview responses provided clearly indicated that the fulfillment of the organization’s employer brand promises would be difficult without the facilitation of organizational factors such as brand championship and support from the organization’s leaders, effective communication, and a host of relevant controls.
BOB’s efforts to incorporate employee performance enhancement in its employer branding process occurred in multiple ways, some of which were directly related to increasing employees’ work abilities and performance while others are more indirect as they relate to the strengthening of employee engagement, the key mediator of employee performance.

Quantitative results presented along with the qualitative data in this chapter support that as whole, the organization’s efforts to deliver on its employer brand promises had in fact positively influenced employee performance, though mainly on organizational citizenship performance and to a noticeably lesser degree on task performance.
Acknowledging the Challenge of Linking Process to Outcome

Pettigrew (2012) suggests in his acclaimed article, *Context and action in the transformation of the firm: A reprise*, that the biggest challenges and pay-offs come from our attempt to “carry out process and outcome studies where there is an explicit attempt being made to explain the determinants of outcome variation in context and process terms” (pg. 1309). He called this a context–process–outcome study. Pettigrew acknowledges the difficulty of producing concrete and convincing evidence to establish a causal link between the context, process, and outcome. While this might be the case, the mixing of inductive and deductive work to produce theories and fulfill the objectives of research that demand such investigations have been accepted by major process scholars (e.g. Langley and Eisenhardt in Pettigrew, 2012).

For this specific doctoral study, the researcher sees great value in complementing the quantitative results of the study with some viable interpretations and explanations of how and why those results might have come about. Ultimately, to claim that the fulfillment of employer brand promises has a positive or no influence on employee performance but not be able to offer any insight as to how or why this might have happened would not be very useful in a theoretical or practical sense. Recognizing the great difficulty in proving causal link, the researcher acknowledges the presumptive nature of the reported process findings.

Educational process and system researcher, Dr. Don R. Morris (2005, pg. 3), sees such presumptive nature as a part of reporting process findings:

> *In the process approach one observes an effect and identifies the suspected cause(s), but does not have the option of manipulating the causal variable(s), and/or does not have access to comparative data. Consequently, one draws instead on theory and/or experience to describe the mechanism by which the effect is thought to be caused, emphasizing the causal process.*

In this case study, the qualitative analysis had identified the activities and events that occurred in the employer branding-employee performance linking process as well as the interplay that existed between the different entities, factors, and characters in the linking process. Such revelation combined with findings from other relevant research would enable one to make educated speculations of the influence that BOB’s strategies would likely have had on its employees’ performance and how or why that might be the case. However, the information gained could not offer clear confirmation and/or definitive evidence of the actual influence or lack thereof that these series of activities and events and/or entity interplay would have had on employee performance.
CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS AND ANALYSIS – DETERMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYER BRAND PROMISE FULFILLMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

This quantitative investigation was intended to determine the relationship between employer branding and employee job performance, more specifically:

1. Assessing the direction and strength of relationship between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer and their reported level of organizational citizenship and task performances.

2. Verifying the presence and sizes of influence that employees’ perceived fulfilment of their employer brand promise expectations by the employer would have on their reported level of organizational citizenship and task performances.

3. Verifying the presence and sizes of influence that employees’ perception of the greatness of their workplace, the desirability and distinctness of their work experience, and their intentions to leave, would have on their reported level of organizational citizenship and task performances.

In order to do so, specific hypotheses, as identified in the quantitative data analysis section of the Methodology chapter and again in this chapter, were tested.

Prior to the testing of specific hypotheses, the quantitative investigation started off by examining the employees’ overall perception of how well their organization had fulfilled their expectation for each of the 20 employer brand promises identified in Chapter 5.

Following that, key hypotheses were tested:

Hypotheses 1a and b:

*Employees’ reported level of a. overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and b. overall task performance is positively co-related with their perceived level of overall employer brand promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment by their employer.*

Hypotheses 2a to j:

*Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the following employment benefit content factor clusters will report a higher level of a/c/e/g/i. organizational citizenship performance and b/d/f/h/j. task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster:*

vi. *Factor of personal sustainability*
vii. Factor of connectedness and belonging
viii. Factor of opportunities and growth
ix. Factor of personal stake and influence
x. Factor of significance and esteem

Hypotheses 2k and l:
As a whole, employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will report a higher level of k. organizational citizenship performance and l. task performance than employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer.

Hypothesis 3:
Employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will concur more strongly with each four of the following notions when compared to employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer:
   e. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).
   f. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
   g. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
   h. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

Hypotheses 4a and b:
Employees who concur (CC) with each of the four notions below will demonstrate a higher level of a. organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and b. task performance when compared to employees who do not concur (DNC) with the notions:
   e. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).
   f. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
   g. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
   h. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

As mentioned in Methodology chapter, reliability analyses were conducted on the employer brand promise scales, organizational citizenship performance scales, and task performance scales used for the quantitative investigation. The results of these analyses were used in order to determine the most appropriate method of incorporating these measures into the later analyses. Specifically, a reliability of 0.70 was used as the standard to indicate acceptable reliability.
Reliability analysis performed for EBP scales revealed the Cronbach's alpha equal 0.907 indicating a high level of internal consistency for our scale within our sample. Reliability analysis of OCP scales showed the Cronbach's alpha is 0.862, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale with this specific sample. Reliability analysis performed for TPs scales revealed the Cronbach's alpha is 0.781, which indicates an adequate level of internal consistency for our scale with this specific sample.

Pearson’s correlation coefficient was used to measure the strength of relationship as well as the size of effect between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer and their reported level of organizational citizenship and task performances. Cohen’s (1988) commonly-referenced guide below (in Field 2009, pg. 57) was used to gauge these relational strengths and effect sizes:

- $r = 0$: Zero correlation/effect
- $r = .10$: Small or Weak correlation/effect (range would be $0 < r < .30$)
- $r = .30$: Medium or Moderate correlation/effect (range would be $.30 \leq r < .50$)
- $r = .50$: Large correlation/effect (range would be $.50 \leq r < 1.0$)
- $r = 1$: Perfect correlation/effect
Examining the extent of employer brand promise fulfillment

In the employee survey, respondents were asked to rate, using the Likert-response scale, how well their organization had fulfilled their expectation for each of the 20 employer brand promises identified. Chi-square analyses was done and Table C5-5 in Appendix 9 as well as the following Figure C6-a provide a summary of the distributions out of 299 respondents who answered this question.

**Figure C6-a. Distribution of employee responses for employer brand promise expectation fulfillment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Level of employer brand promise Fulfillment</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful treatment of employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
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<tr>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational dedication to technical excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competitive compensation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A work environment that allows for worklife balance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
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If one considers the majority as being 50% + 1, then the results indicated the majority of 299 respondents had acknowledged that their expectations in all but one of the 20 employment
benefits promised had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB. The following Figure C6-b offers a visual view of the percentage of employee survey respondents who expressed that their expectation for each of the employer brand promise identified had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled.

**Figure C6-b. Distribution of response 3 (adequately fulfilled) and 4 (more than adequately fulfilled) for employer brand promise expectation fulfillment**

The results also showed a strong proportion of the respondents whose expectation had not just been adequately fulfilled but had actually been more than adequately fulfilled. Some customer satisfaction literature suggests that those who give the highest mark have very strong and true loyalty to the organization and with that comes repeat patronage, willingness to try new products that the organization introduces, positive word of mouth, referrals, and other acts of loyalty which would have direct impact on organization’s bottom line results. Should such indication be transferred to employee loyalty and its impact on overall organizational performance, this
organization would have a significant portion of workforce that would be exceptionally loyal to the organization.

While the overall acknowledgements from respondents indicated that BOB had adequately or more than adequately fulfilled employees’ expectations for all but one of its identified employer brand promises, the results, as illustrated by Figure C6-c, also showed a reasonably high percentage of responses from employees who indicated that their expectations for certain employer brand promises had been either inadequately or not at all fulfilled or who had no expectation at all for the items, particularly the following five employer brand promises, each with 40% or share of such responses:

- Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges
- Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation
- Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy
- Peer nominated Principals and Associates System
- A work environment that allows for work-life balance
Employer brand promises with large percentages, such as 40% of more, of such responses warrant attention. In addition, five out of 20 employment benefits promised is a large number. That was ¼ of promised benefits where a large percentage of employees felt were not at all or not adequately fulfilled.
Each employer differs greatly not only in terms of their employment offerings but also in terms of various aspects that might affect the successful fulfillment or receipt of their employment offerings, such organizational structure and processes, culture, demographics of core workforce, resources, and more. As such, the specific results above might not be transferable or significance beyond the organization itself. The organization needs to examine why such high propositions of its employees were feeling that their expectations had either not at all not been adequately fulfilled for the items above.

**Difference in perception of employer brand promise fulfilment among different classes of employees**

While the overall employer brand promise expectation fulfilment results is helpful in offering a general insight into the organization’s success in fulfilling its employer brand promises, there is a need to dig deeper to determine whether there is a difference in perception between those who design, develop, and implement the employer branding strategies versus those who mainly receive and experience them but are not actively involved in designing, developing, and implementing the organization’s employer branding strategies.

Employees could be divided into four classes:

- Purely non-management employees (that were neither Principals nor Associates)
- Purely managers (that were neither Principals nor Associates)
- Principals and Associates, which could be divided into two sub-classes
  - Principals and Associates that were managers
  - Principals and Associates that were non-management employees

The number of survey respondents who fully answered the employer brand promise expectation fulfilment question was 299, with 261 being purely non-management employees, 30 being purely managers, and 38 being Principals and Associates. Of the 38 Principals and Associates, 22 were non-management employees and only 16 were managers.

The qualitative results have revealed that the design and development of the organization’s employer branding strategies are led by senior leaders, who would be included in Group 1, and executed by managers, who might be included in Group 1 or 3.

Table C5-6 in Appendix 10 presents the results from survey respondents who have acknowledged that their expectation of each of the employer brand promise has been either adequately (Answer # 3) or more than adequately (Answer # 4) fulfilled by BOB.
Results showed that there were seven out of the 20 promised employment benefits where 100% of respondents, who held the both the roles of a manager as well as a Principal or an Associate, acknowledged that their expectations had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB. Respondents who were Principals or Associates but not managers showed the same results for two of the 20 employer brand promises. However, there were no employer brand promises among the 20 where 100% of purely non-management employees or purely managers acknowledged that their expectations had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB.

The trend noticeably reversed as the percentage of employees who acknowledged that their expectations of the employer brand promises have been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB was lowered to 59% or below. In this case, respondents who were Principals or Associates who were managers or otherwise identified a combined total of only two employer brand promises among 20 for which 59% or less of its members had acknowledged that their expectations had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB while purely non-management employees or purely managers groups had identified a combined total of six employer brand promises (there is overlap of promises identified) among 20 for which 59% or less of its members had acknowledged that their expectations had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB.

The results shown in figure C6-d below offers an indication of the disparity in the percentage of respondents who acknowledged that each of their employer brand promises expectations had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by BOB was most noticeable between employees who were held both roles of Principals or Associates and managers and those who were purely non-management employees. Disparity in percentages for 18 of the 20 promised employment benefits range from 9.96% to 46.75%, with 10 of them being over 20%. The mean of the disparity in percentages for all 20 employer brand promises is 18.08%. It is noted, however, that statistical significant ($p \leq 0.05$) results were found for only six of the twenty employer brand promises: opportunity for career growth, peer nominated Principals and Associates system, competitive compensation, fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy, opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges, and organizational support for risk-taking and innovation.
Figure C6-d. Disparity in the percentage of respondents who acknowledged that each of their employer brand promises expectations had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled

While it was not surprising that 100% of respondents held both roles of Principals or Associates and managers and 95.45% of respondents were Principals or Associates but not managers acknowledged that their expectation of the employer brand promise of Peer nominated Principals and Associates System had been either adequately or more than adequately fulfilled, it was surprising that at 43.33%, the lowest percentage of respondent acknowledgement for the fulfillment of this promise actually came from purely managers instead of purely non-managers, who registered at 53.25%. A total of 27% of purely managers had indicated that their expectation for this employer brand promise had been either not at all or not adequately fulfilled while only 19% of purely non-management employees had indicated the same. Both groups showed close to a 30% ratio of individuals in that had no expectation for this provision. One could assume that a higher proportion of purely managers were interested, felt ready, and closer to the possibility of
becoming an Associate but had either not been nominated as one or had failed in the selection process, thus creating a sense of unfulfilled expectation.

As a whole, it appears that noticeably more promised employment benefits have been identified by a higher percentage of Principals or Associates respondents as having been either adequately or more than adequately delivered by BOB when compared to the percentage of non-Principals or Associates respondents, even if they were managers. This result might not be that surprising considering that many expectations would have had to be already fulfilled in order for employees to reach the status of Principals or Associates. As well, these individuals had much more freedom as well as control within the organization to decide on and/or direct the activities of the organization, shape the culture and policies of the organization, or choose the project they want to pursue. Purely non-management employees or even purely managers would not have such broad combination and/or degree of autonomy, power, and control to affect their work environment or work life. Ultimately, Principals and Associates also had greater stakes and investment in the organization and would therefore be advocating for and establishing values and provisions for which already met their expectations and assumptions as being essential to the organization’s success.
Examining the correlation between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment and their level of organizational citizenship and task performances

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

**H1a:** Employees’ reported level of overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) is positively co-related with their perceived level of overall employer brand promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment by their employer.

**H1b:** Employees’ reported level of overall task performance (TP) is positively co-related with their perceived level of overall employer brand promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment by their employer.

In order to test hypotheses H1a and H1b, Pearson’s correlation was used and two separate correlation coefficients were determined, one between the fulfillment of overall employer brand promises and the reported level of overall organizational citizenship performance as well as another between the fulfillment of overall employer brand promises and the reported level of overall task performance.

First, the correlation between overall employer brand promise fulfilment and overall organizational citizenship performance was found to be positive, moderate in strength, and achieved high statistical significance, \( r = 0.358, p < 0.001 \). Then, the correlation between overall employer brand promise fulfilment and overall task performance was found to be positive, weak in strength, and achieved statistical significance, \( r = 0.155, p < 0.001 \). Both of these results indicate that employees’ overall reported level of organizational citizenship performance as well as task performance is positively correlated with their perceived level of overall fulfillment employer brand promises by their employer. This supports hypotheses 1a and 1b.

**Model H1:** Results indicated positive correlations between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment and their organizational as well as task performances

| Employees’ Perceived Level of Employer Brand Promise Expectation Fulfilment | Organizational Citizenship Performance | Task Performance |
In order to ensure that linearity was present, a scatter plot was constructed for visualization of these measures. First, Figure H1-a presents the scatter-plot between the measures of overall employer brand promise fulfilment and overall organizational citizenship performance. A positive, linear association was indicated. Figure H1-b was constructed to show a scatter plot of the relationship between overall employer brand promise fulfilment and overall task performance. The scatter-plot also indicated that a linear, positive association was present between these two measures.

**Figure H1-a. Scatter Plot of Overall employer brand promise (EBP) expectation fulfillment vs. Overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) Values**
Figure H1-b. Scatter Plot of Overall employer brand promise (EBP) expectation fulfillment vs. Overall task performance (TP) Values

The following Figure H1-c offers a good visual comparison of the relationship between employer brand promise fulfilment and the two types of performances, organizational citizenship performance and task performance. The super-imposed scatter-plots show a steeper linear, positive association between the measures of employer brand promise fulfilment and organizational citizenship performance. The conclusion was that employees’ level of organizational citizenship performance was more strongly co-related than their level of task performance - with their perceived level of fulfillment of employer brand promises by their employer.
While the correlations were of weak to moderate strength, results did lead to the conclusion that as employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfillment increases, their level of organizational citizenship performance as well as task performance also increases.

It should be noted that while the results did suggest that employees’ performance was positively co-related to their perception of the employer’s fulfilment of its employer brand promises, it did not indicate whether the fulfilment of employer brand promises would actually influence or affect employees’ performance. As well, the tests for hypotheses 1a and 1b did not offer any insight into the differences in degree of influence between the fulfillment of one employer brand promise and another. The answers to these questions were revealed in the testing of subsequent hypotheses.
Examining the influence that employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment has on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances

As indicated in *Chapter 4: Main Research Project Methodology* of this dissertation, a quasi-experiment was set up to examine if employees’ perceived fulfilment of their employer brand promise expectations by their employer does in fact have an effect or influence on their organizational citizenship and task performances. In this experiment, employees who responded to the research survey were divided into groups for each analysis, based solely on the reported ratings of their perceived level of fulfilment for the employer brand promises being examined.

The investigation explored the different degrees of influence on performance that might exist in response to employees’ perceived fulfilment of each employment benefit content factor cluster that was outlined in Chapter 5. Organizational citizenship performance results as well as the task performance results of two independent variable employee groups were examined. The groups were:

- **Group HF:** High Fulfilment - Employees who perceived that their employer brand promise expectations as having been adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by their employer.

- **Group LF/NE:** Low Fulfilment or No Expectation – This is a group that combines employees who perceived that their employer brand promise expectations as having been inadequately or not at all fulfilled and employees who had no expectations for that the investigated employer brand promises.

T-test was used to examine the performance mean scores of the two groups in order to determine if employees who perceived that their expectations for the employment benefits in each factor cluster being adequately or more than adequately fulfilled did in fact demonstrate higher level of organizational citizenship performance or task performance when compared to employees who did not have expectations for these employment benefits or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled. The independent-samples t-tests conducted on these data also examined whether statistically significant differences in these measures were present on the basis of low versus high employer brand promise fulfilment scores. This was followed by the use of Pearson’s correlations to determine the size of effect between the two groups.
The influence of employees’ perceived fulfilment of employment benefit content factor clusters on their organizational citizenship and task performances

Table C5-3 in Appendix 7 offers a summary of the t-test results for this section of the dissertation while Table C5-4 in Appendix 8 offers a summary of the Pearson’s correlation results for this section of the dissertation.

Influence of the factor of personal sustainability on employee performance

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

H2a: Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Personal Sustainability factor cluster will report a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.

H2b: Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Personal Sustainability factor cluster will report a higher level of task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Employment Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>A work environment that supports work-life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive compensation and benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational commitment to treat employees with honesty, fairness, and respect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test results supported both hypotheses 2a and 2b through the indication of influence of the factor of Personal Sustainability on employees’ organizational citizenship performance as well as task performance. It showed that employees whose expectations of the employer brand promises within this factor cluster were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported a higher organizational citizenship performance mean score as well as a higher task performance mean score, when compared to employees who had no expectation of the employer brand promises in this cluster or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled (for OCP, 4.21±0.85 vs. 3.96±0.82, p = 0.013 and for TP, 5.33±0.58 vs. 5.18±0.63, p = 0.047).
Using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the size of influence for the adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises in the factor of Personal Sustainability on employees’ organizational citizenship performance was found to be small ($r = 0.196$, $p < 0.01$), accounting for only 3.84% of the total variance. The size of influence of this factor on task performance was also found to be small ($r = 0.174$, $p < 0.01$), accounting for only 3.03% of the total variance.

These results from the analysis of this factor cluster inferred that employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises within the Personal Sustainability factor had a positive and statistically significant influence, albeit small, on their overall organizational citizenship performance as well as overall task performance.

**Figure H2-a. Comparisons of the OCP and TP mean scores between groups within Personal Sustainability factor cluster.**

![Comparison of OCP and TP mean scores](image)

**Influence of the factor of Connectedness and Belonging on employee performance**

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

*H2c:* Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Connectedness and Belonging factor cluster will report a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than employees who either perceive a low level of
expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.

\[H2d: \text{Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Connectedness and Belonging factor cluster will report a higher level of task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.}\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Employment Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Belonging</td>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test results showed employees whose expectations of the employer brand promises within this factor cluster were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported a higher organizational citizenship performance mean score as well as a higher task performance mean score, when compared to employees who had no expectation of the employer brand promises in this cluster or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled but the results were not found to be statistically significant at the level of \(p < 0.05\) (for OCP, \(4.17 \pm 0.88\) vs. \(3.96 \pm 0.73\), \(p = 0.059\) and for TP, \(5.29 \pm 0.61\) vs. \(5.22 \pm 0.58\), \(p = 0.397\)). As such, the results did not support hypotheses 2c and 2d.

