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Determinants of Internal Branding in the Telecommunications Industry: An Exploratory Sequential Approach

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This study aimed to explore the determinants of internal branding within the telecommunications sector, focusing on how Shared Culture and Policy (SCP) and Employee Brand Advocacy (EBA) influence internal branding effectiveness. It sought to deepen the understanding of internal branding dynamics and offer practical recommendations for enhancing brand reputation and employee satisfaction within the industry.

Methodology: The research employed an exploratory sequential mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative analyses. The study began with a qualitative phase that involved collecting data from various management levels within telecommunications firms to understand the manifestations of corporate brand acceptance and strategic management practices related to internal branding. This phase was followed by a quantitative analysis involving 456 respondents, aimed at measuring the levels of Employee Brand Advocacy and its impact on the effectiveness of internal branding strategies. Techniques such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were used to validate and interpret the findings.

Results: The qualitative analysis uncovered diverse dimensions of Shared Culture and Policy, highlighting the role of strategic management practices, communication strategies, and brand identity implementation within the organizational culture. The quantitative phase revealed significant levels of Employee Brand Advocacy and identified a robust internal brand promotion framework that included tailored training programs, strategic advocacy initiatives, and comprehensive internal communication channels. These elements collectively fostered a cohesive internal connection and instilled brand loyalty among employees.

Conclusion: The study concluded that both Shared Culture and Policy and Employee Brand Advocacy are critical determinants of internal branding effectiveness in the telecommunications industry. It highlighted the pivotal role of top management in driving these elements through well-crafted brand messages and consistent identity strategies. The findings suggest that integrating internal branding strategies with management practices enhances organizational culture, employee engagement, and overall brand reputation, contributing to the sector's resilience and competitive advantage.

Keywords: Internal Branding, Telecommunications Industry, Employee Brand Advocacy, Shared Culture and Policy, Exploratory Sequential Approach, Brand Management

INTRODUCTION

The telecommunications industry operated within a dynamic landscape shaped by rapid technological advancements, regulatory changes, and intensified competition. As the demand for faster and more reliable networks continued to grow, the industry significantly expanded its network capacity through the deployment of advanced fiber and wireless technologies. The Philippines, emerging as a significant telecommunications hub, reflected this industry's strategic importance in the region (Telecommunications Market Research Reports, 2023).



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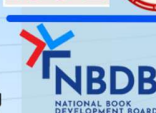
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In this highly competitive environment, the convergence of various communication technologies—such as landlines, smartphones, emails, chat groups, wireless and Bluetooth connections, and cable lines—became prevalent. This convergence, bolstered by the exponential growth of the Internet of Things (IoT), underscored the intensifying competitiveness among Telecommunication Companies (TelCos) striving for market dominance and consumer loyalty (Industry Reports on Telecommunications, 2022). As a result, TelCos engaged in aggressive marketing campaigns, advertisements, and promotions to secure favorable market positions.

Amidst this corporate brand war, a novel approach known as Internal Branding emerged. Internal Branding advocated for initiating corporate brand marketing efforts within organizations to achieve external success (Cheung et al., 2014; Hofer & Grohs, 2018). This strategy involved embedding the company's mission, vision, and values in its employees to ensure they delivered on the brand promise effectively (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). By focusing on internal stakeholders first, organizations could foster a strong internal culture that translated into a compelling external brand identity.

This study examined the impact of internal branding on organizational performance, specifically in the telecommunications industry. It focused on how leaders implemented their mission and vision through internal communication strategies, aiming to equip employees with the necessary knowledge and tools to meet and surpass client expectations. This, in turn, enhanced brand identity and service quality, ultimately aiding consumers in making informed decisions in a crowded market (Morhart et al., 2009; Aaker, 1996; Lee, 2009).

Internal branding strategies were designed to inspire employees to uphold the brand promise externally. While similar to internal marketing, it was essential to distinguish between the two, viewing internal marketing as a tool for internal branding (Vella et al., 2009). Understanding the brand's significance and its benefits to consumers was crucial for employees to deliver both tangible and intangible brand components effectively (King & Grace, 2008). This study aimed to bridge the gap between these two concepts and highlight the importance of a unified internal branding strategy.