While the lack of statistical significance was highly evident in the result of the mean score difference in task performance, the same could not be said in the result of the mean score difference in organizational citizenship performance. With a slightly larger sample, the result of the difference in the mean scores between the two groups for organizational citizenship performance could possibly have been statistically significant to the level of \(p \leq 0.05\). With \(p = 0.059\) being very close to \(p = 0.05\), one could argue that the result was not statistically significant from the standard \(p \leq 0.05\) reporting perspective, however, in reality, the effect could be similar, at least to that of \(p = 0.05\).

Pearson’s results indicated the existence of a positive, small but statistically significant correlation between employees’ perceived level of fulfillment of the employment promises within the factor of Connectedness and Belonging and employees’ organizational citizenship performance \((r = 0.212, p < 0.001)\) as well as task performance \((r = 0.149, p < 0.05)\).

These results from the analysis of this factor cluster inferred that while positive correlation exists between employees’ perceived level of fulfillment of the employment promises within the Connectedness and Belonging and their organizational citizenship as well as task performances, actual influence of the fulfilment of the employment promises within the Connectedness and
Belonging on employees’ organizational citizenship or task performance could not be confidently established.

**Influence of the factor of Opportunities and Growth on employee performance**

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

**H2e:** Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Opportunities and Growth factor cluster will report a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.

**H2f:** Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Opportunities and Growth factor cluster will report a higher level of task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Employment Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test result showed employees whose expectations of the employer brand promises within this factor cluster were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported a higher organizational citizenship performance mean score when compared to employees who had no expectation of the employer brand promises in this cluster or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled (4.42±0.71 vs. 3.89±0.87, p < 0.001). As such, the result supported hypothesis 2e.

While a difference in mean scores was found between the two employee groups for task performance, the result was not statistically significant to the level of p ≤ 0.05 (5.35±0.57 vs. 5.21±0.63, p = 0.054). As such, the results did not support hypothesis 2f. As with the scenario for the fulfilment of employment promises within the factor cluster of Connectedness and Belonging, the result of the difference in the mean scores between the two groups for this factor cluster of Opportunities and Growth could possibly have been statistically significant to the level of p ≤ 0.05.
with a slightly larger sample. Again, with $p = 0.054$ being very close to $p = 0.05$, one could argue that the result for task performance was not statistically significant from the standard $p < 0.05$ reporting perspective, however, in reality, the effect could be similar, at least to that of $p = 0.05$.

Using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the size of influence for the adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises in the factor of Opportunities and Growth on employees’ organizational citizenship performance was found to be moderate ($r= 0.379, p < 0.001$), accounting for only 14.36% of the total variance.

While not measuring the size of influence, Pearson’s correlation result did indicate a positive, small but statistically significant correlation ($r= 0.139, p < 0.05$) between employees’ perceived level of fulfilment of the employment promises within the factor cluster of Opportunities and Growth and employees’ task performance.

These results from the analysis of this factor cluster inferred that employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises within the Opportunities and Growth factor cluster had a positive and moderate influence on their overall organizational citizenship performance. However, actual influence of the fulfilment of the employment promises within this factor cluster and task performance could not be confidently established.

**Figure H2-b. Comparisons of the OCP and TP mean scores between groups within Opportunities and Growth factor cluster.**
**Influence of the factor of Personal Stake and Influence on employee performance**

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

**H2g:** *Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Personal Stake and Influence factor cluster will report a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.*

**H2h:** *Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Personal Stake and Influence factor cluster will report a higher level of task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Employment Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test result showed employees whose expectations of the employer brand promises within this factor cluster were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported a higher organizational citizenship performance mean score when compared to employees who had no expectation of the employer brand promises in this cluster or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled (4.35±0.76 vs. 3.90±0.86, p < 0.001). As such, the result supported hypothesis 2g.

While a difference in mean scores was found between the two employee groups for task performance, the result was not statistically significant (5.30±0.58 vs. 5.24±0.63, p = 0.395). As such, the results did not support hypothesis 2h.

Using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the size of influence for the adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises in the factor of Personal Stake and Influence on employees’ organizational citizenship performance was found to be moderate (r = 0.320, p < 0.001), accounting for only 10.24% of the total variance.

No statistically significant influence or correlation was found between employees’ perceived level of fulfilment of the employment promises within the factor cluster of Personal Stake and Influence and employees’ task performance.
These results from the analysis of this factor cluster inferred that employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises within the Personal Stake and Influence factor cluster had a positive and moderate influence on their overall organizational citizenship performance but not their task performance.

**Figure H2-c. Comparisons of the OCP and TP mean scores between groups within Personal Stake and Influence factor cluster.**

![Graph showing comparisons of OCP and TP mean scores between groups within Personal Stake and Influence factor cluster.]

**Influence of the factor of Significance and Esteem on employee performance**

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

**H2i:** Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Significance and Esteem factor cluster will report a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.

**H2j:** Employees who perceive a high level of expectation fulfilment by their employer of the promises in the Significance and Esteem factor cluster will report a higher level of task performance than employees who either perceive a low level of expectation fulfilment by their employer in this factor cluster or who have no expectation for the promises in this factor cluster.
### Factors | Employment Benefits
--- | ---
Significance and Esteem | Organizational commitment to technical excellence
 | Opportunity to be involved or contribute to the organization's community building and engagement efforts
 | Opportunity to be part of a successful and highly respected organization

T-test results supported both hypotheses 2i and 2j through the indication of influence of the factor of Significance and Esteem on employees' organizational citizenship performance as well as task performance. It showed that employees whose expectations of the employer brand promises within this factor cluster were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported a higher organizational citizenship performance mean score as well as a higher task performance mean score, when compared to employees who had no expectation of the employer brand promises in this cluster or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled (for OCP, 4.26±0.85 vs. 3.81±0.76, p < 0.001 and for TP, 5.32±0.61 vs. 5.17±0.58, p = 0.047).

Using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the size of influence for the adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises in the factor of Significance and Esteem on employees’ organizational citizenship performance was found to be moderate (r= 0.335, p < 0.001), accounting for 11.22% of the total variance. The size of influence of this factor on task performance was found to be small (r= 0.128, p < 0.05), accounting for only 1.64% of the total variance.

These results from the analysis of this factor cluster inferred that employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of the employment promises within the Significance and Esteem factor cluster had a positive and moderate influence on their overall organizational citizenship performance as well as a positive and small influence on their overall task performance.
The influence of employees’ perceived fulfilment of specific employer brand promises on their Organizational Citizenship Performance

Following the first set of investigations in the former section, more in depth examinations were done on the different degrees of performance influence that might exist in the fulfilment of each item of employer brand promise. In short, the investigation was intended to find out if certain types or items of employer brand promises would have a stronger influence on employee performance than others. For this investigation, the results from both High Fulfilment and Low Fulfilment/No Expectation groups were once again used for comparison. For certain examinations, the Low Fulfilment/No Expectation employee group was further broken down into two independent groups – Low Fulfilment group and No Expectation group. The organizational citizenship performance results as well as the task performance results of three independent variable employee groups were therefore compared:

Group HF: High Fulfilment - Employees who perceived that their employer brand promise expectations as having been adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by their employer.

Group LF: Low Fulfilment - Employees who perceived that their employer brand promise expectations as having been inadequately or not at all fulfilled.
Group NE: No Expectation - Employees who had no expectations for that the investigated employer brand promises.

A one-way analysis of variance followed by Scheffe Post-hoc test was used to test for differences in performance mean scores between the three above-mentioned groups. Where differences existed between groups, Scheffe Post-Hoc test was used to ascertain the location of the difference between the groups. In all cases, the assumption of equality of variances was not violated.

With reference to Table H2-1 in Appendix 12, statistically significant differences in the performance mean scores between the three employee groups – High Fulfilment Group, Low Fulfilment Group, and No Expectation Group, were found for 19 of the 20 employer brand promises, which indicated that for 19 of the 20 employer brand promises, employees who perceived high fulfilment reported a higher performance level of selective organizational citizenship behaviours when compared to employees who had no expectation or perceived low fulfillment for those employer brand promises.

In this section, the influence of employer brand promises will be examined in several categories, according to the extent of statistically significant influence they had on organizational citizenship performance and task performance:

- No Yield Influencers Category
- Low Yield Influencers Category
- High Yield Influencers Category
- Moderate Yield Category

**No Yield Influencer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer brand promises</th>
<th>EBP #</th>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor</th>
<th># of OCP affected</th>
<th>Types of Employment Benefits Based on Extant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO YIELD INFLUENCERS - Results showed the following employer brand promise as having statistically significant influence on the performance of 0 of the 17 organizational citizenship behaviours even when they were perceived by employees as adequately or more than adequately fulfilled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Connectedness and Belonging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very surprisingly, statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the three employee groups -High Fulfilment Group, Low Fulfilment Group, and No Expectation Group, for organizational citizenship performance (as well as task performance) was not found for employer brand promise:
Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues. This inferred that neither employees’ performance of civic virtues, helping behaviours, individual initiatives, organizational compliance, organizational loyalty, self-development initiatives, nor sportsmanship behaviours was noticeably influenced by the organization’s fulfillment of support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues.

Majority of BOB’s employees worked in teams and participated regularly in collaborative projects between divisions. It is possible that team work and collaboration was such a common part of their work structure and culture that it was not recognized by employees as a form of “employment benefit” that they expected the organization to provide and upon which their work motivation and demonstrated level of individual performance would be influenced. It is possible in this scenario that employees see team work and collaboration as something within their own control rather than facilitated by the organization.

This begs the question of whether: 1) a possible factor that is part of an organization’s basic work structure or routine would lose its capacity to serve as a performance influencer to its specific workforce even when that something is deemed by most in the world of work as positive and desirable and 2) a possible factor that is common within employees’ profession or employment (e.g. environmental project workers routinely work in teams and across different collaborative projects, hence collaboration and team work is the norm rather than an exciting opportunity to participate in team project and team development) would typically be seen by the employees as a form of “benefit” or “value”.


**Low Yield Influencers**

As summarized in Table H2-2 in Appendix 13, each employer brand promise with statistically significant effect on the performance of between two and four (less than 25%) of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours were shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer brand promises</th>
<th>EBP #</th>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor</th>
<th># of OCP affected</th>
<th>Types of Employment Benefits Based on Extant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work-life Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful treatment of employees</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Economic/Monetary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Connectedness and Belonging</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each of the seven employer brand promises above, statistically significant difference in mean scores between either two or all three of the employee groups - High Fulfilment Group, Low Fulfilment Group, and No Expectation Group, were found for only four or less (less than ¼) of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours. Benefits represented here were not confined to one specific employment benefit content factor cluster.

Scheffe Post-Hoc test revealed that statistically significant differences in mean scores (see Table H2-2 in Appendix 13) between groups were found between employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment and those who perceived low expectation fulfillment for these items rather
with those who had no expectation for these items. In short, employees who perceived adequate or more than adequate expectation fulfilment of the employer brand promises in this category reported higher level of performance in affected organizational citizenship behaviours that employees who perceived inadequate or no expectation fulfilment of these employer brand promises.

When looking at these three employer brand promises together, statistically significant differences in mean scores between groups were found for the performance of six of the seven types of organizational citizenship behaviours on the survey scale. The behaviours not significantly affected by the employer brand promises in this category were those reflective of Self Development.

The organizational citizenship performance behaviours on the scale that were affected by the fulfilment of the most number of employer brand promises in this category were those reflective of organizational loyalty behaviours - defended the organization when other employees criticized it and showed pride when representing the organization in public. Pearson's correlation coefficient showed a small effect (from $r = .135$ to $r = .288$, $p \leq 0.05$) of each of the employer brand promises that had an effect on these two organizational loyalty behaviours, accounting for 1.8% to 8.29% of the variance.

When the overall difference in organizational citizenship performance mean scores between employee groups for this category of employer brand promises was examined, the disparity in the level of performance between the employee groups in each category was evident and statistically significant. In this T-test, the Low fulfillment and No Expectation employee groups were once again combined as one. Results indicated that employees whose expectations of employer brand promises were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported higher level of organizational citizenship performance when compared to employees had no expectation of the employer brand promises or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Brand Promise Influencer Categories</th>
<th>Level of EBP expectation fulfillment</th>
<th>Overall organizational citizenship performance Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Yield Influencers EBP_1_3_4_10_13_18_19</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure H2-a.** Comparison of overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) mean scores between employee groups with “No expectations and Low fulfillment” and “High fulfillment” for employer brand promises (EBP) categorized as low yield influencers: EBP_1_3_4_10_13_18_19
High Yield Influencers

As summarized in Table H2-3 in Appendix 14, each employer brand promise with statistically significant effect on the performance of between 12 and 13 (over 70%) of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours were shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer brand promises</th>
<th>EBP #</th>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor</th>
<th># of OCP affected</th>
<th>Types of Employment Benefits Based on Extant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Interest Value/ Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all three employer brand promises above, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores were found between either two or all three of the employee groups. Employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these employer brand promises reported higher level of performance for 12 to 13 of the 17 organizational citizenship behaviours when compared, to either those who perceived low expectation fulfillment or those who had no expectations for these three employer brand promises and in ¼ of the cases, when compared to both of these employee groups.

When looking at these three employer brand promises together, statistically significant differences in mean scores between groups were found for the performance of all seven types of organizational citizenship behaviours on the survey scale. The performance of organizational citizenship behaviours affected by all three employer brand promises were those reflective of:

- Organizational loyalty (two of two behaviour descriptors on the scale) - defending the organization when other employees criticized it and showing pride when representing the organization in public
• Sportsmanship (one of two behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *maintained a positive attitude even when things at work were not going the way you wanted them to go*

• Helping behaviour (one of four behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *went out of your way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group*

• Civic virtue (one of three behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *kept up with developments in the organization*

• Individual initiative (one of three behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *offered ideas for organizational improvements.*

Another noteworthy observation is that all three employer brand promises were within the Opportunities and Growth factor cluster. These employer promises are representative of strategies, structures, and activities designed and coordinated to enhance or expand employees’ professional and technical skills as well as to keep them professionally stimulated and engaged on an on-going basis.

A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to evaluate whether all three of the above-mentioned employer brand promise scores were necessary to predict each of the organizational citizenship performance behaviours. The unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with R and R² and significance levels are presented in Table H2-6 in Appendix 17.

The models were statistically significant, p < 0.05. While none of the three employer brand promises had the capacity on its own to predict or significantly influence all 17 identified organizational citizenship performance behaviours, in combination the three employer brand promises were required to predict 16 of the 17 identified organizational citizenship performance behaviours. Behaviour not predicted by any employer brand promise was *diligently followed organizational rules, policies, and procedures*, a behaviour reflective of organizational compliance.

It is very possible that this behaviour was seen by employees as a requirement rather than discretionary. One would be expected to follow the rules at work regardless of whether one was pleased or displeased with the organization’s ability to deliver on its promised benefits.

Results showed the predictive capacity of the three employer brand promises in the following descending order:

1. *Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities* was required to predict seven of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

2. *Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation* was required to predict five of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours.
3. *Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges* was required to predict four of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

The inference here is that the fulfillment of *opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities* would have the largest capacity to positively influence employees’ organizational citizenship performance as it positively influenced the most number of organizational citizenship performance behaviours compared to all other employer brand promises examined.

Generally, the size of influence explained by each of the variables was small to moderate (from $r = .126$ to $r = .418$, $p < 0.05$), accounting for 1.6% to 17.4% of the variance of the organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

When the overall difference in organizational citizenship performance mean scores between employee groups for this category of employer brand promises was examined, the disparity in the level of performance between the employee groups in each category was evident and statistically significant. In this T-test, the Low fulfillment and No Expectation employee groups were once again combined as one. Results indicated that employees whose expectations of employer brand promises were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported higher level of organizational citizenship performance when compared to employees had no expectation of the employer brand promises or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Brand Promise Influencer Categories</th>
<th>Level of EBP expectation fulfillment</th>
<th>Overall organizational citizenship performance Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Yield Influencers EBP_14_17_20</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure H2-b. Comparison of overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) mean scores between employee groups with “No and Low fulfillment” and “High fulfillment” for employer brand promises (EBP) categorized as high yield influencers: EBP_14_17_20
**Moderate Yield Influencers**

As summarized in Table H2-4 in Appendix 15, each employer brand promise with statistically significant effect on the performance of between five and ten (between 30% to 60%) of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours were shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer brand promises</th>
<th>EBP #</th>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor</th>
<th># of OCP affected</th>
<th>Types of Employment Benefits Based on Extant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Interest Value/ Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A work environment that allows for work-life balance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Work-life Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive compensation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Economic/Monetary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interest Value/ Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational dedication to technical excellence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interest Value/ Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the identified employer brand promises above, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores were found between either two or all three of the employee groups. Employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these employer brand promises reported
higher level of performance for between five and ten of the 17 organizational citizenship behaviours when compared, to either those who perceived low expectation fulfillment or those who had no expectations for these three employer brand promises and in about 1/3 of the cases, when compared to both of these employee groups.

For some employer brand promises, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between groups were found to be exclusively or almost exclusively between employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these provisions and those who perceived low expectation fulfillment. These employer brand promises were:

- challenging work
- organizational dedication to technical excellence
- competitive compensation
- fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy

For other employer brand promises, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between groups were found to be exclusively or almost exclusively between employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these provisions and those who had no expectation for them. These employer brand promises were:

- strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement
- an organization that values employee input
- peer nominated Principals and Associates System

For the remaining employer brand promises, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between groups were found to be between employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these provisions and both employees with low expectation fulfillment and employees with no expectation for these provisions. These employer brand promises were:

- opportunity for career growth
- a work environment that allows for work-life balance

When looking at these nine employer brand promises together, statistically significant differences in mean scores between groups were found for the performance of all seven types of organizational citizenship behaviours on the survey scale. Organizational Citizenship Behaviours with the most number of statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between groups were those reflective of:

- Organizational loyalty - defending the organization when other employees criticized it (affected by eight of the nine employer brand promises above) and showing pride when representing the organization in public (affected by all nine employer brand promises above)
- Sportsmanship - maintained a positive attitude even when things at work were not going the way you wanted them to go (affected by seven of the nine employer brand promises above)
A stepwise multiple regression was conducted to evaluate whether all nine of the above-mentioned employer brand promise scores were necessary to predict each of the organizational citizenship performance behaviours. The unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with $R$ and $R^2$ and significance levels are presented in Table H2-7 in Appendix 18.

The models were statistically significant, $p < 0.05$. In combination, six of the nine employer brand promises were required to predict all 17 identified organizational citizenship performance behaviours. Employer brand promises that did not predict any organizational citizenship performance behaviours were: competitive compensation, fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy, and a work environment that allows for work-life balance.

Results showed the predictive capacity of the six employer brand promises in the following descending order:

1. *Peer nominated Principals and Associates System* was required to predict four of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

2. *Provision of challenging work, organizational dedication to technical excellence, opportunity for career growth, and strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement* were each required to predict three of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

3. *An organization that values employee input* was required to predict one of the 17 organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

Again the organizational citizenship performance behaviour most noticeably impacted was that which is reflective of organizational loyalty - defending the organization when other employees criticized it. Within this group, the employer brand promise of *organizational dedication to technical excellence* received the strongest weight in the model for the behaviour, explaining approximately 9.4% of the variance for this behaviour.

Generally, the size of influence explained by each of the variables was small to moderate (from $r = .164$ to $r = .416$, $p < 0.05$), accounting for 2.7% to 17.3% of the variance of the organizational citizenship performance behaviours.

When the overall difference in organizational citizenship performance mean scores between employee groups for this category of employer brand promises was examined, the disparity in the level of performance between the employee groups in each category was evident and statistically significant. In this T-test, the Low fulfillment and No Expectation employee groups were once again combined as one. Results indicated that employees whose expectations of employer brand
promises were adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by the employer reported higher level of organizational citizenship performance when compared to employees had no expectation of the employer brand promises or whose expectations were inadequately or not at all fulfilled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Brand Promise Influencer Categories</th>
<th>Level of EBP expectation fulfillment</th>
<th>Overall organizational citizenship performance Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Yield Influencers EBP_2_6_7_8_9_11_12_15_16</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>N 164 Mean 3.91 Standard Deviation 0.84 Significance, p-value &lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>118 4.40 0.77 &lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure H2-c. Comparison of overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP) mean scores between employee groups with "No and Low fulfillment" and "High fulfillment" for employer brand promises (EBP) categorized as moderate yield influencers: EBP_2_6_7_8_9_11_12_15_16
The influence of employees’ perceived fulfilment of specific employer brand promises on their Task Performance

As indicated in Table H2-5 in Appendix 16, no significant difference in mean scores could be found for the reported level of task performance between employees who perceived high expectation fulfilment and those who had no expectation or those who perceived low expectation fulfilment for 12 of the 20 identified employer brand promises. For the remaining eight employer brand promises listed below, statistically significant differences in mean scores between groups were found for only one or two task performance actions each.

The size of influence explained by each of the identified employer brand promise was small (from $r = .119$ to $r = .196$, $p \leq 0.05$), accounting for 1.42% to 3.84% of the variance of the task performance actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer brand promises</th>
<th>EBP ID</th>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor</th>
<th># of TP affected</th>
<th>Types of Employment Benefits Based on Extant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work-life Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational dedication to technical excellence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interest Value/ Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Economic/Monetary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interest Value/ Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful treatment of employees</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the identified employer brand promises above, statistically significant differences in task performance mean scores were found between two of the three of the employee groups. Scheffe Post-Hoc test revealed that in half of the cases, employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these employer brand promises reported higher level of performance than those who perceived low expectation fulfillment for these employer brand promises. In the other half of the cases, employees who perceived high expectation fulfillment for these employer brand promises reported higher level of performance than those who had no expectations for these employer promises. Because of the low number of affected task performance actions for each of the above employer brand promises, one could not confidently identify any trends of influence with any of these employer brand promises.

When looking at these eight employer brand promises together, statistically significant differences in mean scores between groups were found for the performance of five of the seven task performance actions on the survey scale. The task performance action with the most number of statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between groups was - *engaged in activities that would positively affect your performance evaluation* (affected by five of the eight employer brand promises). On the opposite end, task performance actions not influenced by the fulfillment of any employer brand promises were *adequately completed assigned duties* and *met formal performance requirements of your job*.

An interesting observation is that employees who had no expectation for the organization’s *peer nominated Principals and Associates System* demonstrated higher level of task performance when compared to employees whose expectation for this provision was not at all or not adequately fulfilled. This meant higher frequency of demonstrated action, and in this case, it was specifically for the action of *NOT failed to perform essential duties* (reversed statement). In the management interview, respondents offered insight into the rigorous assessment and appointment process employees have to go through in order to become an Associate or Principal. As such, it might not be unusual for some employees who had not or not yet become an Associate or Principal to feel that their expectation had not been adequately or at all met. A total of 15% of the 279 employee survey respondents for this specific question fell into this group while 26% fell into the group of ‘no expectation”. Here, one could assume that if an employee had no expectation to be an Associate or Principal, having or not having this benefit would have little influence on his/her performance. Instead, the employee’s task performance would be guided primarily by the requirements of his/her job. On the other hand, if an employee had expected to be an Associate or Principal but had not been able to fulfill this expectation, his/her task performance could very possibly be influenced by the failure to have his/her expectation met, thus explaining the difference in performance score.

When the overall difference in task performance mean scores between employee groups for these eight employer brand promises were examined, disparity was present in the level of performance between the employee groups but the overall categorical result itself was not statistically
significant to the level of $p \leq 0.05$ (in this T-test, the Low fulfillment and No Expectation employee groups were once again combined as one). As such, one could not confidently suggest that employees’ task performance was influenced by their perception of adequate or more than adequate fulfilment of their expectations of these employer brand promises.

Table H2-9. Comparison of overall task performance (TP) mean scores between groups for employer brand promises 1_4_6_8_14_15_18_20:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer brand promises</th>
<th>Level of EBP expectation fulfillment</th>
<th>Overall task performance</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP_1_4_6_8_14_15_18_20</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>5.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Overall results on the influence of employer brand promises on employees’ Organizational Citizenship and task Performances**

The combination of results would allow us to determine whether the following hypotheses could be supported:

\( H_{2k}: \) As a whole, employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will report a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer.

\( H_{2l}: \) As a whole, employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will report a higher level of task performance than employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer.

The potential influence of employer brand promises on employees’ organizational citizenship performance and task performance was investigated in different clusters and categories as well as at different levels of depth to offer a more well-round and multi-dimensional view of the examination outcomes.

Almost all test results showed that the organizational citizenship performance mean scores of employees with high expectation fulfilment were statistically significantly higher than those with low expectation fulfilment or no expectation. While there were a couple of exceptions where results revealed non-statistically significant difference in performance mean scores, these few and far-between results could not overshadow the overwhelming number of all other individual and cluster or categorical results that clearly and consistently showed that employees who perceived their employer brand promise expectations as having been adequately or more than adequately fulfilled performed better that those who had no expectation of the employer brand promises or those who perceived their employer brand promise expectations as having been inadequately or not at all fulfilled. The sizes of the effects ranged from small to moderate. One could see that the combination of results from these different clusters, categories, and levels support hypothesis \( H_{2k} \).
Model H2k: Statistically significant difference in organizational citizenship performance mean scores found between HF group and NF or NE groups

The same could not be said for task performance. Majority of test results reveal no statistically significant difference in mean scores for task performance between employees with high expectation fulfilment and those with low expectation fulfilment or no expectation. As such, the results did not support hypothesis H2l.

Model H2l: Statistically significant difference in task performance mean scores between HF group and NF or NE groups

In addition to the separate tests done to determine the influence of that employees’ perceived high fulfillment of different employer brand promises might have on their organizational citizenship and task performances, a t-test was also completed to determine the influence that employees’ perceived high fulfillment of overall set of employer brand promises have on their overall organizational citizenship performance as well as their overall task performance. In both cases, the assumption of the equality of variances was not violated. Statistically significant difference in overall organizational citizenship performance mean score was found ($t = 3.600, p < .001$) between employees who perceived high fulfillment of their employer brand promise expectations.
and the combination group of employees who perceived low fulfillment or no expectation. On the contrary, statistically significant difference in overall task performance mean score was not found ($t = 1.809, p = .071$) between the high fulfillment group and the low fulfillment or no expectation group.

In line with the different test results found earlier, these t-test results also supported hypothesis H2k but not hypothesis H2l.

**Model H2m: Statistically significant difference in mean scores found for organizational citizenship performance but not task performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees’ Perception of HIGH FULFILMENT of Employer Brand Promise Expectations</th>
<th>OCP</th>
<th>Statistically significant positive influence on organizational citizenship performance was found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TP</td>
<td>Statistically significant influence on task performance was NOT found</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are several practical implications of the results found here. The first implication is that when the employer ensure that its employees’ expectations of the employer brand promises are fulfilled, it can likely anticipate better organizational citizenship performance from its employees, particularly in the demonstration of behaviours reflective of organizational loyalty. To a much lesser extent and scope, the employer could also anticipate small positive effects on some of the employees’ task performance actions when ensure that its employees’ expectations of the employer brand promises are fulfilled.

The second practical implication is that employers could dedicate less of their resources to some employer brand promises and more to others, depending on the strength of their influence on performance. More financial, material, human or other appropriate resources should be dedicated to employer brand promises that show significant influence on a large number of performance behaviours and actions while less resources should or could be dedicated to employer brand promises that show significant influence on a small number of performance behaviours and actions, unless those few behaviours or actions are deemed to be highly critical to the achievement of the organization’s key objectives and goals. As most organizations operate with limited resources, effective employer branding can still be materialized if the limited resources are used in an effective matter through selective and strategic allocation of the resources to employer brand promises that would yield significant influence on either the highest number and/or the most important performance behaviours and actions. Employment benefits that do not generate
significant influence on targeted behaviours could possibly even be dropped from an employer’s list of employer brand promises offered.

As organizations differ from one another in so many ways including the specific employer brand promises offered and the performance outcomes they aim to achieve, it is realistic to assume that an organization’s top 5 or top 10 most influential employer brand promises may not be the same as those of other organizations. Realizing this and the likelihood that the fulfillment of some employer brand promises will have a larger positive influence on more organizational citizenship performance behaviours and task performance actions than the fulfillment of other employer brand promises, organizations should analyze the influence of each of their own employer brand promise and to determine where resources could be best allocated to yield the highest return on investment in terms of the positive influence on the largest number or most critical performance behaviours and actions.
Examining the influence that employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment has on their perception of having of a desirable and distinctive experience, a great workplace, a desire to spend the rest of their career with their organization as well as non-presence of frequent thoughts of leaving their organization

Hypothesis tested in this section was:

H3: Employees who perceive a high level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer will concur more strongly with each of the following notions when compared to employees who have no expectation for the employer brand promises or who perceive a low level of employer brand promise expectation fulfilment by their employer:

i. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).

j. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).

k. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).

l. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether statistically significant differences could be found in the concurrence mean scores for all four notions above between the three employee groups – High Fulfilment Group, Low Fulfilment Group, and No Expectation Group. In determining their level of concurrence, employee survey respondents were prompted to compare their current experience to what they knew or what they had experienced with other similar organizations in the industry. Where differences in concurrence mean scores existed between groups, Scheffe Post-Hoc test was used to ascertain the location of the difference between the groups. Again, in all cases, Levene’s tests were conducted and the assumption of equality of variances was not violated.

Table H3-1 on Appendix 19 offers a condensed view of the differences in concurrence mean scores between the three groups for the fulfilment of every one of the 20 employer brand promises.

Results indicated that for the high fulfillment of every one of the 20 employer brand promise, statistically significant difference in concurrence mean scores was found between groups for each of the following notions:

a. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).

b. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).

c. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).

d. They do not frequently think of leaving their employment at the organization (NFTL).
For every employer brand promise, employees who perceived a high expectation fulfillment expressed a higher level of concurrence with each of the notion above when compared to employees who perceived a low expectation fulfillment and/or employees who had no expectation for the provision. These results support hypothesis 3 above.

Pearson’s correlation coefficient (see Table H3-2 in Appendix 20) was used to determine the sizes that the statistically significant influences above have on employees’ perception of the each of the notions above. Results showed that statistically significant, positive, small to large effects exist between employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise expectation fulfillment their level of concurrence with the stated notions:

a. For the notion of "Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive", effect of the high fulfilment of the 20 employer brand promises ranged from moderate to large (0.282 ≤r≤ 0.597, p = 0.01 for all cases), accounting for 8% to 35.6% of the variance in employees’ level of concurrence with this notion.

b. For the notion of "Their organization is a great place to work", effect of the high fulfilment of the 20 employer brand promises ranged from small to large (0.232 ≤r≤ 0.646, p = 0.01 for all cases), accounting for 5.4% to 41.7% of the variance in employees’ level of concurrence with this notion.

c. For the notion of "They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization", effect of the high fulfilment of the 20 employer brand promises ranged from small to large (0.235 ≤r≤ 0.554, p = 0.01 for all cases), accounting for 5.5% to 30.7% of the variance in employees’ level of concurrence with this notion.

d. For the notion of "They DO NOT frequently consider leaving their employment at the organization", effect of the high fulfilment of the 20 employer brand promises ranged from small to moderate (0.149 ≤r≤ 0.459, p≤ 0.05 for all cases), accounting for 2.2% to 21.1% of the variance in employees’ level of concurrence with this notion.

The uniformity and strength of the results is deserving of serious attention. The key inference here is that the fulfilment of employer brand promises would have a generally evident, and in many cases even large, positive effect on employees’ level of agreement that their employment experience at the organization is both desirable and distinctive, their organization is a great place to work, they would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization and that they do not frequently think of leaving their employment at the organization.
Model H3: Statistically significant difference in employees’ concurrence mean scores found between HF group and LF/NE group for the following notions:

a. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).

b. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).

c. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).

d. They do not frequently think of leaving their employment at the organization (NFTL).
Examining the influence that employees’ perceived presence of a desirable and distinctive experience, a great workplace, a desire to spend the rest of their career with their organization as well as non-presence of frequent thoughts of leaving their organization, has on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances

Hypotheses tested in this section were:

**H4a:** Employees who concur (CC) with each of the four notions below will demonstrate a higher level of organizational citizenship performance (OCP) when compared to employees who do not concur (DNC) with the notions:
  i. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).
  j. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
  k. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
  l. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

**H4b:** Employees who concur (CC) with each of the four notions below will demonstrate a higher level of task performance (TP) when compared to employees who do not concur (DNC) with the notions:
  a. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).
  b. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
  c. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
  d. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

This investigation explored the different degrees of influence on performance that might exist in response to employees’ level of agreement with the four notions presented above. T-test was used for this investigation and participants were divided into two independent variable groups based solely on their concurrence score for each of the notions above. The groups were:

**Group CC:** Concur – This group consisted of employees who responded “agree” or “strongly agree” when asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the notions in hypotheses H4a and H4b.
Group NC: Do Not Concur – This group consisted of employees who responded “neutral”, “disagree” or “strongly disagree” when asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the notion above.

Organizational citizenship performance results as well as the task performance results of these two independent variable employee groups were then examined. Table H4-1 in Appendix 21 offers a summarized view of the differences in the organizational citizenship performance mean scores and task performance mean scores between the two groups for each of the notion above.

For overall organizational citizenship performance, statistically significant differences in the performance mean scores were found for every one of the four notions above between employees who concurred and employees who did not concur with the notions. Pearson’s correlation coefficient conducted offered further insight into the strength of the relationships and sizes of influences. The results were as follow:

a. For the notion of “Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive”, $\bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 4.23 \pm 0.79$ vs. $\bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 3.73 \pm 0.91$, $p \leq 0.001$ and the effect on employee performance appeared to be moderate with $r = 0.308$, $p < 0.01$, accounting for 9.49% of the variance in the level of performance.

b. For the notion of “Their organization is a great place to work”, $\bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 4.19 \pm 0.82$ vs. $\bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 3.69 \pm 0.9$, $p \leq 0.001$ and the effect on employee performance appeared to be small but nearing moderate with $r = 0.263$, $p < 0.01$, accounting for 6.92% of the variance in the level of performance.

c. For the notion of “They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization”, $\bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 4.30 \pm 0.80$ vs. $\bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 3.83 \pm 0.84$, $p \leq 0.001$ and the effect on employee performance appeared to be moderate with $r = 0.329$, $p < 0.01$, accounting for 10.82% of the variance in the level of performance.

d. For the notion of “They DO NOT frequently consider leaving their employment at the organization”, $\bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 4.23 \pm 0.84$ vs. $\bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 3.94 \pm 0.83$, $p \leq 0.01$ and the effect on employee performance appeared to be small with $r = 0.157$, $p < 0.01$, accounting for 2.46% of the variance in the level of performance.

Results showed that employees who perceived or concluded that their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive, or that their organization was a great place to work, they would be happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization, or that they did not frequently thought of leaving their employment at the organization, reported higher level of overall organizational citizenship performance when compared to employees who did not perceive or conclude each of these notions.
The inference here is that employees’ concurrence with each of the notions above had a small to moderate influence on their level of overall organizational citizenship performance. As a hole, these results supported hypothesis H4a.

When the four notions were looked at as a whole, statistically significant differences in the performance mean scores were found for all seven types of organizational citizenship behaviours on the scale (helping behaviour, civic virtue, organizational compliance, organizational loyalty, individual initiative, sportsmanship, self-development), although the specific types of organizational citizenship behaviours influenced by employees’ concurrence with each of the four notions were as follow, in decreasing order:

1. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive
   - Six of seven types of behaviours – excluded were behaviours reflective of Individual Initiatives

2. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization
   - Six of seven types of behaviours – excluded were behaviours reflective of Self-development

3. Their organization is a great place to work
   - Five of seven types of behaviours – excluded were behaviours reflective of Individual Initiatives and Self-development

4. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization
   - Four of seven types of behaviours – excluded were behaviours reflective of Individual Initiatives, Self-development, and Helping Behaviour

It appeared that Individual Initiatives and Self-Development were affected by a lesser number of notions concurred by employees. On the other hand, organizational citizenship behaviours statistically significantly affected by every one of the four notions concurred by employees were as follow:

- Organizational loyalty (two of two behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *defending the organization when other employees criticized it and showing pride when representing the organization in public.*

- Civic virtue (two of three behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *attended functions that were not required but that helped the organizational image and kept up with developments in the organization.*

- Sportsmanship (one of two behaviour descriptors on the scale) - *maintained a positive attitude even when things at work were not going the way you wanted them to go*
organizational compliance (one of one behaviour descriptor on the scale) - diligently followed organizational rules, policies, and procedures.

The inference here is that employees who did perceive or conclude each of the four notions identified would, for most organizational citizenship performance behaviours, performed at a higher level when compared to employees who did perceive or conclude each of the four notions.

For overall task performance, statistically significant differences in mean scores between employees who concurred and employees who did not concur were found for three of the four notions. As with organizational citizenship performance, Pearson’s correlation coefficient conducted here offered further insight into the strength of the relationships and sizes of influences. The results were as follow:

a. For the notion of "Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive", \( \bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 5.33 \pm 0.54 \) vs. \( \bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 5.08 \pm 0.75 \), \( p \leq 0.05 \) and the effect on employee performance appeared to be small with \( r = 0.207, p < 0.01 \), accounting for 4.28% of the variance in the level of performance.

b. For the notion of "Their organization is a great place to work", \( \bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 5.31 \pm 0.56 \) vs. \( \bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 5.02 \pm 0.77 \), \( p \leq 0.05 \) and the effect on employee performance appeared to be small with \( r = 0.230, p < 0.01 \), accounting for 5.29% of the variance in the level of performance.

c. For the notion of "They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization", statistically significant difference in mean scores were not found between employees who concur and employees who did not concur with this notion.

d. For the notion of "They DO NOT frequently consider leaving their employment at the organization", \( \bar{x}_{\text{Group CC}} = 5.33 \pm 0.57 \) vs. \( \bar{x}_{\text{Group NC}} = 5.17 \pm 0.64 \), \( p \leq 0.05 \) and the effect on employee performance appeared to be small with \( r = 0.136, p < 0.05 \), accounting for 1.85% of the variance in the level of performance.

Results showed that employees who perceived or concluded that their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive, or that their organization was a great place to work, or that they did not frequently thought of leaving their employment at the organization, reported higher level of overall task performance when compared to employees who did not perceive or conclude each of these notions. However, statistically significant difference in performance mean score was not present to support the suggestion that employees who did perceive or conclude that they would be happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization would perform better than those who did not perceive or conclude this notion.
The inference here is that employees’ concurrence with three of the four notions above had a small influence on their level of overall task performance.

It should, however, be noted that when the influence on each task performance action was examined, statistically significant difference in mean score between the two employee groups were found for only one task performance action - *Engaged in activities that would positively affect your performance evaluation* for employees concurrence with two of the four notions, which were, “Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive” and “They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization”.

As a whole, the results for task performance could not fully support hypothesis H4b as statistically significant difference in the level of performance were not present between the two employee groups for almost all of the task performance actions.