As brands became the primary source of competitive advantage, internal branding gained prominence in brand research and business management (Sawhney, 2005; Davis, 2005). The original concept of competitive advantage, which primarily focused on products, was redefined with brands taking center stage. Strong brands were believed to have a significant impact not only on financial performance but also on customer-related market performance (Wood, 2000). Moreover, brand performance was found to positively affect financial outcomes (Wong & Merrilees, 2008), and customer retention played a crucial role in developing customer share (Verhoef, 2003).

In the context of the telecommunications industry, several challenges abounded, particularly concerning the nation's internet infrastructure. The Philippines was cited for having one of the slowest and most expensive internet services in Asia (Akamai, 2017). Despite efforts to expand network coverage, bureaucratic hurdles and monopolistic practices hindered progress (Avila, 2016; Jiao, 2016; Alvarez & Saldivar, 2015). This situation created a need for innovative strategies to improve service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Internal Branding became a critical topic in customer-centric industries. It emphasized inculcating an organization's foundational philosophies among its employees, thereby impacting their attitudes and behaviors positively (Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021; Henkel et al., 2009). According to this concept, the company brand should be embraced first by internal stakeholders before it could be effectively accepted by external stakeholders (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). This meant that the Vision, Mission, and Values of the company had to be internalized by the employees before they could impact customers. Internal branding was shown to have a positive impact on employee attitudes and behaviors that supported the brand (Henkel et al., 2009; Matanda & Ndubisi, 2013).

Papasolomou and Vrontis (2006) defined internal branding as the set of communications, training, and activities directed at a company's internal audiences to enhance their understanding of and commitment to the brand. These practices included internal control over the delivery of brand values, staffing decisions, and communicating the brand's values to employees (Aurand et al., 2005). Organizational commitment, as demonstrated by Hunt et al. (1985) and Meyer et al. (2002), was shown to decrease employees' intentions to leave and increase their motivation. Furthermore, employees' brand-congruent behavior was influenced by their brand knowledge (Löhrndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014).

While studies on internal branding in the telecommunications industry were conducted in countries such as India, Nigeria, and Malaysia (Binu, 2022; Abdghani, Adamu, & Rahman, 2022; Adamu et al., 2017), there was a notable lack of related research in the Philippines. This study sought to fill this gap by comprehensively identifying how internal branding manifested within organizations in the Philippines' telecommunications industry. The study focused on Globe, Smart, and other TelCos in the National Capital Region, providing valuable insights for business owners, researchers, students, telecommunication companies, and managers (Greve, 2014).



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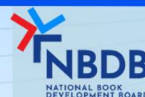
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Through an exploratory sequential approach, this research aimed to unravel the intricacies and implications of internal branding. By doing so, it contributed valuable insights to the field, enhancing our understanding of how internal branding strategies could be effectively implemented in the telecommunications sector. The findings of this study were expected to inform the development of more effective internal branding strategies, ultimately leading to improved organizational performance and customer satisfaction.

In summary, this study addressed the research gaps identified in recent literature by providing a comprehensive understanding of internal branding in the telecommunications industry, specifically in the Philippines. By examining how internal branding influenced organizational performance and employee behavior, this research aimed to contribute to the development of more effective internal branding strategies that could enhance brand identity and service quality in the highly competitive telecommunications market.

Objectives

This study explored how internal branding affected an organization's success in the Philippines' telecommunications industry. Specifically, it aimed to achieve the following:

- **Understand Employee Attachment to the Corporate Brand:** Investigated how employees and internal stakeholders demonstrated their attachment and loyalty to the corporate brand within telecommunications companies. This included assessing levels of engagement and advocacy among employees. *Q1: "How do employees or internal stakeholders show their attachment to the corporate brand? (Employee Attachment to Corporate Brand)"*
- **Evaluate Policies and Programs for Brand Promotion:** Examined the existing policies and programs designed to promote the corporate brand internally. This involved understanding the awareness, adherence, and effectiveness of these programs in reinforcing brand values among employees. *Q2: "What policies or programs exist to promote the corporate brand within the organization? (Policies and Programs for Brand Promotion)"*
- **Assess Top Management's Role in Brand Promotion:** Analyzed how top management contributed to the promotion of the corporate brand within the organization. This included evaluating the visibility and involvement of leadership in brand advocacy and the impact this had on employee perceptions and behaviors. *Q3: "How does top management show that the corporate brand is being promoted within the organization? (Top Management's Role in Brand Promotion)"*
- **Identify Manifestations of Corporate Brand Acceptance:** Determined the signs and indicators that the corporate brand was effectively accepted and embodied by employees. This objective sought to capture tangible manifestations of brand alignment, such as through employee behavior, language, and overall corporate culture. *Q4: "What signs manifest to show that the corporate brand is being accepted and lived by people within the organization? (Manifestation of Corporate Brand Acceptance)"*
- **Discover Determinants of Internal Branding:** Explored and identified significant factors that acted as determinants of successful internal branding within the telecommunications industry. This included leadership commitment, organizational culture, communication strategies, and other critical elements that influenced internal branding effectiveness. *Q5: "What significant factors can be identified as determinants of Internal Branding for the Telecommunications Industry? (Determinants of Internal Branding)"*

Through this thorough research, potential opportunities and limitations were identified, for which suggestions were made to enhance internal branding practices in the telecommunications industry.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method approach using an exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research incorporated both qualitative and quantitative techniques to achieve the study's objectives.

Initially, qualitative research was conducted, followed by quantitative research. This approach was particularly useful for uncovering underlying constructs or latent variables in qualitative data (Toyon, 2021). In the first stage, qualitative data were collected through one-on-one interviews and focus groups with telecommunications industry professionals. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed for thematic content, providing a foundation for the next phase. The second stage involved quantitative studies. Surveys were used to assess and delve deeper into the



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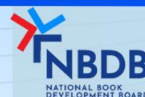
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themes or factors identified in the qualitative phase. The results of the statistical analysis, such as factor analysis, were interpreted to validate and further explore these dimensions (Li et al., 2015).

The sequential nature of this design allowed for a systematic progression from qualitative exploration to quantitative validation. The qualitative phase provided an in-depth understanding of internal branding determinants by uncovering real-world insights. These insights informed the development of the quantitative survey, enabling the exploration of broader trends and patterns across a larger sample. This methodological approach offered a holistic perspective on the determinants of internal branding within the telecommunications industry. It leveraged the strengths of qualitative inquiry, such as depth and contextual understanding, complemented by quantitative analysis to establish empirical support and generalizability. By integrating both methods, this research design aimed to offer a comprehensive understanding of internal branding dynamics, providing valuable insights for industry practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders.

The exploratory sequential design was well-suited for this research, particularly because the primary goal was to extract relevant factors or dimensions for internal branding from respondents' narratives in the qualitative phase. These themes were then quantitatively explored and validated through surveys among targeted participants in the telecommunications industry.

In summary, this design enabled a comprehensive investigation into the determinants of internal branding, starting from qualitative exploration to establish foundational insights, followed by quantitative analysis to validate and further understand these factors. This method was particularly effective for developing new research instruments or concepts and testing their applicability within a specific context (Toyon, 2021; Li et al., 2015).

Population and Sampling

This study focused on telecommunication companies in the Philippines, including major players like Globe Telecoms and Smart Communications, Inc., as well as various other entities such as Eastern Communications, Dito Telecommunity, Huawei Technologies, ATE Technologies Corporation, and Bell Telecommunications.

To understand internal branding determinants in the telecommunications industry comprehensively, a strategic sampling approach was used. In the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was employed to select participants. This method ensured the inclusion of 3 to 5 managerial-level participants directly engaged in internal branding initiatives within their telecom companies. These participants were chosen based on their roles in brand management to ensure the richness and depth of qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews.