**Model H4: Statistically significant difference in employees’ concurrence mean scores found between HF group and NF/NE group and statistically significant difference in employees’ organizational citizenship performance mean scores as well as task performance mean scores found between CC group and NC group**

The following figures offer a visual view of the difference in the organizational citizenship and task performance mean scores between groups for each of the four notions. Overlapping scatter plots to show that a linear, positive association was present between values for employees’ level of concurrence with each of the four notions and their demonstrated level of overall organizational citizenship performance as well as task performance.
Figure H5-ai. Comparison of organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and task performance (TP) between Group CC and Group NC for the notion that their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (DDEE)

As a whole, the Organization offers me an employment experience that is both DESIRABLE and DISTINCTIVE (compared to what I have experienced with other similar organizations in the industry)

Figure H5-a(ii). Overlapping scatter plots of employees’ level of concurrence with the notion that their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive and overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP - green) as well Overall task performance (TP - orange) values
Figure H5-bi. Comparison of organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and task performance (TP) between Group CC and Group NC for the notion that their organization is a great place to work (GPTW)

Figure H5-bii. Overlapping scatter plots of employees’ level of concurrence with the notion that the organization is a great place to work and overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP - green) as well as Overall task performance (TP - orange) values
Figure H5-ci. Comparison of organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and task performance (TP) between Group CC and Group NC for the notion that they would be happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO)

Figure H5-cii. Overlapping scatter plots of employees’ level of concurrence with the notion that they would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization and overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP - green) as well Overall task performance (TP - orange) values
Figure H5-di. Comparison of organizational citizenship performance (OCP) and task performance (TP) between Group CC and Group NC for the notion that they do not frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL)

Figure H5-dii. Overlapping scatter plots of employees’ level of concurrence with the notion that they do not frequently think of leaving their employment at the organization and overall organizational citizenship performance (OCP - green) as well Overall task performance (TP - orange) values
Summary of Quantitative Results

The summary of the results from this quantitative section is presented in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses: EBP Fulfillment vs. OCP and TP</th>
<th>Organizational Citizenship Performance</th>
<th>Task Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistically Significant Results</td>
<td>Size of Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1a and H1b: Correlation between employer brand promise fulfillment and employee performance</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Moderate strength ( r = 0.358, p &lt; 0.001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a and H2b: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Personal Sustainability factor cluster on their performance</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4.21±0.85 vs. 3.96±0.82, ( p = 0.013 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2c and H2d: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Connectedness and Belonging factor cluster on their performance</td>
<td>NOT TO THE LEVEL OF ( P \leq 0.05 ) (but close) 4.17±0.88 vs. 3.96±0.73, ( p = 0.059 ) (( A ) larger sample might have yielded a statistically significant result)</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2e and H2f: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Opportunities and Growth factor cluster on their performance</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4.42±0.71 vs. 3.89±0.87, ( p &lt; 0.001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2g and H2h: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Personal Stake and Influence factor cluster on their performance</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4.35±0.76 vs. 3.90±0.86, ( p &lt; 0.001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2i and H2j: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Significance and Esteem factor cluster on their performance</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>4.26±0.85 vs. 3.81±0.76, ( p &lt; 0.001 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2k and H2l: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of employer brand promises as a whole on employee performance</td>
<td>Statistically significant positive influence on organizational citizenship performance was found in the high fulfillment of 19 out of the 20 employer brand promises</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Low Yield EBP on OCP EBP_1_3_4_10_13_18_19</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>on less than 25% of OCP for every EBP identified in the Low Yield Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Hypotheses: EBP Fulfillment vs. Concurrence with Notions as well as Concurrence with Notions vs. OCP and TP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>EBP Fulfillment vs. Concurrence with Notions</th>
<th>Concurrence with Notions vs. OCP and TP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H3: Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of each employer brand promise on their concurrence with experiencing the four notions.</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Results: YES for every EBP (see Table H3-1 on Appendix 19)</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Results: YES for every EBP (see Table H3-1 on Appendix 19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Influence: Moderate to Large 8% to 35.6% 0.282 ≤ r ≤ 0.597, p = 0.01</td>
<td>Size of Influence: Small to Large 5.4% to 41.7% 0.232 ≤ r ≤ 0.646, p = 0.01</td>
<td>Size of Influence: Small to Large 5.5% to 30.7% 0.235 ≤ r ≤ 0.554, p = 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a: Influence of employees’ concurrence with experiencing the four notions on their overall organizational citizenship performance</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Results: YES x Group CC = 4.23±0.79 vs. x Group NC = 3.73±0.91, p≤0.001</td>
<td>Statistically Significant Results: YES x Group CC = 4.19±0.82 vs. x Group NC = 3.69±0.9, p≤0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of Influence: Moderate, 9.49% r = 0.308, p &lt; 0.01</td>
<td>Size of Influence: Small (nearing moderate), 6.92% r = 0.263, p &lt; 0.01</td>
<td>Size of Influence: Moderate, 10.82% r = 0.329, p &lt; 0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My employment experience is both desirable and distinctive |
My organization is a great place to work |
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the organization |
I DO NOT frequently think of leaving my employment at the organization |

### Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of High Yield EBP on OCP

| Group | YES for the High Yield Group as a whole 4.43 ±0.74 vs. 3.93 ±0.85, p < 0.001 | Small to Moderate 2.7% to 17.3% r range = 0.164 to 0.416, p < 0.05 |

### Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Moderate Yield EBP on OCP

| Group | YES on between 30% and 60% of OCP for every EBP identified in the Moderate Yield Group YES for the Moderate Yield Group as a whole 4.40 ±0.77 vs. 3.91 ±0.84, p < 0.001 | Small to Moderate 1.6% to 17.4% r range = 0.126 to 0.418, p ≤ 0.05 |

### Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Low Yield EBP on OCP

| Group | YES for the Low Yield Group as a whole 4.22 ±0.82 vs. 3.90±0.86, p < 0.003 | Small to Moderate 1.6% to 17.4% r range = 0.126 to 0.418, p ≤ 0.05 |

| Group | YES on more than 70% of OCP for every EBP identified in the High Yield Group YES for the High Yield Group as a whole 4.43 ±0.74 vs. 3.93±0.85, p < 0.001 | Small to Moderate 1.6% to 17.4% r range = 0.126 to 0.418, p < 0.05 |

### Influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of Low Yield EBP on TP

| Group | YES on less than 30% of TP for every EBP identified in the Low Yield Group NOT TO THE LEVEL OF P ≤ 0.05 for the Low Yield Group as a whole 5.34±0.57 vs. 5.22±0.63, p < 0.099 | Small 1.42% to 3.84% r range = 0.119 to 0.459, p≤0.05 |

| Group | YES on more than 70% of OCP for every EBP identified in the High Yield Group YES for the High Yield Group as a whole 4.43 ±0.74 vs. 3.93±0.85, p < 0.001 | Small 1.42% to 3.84% r range = 0.119 to 0.459, p≤0.05 |

| Group | YES on between 30% and 60% of OCP for every EBP identified in the Moderate Yield Group YES for the Moderate Yield Group as a whole 4.40±0.77 vs. 3.91±0.84, p < 0.001 | Small 1.42% to 3.84% r range = 0.119 to 0.459, p≤0.05 |

| Group | YES for the Low Yield Group as a whole 4.22 ±0.82 vs. 3.90±0.86, p < 0.003 | Small 1.42% to 3.84% r range = 0.119 to 0.459, p≤0.05 |
In general, results from the examination of the relationships between the fulfillment of different employer brand promises and employee performance indicate that adequate or more than adequate fulfillment of employer brand promises has a small to moderate positive influence on employees’ organizational citizenship performance and the total variation in the level of employees’ organizational citizenship performance that could be accounted for by the variation in employees’ perceived level of fulfillment of employer brand promises ranged from 1.6% to 17.4%. For task performance, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores were not found for the fulfillment of almost 2/3 of the employer brand promises and with the remaining 1/3 that showed statistically significant results, the strength of influence has been weak, with attributable variation ranging from 1.42% to 3.84%.

Results from the analysis of each employer brand promise indicated that through the fulfillment of one or more of nineteen (19) out of the twenty (20) employer brand promises on the scale, statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between employees who perceived high (adequate or more than adequate) expectation fulfillment and those who perceived low (not at all or not adequately) expectation fulfillment and/or no expectation were found for all seventeen (17) organizational citizenship performance behaviours presented on the research scale.

For task performance, the fulfillment of one or more of eight (8) out of the twenty (20) employer brand promises yielded statistically significant differences in performance mean scores between employees who perceived high (adequate or more than adequate) expectation fulfillment and those who perceived low (not at all or not adequately) expectation fulfillment and/or no expectation for five (5) of the seven (7) task performance actions presented on the research scale.

Results showed that high level of fulfillment of some employer brand promises would have significant positive influence on more organizational citizenship performance behaviours and task performance actions than the high level of fulfillment of other employer brand promises. However, there is no clear trend on the types of employer brand promises that would have significant influence on more organizational citizenship performance behaviours and task performance actions or on the types of employer brand promises that would have significant influence on less performance behaviours and actions. In general, organizational citizenship performance behaviours most regularly influenced by the fulfillment of employer brand promises were those reflective of
organizational loyalty, while for task performance, action most regularly influenced by the by the fulfillment of employer brand promises was that of Engage in activities that would positively affect your performance evaluation.

Results showed that employees’ perceived high fulfilment of employer brand promises has a positive and noticeably stronger influence on employees’ perception of the desirability of their employment, as reflected by their sense of whether their employment experience was both desirable and distinctive, their organization was a great place to work, their desire to spend the rest of their career with their organization, and their lack of frequency in thinking about leaving their employment with the organization. Percent of variation in employees’ perception of each notion above that was attributable to the variation in the employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment were found to be as followed:

a. Their employment experience at the organization was both desirable and distinctive (8.1% to 35.6%).
b. Their organization is a great place to work (5.4% to 41.7%).
c. They would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (5.5% to 30.7%).
d. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (2.2% to 21.1%).

When compared to the degrees of influence that employees’ perceived high employer brand promise fulfillment have on their organizational citizenship performance behaviours or task performance actions, the degrees of influence that employees’ perceived high employer brand promise fulfillment have on employees’ perception of the desirability of their employment are, as a whole, stronger.

Statistically significant differences in organizational citizenship performance mean scores were also found between employees who concurred and employees who did not concur with each of the four notions above. Employees who concurred reported a higher level of organizational citizenship performance than those who did not concur and the sizes of influence range from small to moderate. For task performance, statistically significant differences in task performance mean scores between employees who concurred and employees who did not concur with notions above were found for three of the four notions. No significant difference in task performance mean scores were found between groups for the notion that employees would be very happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization. For the other three notions, employees who concurred reported a higher level of task performance than those who did not concur but the sizes of influence are small.

When compared to the degrees of influence that employees’ perceived high employer brand promise fulfillment have on their organizational citizenship performance behaviours or task performance actions, the degrees of influence that employees’ concurrence with these notions has on their organizational citizenship performance behaviours and with three of the four notions has
on task performance actions are, based on broad scan of all separated organizational citizenship and task performance results, are generally parallel.
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This doctoral study was set out to investigate the influence of employer branding on employee job performance. More specifically, the study attempted to answer the questions:

1. What are the factors present in the content and delivery of employer brand promises and how might they influence employee performance?

2. What influence does employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfillment by their organization have on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances?

In this chapter, the researcher will make effort to first answer the research questions and offer interpretations and opinions on the results as well as discuss how the findings relate and contribute to existing knowledge on the subject of employer branding and its relationship with employee performance. Following that, explanations will be provided on: the implications of the findings on practice, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Answers, Discussions, and Contribution to Knowledge

This section will start off by answering the most important and ultimate question of the study, which is whether employer branding, particularly employer brand promise fulfillment, has any influence on employee performance.

*What influence does employees’ perceived level of employer brand promise fulfillment by their organization have on their level of organizational citizenship and task performances?*

The short answer to the question is, with all things being equal, employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfillment of employer brand promises by their employer has, on aggregate, a weak but nearing moderate positive influence on employees’ organizational citizenship performance and a very weak positive influence on employees’ task performance.

Thus far, the positive relationship between effective employer branding, particularly employer brand promise fulfillment, and improved employee performance has been mostly assumed rather than proven. The quantitative results in this case study offers empirical evidence to suggest that there is some merit in this assumption. However, the influence is not strong and to claim unequivocally that employer brand promise fulfillment has a direct positive influence on employee
performance without acknowledging some of the conditions that exist would be somewhat misleading.

The influence of employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfillment of employer brand promises on their organizational citizenship performance has been shown to range from weak to moderate. On task performance, statistically significant influence of employees’ perceived adequate or more than adequate fulfillment of employer brand promises was only present for 1/3 of the promises and the strength of influence was found to be weak.

Results from the detail analysis of each employer brand promise showed that some of the employer brand promises, when perceived as adequately or more than adequately fulfilled by employees, did not achieve statistically significant influence on some of their organizational citizenship performance behaviours or on most of their task performance actions when compared to performance results of those who had no expectation of the employer brand promises or who perceived a low level of fulfillment. No clear trend was found on the specific types of employer brand promises that would have an influence on more organizational citizenship performance behaviours and task performance actions or on the specific types of employer brand promises that would have an influence on less performance behaviours and actions. Organizational citizenship performance behaviours that appeared most frequently influenced by employees’ perceived high fulfillment of employer brand promises were those reflective of organizational loyalty while the task performance action that appeared most frequently influenced was *Engage in activities that would positively affect your performance evaluation.*

ultimately, one could interpret from the combination of analyses and results that employer brand promise fulfillment has a positive influence on employees’ organizational citizenship and task performance but it is small or weak, especially for task performance.

**Possible reasons for the findings of weak influence**

In general, the weak influence might not be that unrealistic or surprising considering that an employee’s motivation and consistency in demonstrating targeted performance and work behaviours could be moderated and mediated by various factors aside from the provision of desirable employment benefits. These might include but are not limited to attitude (Adsit *et al.*, 1996), general mental abilities (Hunter, 1986), personality (Barrick and Mount, 1991), personal life stressors (Hobson *et al.* 2004), qualifications, work-culture, and many more. As such, one could likely conclude that in the case of BOB, employees’ motivation and consistency in demonstrating performance and targeted work behaviours was influenced by more than just their perception of their employer’s level of fulfillment of employer brand promises.

The method by which data was gathered could also play a role in the small size of effect found. The quantitative data for the study was self-reported by respondents in an employee survey. As
such, the data for each employee’s demonstrated level of organizational citizenship and task performance was interpreted and reported by the employee him/herself rather than observed and verified by other parties such his/her supervisor, co-workers, or the researcher. As this study dealt with issues that were quite personal (acknowledgement of personal performance, motivations of behaviour, etc.), there might be the inclination to provide more socially desirable or acceptable answers (Mensch and Kandel, 1988). Employees who reported low employer brand promise expectation fulfillment or no expectation could, in spite their less than positive sentiment, be indicating higher (more positive) ratings of their organizational citizenship and/or task performance(s) unconsciously, as they truly viewed themselves and their performance more favourably than reality (Fisher and Katz, 2000) or they had a strong psychological need for the preservation of positive self-image. The action could also be conscious due to the possible concern with the lack of survey anonymity and that their responses would be scrutinized by their employer since the survey was approved and made accessible by the employer. Another reason for such result could be the fact that employees were also owners of the organization, thus felt either embarrassed to indicate even to themselves that they were not pulling their weight or felt a need to answer positively to live up to the organization’s best employer, awesome organization reputation.

There was a ceiling to the highest possible rating for the organizational citizenship and task performances. Should respondents reported high ratings of performance regardless of their actual performance or of their reported level of employer brand promise fulfillment, results would pool at the high end of the performance ratings, thus reducing the true difference in the mean scores of the organizational citizenship and task performances between employees with high employer brand promise expectation fulfillment and those with no expectation or low employer brand promise expectation fulfillment.

Some results of the difference in performance scores, such as those for hypotheses 2c and 2f, did not achieve statistical significance to the level of $p = 0.05$ but were hovering close, for example, at $p = 0.059$. The prediction is that with a larger sample, one would likely gain statistically significant results. Because they were not statistical significant to the level of $p = 0.05$, they were included in the aggregate assessment of effect as “non-influence”.

The implication of this could be significant in that the true difference in performance results between employees with high employer brand promise expectation fulfillment and those with no expectation or low employer brand promise expectation fulfillment might be much larger than reported by the survey respondents. This in turn would mean that the influence of employees’ perceived high fulfillment of employer brand promises on their organizational citizenship and task performances could be stronger than found in this study. In terms of how much stronger the influence might be, is yet unknown.
In order to verify the speculation of a stronger than reported influence, one could conduct a study with a much larger and diverse samples from different organizations and/or conduct investigations where employees’ performances are observed and measured by other means than self-report and/or by other parties such as one’s supervisor. Determination of an employee’s level of performance often occurs at the end of a designated period after the employee has had the chance to consistently demonstrate the expected behaviours or actions. Such is also true for the determination of the level of performance for organizational citizenship behaviours and task actions. As such, further studies to observe and verify the influence of employer brand promise fulfillment on employees’ organizational citizenship performance behaviours and task performance actions can be longitudinal in design.

**Possible reasons for the noticeable disparity in results between organizational citizenship performance and task performance**

The more interesting question from the research findings is why employees’ organizational citizenship performance was more noticeably influenced, both in terms of degree and scope, by their perceived level of employer brand promise fulfilment, than their task performance?

Task performance is considered an in-role performance in that an employee is formally expected by his/her employer to fulfil the specified duties and responsibilities of his/her job description (Williams and Anderson, 1991) in exchange for the eligibility to keep his/her employment and get a regular pay cheque. The understanding here is that if the employee fails to fulfil his/her required job duties and responsibilities, he/she will immediately or eventually lose his/her employment. As such, the fulfilment of required job duties and responsibilities is deemed compulsory rather than discretionary, should one wishes to keep his/her job. In this situation, the employee’s main or even sole motivation for fulfilling the required duties and responsibilities of his/her position comes from his/her desire or need to keep his/her employment with the organization. Additional motivation from other sources or lack thereof might have minimal influence on the employee’s commitment to fulfilling these required obligations. In short, regardless of whether the employee feels that his/her expectations of specific employment promises have been met or that he/she has a desirable and distinctive work experience, the employee will still be expected by his/her employer to fulfill his/her required job duties and responsibilities in exchange for continued employment. In return, the employee will fulfil these required job duties and responsibilities in response to the motivation of having continued employment. Termination of employment would result in the loss of not only one’s livelihood but also one’s reputation and to some degree, self-esteem - factors that are likely to be strong performance motivators for many employees. As such, it is conceivable for employees to at least perform their essential duties as required, regardless of whether their expectations of the employer brand promises are adequately or not adequately met.

Another contributing factor to employees’ task performance is their skills and ability to do what needs to be done. Should employees receive the proper training and support in developing and
executing their work tasks, as appeared to be the case at BOB, and they are motivated by the prospect of keeping their employment, they could perform well in their required obligations, regardless of their perceived level of employer brand promise fulfillment.

These factors might explain why statistically significant differences in the level of task performance was scarcely found between employees whose employer brand promise expectations had been adequately or more than adequately fulfilled and those whose expectations had be inadequately or not at all fulfilled or those with no expectations at all.

Organizational citizenship performance, on the other hand, is considered an extra-role (outside of one’s formal job requirements) performance because it is discretionary and performed at the employee’s own volition without being required to do so by their employers (George and Brief, 1992). In such situation, one can argue that the employee would have to feel motivated enough to not only do their required job duties well but also take on extra activities and obligations that is not required of them. This is assuming that the employee also has other personal obligations in his/her life to which he/she has to attend. As such, the “extra” motivation needed to carry out these extra-role organizational citizenship activities and obligations could certainly be affected by how good the employee feels about the organization and/or how well the organization has taken care of his/her needs and expectations. After all, an employee can, in general, still keep his/her employment by fulfilling all of his/her required task obligations without having to go the extra mile to take on non-required activities or obligations. With this understanding and based on the results of the survey, an employer can likely prompt more frequent and/or consistent performance of extra-role actions and behaviours among more employees if it offers employee-desired employment propositions and consistently fulfils its promises to employees.

It is noted that some organizational citizenship activities and behaviours might be a requirement in certain positions and should that be the case, these specific organizational citizenship activities and behaviours would be treated by the employer as compulsory in-role obligations rather than discretionary extra-role obligations.

**Likely mediator of performance in this case**

The quantitative results showed a generally higher degree of influence by employees’ perceived high fulfillment of employer brand promise expectations on their perception of the desirability of their employment than on their organizational citizenship performance or task performance. This suggests that high fulfillment of employer brand promise expectations might have more impact on how employees feel about their employment with the organization and less on how they actually perform in their job. However, results also showed that employees who perceived the presence of

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34 Based on qualitative data and analysis
35 The word “more” instead of “all” or no word is used in recognition of the fact that some employees might, by personal nature or self-motivation, still go the extra-mile to provide extra-role service regardless of their satisfaction with their employer or employment.
what could be labeled as desirable employment (as reflected by their sense that their employment experience was both desirable and distinctive, their organization was a great place to work, their desire to spend the rest of their career with their organization, their lack of frequency in thinking about leaving their employment with the organization), reported better organizational citizenship performance as well as better task performance\textsuperscript{36} that employees who did not perceive the presence of desirable employment. This in turn suggests that employees’ perception of the desirability of their employment influences their level of organizational citizenship and task performances.