For the quantitative phase, the sample size was 456, which exceeded the recommended minimum thresholds for factor analysis. Various scholars, such as Arrindell and van der Ende (1985), Velicer and Fava (1998), and MacCallum et al. (1999), have provided guidelines emphasizing the importance of adequate sample size for robust factor analysis. Studies have shown successful factor recovery with sample sizes as low as 100 or even 60 under specific conditions. Therefore, a sample size of 456 was considered substantial and reliable for this study. The chosen sample size aligned with practical studies, suggesting that sample sizes around 200 to 500 are generally considered good for factor analysis. This indicated that the sample size was well within the parameters of what is considered adequate in empirical research.

In summary, the sample size of 456 was more than sufficient for conducting a robust factor analysis, providing confidence in the reliability of the results. By adopting both qualitative and quantitative sampling methods, this study aimed to gather comprehensive insights from managerial perspectives and empirical data, enabling a holistic exploration of internal branding determinants in the dynamic telecommunications industry in the Philippines.

Research Instrument

This study employed a dual-phase methodology using an exploratory sequential approach to investigate internal branding determinants in the telecommunications industry in the Philippines.

Qualitative Phase:

The initial phase involved structured interviews to gather insights from telecommunications managers about internal branding challenges, strategies, and solutions. Data were collected through one-on-one interviews or focus group discussions, based on participant availability. These interviews provided rich, narrative-based insights into the practical application of internal branding within organizations.

Quantitative Phase:

Based on the qualitative findings, a survey questionnaire was developed for the quantitative phase. The questionnaire included items reflecting the themes identified during the interviews. Respondents, primarily managers



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or supervisors, rated these items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree"). This phase aimed to quantify the degree of agreement with the identified internal branding determinants and allowed for statistical analysis of their significance.

Survey Design:

The survey questions were derived from validated items in existing literature and tailored to the study's specific context. The Likert scale provided a straightforward way for respondents to express their opinions and experiences regarding internal branding strategies in the telecommunications sector. Thirty (30) questionnaires were distributed to collect the necessary data for analysis (refer to **Table 1** *Initial Codes to Final Themes*).

Table 1 *Initial Codes to Final Themes*

Initial Codes (<i>Unique Excerpts</i>)	Categories	Final Themes
Adoption of Corporate Culture <i>(Q1: My company enrolls us in self-enhancement seminars to promote the culture of the company to us.)</i> Embracing Company Values <i>(Q2: I wear paraphernalia(s) provided by the company to be identified as working for that brand or organization.)</i> Dress Code and Behavior Alignment <i>(Q3: I adopted the culture of the company in terms of how they dress, how they behave inside and outside of the company, and how they present themselves to other people.)</i> Employee Engagement <i>(Q5: I am engaged with the game plan of the company.)</i> Active Engagement in Company Initiatives <i>(Q6: I demonstrate a strong attachment to the corporate brand which requires active engagement and advocacy.)</i>	Employee Engagement and Behavior	Internal
Using Company Paraphernalia <i>(Q4: We are mandated to wear corporate clothes the way my company wants to be recognized by the other brand.)</i> Wearing Branded Clothing <i>(Q7: I wear clothes with the printed logo of our brand because I'm proud that I am part of the company.)</i> Using Brand Language and Messaging <i>(Q10: I use the company's brand language and messaging to reinforce the brand's identity and values.)</i> Demonstrating Loyalty to the Brand <i>(Q30: I can demonstrate my commitment to the brand by participating in business events and using the company's products or services.)</i>	Brand Advocacy	Internal
Brand Training and Seminars <i>(Q14: I attended company seminars to help me understand the importance of a brand and how I contribute to promoting it.)</i> Employee Advocacy Programs <i>(Q15: In my company, we have an employee advocacy program to make it easy for us to share content and track the impact of our efforts.)</i>	Training and Education	Internal