When put together, both results above suggest that an employer’s ability to adequately or more than adequately fulfill its employer brand promises will likely have a noticeably positive influence on employees’ perception of the desirability of their employment and this in turn will positively affect their organizational citizenship and task performance efforts.

One aspect of employer brand promise fulfillment worth repeating is that the act of delivering on a promise itself is a demonstration of trustworthiness and in the case of employment promises, it is also fulfillment of the psychological contract that the employer has established with its employee (Robinson, 1996). The act of employer trustworthiness has shown to strengthen an employee’s commitment to and engagement with its employer, which in turn also strengthens their work performance, particularly organizational citizenship performance (Coyle-Shapiro, J. and Keller, 2000).

The implication here is that while the direct relationship between employer brand promise fulfillment and employee performance was not statistically proven to be strong, it did not mean that the organization’s efforts were futile and of little importance. In this case, there were statistical indications that the influence of employee brand promise fulfillment on employee performance were mediated by employees’ perception of the desirability of their employment. Higher level of performance in more number of work behaviours and actions were demonstrated by employees when they felt that there were opportunities to build their life long career with their organization, their organization was a great place to work, they had a distinctive and desirable work experience at the organization, and that they would prefer to stay rather than leave. It is likely that their sense of the employer’s trustworthiness due to its ability to consistently deliver on its employer brand promises also contributed to the enhancement of their performance. As such, there is legitimate value for organizations to continue their efforts to ensure that they deliver on their employer brand promises because when they positively affect the enhancement of mediators of employee performance such as factors that strengthen the desirability of employees’ employment, with the fulfillment of its employer brand promises, they in fact also positively influence the enhancement of employee performance.

\textsuperscript{36} Except for the notion of wanting to spend the rest of their career with the organization.
What are the factors present in the content and delivery of employer brand promises and how might they influence employee performance?

The qualitative data analysis and interpretation led to the conclusion that there were two sets of factors in BOB’s employer branding efforts that could have influenced employee performance.

The first set of factors were associated with the manner in which BOB viewed the employment values and benefits offered to employees. Instead of looking, categorizing, and selecting employment values and benefits based on their conventional functions - economic, functional, interest value, organizational environment, social, psychological, and/or symbolic - such as presented in extant literature, the organization viewed the development and enhancement of employee performance as a holistic and very human venture. Accordingly, it viewed and categorized employment values or benefits in an employee need-centred manner consisting of factors that works inter-connectedly and in tandem to build and address the needs of the whole human person, thus allowing the person to develop in a holistic manner. These factors were labeled Employee Benefit Content Factors and were identified to be:

- Factor of personal sustainability
- Factor of connectedness and belonging
- Factor of opportunities and growth
- Factor of personal stake and influence
- Factor of significance and esteem

Based on the qualitative analysis, these factors could have positively affected employee performance by: ensuring that employees’ basic employment sustainability needs were met so that they did not become a factor in the employees’ focus on other employment and development priorities; expanding or improving employees’ work-related knowledge and skills so that they had the ability to do their work well and to advance; motivating employees to perform well with various targeted incentives; monitoring performance through various means and support; as well as strengthening mediators of performance, particular employees’ sense of commitment and engagement.

The second set of factors were associated with the organization’s recognition, hence preservation, of actions and safeguards within its employer branding process that ensured the effective delivery of the organization’s proposed employment values or benefits to its employees. For this employer, the factors, labeled Employee Benefit Materialization Factors, were identified to be:

- Factor of brand championship
- Factor of branding control
- Factor of stakeholder awareness, selection, consultation

As explained in the qualitative component of the study, these factors might or might not have a direct influence on employee performance, however, their absence or inadequate presence would
have a direct impact on BOB’s ability to effectively fulfill its employer brand promises and this, in turn, could reduce, slow down, or even fully inhibit the enhancement of employee performance and mediators of performance.

What is interesting and worthy of further discussion on this subject is how employees’ performance could have been further affected by the manners in which the organization view and approach employer branding. These were found to be:

- The view of employee performance enhancement as a holistic, continuous, inter-connected endeavour.
- The intentional incorporation of the element of employee performance enhancement in the design and fulfillment of employer brand promises.
- The recognition of the need to be authentic, selective, and not be the best employer to all people.
- The leveraging of its unique 100% employee-owned organizational structure and Principals and Associates system to layer and inter-connect its employer brand promises in order to intensify employee commitment, engagement, and performance over time.

**The view of employee performance enhancement as a holistic, continuous, inter-connected endeavour**

Firstly, this deemed best-of-the-best employer, BOB, saw the development and enhancement of employee performance as a holistic and continuous endeavour where employment benefits and programs were factored, coordinated, and facilitated to work inter-connectedly and in tandem to continually engage as well as develop employees in order that enhancement occurred not only with employees’ work-specific performance but also their overall capability as well as commitment to and engagement with the organization. BOB saw its efforts to brand to and engage employees as not having any end date, even when employees leave the organization. They called their continuous engagement and development of employees the "cradle to grave" philosophy and felt that such continuous effort would enable the organization to build a committed (even when the employees might not be working for them at the time), capable, flexible, and consistently high performing workforce that would be ready to work competently and effectively to tackle any emerging organizational goals or challenges.

Employee performance enhancement initiatives have often been designed from the perspective of the organization, specifically upon asking the questions: What organizational and business unit results does the employer want to achieve? What do employees need to do in their respective job and within the organization to help achieve these targeted results? How do we as the employer ensure that they deliver on what we expect? At times, employers would ask employees for their opinions on what they need in order to improve their performance in a specific area or for a specific task. Upon accumulating such information for the different organizational and business unit
results that the employer wishes to achieve, efforts would be made to create incentives to address employees’ performance for each targeted result or for a combination of results.

Very rarely, however, would most organizations truly look at employee performance enhancement as a partnership endeavor where an employee is nurtured and developed as a whole being, starting not from the basis of what the organization needs in order to achieve its results but from what an employee – a person, may need in order to remain overall engaged and productive in his/her work relationship with the organization. This would mean addressing a person’s needs holistically instead of piece-meal based on targeted business results and doing so would involve helping the employee sustain his/her employment relationship with the organization, establish a supportive work family, build a capable self and a strong future, and in return be the best that he/she could be for the employer not just in his/her specific job but also as a whole, because he/she is in a significant, long-term relationship with the organization.

It is important to highlight that BOB’s holistic approach to enhancing employee performance through its employer branding efforts were not all related to direct performance expectations or requirements. In fact, its holistic view of and approach to employee development appeared to be based firstly on establishing employee commitment and engagement, then on strengthening overall personal and professional development, followed finally by ensuring work performance. While no indication was given that the organization would tolerate low performance from an employee while he/she went through the process of development, there were strong indications that the organization was not interested in creating strategies that would focus only on the enhancement of targeted work performance. By focusing on the strengthening of employee commitment and engagement as well as on overall individual development, the organization had in fact targeted the enhancement of known mediators and moderators of performance that in turn could be expected to solidify the results of the efforts that the organization put in place to improve formal work performance.

In BOB’s case, their declared organizational values and corresponding organizational practice of caring for their employees from cradle to grave as well as of having a relationship with their employees throughout their career regardless of whether they were still employed at BOB reflected a good intent and equally good effort to not only enhance employee performance but also build a sustainable partnership with each employee that entered into an employment relationship with the organization. As a result, a very large majority of employees were, according to various evidence presented in this case study, productive, engaged\footnote{The organization’s 2012 Gallup Q12 employee engagement results with 90% participation rate showed of 80.74%.} in ensuring that their organization remain the best in the industry year after year, proud of being a member of the organization, and responsive to maintaining a relationship with the organization even when they were no longer employed at the organization.
The intentional incorporation of the element of employee performance enhancement in the design and fulfillment of employer brand promises

The second contributor to the enhancement of employee performance in BOB's employer branding efforts was likely its intentional incorporation of the element of employee performance enhancement in the design and fulfillment of its employer brand promises.

Not surprisingly, it would be hard for employer branding or almost any other organization program or initiative to have significant influence on employee performance if that is not one of the objectives or deliverables of the program and it has not been incorporated in the design and delivery of the program. The publicly held assumption that effective employer branding would lead to better employee performance would not just automatically materialize itself. As mentioned in earlier paragraphs, an organization's employer branding strategies could be designed with the objectives of employee attraction and retention alone without delving into performance enhancement. In such cases, an organization can consider itself to have an effective employer branding structure if it has been successful in attracting and retaining employees with an attractive employment value proposition that does not involve achieving great employee or organizational performance.

It is highly likely that employee performance enhancement could only be made possible with concerted effort on the part of employers to intentionally incorporate specific objective and plan for enhancing employee performance within the design and delivery of each of its employer brand promises. The element of employee performance enhancement should likely not be limited to direct work performance expectations and instead should include the strengthening of mediators and moderators of employee performance, as has been done by BOB. As shown in the qualitative data and supported by the quantitative results, BOB's active incorporation of the element of performance enhancement in the design and delivery of almost all of its employer brand promises generated positive influence on mediators of employee performance as well as on employee performance itself.

The recognition of the need to be authentic, selective, and not be the best employer to all people

The third aspect of BOB's approach to employer branding that could have retained rather than enhanced strong performance was its recognition and acceptance that it could not be the best employer to all employees and instead would focus on being authentic to its core characteristics and to designate more of its resources to creating a distinct employment value proposition for its targeted best-fit employees.

The uniqueness of each organization's employment value proposition was made clear to the researcher not from the empirical results but from the process of identifying BOB's set of employer brand promises. As reflected in the qualitative data, so many factors came together in determining,
delivering, evaluating, and upgrading the employment benefits that the organization offered its employees. In order to ensure that the employment benefits offered were meaningful, relevant, and impactful in terms of employee retention and performance enhancement, BOB spent much time and effort in monitoring and attempting to better understand the organizational and core workforce characteristics that made BOB what it was and what it needed to be in order to remain successful.

Firstly, an organization’s core workforce possesses a unique combination of characteristics in terms of factors such as types of skills, level of education, age and gender proportions, family configurations, ethnicity, and many others including but certainly not limited to generational influences on aspects such as work ethics, view of life and work, personal priorities, and so on. While different organizations may share some of the characteristics of these factors, the combination possessed by each organization is likely very different. The characteristics of each of these factors may change over time depending on the organization’s strategic and operational changes.

Secondly, each organization itself possesses a unique combination of characteristics in terms of factors such as type of industry or professional field, internal culture and value, general leadership style, management practices, geographical dispersions of operation, and many others. Again, while different organizations may share some of the characteristics of these factors, the combination possessed by each organization is likely very different.

The employment value proposition offered by an organization, its ability to deliver on the content, and employees’ reception of it are very likely affected by an intricate overall combination of both unique organizational and workforce combinations of characteristics above. Since so many organizational and workforce characteristics are involved in the making of an organization, the likelihood of any two organizations sharing the same distinct combination of organizational and workforce characteristics are slim to possibly none. As such, the specific employment benefits deemed essential and performance enhancing for the core workforce of one organization might be very different than those deemed essential and performance enhancing for the core workforce of another organization. Trying to adopt the same configuration of employment value proposition used by one’s successful competitor or trying to coordinate a set of employment value proposition based on what might be found as “most employee satisfying/motivating benefits” by practitioner research or even by academic research without first taking into consideration its own distinctive combination of characteristics could create a very noticeable authenticity gap between the true essence of the organization as well as what it can provide and what it tries to provide or to become in order to compete for good employees. In such cases, the primary concern is not on the employer’s ability to deliver on its employer brand promises. Rather, it is on the employer failure to recognize as well as capitalize on who or what it is in the design of its employment value proposition. Instead, it tries to adopt and deliver on employment value proposition created and/or shared by others with characteristics of others or with no unique characteristics at all, thus diminishing its own distinct and authentic characteristics in its employment value proposition.
Ultimate, this could result in failure to fully deliver on the value proposition, great disappointment, and loss of investment.

In addition to taking into consideration its unique combination of organizational and workforce characteristics in the creation and delivery of its employment value proposition, BOB recognized and accepted the fact that it could not be a best choice employer for all job applicants and even employees. In the management interviews, respondents were consistently clear about hiring best-fit employees. Such employees would be best-fit for BOB but might not be best-fit for other organizations. The presence of necessary skills to do their job would be a given rather than an option. However, they were best-fit in terms of sharing the same values, priorities, work ethics, and worldview as BOB’s leadership team and core workforce. As a result, the employment value proposition painstakingly tailored for this targeted group of best-fit employees were seen by these employees as meaningful and resonated authentically with who they were, what they stood for, and what they needed. This in turn, created a desirable and distinctive employment experience for this targeted group of employees. Given the same employment value proposition, other groups of employees might not feel that it resonated with their values and needs and in turn might not enjoy a desirable and distinctive employment experience. In this case, aside from some more genuinely unique benefits such as the Principal and Associates System, the 100% employee-ownership structure, the highly consultative decision making approach, and the many opportunities for cross-division work, these employees’ sense of distinctness of in their work experience likely also resulted from the fact that they felt the organization “gets them”, what they were about, and what they needed in order to thrive – a sense they possibly never quite got from other employers.

The leveraging of its 100% employee-owned organizational structure and Principals and Associates system to layer and inter-connect its employer brand promises to intensify employee commitment, engagement, and performance over time

The fourth aspect of BOB’s approach to employer branding that could have enhanced employee performance both directly and indirectly was its 100% employee-owned structure and Principle and Associates system. In combination, it used layering and inter-connection of its employer brand promises to intensify employee commitment, engagement, and good performance over time.

While not identified by any one respondent in the management interviews, a conclusion gained from the 19 interviews was the concept that through its 100% employee-owned structure and Principle and Associates system, the organization was able to engage in what could be termed as “multi-bind branding” where the organization used various benefits and provisions throughout a noticeable portion of the employees’ tenure at the organization to engage and “bind” an employee to the organization. Such engagement escalated and binding intensified when the employee became more personally involved and had a higher personal stake in maintaining the well-being and sustainability of the organization.
Potential candidates were first attracted to the organization by its various brand promises. Majority of the promises might satisfy an employee’s needs when consistently fulfilled, however, they would not necessarily bind an employee to the organization for any extended period of time or prompt better individual performances. In order to be truly bound, an employee would have to feel that he/she owns something that is of significance to him/her and that to have to leave the organization or to underperform for whatever reason would put his/her ownership of that something at risk.

In the case of BOB, any individual that was an employee, regardless of rank, would have the opportunity to own company shares. Company shares were sold exclusively to employees. Being a part owner of the organization was BOB’s first significant effort to positively bind the employee to the organization.

In this 100% employee-owned structure, an employee’s sense of ownership was augmented by the fact that majority of organizational decisions had to be vetted through various employee groups. Group consensus and collective decisions was deeply ingrained in the process and culture of the organization, allowing employees to feel that they had some genuine owner influence in the decisions made by the organization. This first effort of binding through ownership was augmented by the second binding through the allowance for genuine collective decision making. Continue engagement of the employee was then generated through its many high-interaction employment benefits such as mentorship program, cross-division work, advancement opportunities, large-scale community engagement projects, and more. As mentioned Chapter 6, these benefits worked interconnectedly and in tandem to both develop and engage employees.

While employee development and engagement continued, the third effort of binding occurred through the organization’s very unique Principals and Associates system. Employees had to have proven themselves as a superior performer as well as a true subscriber of the organization’s values and culture before being eligible for nomination into the group. Such demand that came with the declaration that any employee could become an Associate and then a Principal if he/she was committed to attaining it, was itself a sense of informal binding that kept employees hopeful and working towards stronger engagement with organization. When consistent engagement was proven, and employee could be nominated and accepted into the exclusive group consisting of 12% of the organization’s workforce and once an employee became an Associate and later a Principal, he/she retained substantially more organizational shares (76% of company shares owned by this group) as well as increasingly stronger influence on organizational decision, thus further strengthening their bind or attachment to the organization. By the time an employee reached this level, much would be at stake to lose if they chose to leave or if they were asked to leave due to various reasons including performance inadequacies. With this group continually safeguarding the values and culture of the organization and with on-going, highly selective new entries into the group, the practice of multi-bind branding would continue in the organization, thus preserving the concept of intensified and escalated employee binding, engagement, and performance.
**Distinction versus legitimacy – how this shapes the organization’s employer branding actions**

In employer branding literature, there has been much emphasis on being distinct as an employer and needing to offer distinctive employment value proposition and total work experience (Michaels et al., 2001; Ewing et al. 2002; Ruch, 2002; Lloyd, 2002; Mosley, 2004; Minchington, 2006; Moroko & Uncles, 2008) when compared to those offered by other employers in order that the organization can best attract and retain employees.

The question is, is it realistic for every organization to attempt to be distinct and come up with distinctive employment value proposition and total work experience in order to attract and retain good employees? Ultimately, is it necessary for an organization to be distinct and come up with a distinctive employment value proposition and total work experience in order to attract and retain good employees, and in the case of BOB, also to enhance employee performance?

In order to determine the answers to these question, one can start off by examining how most employers try to develop or enhance their employer brand. For most organizations as well as job searchers and employees, the benchmark or reference for successful employer branding and employer branding best practices have been the employers in the “best employers” or “employers of choice” lists or some deemed-successful employers highlighted by employer branding authors and consultants. These employers have been repeated hailed by best employer competition organizers, employer branding consultants, and through some research evidence as: offering more superior employer brand provisions and/or employer branding practices (Joo and McLean, 2006); demonstrating the gold standard for best practices in recruitment and retention (The Lawyers Weekly – Mediacorp Press Review, 2013); being able to attract higher quality workforce (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Rindova et al. 2005); possessing stronger competitive advantage in terms of reputation (Ainspan et al., 2001; Lenaghan & Eisner, 2005); being able to yield better organizational performance (Fulmer et al., 2003; Hewitt, 2004); and are ultimately being seen as employers of choice by potential and actual employees (Joo and McLean, 2006) - when compared to employers that have not been recognized as best employers or employers of choice. The recognition of being the best among other employers, especially in a repeated manner, also reflects the organizations’ ability to develop and maintain highly positive employer reputation and brand image (Schulte, 2010).

With sale pitches and survey reports from consultants (e.g. Bernard Hodes, 2006; Nigel Wright, 2008; Employer Brand Institute, 2009, 2011, 2014), advice from management and employer branding authors (e.g. Barrow and Mosley, 2006; Sartain and Schumman, 2006), and papers from scholars (e.g. Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Ainspan et al., 2001; Ewing et al. 2002; Fulmer et al., 2003; Harding, 2003; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2005; Ogilvie, 2006; Martin, 2007; Moroko & Uncles, 2008 and more) on the importance of effective employer branding in attracting, retaining, and developing our human
resources, organizations that are not on the lists, those that want to be on the lists more frequently, or those that just want to be more effective in employee attraction and retention, might be driven by choice or by pressure, to adopt some of the employment offerings and practices of these benchmarked employers, in hope they too can enhance the success of their employer branding efforts.

Over time, with cross-adoptions by a large number of organizations of the deemed best-practices of employer branding, employment value propositions and approaches to employer branding will likely become more alike rather than different. By attempting to meet or get close to the gold standard of employer branding exhibited by the best employers or employers of choice, these employers are in fact striving to become one of the best employers or employers of choice. If and when they achieve this, they would be seen as “in”, as one of them, and ultimately as a legitimate best employer or employer of choice.

Employers might start out wanting to be different and distinctive compared to others but over time, their efforts to become like the best employers and employers of choice would lead them to be more alike than different, but at the same time, they also become more recognized and legitimate as a member of the best employers or employers of choice club.

The neo-institutional theory of legitimacy was defined by Suchman (1995) as a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within a set of prevailing, socially constructed system of norms, values, or beliefs. Organizations conform to such external conditions in order to be accepted as legitimate and to enhance their chances of survival. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), when an organization becomes a legitimate leader or contender in the industry, such as the best employers or employers of choice, other organizations will try to adopt similar practices with the hope and expectation that they too can have the extra strengths and advantages possessed by the legitimate leading organizations. In the case of employer branding, the theory would be that employers that are not successful in employer branding or that want to be more successful in employer branding will try to adopt the employer branding practices and employment value propositions used by the deemed legitimate leaders of the pack, which are the recognized best employers or employers of choice. By doing that, these organizations hope and expect to achieve not just more success but high success in their employer branding efforts.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified the following three common types of institutional isomorphism or reproduction in organizations: (a) mimetic, (b) coercive and (c) normative. The one most applicable to the situation of employer branding and competition for employees in a tight and/or volatile market would be mimetic isomorphism, where the more uncertainty that is faced by an organization, the more it will model its structures and processes after other successful organizations. Organizations that employ many certified professionals, such as BOB, might also experience pressure for normative isomorphism where conforming to academic and credentialing
requirements are the norm, regardless of one's employer branding approach. One concern highlighted by Scott and Meyer (1991) is that over time, such mimicry or isomorphism would result in the loss of diversity.

The potential convergence of employer branding approaches and employment values provided by employer need to be recognized. The lack of noticeable individual distinction now or in the future for an employer does not equate to employer branding failure or doom. In the case of best employers or employers of choice, distinction can occur in groups – groups of best employers or employers of choice. Striving to be legitimate can in fact be a strategic and valid goal of employer branding. Distinction for an organization can occur not necessarily as the most unique or best among other employers but as an employer that offers and consistently delivers on employment promises that fulfill the holistic human needs of its targeted employees. Due to the many variables, factors, and actors that are involved, the fulfillment of employer brand promises is not an easy feat, hence the constant concern by employees with employers’ ability to sell but not deliver on their promises. The ability to fulfill promises of employee-valued provisions in a consistent basis will unavoidably distinguishes an employer among others. One could equate this as being in the group of people who obtained their doctoral degree versus those who obtained a master but not a doctoral degree, a bachelor but not a master or a doctoral degree or those with only a high school diploma. Due to the incrementally harder work and other extra variables involved in obtaining a higher degree, there is the least number of people in the doctoral group and this distinguishes them from those with other lower levels of degrees.

Ultimately, employers should focus on how to be a great employer to its targeted employees and not be overly concerned with being highly distinctive. Many great employers, such as BOB, are able to retain and develop great employees not because they are noticeably different than other employers but because they see and consistently address the holistic needs of their employees. They are generally known as a good or great employer for which employees want to work. One should note that not being independently distinct is not the same as not being authentic. As discussed in an earlier section, being authentic and seeking to hire and retain employees that subscribe to the same values and qualities are essential aspects of employer branding success.
Relevance and Contribution of Findings to Existing Knowledge/Literature

A large majority of academic literature and almost all of professional literature on employer branding have focused on employee attraction, retention, and features of employer brand (e.g. McKenzie and Glynn, 2001; Collins and Stevens, 2002; Berthon et al., 2005; Kateon & Macioschek, 2007; Lievens, Van Hoye & Anseel, 2007; Bhatnagar & Srivastava, 2008). As well, from a process perspective, the definition and scope of employer branding actions have been limited to the functions of communication of the employment values offered (e.g. Ewing et al., 2002; Lloyd, 2002; Backhaus and Tikoo’s, 2004) or employer image building (D’Arcy, 2003; Kateon & Macioschek, 2007), with little or no reference to employer brand promise delivery or performance enhancement.

Hence, the first relevance and contribution of this study to existing knowledge is the fact that it investigates an aspect outside of the more commonly defined scope of employer branding and adds to the still limited empirical literature that is specifically or generally focused on the relationship between employer branding and employee performance (e.g. Fulmer, Gerhart, and Scott, 2003; Davies, 2007; Bodderas et al., 2011). More specifically, the findings add to existing knowledge by offering particular insight into:

1. The possible influence that the fulfilment of employer brand promises have on employees’ organizational citizenship performance and task performance.

2. The possible influence that the fulfilment of employer brand promises has on employees’ perception of the desirability of their employment and in turn, the influence of this perception on employees’ organizational citizenship performance and task performance.

3. How employee performance could have been influenced by the factors and process of employer branding.

There are consistent mentions of the impact of employer branding on employee performance but they are largely based on assumptions of related HR studies (e.g. employee engagement, commitment and performance) rather than empirical studies directly on employer branding. Hence, the second relevance and contribution of the research findings to existing knowledge is the empirical evidence which lends some verifiable support to the mostly assumed influence of employer branding on employee performance, as presented through some anecdotal reports, self-reports by organizational representatives (Martin, 2007), and marketing materials by employer branding consultants (e.g. Nigel Wright, 2008; Lombardi for Aberdeen Group, 2009).

The assumption that effective employer branding has a positive influence on employee performance is not that surprising or without basis as there is a significant number of human resource management research that link particular human resource management strategies,
systems, culture, climate, leadership, or some other aspects to better employee performance, some of which are through the influence of these aspects on the mediators of performance such as job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (e.g. Guthrie, 2001; Medlin et. al., 2008; Albrecht, 2012; Biswas and Varma, 2012, Aslam et. al., 2013; Anitha, 2014; and many more). However, the complex and interrelated nature of employer branding needs to be taken into consideration and as a whole, employer branding appears to be much more intertwined and intricate than just any one function of human resource management. It cannot simply be installed as isolated components and be expected to work effectively as is, especially on the enhancement of employee performance, regardless of how well designed each isolated component might be. In order to have an impact on employee performance, the complex and many interrelated components of employer branding, along with relevant moderating and mediating conditions, would likely have to be managed and maneuvered in tandem, in a holistic and complementary manner. Even if there is a recognition of the complex and interrelated nature of employer branding behind the assumption of its influence on employer branding, there has been a noticeably lack of explanation on how such influence might be materialized through that complex and interrelated system. This doctoral study offers one insight into how such influence could have materialized. It is likely that similar studies of different organizations or different studies on the subject would offer more or varied insights that, in combination, would enrich our knowledge of the relationship between employer branding and employee performance.

The third relevance and perhaps more important contribution of this study to knowledge is the empirical finding that the influence of employer brand promise fulfillment, deemed the most important aspect of employer branding by many, on employees’ organizational citizenship performance is general small leaning towards moderate and on task performance is very small. Evidence found did support the hypothesis that employer brand promise fulfillment has an influence on mediators of performance such as employees’ perceived desirability of their employment. However, the final results on employee performance did not change much.

This finding is meaningful in that employers have been told over and over by well-known employer branding firms and even some scholars of the significance of effective employer branding in ensuring strong employee performance, either directly or indirectly. Many employers around the world have jumped on the employer branding bandwagon and either have or will spend large sums on establishing or enhancing an employer branding program in their organizations. In fact, the 2014 Employer Branding Global Trend Study report produced by Employer Brand International showed that 38% of its 1143 respondents from around the globe indicated they plan to increase the investment they put into employer branding.

Ultimately, what true returns are employers getting for their employer branding investment, particularly in area of organizational citizenship and task performance enhancement? The returns, at least on organizational citizenship and task performance enhancement, could be much less than
expected and employers might need to think more carefully and more realistically about the ultimate end goals of their employer branding initiatives.

It should be noted again that results in the study suggest a stronger employer brand promise fulfillment influence on organization citizenship performance than on task performance. Theories for this was provided in a former section of this chapter. This finding is also an interesting addition to knowledge.

The fourth relevance and contribution of the research findings to existing knowledge is its discovery and proposal of another way to view and treat employment values and benefits. The existing view of employment values and benefits has been based more on functional categories – economic function, development and application function, social and psychological function, and so forth. The assumption is that an employer will select benefits from each or some of these categories to fulfill the functional needs that employees may have. They might be provided to employees as a cluster of independent benefits, formed with little or no inter-connection between the activities and/or outcome of one benefit and another. The challenge is that viewing and providing benefits in this manner does not necessarily fulfill a person’s needs in a holistic way and gaps of immediate or subsequent level needs can often be missed. This can very likely cause an employee to feel that there are inadequacies in some or all factors of work and life that determine their retention and motivation in a job.

There is not necessarily one right way to look at employment values and benefits as they are encountered by different parties coming from different perspectives and with different points of interest. An employer might take a macro organizational view of employment values and benefits and examine how they may affect the organization from a human, material, financial, and targeted outcome perspectives while an employee or job applicant might take a more micro personal view of employment values and benefits and examine how they may affect his/her immediate as well as longer term needs and aspirations. The way that an employer views these employment values and benefits could shape the types of values and benefits chosen as well as how they are organized and delivered. In the case of BOB, the factor of personal sustainability was the foundation to the other factors and this factor contained various types of benefits – financial, functional, work-life balance, and work environment. As well, there was a strong emphasis on the need to deliver the benefits within each factor in tandem and in an inter-connected manner as they work off and augment the effects of one another to fulfill the employees’ needs as well as develop them.

Around ¾ of the employment benefits offered by BOB, while competitive, were not particularly distinct or unique. However, it was BOB’s view and treatment of the employment value and benefits that made their approach a new addition to existing knowledge on the subject.

Ultimately, one might determine how best to view and organize employment values and benefits by asking who or what they are for, what goals one hopes to achieve by providing them, what
forces or conditions might mitigate that which is provided and how it is provided, and how to best achieve the goals with the values and benefits present and the forces and conditions that are mitigating the situation.

The sixth relevance of the research findings to existing knowledge is its contribution to literature on human resources management practices of employee-owned organizations. Latest data provided by the Employee Ownership Association of United Kingdom indicates that the number of employee-owned businesses in the United Kingdom is growing by just under 10% per year and contribute £30 billion GDP to the UK economy each year (2012 data). Almost half of the organizations in Britain it surveyed in 2014 had become employee-owned, directly or indirectly, since 2010. In Canada, where this study was conducted, the trend for employee ownership is also on the rise. Forty percent of the organizations on the 2011 Canada Profit 200 list were employee-owned (Advantage Magazine, 2013). Three of the five deemed best-of-the-best employers shortlisted for this study were employee-owned with two, including BOB, being 100% employee-owned. The amount of human resources management literature focused on employee-owned organizations is still limited. The number focused on the subject of employer branding within organizations with significant employee ownership could hardly be found.

With the rapid growth in employee ownership, there is certainly value in studies that shed light on how employer branding practices are done in employee-owned organizations and whether employee ownership plays a role in shaping these practices or in influencing the outcome of these practices. Should it be found that employee ownership does play a role, such as found in this study, the interesting questions would then be how it played a role and if there are ways that either the approaches or the effects could be reproduced in organizations with other forms of governance and ownership structures.

As a whole, this in-depth case study was a direct effort to respond to the call for investigation into the relationship between employer branding and employee performance. The research generated new knowledge and understanding not just on whether and to what extent relationships existed between employer brand promise fulfillment and organizational citizenship as well as task performances, but also on why and how such relationships were materialized and preserved within a complex and organic organizational environment. The complexities and interactions within and surrounding employer branding needed to be understood before any viable theories of relationships could be derived and further tested. This case study allowed the researcher to explore and generate insights on these complexities and on how employee performance was affected. Such new insights have enable the researcher to address some of the key unanswered questions that ultimately contributed to the advancement of scholarly knowledge in the matter.

38 See details in Chapter 4 for the shortlisting process
Implications for Practice

In addition to contribution to theoretical knowledge, the findings in this study also presented some important implications for the practice of employer branding.

The first implication is the need for an organization to intentionally include the targeted outcome of enhanced employee performance and the operational element of employee performance enhancement in the design and execution of its employer branding plan, particularly in the development and fulfillment of its employer brand promises. Only in doing so can an organization be consistently reminded and called upon to address the performance enhancement objectives identified. As such, it is not enough to simply provide employee with a mixture of desirable employment values or benefits that have no association, by content or process, with the enhancement of employee performance because that would likely limit the outcomes of employer branding to ensuring employee attraction and retention alone.

In order to continually enhance performance and mediators of performance, the design of the overall set of employment values or benefits should include:

- Provisions with different capacities to enhance performance and mediators of performance.

- Provisions that are inter-connected and work in tandem to achieve more than one employer branding objective.

- A progressive attachment and engagement plan that would provide formal opportunities for employees to intensify their personal involvement with organization over time, and by doing so also escalates their engagement with and commitment to the organization.

Another implication is the need to recognize employee performance enhancement as part of a holistic employee development endeavour and to therefore view employment values or benefits from a holistic, inter-connected, individual need-centred perspective instead of from an independently functional perspective. Each employment value or benefit needs to be assessed as a part of the whole in contributing to the development of the employee, and be provided in a holistic, linked-to-others manner, rather than in an isolated À la carte manner.

As a whole, an employer should view holistic employee performance enhancement as a strategic organizational goal that needs to be achieved and maintained regardless of the organizational and business unit performance targets of the day. In doing so, the organization is building a high performing workforce that would enable the organization to continually achieve its performance goals, again, regardless of the organizational and business unit targets of the day.

The third implication from the research results is the realization that even a best-of-the-best employer was not able to adequately fulfill the expectations of all employees for all of the
provisions the employer had promised. Is it in fact realistic to expect any employer to fulfill all or even most of its employer brand promises to a level that is perceived as adequate by all or even over ¾ of its employees? After all, perception of adequacy is highly subjective and can be influenced by various factors including an employee’s work and life situation on the specific day that he/she is taking the survey. The answer is likely no but the more important question is whether employee performance would be noticeably affected if the employer is not able to adequately fulfill most of its employer brand promises? In spite of the findings of small influence, the answer to this question could be yes as it indicates a break of psychological contract and trust for multiple promises. Hence it is important to be both authentic and selective in the selection and coordination of one’s employer brand promises. Both of these implications are explained below.

The findings in this study indicate that not all employment values or benefits are created equal when it comes to the enhancement of employees’ organizational citizenship or task performance. As well, due to the many elements that shape an organization, the employment values or benefits that would be most effective in influencing performance behaviours in one organization might be very different that those in another organization. Hence the implication here is that there is a need for employers to investigate and determine the employment values or benefits that work most effectively in their respective organizations. In the era of higher management transparency and accountability, there is pressure for organizational leaders to use their resources in a prudent, strategic, and cost-effective manner. Instead of spending resources on a variety of employment values or benefits, an employer might yield a higher performance return by allocating more resources to performance-enhancing values or benefits and less or none to those that do not, unless those values or benefits enhance other employee qualities targeted by the employer. Aside from focusing resources on performance-enhancing values or benefits, employers with a tighter budget can also consider focusing a larger portion of its finite resources on the fulfillment of the needs of the core group of competitive-value-enhancing and organizational-sustaining employees rather than offering a one-size-fits all or all-is-equal type of employment values and benefits to all employees.

Another practical implication is to be realistic and strategic about the path to being an employer of choice. It is not realistic, necessary, or even wise for an organization to try to be the best employer or the employer of choice to all people. Distinction as an employer of choice does not necessarily mean being an employer that is unique and distinct from all its competitors although this could certainly happen. An organization can exist within a legitimate group of employers of choice and distinction as a great employer can be achieved through the offer and consistent fulfillment of employee-valued provisions.

The more important realization is that an employer needs to focus on employer branding aspects within its realistic control and employment values or benefits that are within its realistic scope of provision. This begins with the organization having a clear understanding of itself as an employer. What is the essence of the organization? How can that be reflected in one’s employer brand and
human resources management practices? There is a need to promote one's self and offer employment proposition that is in line with its authentic organizational essence, values, characteristics, and capability to fulfill because not doing so would make it very difficult for the employer to fulfill its promises.

Being authentic would likely result in the organization appealing to some groups of individuals but not to other groups, which might be a positive rather than a negative outcome. In order to be most effective in employee attraction, retention, engagement, and performance enhancement, an employer should focus its resources and employer branding efforts on targeted best-fit employees rather than all employees. Best-fit employees are those that identify with and subscribe to the employer's authentic identity, values, expectations, and offers. Ensuring person-organization fit would be the first level of control an employer has to create a positive and productive work experience for the employee as well as the employer.

One final but important implication to be presented here is the fact that any employer branding strategies or actions found to be effective or possibly insightful at this point in time might not be so in the future. As cautioned by Rosenzweig (2007ii), there are factors that mediate one’s decisions, actions, and outcomes and these include competitors’ actions and level of risk taken by an organization’s executives. When these come into play at a later time, what is deemed effective now may be less or more so at that time. Process scholars (e.g. MacKay and Chia, 2013; Langley et. al., 2013) also presented the same caution and concluded that the specific decisions or particular series of activities and events that would lead to a projected result at one point might not be applicable or might even be catastrophic at another time when other activities, events, entities, players, or factors intervene.

Ultimately, performance is relative rather than absolute (Rosenzweig 2007ii, pg. 60) and organizations need to be adaptable in decisions and actions in order to stay competitive or even to survive.

Limitations
There are some limitations in the study that need to be acknowledged. The first being the factors that might affect the validity of the results and the second being the factors that might affect the transferability of the results.

Factors that might affect validity of results
Many aspects of a research can affect the validity of its findings. These include but not limited to what and how data is collected, sources of data, and how data is analyzed.
One of the factors that might affect the validity of result in this study is the self-reporting nature of survey responses. The study asked respondents to declare their level of performance, albeit in an anonymous manner. That meant an employee had to reflect on his/her own performance and acknowledge whether he/she had been performing well. Such personal request could prompt social desirability bias among some respondents. Should that be the case, these respondents would provide an overly-positive report on how they reacted (Mensch and Kandel, 1988) when encountering each of the organizational citizenship and task performance scenarios. While these respondents might have felt assured that no one would be verifying their answers, there could still be an inclination to provide more socially acceptable answers, possibly because they truly viewed their performance as better than reality (Fisher and Katz, 2000). Then, there might be some respondents who did in fact feel uncertain about whether their responses could be read by someone in the management rank. Should that occurred, these respondents might answer the questions dishonestly in order to put themselves in a better light or to avoid being viewed in a bad light. Also as indicated in an earlier paragraph, employees were also owners of the organization, thus anyone not performing as well might feel embarrassed to indicate even to one’s self that they were not pulling their weight. Alternatively, they might feel a need as an owner to answer positively in order for the results to reflect their best employer, awesome organization reputation.

This in turn could skew the performance ratings and overall outcome of the influence that employees’ perceived employer brand promise fulfillment might have on employee performance.

There might also be a portion of respondents who felt pressured by their managers to participate in the survey and did so half-heartedly, quickly, and without much thought given to the questions and responses. Some respondents might experience fatigue part way through the survey and proceeded to finish up the survey half-heartedly, quickly, and again, without much thought given to the remaining questions and responses. This again could result in inaccurate ratings that could affect the results of the analyses.

Another factor that might affect the validity of result is the manner in which the qualitative data was treated. In the qualitative analysis, there was a need for interpretation by the researcher of information gained from the management interviews and material review. While some answers to question were direct and obvious, others were not. As well, some conditions of the employer branding process were not directly mentioned by interview participants but were reflected through their descriptions of scenarios, decisions, or actions. The researcher had to make sense of the information and draw patterns and inferences from them. Even with the triangulation of data, there would be some degree of subjectivity injected into the formation of the conclusions, which means that one could not be fully certain of the accuracy, thus also validity, of the conclusions.
Factors that might affect the transferability of the results
Another possible limitation of this study involves the factors that might affect the transferability and generalizability of the results found in the study.

The matter of transferability of results to a larger population has often been challenged in case studies due to arguments that include: 1) the context of the case is unique and unlike those of the general population, 2) current findings might not be relevant or applicable when there is a change in the environment and forces which the findings originally exist.

The context in which a research subject exists could indeed be unique and unlike those of other subjects. The fact that the case study was done on a fully-employee-owned, generally well-resourced best-of-the-best organization in Canada could pose a challenge in the transferability of results to other organizations that are either not employee-owned, not best-of-the-best organizations, not well-resourced, not a Canadian organization, and/or not similar in characteristics.

As indicated in earlier sections of the dissertation, individuals in an employee-owned organization, especially one with 100% employee ownership, likely function in a very different environment and perhaps also conduct themselves in a very different manner than employees in a non-employee-owned or even partially-employee-owned organization. The first difference would be that this organization could offer shares to employees as a proposed employment value while non-employee-owned organizations could not do that. Employees in the organization might see themselves as business owners rather than employees and should that be the case, they might feel the right to expect and the organization, being 100% employee-owned, might feel the obligation to comply with demands such as fully decentralized decision making, regular consultations, high “business partner” (managers) accountability and responsiveness in different areas of the organization, and more. On the other hand, employees in such structure might feel a much higher stake in the success of the organization, thus would be willing to sacrifice some personal needs in exchange for the greater good of the organization.

Other conditions that framed the context of the case, such as their highly educated and technical workforce, their existence in a highly competitive, energy-focused province in Canada, their long-term orientation towards employee relations and so on, could have affected the way they designed and organized their employment values as well as the way they executed their employer branding.

From a macro perspective, Canada’s economic status, work culture, government incentives, employment legislations, and other characteristics might cause employers to behave differently than employers of other countries when it comes to the activities of human capital management. Educated Canadian employees, particularly those residing in oil-rich Alberta, where this case study was conducted, would generally receive high salaries and enjoy a high standard of living. Should Maslow’s hierarchy of needs be used as reference, these employees would likely not have a
concern with trying to meet basic physiological or safety needs. The type of employment benefits they seek would be very different than those sought by employees in less developed or less resourced countries. What was found to be effective in Canada might not be effective or even realistic in other countries.

Knowledge gained in this dynamic and unique context enriches our understanding on employer branding and adds to the literature on not only employer branding but also on employee-owned organizations, especially fully employee-owned organization. However, the context that shapes the organization is, in some aspects, unique to this organization, thus the findings in the study might not be sufficiently transferable to the broader market.

While an organization’s existing context could make results found within the organization not sufficiently transferable, changing context due to the changes with the forces and conditions that define the context could also make results from one point in time not transferable to another point in time.

According to Rosenzweig (2007i, ii, 2009), there is no formula or “timeless principles” (pg 11, 2007ii) that can guarantee an organization’s success in a competitive environment. He posits that when one encounters ‘successful’ organizations (as typically reflected by financial and market share performance), one assumes that the organizations are successful because they possess a secret set of formula, principles, or traits that when applied, would predictably bring about their enduring success, regardless of other mediating factors. Rosenzweig (2007ii) further argues that mediating factors such as competitors’ actions and the level of risk taken by an organization’s executives would directly affect the organization’s performance outcome, at any given time, in spite of any good formula or traits the organization might have in place. Ultimately, performance is relative rather than absolute (pg. 60).

Rosenzweig argument has merit in that BOB’s as well as any other organization’s existing employer branding strategies to influence its employees’ performance can be affected by the organization’s own increase or decrease in resources and/or efforts put into the existing employer branding structure. It can also be challenged by the employer branding efforts of other organizations attempting to recruit and retain the same kind of employees. Other organizations vying for the same targeted groups of employees can attempt to imitate the same employer branding approaches or concentrate on the same employer branding priorities and offer the same provisions to attract and retain these employees. Alternatively, they can use other strategies, focus on other priorities and offer different provisions that can yield better results. Should this happen, BOB’s employer branding strategies and process that have been found to work very effectively now to attract, retain, and develop employees can very possibly be weakened or be no longer effective at that time.
Rosenzweig’s argument of relativity of organizational performance is echoed by process scholars (e.g. MacKay and Chia, 2013; Langley et. al., 2013), who see the change in context as affecting the series of activities and events that lead to the anticipated results or performance outcome. As mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, they too conclude that decisions or particular series of activities that are effective in yielding targeted results at one point might not be so at another time with the emergence of intervening activities, events, entities, players, or factors.

Changes in context at a subsequent time will result in changes to the processes, mechanisms, or other factors that shape the conclusions we find at the present time. As such, the results in this and many other studies, especially if they relate to process, change, or strategy, might only be applicable for a point in time and not transferable to another time.

**Transferability of Results is Possible In Some Aspects**

While there might not be any timeless principles or series of activities and events that could permanently ensure an organization’s employer branding success and/or positive influence on employee performance, one could argue that there are some good practices of effective employer branding grounded in the research and knowledge of psychology, organizational behaviour, or employee management, and studied many times over throughout the years. If applied appropriately, they would likely enhance an organization’s ability to attract and retain employees as well as influence to some noticeable degree, their organizational citizenship performance and possibly also other performances. These include:

i. Offering employment provisions that are, as a whole, desired by the specific groups of employees targeted by the organization.

ii. Building trust by fulfilling one’s employer brand promises and psychological contract with employees (Robinson, 1996).

iii. Integrating the aspect of employee performance in the design and evaluation on one’s employer branding program.

The challenge in transferability may lie not so much in knowing these fundamental principles or practices of effective employer branding but in recognizing that the content items and application methods of these principles and practices would and should likely be different from one organization to another. This is because the organic make-up or configuration of every organization evolves and is different from that of another organization, no matter how alike they appear to the public. Everything impacts this organic configuration, from employees and systems of the day to buildings and locations. If an organization simply super-imposes the content items and application methods of another organization on its own setting, it may be ineffective or even disastrous depending on how the specific characters and articles that shape the organization’s own
unique configuration might respond or adapt to these pre-packaged content items and delivery methods.

As well, one aspect of successful employer branding appears to be the organization’s ability to offer employer brand promises that are deemed by its targeted employee groups as not only desirable but also authentic. Ironically, to achieve authenticity and some degree of distinctness as an employer of choice and to maintain competitive advantage, the organization’s combination of employer branding practices, provisions, and overall delivery methods should be organization-specific and hard to imitate or even non-transferable. It would be difficult for an organization to hold the contrasting position of being like others (e.g. do what other employers of choice are doing and offer what they are offering) and being distinctive and authentic at the same time.

At the same time, the knowledge of some fundamental good practices of employer branding as well as the knowledge of performance enhancement factors identified in this case study can be transferable to many other organizations regardless of industry, size, or other distinguishing features that an organization might possess. Being attentive to employees’ development and growth, sustainability of employment, a reasonable degree of personal influence, sense of connectedness at work as well as sense of significance in the work they do, can be a common and foundational practice rather than exceptional practice within an organization’s employer branding agenda. Their specific content items and methods of delivery of each of these factors might be different from one organization to another but the rationale and intent behind them could remain the same across different organizations. These factors are not exhaustive and future research will likely uncover more performance enhancement factors. Their presence on the agenda would serve as a reminder as well as a reference in the organization’s selection, design, coordination, communication, and delivery of employer brand promises.
Recommendations for Future Research

In order to determine whether there are commonalities in the ways that proven employers of choice use employer branding to enhance employee performance, there would be a need to conduct a larger number of in-depth case studies of proven employers of choice. Doing so would likely also reveal more unique, hard-to-imitate strategies used by these employers of choice to remain distinctive and maintain competitive advantage. This would enrich our knowledge in the types of strategies used and also allow us to determine if there is some common approach employed by these proven employers of choice in their decision making, planning, or design of the types of strategies to employ. In addition, having a larger group of proven employers of choice would allow us to re-do the quantitative analyses to determine if the trend of results for the influence of employer branding on employee performance remain the same. If so, this would strengthen our conclusion on the degree of influence that the fulfillment of employer brand promises would have on the level of employee performance. If not, it would be highly important to examine how and why the trend changes.

To further verify how significant an influence effective employer branding truly has on employee as well as organizational performance, more and larger comparative studies should be undertaken between proven employers of choice and employers that have never been recognized as employers of choice. Comparing the results between employees in deemed-opposite groups of organizations could likely yield very different conclusions than comparing the results between different groups of employees within the same organization. If in depth qualitative investigation is also carried out, such results would shed light on why and how the difference exists. If at all possible, verification of performance should also extend beyond employees’ self-perception to other more observable and tangible outcomes.

Further research should also be done on the effects of employer brand image-identity gap on employee engagement and performance. Would the degree of gap between the intended image promoted to employees and the actual image promoted to job applicants be different when measured against the organization’s identity as perceived by employees? What could have cause the difference and how does an organization minimize the gap? How does this affect the performance of employees with different amount tenure in the organization? Would image-identity gap affect mainly new employees or do long-term employees get affected as well? These answers would enable organization to take a closer look at how to minimize both the image-identity gap as well as its impact on employee performance.
Overall Conclusion

The main conclusion of the case study is that the relationship between employee performance and employer brand is intricate and complex. It is not straight-forward and it involves obvious and non-obvious factors. While each organization should remain authentic in its employment value proposition, it could improve its employer branding efforts by investigating, considering, and where appropriate, incorporating missing key elements and/or common performance enhancing factors of employer branding identified in extant literature. The same could be done with the basic framework and processes of employer branding. However, the intricacies that exist within the process of employer branding could be highly organization-specific. In BOB’s case, the intricate way that its employment benefits were chosen, coordinated, and weaved together to enhance employee performance was precisely what was unique about the organization’s ability to truly foster long-term employee engagement and productive. Such intricate ability could be hard to imitate, thus preserving it competitive advantage. The challenge for organizations is to design and execute such organization-specific, intricate, effective, and hard-to-imitate strategies or approaches within their own employer branding processes.

As a whole, this study have built on existing discoveries to produce new insights that would:

- Serve as a meaningful addition to the growing body of investigative work that has been done on employer branding as well as to the larger body of knowledge on branding and human resource management as a whole.

- Add new knowledge to the subject of employer branding, as it relates to employee performance management.

- Offer opportunities for critique, further investigations, modifications, and refinement of the research results by academic and professional researchers from multiple disciplines including marketing, human resource management, organizational behaviour, organizational psychology, and others.

- Serve as reference for the work of other researchers and/or as a foundation to launch other related studies in the future.

- Contribute to practical management planning and decision making knowledge by providing organizations with an in depth empirically based understanding of the intricate nature of employer branding and of aspects that would as well as would not effectively influence employees’ job performance.
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APPENDICES

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5. Gallup Q12 Workplace Audit Questions
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   iv. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL)

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   iii. They are Happy to Spend the Rest of Their Career with the Organization (HSCO).
   iv. They DO NOT Frequently Consider Leaving Their Employment at the Organization (NFTL).

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   ii. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).
   iii. They would be happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).
   iv. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).
1. Abbreviations Used in this Dissertation

The following abbreviations will be used extensively in this chapter for explanations of analyses:

EBP = Employer Brand Promises
- Which in this case, represent the 20 employment benefit items with acknowledgements by the highest number of management interview respondents as being offered to employees.

OCP = Positive Organizational Citizenship Performance
- Which in this case, represents the 17 OCP scale behaviours selected for this study.

TP = Positive Task Performance
- Which in this case, represents the 7 TP scale actions\(^\text{39}\) as used by William and Anderson in their research, *Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviours* (1991).

DDEE = Desirable and distinctive employment experience

GPTW = Great place to work

HSCO = Happy to spend the rest of my career with the organization

NFTL = DO NOT frequently think of leaving my employment with this organization

POI = Projected organizational image

AOI = Actual organizational image

EOI = Experienced organizational identity

\(^{39}\) 2 negative actions and their responses were reversed for analysis.
## 2. Employer Brand Promises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EBP #</th>
<th>Employer Brand Promised Items Descriptors</th>
<th>Types of Employment Benefits Based on Extant Literature</th>
<th>EBP Content Factor Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>Economic/Monetary</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs (e.g. BOB University, coaching, mentoring, buddy system, educational subsidy, etc.)</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>Work-life Balance</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
<td>Connectedness and Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Organizational dedication to technical excellence</td>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Competitive compensation</td>
<td>Economic/Monetary</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
<td>Connectedness and Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A work environment that allows for work-life balance</td>
<td>Work-life Balance</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>Interest Value/Organizational Culture and Environment</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful treatment of employees</td>
<td>Social/Psychological</td>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>Functional or Development and Applications</td>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Organizational Citizenship Performance Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Organizational Citizenship Performance Behavioural Descriptors Selected</th>
<th>Performance Themes</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Being mindful of how your behavior affected other people’s work in the organization</td>
<td>Helping Behaviour - courtesy</td>
<td>Vey &amp; Campbell (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Risked disapproval in order to express your beliefs about what's best for the organization</td>
<td>Civic Virtue</td>
<td>MacKenzie, Podsakoff &amp; Fetter (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Attended functions that were not required but that helped the organizational image</td>
<td>Civic Virtue</td>
<td>MacKenzie, Podsakoff &amp; Fetter (1993); Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Diligently followed organizational rules, policies, and procedures</td>
<td>Organizational Compliance - conscientiousness</td>
<td>Adapted from MacKenzie, Podsakoff &amp; Fetter (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Defended the organization when other employees criticized it</td>
<td>Organizational Loyalty</td>
<td>Moorman and Blakely (1995); Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Volunteered to carry out tasks that are not formally part of your job responsibilities</td>
<td>Individual Initiative</td>
<td>Borman &amp; Motowidlo (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Maintained a positive attitude even when things at work were not going the way you wanted them to go</td>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>Podsakoff et. al. (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Voluntarily enhanced your knowledge and skills (e.g. enrolling in a relevant course) in order that you can perform your existing job better</td>
<td>Self-Development</td>
<td>Adapted from George &amp; Brief (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Went above and beyond the call of duty when doing your job</td>
<td>Individual Initiative</td>
<td>Moorman and Blakely (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Went out of your way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group</td>
<td>Helping Behaviour</td>
<td>Moorman and Blakely (1995); Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Offered ideas for organizational improvements (e.g. in operations, administration, products and services)</td>
<td>Individual Initiative</td>
<td>Adapted from Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Sacrificed your own interest for the good of your organization and/or work team</td>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>Podsakoff et. al. (2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Showed genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations</td>
<td>Helping Behaviour</td>
<td>Moorman and Blakely (1995); Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Showed pride when representing the organization in public</td>
<td>Organizational Loyalty</td>
<td>Moorman and Blakely (1995); Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Voluntarily pursued new knowledge and skills (e.g. advancing your professional credentials) so that you may take on more complex assignments and/or a higher level position within the organization</td>
<td>Self-Development</td>
<td>Adapted from George &amp; Brief (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Willingly gave up your time to help co-workers who had work-related problems</td>
<td>Helping Behaviour - Alturism</td>
<td>Adapted from Lee &amp; Allen (2002)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 4. Task Performance Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TP #</th>
<th>Task Performance Action Descriptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adequately completed assigned duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fulfilled responsibilities specified in your job description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Performed tasks that were expected of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Met formal performance requirements of your job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engaged in activities that would positively affect your performance evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>NOT Neglected aspects of your job that you were expected to perform (reversed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>NOT Failed to perform essential duties (reversed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Gallup Q12 Workplace Audit Questions

The Q12 statements are:

Q00. (Overall Satisfaction) On a 5-point scale, where “5” is extremely satisfied and “1” is extremely dissatisfied, how satisfied are you with (your company) as a place to work?

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Q05. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Q07. At work, my opinions seem to count.

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Source:
6. Management Interview Questionnaire

Research Overview

As one of the most recognized top/best employer in Canada, BOB has been specifically selected among a large number of organizations to participate in this doctoral research on the relationship between employer branding and employee performance. More specifically, the research will investigate the influence of employer brand promise fulfillment on two dimensions of employee performance - ask performance and organizational citizenship performance.

As a manager of BOB, your responses to the interview will offer the researcher with an understanding of the philosophies, traits, practices, and provisions engaged by BOB to brand and distinguish itself as an employer of choice for job applicants and existing employees. More specifically, the interview aims to:
- Identify the employment values/promises inherent in BOB’s employer brand.
- Examine how the organization materializes its employer brand values/promises.
- Examine how the organization uses its employer brand promises to enhance employee performance.

Naturally, the completion of this doctoral research will not be possible without your input and support. As such, your participation is both relevant and significant.

The information you share will be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. NO member of BOB will see or have access to your individual responses to the interview. As such, I hope that you will answer the questions as honestly as possible.

The aggregate results (cumulative responses from all participants) of the interviews will be used to establish part of the questionnaire for a larger scale follow-up survey of employees. They will also form part of the researcher’s doctoral dissertation. A copy of this dissertation will be provided to BOB.

If you have any questions concerning the study, please do not hesitate to contact me, Hendriatta Wong or my research supervisor, Dr. Stuart Roper:

**Primary Contact:**
Hendriatta Wong  
Doctoral Candidate  
Manchester Business School  
The University of Manchester  
Work Phone: 1-780-413-7831  
Work Email: hendriatta.wong@concordia.ab.ca

**Research Supervisor:**
Dr. Stuart Roper  
Senior Lecturer, Marketing  
Manchester Business School  
The University of Manchester  
Work Phone: +44 (0)161 306 3475  
Work Email: stuart.roper@mbs.ac.uk

Please accept my deepest appreciation for your participation in this research.
Management Personnel Informed Consent Form

**Purpose:** You are invited to participate in a doctoral research conducted by Hendriatta Wong, a doctoral candidate at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. The purpose of the research is to examine the relationship between employer branding and employee performance. More specifically, the research will investigate the influence of employer brand promise fulfillment on two dimensions of employee performance - task performance and citizenship performance.

**Participation Requirements:** Your participation in this research involves engaging in a one-on-one interview with the researcher. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. In the interview, your opinions and observations will be sought on the philosophies, practices, provisions, and traits that shape BOB’s employer brand and its effort to distinguish itself as an employer of choice for job applicants and existing employees.

**Confidentiality:** The information you share will be kept STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. NO member of BOB will see or have access to your individual responses to the interview. This completed informed consent form will be kept separate from your interview data and no identifying information will remain with your data. The researcher is interested in the collective responses among a group of people and not in the single response of any one person. Analyses will be done on the collective data and the aggregate results (cumulative responses from all participants) will be used to establish part of the questionnaire for a larger scale follow-up survey of employees. They will also form part of the researcher’s doctoral dissertation. Again, the dissertation will NOT contain any identifying information about you personally. A copy of this dissertation will be provided to BOB.

**Right to Refuse Participation:** Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse participation without any fear of negative consequences. Should you choose to participate but conclude sometime during the interview session that you are unable or unwilling to continue, you may also terminate your participation at that time.

**Contact:** The following individuals are involved with the research and may be contacted at any time for further information or questions. The primary researcher of this project is Hendriatta Wong and the research supervisor for this project is Dr. Stuart Roper (PhD).

**Primary Contact:**
- Hendriatta Wong
- Doctoral Candidate
- Manchester Business School
- The University of Manchester
- Work Phone: 1-780-413-7831
- Work Email: hendriatta.wong@concordia.ab.ca

**Research Supervisor:**
- Dr. Stuart Roper
- Senior Lecturer, Marketing
- Manchester Business School
- The University of Manchester
- Work Phone: +44 (0)161 306 3475
- Work Email: stuart.roper@mbs.ac.uk

I have read the above information and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates my full consent to participate in the research. I also understand that I will retain a copy of this informed consent form for my own records.

Participant’s Signature: ____________________________________________

Participant’s Name: ________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________
Management Interview Questions

Identifying elements of employer branding

- How does BOB brand and distinguish itself as an employer of choice?
- What are the departments or employee groups that are involved in planning, developing, and executing the organization’s employer branding strategies?

Disseminating and fulfilling employer brand promises

An organization’s employer brand typically reflects certain employment values and benefits that the organization offers as an employer and as a place of employment. These employment values and benefits have been referred to as “employer brand promises”. It is assumed that an individual who becomes an employee of the organization can expect to have these promises fulfilled for him/her.

- What are the key employment promises reflected in BOB’s employer brand? In other words, what can job applicants and employees expect from BOB as an employer and as a place of employment?
- Can an employee expect to have a distinctive and desirable overall work experience at BOB (compared to what they would have by working for most other organizations)? If so, how so?
- How are these employer brand promises communicated to job applicants?
  - Do existing employees play a role in communicating these promises to potential employees? If so, how so?
- How are these promises fulfilled for employees by the organization?
- How does BOB determine if these promises are desired and valued by potential and actual employees?
  - What sort of investigation/benchmark would be used to find the answer?
  - When information is gained, how often would it be used to adjust the organization’s own employment value propositions to remain attractive to potential and actual employees?
- Do the organization’s senior leaders play a role in shaping the organization’s employer brand and/or in directing its employer branding efforts? If so, in what way?

Determining the status, challenges and end goal(s) of employer branding

- What are the most important goals that BOB wish to accomplish through its employer branding efforts?
- In your opinion, have BOB’s employer branding efforts been successful in bringing about these accomplishments? How are the results tracked and measured? (NOTE: The researcher will also work with the organization-designated representative to confirm the measures used and results tracked by the organization)
- What are the main barriers experienced by the organization in its employer branding efforts? How does the organization deal with these barriers?
- How has BOB linked its employer brand promises to the enhancement of employee performance?
  - How does BOB verify performance enhance for each of these?
- How has BOB linked its overall employer branding efforts to the enhancement of employee performance?
  - How does BOB verify performance enhance for each of these?
Table C5-3. Comparisons of the overall Organizational Citizenship Performance (OCP) as well as overall Task Performance (TP) mean scores between Employer Brand Promise (EBP) Expectation Fulfilment groups within each benefit-content oriented performance enhancement cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor Clusters</th>
<th>Overall OCP</th>
<th>Overall TP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Sustainability EBP 4, 7, 10, 16, 18</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness and Belonging EBP 5, 13</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities and Growth EBP 2, 3, 8, 14, 17, 20</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Stake and Influence EBP 1, 11, 12, 15</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance and Esteem EBP 6, 9, 19</td>
<td>No expectations and low fulfillment</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High fulfillment</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Table C5-4. Correlations between the expectation fulfillment of Employer Brand Promises (EBP) within each benefit-content oriented performance enhancement cluster and the demonstrated level of overall Organizational Citizenship Performance (OCP) as well as overall Task Performance (TP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Benefit Content Factor Clusters</th>
<th>Overall OCP</th>
<th>Overall TP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Sustainability</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: <strong>.196</strong></td>
<td><strong>.174</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 4, 7, 10, 16, 18</td>
<td>Significance, p-value: <strong>.001</strong></td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness and Belonging</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: <strong>.212</strong></td>
<td><strong>.149</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 5, 13</td>
<td>Significance, p-value: <strong>.000</strong></td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities and Growth</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: <strong>.379</strong></td>
<td><strong>.139</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 2, 3, 8, 14, 17, 20</td>
<td>Significance, p-value: <strong>.000</strong></td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal stake and Influence</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: <strong>.320</strong></td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 1, 11, 12, 15</td>
<td>Significance, p-value: <strong>.000</strong></td>
<td>.202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance and Esteem</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: <strong>.335</strong></td>
<td><strong>.128</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 6, 9, 19</td>
<td>Significance, p-value: <strong>.000</strong></td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
9. Table C5-5. Summary of Responses to the Question on Employees’ Employer Brand Promise Expectation Fulfillment

Survey Responses:
0 = You have no expectation for this promise
1 = BOB has not fulfilled your expectation at all
2 = BOB has partially but not adequately fulfilled your expectation
3 = BOB has adequately fulfilled your expectation
4 = BOB has more than adequately fulfilled your expectation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Responses</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>3 &amp; 4</th>
<th>χ²</th>
<th>Significance, p-value</th>
<th>Responses 3 &amp; 4 Separated</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>Brand Promises</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>150.38</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>130.34</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>114.38</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treatment of employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>115.34</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>105.62</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>98.24</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational dedication to technical excellence</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>97.22</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>91.22</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>91.22</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>86.06</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>81.50</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77.42</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65.18</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs (e.g. BOB U, coaching,</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>57.74</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentoring, buddy system, educational subsidy, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive compensation</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>57.68</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A work environment that allows for worklife balance</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>51.44</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>28.34</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>30.38</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>27.44</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table C5-6. Summary of Responses by Employee Group to the Question on Employees’ Employer Brand Promise Expectation Fulfillment

Survey Responses:

0 = You have no expectation for this promise
1 = BOB has not fulfilled your expectation at all
2 = BOB has partially but not adequately fulfilled your expectation
3 = BOB has adequately fulfilled your expectation
4 = BOB has more than adequately fulfilled your expectation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>231</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Responses</td>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>Confirmation of whether respondents hold status of Principal/Associate, Manager, both, or neither</th>
<th>(X^2)</th>
<th>Significance, p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal/Associate</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manager</strong></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of challenging work</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to employee health and safety</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be part of a successful and highly respected organization</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for career growth</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer nominated Principals and Associates System</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>95%</strong></td>
<td><strong>43%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to be a shareholder in a 100% employee-owned structure</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A supportive and caring work culture</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm organizational commitment to its pledge of honest, fair, and respectful treatment of employees</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to take on varied/diverse projects or work activities</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An organization that values employee input</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong organizational commitment to social responsibility and community engagement</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive compensation</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>63%</td>
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<td>Organizational support for team work and/or collaboration among colleagues</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive employee learning and development programs</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly flat organizational structure with low hierarchy</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational dedication to technical excellence</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedule or telecommuting option</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A work environment that allows for worklife balance</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for international assignments or employee exchanges</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support for risk-taking and innovation</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table H1-1. Pearson’s Correlation matrix – Employer Brand Promise (EBP) Expectation Fulfilment vs. Organizational Citizenship Performance Behaviours (OCP) and Task Performance Actions (TP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCP</th>
<th>EBP 1</th>
<th>EBP 2</th>
<th>EBP 3</th>
<th>EBP 4</th>
<th>EBP 5</th>
<th>EBP 6</th>
<th>EBP 7</th>
<th>EBP 8</th>
<th>EBP 9</th>
<th>EBP 10</th>
<th>EBP 11</th>
<th>EBP 12</th>
<th>EBP 13</th>
<th>EBP 14</th>
<th>EBP 15</th>
<th>EBP 16</th>
<th>EBP 17</th>
<th>EBP 18</th>
<th>EBP 19</th>
<th>EBP 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (HB)</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (CV)</td>
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<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 (CV)</td>
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<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.13</td>
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<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<td>0.22</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.16</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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<td>5 (OL)</td>
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<td>6 (II)</td>
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<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 (SD)</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.17</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
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<td>0.02</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
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<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
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<td>0.15</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.12</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 (HB)</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
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<td>0.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 (OL)</td>
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<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.33</td>
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<td>0.21</td>
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<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 (SD)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 (HB)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Abbreviations:**

- CV = Civic Virtue (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
- HB = Helping Behaviour (4 behaviours in OCP scale)
- II = Individual Initiative (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
- OC = Organizational Compliance (1 behaviours in OCP scale)
- OL = Organizational Loyalty (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
- SD = Self-Development (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
- SM = Sportsmanship (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
12. Table H2-1. Comparison between the mean scores of Employer Brand
Promise (EBP) Expectation Fulfilment groups for Employees’ Organizational
Citizenship Performance (OCP): Results of ANOVA and Scheffe Post-Hoc
test
Mean Scores of Organizational Citizenship Performance Behaviours

Variable

EPB 13

EBP 12

EBP 11

EBP 10

EBP 9

EBP 8

EBP 7

EBP 6

EBP 5

EBP 4

EBP 3

EBP 2

EBP 1

OCP #
1 (HB) 2 (CV) 3 (CV) 4 (OC)
and Type

5 (OL) 6 (II)

7 (SM)

8 (SD)

9 (II) 10 (HB) 11 (CV) 12 (II) 13 (SM) 14 (HB) 15 (OL)

16
17 (HB)
(SD)

NE

4.77

2.63

2.29

4.94

2.77*

4.2

4.14

4.2

4.31

3.89*

3.74

3.34

3.34

4.57

4.09

3.89

4.17

LF

4.76

3.71

2.33

4.29

3.29

4.35

4.19

3.67

4.57

3.86

3.24^

3.48

3.38

4.62

3.95

3.33

4.48

HF

4.7

3.23

3.05

4.74

3.77*

4.47

4.38

3.75

4.7

4.56* 4.16^

3.85

3.82

4.77

4.66

3.91

4.62

NE

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LF

4.58

3.17

2.48

4.81

2.79^ 4.04

3.85^

3.92

4.23^ 3.88^

3.77

3.65

3.4

4.77

3.9^

4.08

4.46

HF

4.74

3.2

2.99

4.71

3.78^ 4.51

4.43^

3.77

4.73^ 4.54^

4.1

3.79

3.79

4.73

4.67^

3.82

4.57

NE

5

2.57

2

4.57

2.57

4.57

3.86

3.14

4.57

4.57

3.43

3.29

3.43

4.86

3*

3.57

4.14

LF

4.56

3.24

2.45^

4.62

3.49

4.55

4.15

3.51

4.69

4.26

3.8

3.73

3.69

4.78

4.22

3.79

4.49

HF

4.78

3.19

3.15^

4.79

3.71

3.36

4.44

3.96

4.62

4.5

4.18

3.8

3.76

4.72

4.74*

3.91

4.59

NE

4.1

1.6 *

2.8

4.8

2.8

3.4

3.9

4.2

3.9

3.4

3.3

3.1

3.6

4.1

3.7

4.4

3.2&*

LF

4.61

3.07&

2.97

4.55

3.51

4.57&

4.3

3.36

4.72

4.41

3.85

3.76

3.85

4.76

4.45

3.58

4.49&

HF

4.79

3.32*

2.88

4.79

3.69

4.43

4.37

3.94

4.65

4.48

4.15

3.8

3.69

4.76

4.61

3.94

4.64*

NE

5.67

2.67

0.67

4

2.33

4.67

3.33

2.67

4.67

5.33

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2.33

3.67

6

2.67

3

4.67

LF

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3.35

2.53

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4.07

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3.88

3.82

4.54

4.14

3.93

4.61

&

&

HF

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3.7

4.77

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NE

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1.29

4.86

1.71*

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3

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5.14

LF

4.53

3.43

2.73

4.12^ 2.86^ 4.29

3.84^

3.84

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4.14

3.55^

3.8

3.67

4.35^ 3.75^

3.73

4.22

3.84*
4.87^
^

4.46

4.45^

3.79

4.7

4.49

4.19^

3.78

3.76

4.82^ 4.74^

3.92

4.61

HF

4.79

3.13

2.99

NE

5

2.83

3.17

4.83

2.83

4

3.5

3.83

5

3.67

4

3.67

3.67

4.83

3.67

4.5

3.67

LF

4.46^

3.17

3.68

4.49^

3.29

4.38

3.99^

3.77

4.38^

4.33

3.84

3.35^

3.59

4.62

4.23^

3.74

4.43

3.8

4.47

4.54^

3.81

4.77^

4.5

4.75

3.97^

3.8

4.79

4.72^

3.9

4.64

1.25*& 4.13

3.25*

2.75

4.13

3.88

2.88*

2.5

3.13

4.25

3.13*

2.75

3.75

3.93^

3.54

4.58

4.27

3.69^

3.67

3.64

4.57

3.61^

3.63

4.25

3.84

3.78

4.81

4.89*^ 3.98

4.68

HF 4.84^

3.21

3.01

4.85^

NE

4.5

1.88

1.5*

4.25

LF

4.52

3.28

2.18^

4.55
4.81

3.88*

4.71

2.4*

HF

4.79

3.21

3.19*
^

NE

4.29

2.21

2.07

LF

4.59

3.03

2.66

4.57

HF

4.78

3.3

3.02

4.78

NE

3.5

2

0

5.5

LF

4.68

3.5

HF

4.73

NE

4.25

3.07&

3^

4.36

3.92

4.68

4.5

4.20*
^

3.5*

2.71

3.9*

3.71

3.36

2.7*

3.29

4.14

3.93

4.1

3.47

4.55

4.45

3.7^

3.48

3.71

4.66

3.9^

3.96

4.72*

4.47

3.76

4.8

4.46 4.51*^
3.2*&
&

4.55

3.87*
4.47* 4.45*
^

3.95

4.43

4.76^ 3.91* 4.64*

2.5

2.5

2

4

4.5

3

4

4

4.5

1.5

2

4

2.55

4.05^ 2.64^ 4.73

4.09

3.14

4.82

4.68

3.45

3.64

4.14

4.73

3.77^

3.36

4.77

3.17

2.95

4.78^ 3.72^ 4.42

4.37

3.87

4.63

4.4

4.1

3.77

3.69

4.74

4.62*^ 3.92

4.53

1.25

0.75

2.5*

0.5*&

4

4.5

1.75*&

1.75

2.25

4.5

1.75*&

2.25

4

&

4

1

4.20^ 3.91*

2.71* 3.64*

0.75*& 3.75

LF

4.7

3.26

2.61

4.47

3.25

4.42

HF

4.73

3.21

3.01

4.81

3.76*

4.44 4.46*^ 3.91*

4.61

&

3.19

3.98^

&

3.60

4.68

4.37

3.88

3.7

4.64

4.44

4.13*

3.81

4.03

&

3.71

&

4.07

4.65

4.14^

3.82

4.4

3.67

4.76

4.69*^

3.9

4.6

NE

4.61

2.52

2.87

4.26

3.97

3.87

4.45

2.81*

3.39

4.52

4.06*

3.94

4.29

LF

4.6

3.16

2.53

4.51^ 3.08^ 4.37

4.19

3.57

4.51

4.17^ 3.78^ 3.82&

3.73

4.6

4.02^

3.56

4.37

HF

4.81

3.35

3.13

4.89^ 4.02^ 4.49

4.49

3.92

4.76

4.86^ 4.27^ 3.92*

3.79

4.87

4.94*^ 4.03

4.71

NE

4.5

2.25

0.5*

4

2

2.75

3.5

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4.5

5

3.25

3.75

4

5.25

2.75*

2.75

4

LF

4.49

2.98

2.57

4.47

3.13

4.34

4.04

3.38

4.68

4.28

3.66

3.53

3.66

4.64

3.91^

3.81

4.36

HF

4.77

3.25

3.01*

4.8

3.74

4.47

4.41

3.9

4.64

4.45

4.13

3.81

3.74

4.75

4.69*^ 3.89

4.6

302


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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EBP 16</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EBP 17</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EBP 18</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EBP 19</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EBP 20</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

* = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "High fulfillment"
^ = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "Low fulfillment" and "High fulfillment"
& = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "Low fulfillment"

Abbreviations:

CV = Civic Virtue (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
HB = Helping Behaviour (4 behaviours in OCP scale)
II = Individual Initiative (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
OC = Organizational Compliance (1 behaviours in OCP scale)
OL = Organizational Loyalty (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
SD = Self-Development (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
SM = Sportsmanship (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
### Table H2-2. Comparison between the mean scores of the LEAST influential Employer Brand Promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment category for employees’ Organizational Citizenship Performance (OCP): Results of ANOVA and Scheffe Post-Hoc test

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<td>OCP Type and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 1</td>
<td>NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 3</td>
<td>NE</td>
</tr>
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<td>LF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 10</td>
<td>NE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 13</td>
<td>NE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

* – significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "High fulfilment"  
^ – significant at the p≤0.05 level between "Low fulfilment" and "High fulfilment"  
& – significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "Low fulfilment"  
*** Only statistically significant results (p≤0.05 level) are shown in this table

**Abbreviations:**

CV = Civic Virtue (3 behaviours in OCP scale)  
HB = Helping Behaviour (4 behaviours in OCP scale)  
II = Individual Initiative (3 behaviours in OCP scale)  
OC = Organizational Compliance (1 behaviours in OCP scale)  
OL = Organizational Loyalty (2 behaviours in OCP scale)  
SD = Self-Development (2 behaviours in OCP scale)  
SM = Sportsmanship (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
## Table H2-3. Comparison between the mean scores of the MOST influential Employer Brand Promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment category for employees’ Organizational Citizenship Performance (OCP): Results of ANOVA and Scheffe Post-Hoc test

<table>
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<td>OCP # and Type</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 (CV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (CV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (OC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (OL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 (II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (SM)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8 (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 (II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 (HB)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

* = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "High fulfilment"
^ = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "Low fulfilment" and "High fulfilment"
& = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "Low fulfilment"
*** = Only statistically significant results (p≤0.05 level) are shown in this table

Abbreviations:

CV = Civic Virtue (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
HB = Helping Behaviour (4 behaviours in OCP scale)
II = Individual Initiative (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
OC = Organizational Compliance (1 behaviours in OCP scale)
OL = Organizational Loyalty (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
SD = Self-Development (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
SM = Sportsmanship (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
### Table H2-4. Comparison between the mean scores of the MODERATELY influential Employer Brand Promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment groups for employees’ Organizational Citizenship Performance (OCP): Results of ANOVA and Scheffe Post-Hoc test

<table>
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<th>Mean Scores of Organizational Citizenship Performance Behaviours***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1 (HB)</td>
<td>2 (CV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (CV)</td>
<td>4 (OC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 (OL)</td>
<td>6 (II)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (SM)</td>
<td>8 (SD)</td>
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<td>9 (II)</td>
<td>10 (HB)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 (CV)</td>
<td>12 (II)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 (SM)</td>
<td>14 (HB)</td>
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<td>15 (OL)</td>
<td>16 (SD)</td>
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<td>17 (HB)</td>
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<td>NE</td>
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<td>LF</td>
<td>4.58</td>
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<td>4.81</td>
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<td>4.86</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

* – significant at the p≤0.05 level between “No expectations” and “High fulfillment”

* – significant at the p≤0.05 level between “Low fulfillment” and “High fulfillment”

& – significant at the p≤0.05 level between “No expectations” and “Low fulfillment”

*** Only statistically significant results (p≤0.05 level) are shown in this table

Abbreviations:

- CV = Civic Virtue (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
- HB = Helping Behaviour (4 behaviours in OCP scale)
- II = Individual Initiative (3 behaviours in OCP scale)
- OC = Organizational Compliance (1 behaviour in OCP scale)
- OL = Organizational Loyalty (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
- SD = Self-Development (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
- SM = Sportsmanship (2 behaviours in OCP scale)
### Table H2-5. Comparison between the mean scores of Employer Brand Promise (EBP) expectation fulfilment groups for employees' Task Performance (TP): Results of ANOVA and Scheffe Post-Hoc test

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean Scores of Task Performance Actions</th>
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<td>TP #</td>
</tr>
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<td>NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 2</td>
<td>NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBP 3</td>
<td>NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 4</td>
<td>NE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HF</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBP 5</td>
<td>NE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>LF</td>
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Notes:
* – significant at the p≤0.05 level between “No expectations” and “High fulfillment”
^ – significant at the p≤0.05 level between “Low fulfillment” and “High fulfillment”
& – significant at the p≤0.05 level between “No expectations” and “Low fulfillment”

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17. Table H2-6. Stepwise multiple regression results for the most influential Employer Brand Promises (EBP): only significant results shown

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18. Table H2-7. Stepwise multiple regression results for the moderately influential Employer Brand Promises (EBP): only significant results shown

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<td>0.001</td>
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19. Table H3-1 Comparison between the Mean Scores of the High Fulfilment, Low Fulfilment, and No Expectation groups for employees’ Level of Concurrency for the Following Notions:

i. Their employment experience at the organization is both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).

ii. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).

iii. They would be happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).

iv. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>DDEE</th>
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<th>NFTL</th>
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<tr>
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Notes:

* = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "High fulfillment"
^ = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "Low fulfillment" and "High fulfillment"
& = significant at the p≤0.05 level between "No expectations" and "Low fulfillment"

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20. Table H3-2. Correlation between the Expectation Fulfillment of Individual Employer Brand Promise (EBP) Items and Employees’ Level of Concurrence for Perceiving That:

i. Their employment experience at the organization is both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).

ii. Their Organization is a Great Place to Work (GPTW).

iii. They are Happy to Spend the Rest of Their Career with the Organization (HSCO).

iv. They DO NOT Frequently Consider Leaving Their Employment at the Organization (NFTL).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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<th>HSCO</th>
<th>NFTL</th>
</tr>
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Notes:

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
21. Table H4-1. Comparison of Organizational Citizenship Performance (OCP) and Task Performance (TP) Between the Group that Conurs (CC) and the Group that Does Not Concur (DNC) with the Following Notions:

i. Their employment experience at the organization is both desirable and distinctive (DDEE).

ii. Their organization is a great place to work (GPTW).

iii. They would be happy to spend the rest of their career with the organization (HSCO).

iv. They DO NOT frequently think of leaving the employment at the organization (NFTL).

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<th>NFTL</th>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
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<td>4.19***</td>
<td>3.83</td>
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**Notes:**

* = significant at the p≤0.05 level
** = significant at the p≤0.01 level
*** = significant at the p≤0.001 level

**** Only OCP and TP with statistically significant results (p≤0.05 level) are shown in this table.