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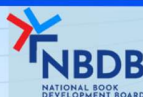
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<p>Employee Brand Training (Q16: The company develops a set of brand guidelines that outline the visual and messaging elements of the brand including the company's logo, colors, font, tone of voice, and other key elements to promote the corporate brand internally.)</p> <p>Understanding Brand Importance (Q21: Our company needs to ensure that the company's brand identity is properly communicated, this includes the company logo, websites, social media presence, and other visual elements that help to create a distinctive brand identity.)</p>	Brand Identity Communication	External
<p>Brand Guidelines and Consistency (Q17: Guidelines from the company will help me to ensure my consistency in the brand's presentation across all internal and external communication channels.)</p> <p>Internal Communication (Q18: In our company, employees are proud of the brand they work for and display it in their conversations and interactions.)</p> <p>Reflecting Company Values (Q19: Company's mission, vision, and culture are consistently being talked about and practiced inside and outside the organization.)</p> <p>Top Management Communication (Q20: The top managers in our organization created a strong consistent message that is communicated both internally and externally.)</p>	Communication and Consistency	External
<p>Impact on Customer Experience (Q11: I can share feedback and suggestions with the company's leadership team and help them improve the brand's product, services, and overall customer experience.)</p> <p>Employee Morale and Pride (Q24: I am more engaged in my work, and I feel a sense of pride in working for our company and I am more motivated to contribute to its success.)</p> <p>Sense of Community and Shared Purpose (Q25: Employees feel a sense of community and shared purpose every time our corporate brand is promoted effectively.)</p> <p>Positive Working Environment (Q26: Promoting our corporate brand leads to a stronger relationship between colleagues, increased collaboration, and a more positive working environment.)</p>	Impact on Morale and Community	External
<p>Participation in Company Events (Q9: We participate in the company's sponsored events, volunteer programs, or other initiatives that promote the brand's values and mission.)</p>	Company Events and Participation	Internal
<p>Mission, Vision, and Culture (Q12: My company is very strict in the implementation of its vision, mission, and values.)</p> <p>Top Management Involvement</p>	Management and Strategy	External



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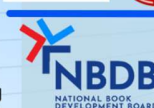
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<p>(Q22: Top management communicates the company's brand strategy to us including the brand's vision, values, and goals.)</p> <p>Communication of Brand Strategy</p> <p>(Q23: Top management helps us understand the importance of the brand and how I contribute to the overall success of the company.)</p>		
<p>Brand Performance Metrics</p> <p>(Q27: Key brand performance metrics help me to ensure that brand promotion efforts are effective and that brands are resonating with us as an employee.)</p> <p>Employee Engagement Metrics</p> <p>(Q28: In my company, top management tracks key brand performance metrics such as brand awareness, brand sentiments, and employee engagement with the brand.)</p>	Measurement and Metrics	External
<p>Practicing Culture</p> <p>(Q13: We practice culture inside the organization to give a better service to our customers.)</p> <p>Communicating Brand Identity</p> <p>(Q29: Our brand is being effectively promoted inside our organization by consistent messaging and visual identity across internal communication channels such as marketing materials and personal social media accounts.)</p>	Training and Communication	External
<p>Branding on Social Media</p> <p>(Q8: I show my attachment to the corporate brand by promoting the company's products and services on social media.)</p>	Brand Promotion	Internal

Research Procedure

The research procedure for this exploratory sequential study on internal branding within the telecommunications industry followed a systematic and rigorous approach to data collection. Before data collection commenced, formal permission was solicited from the identified telecommunications companies through a letter outlining the purpose, objectives, and ethical considerations of the research. This proactive step was crucial for obtaining authorization and cooperation from these companies to engage their managerial personnel as potential participants in the study.

Upon securing the requisite approvals, a pilot testing phase was conducted involving a cohort of fifteen (15) respondents. The primary objective of this pilot test was to assess the clarity, comprehensibility, and feasibility of the survey questionnaire. This phase aimed to identify and rectify any ambiguities, discrepancies, or potential challenges related to the questionnaire structure, ensuring that it was easily comprehensible and user-friendly for the target participants. Insights garnered from the pilot testing phase informed necessary modifications or refinements to enhance the questionnaire's efficacy and validity.

Subsequently, the finalized survey questionnaire was disseminated using an online platform such as Google Forms to ensure ease of access and convenience for the intended participants, primarily managers or supervisors from the identified telecommunications companies. Before administering the survey, clear and detailed instructions were provided to elucidate the purpose, significance, and instructions for completing the questionnaire. Participants were briefed comprehensively on the nature of the study, the specific objectives of the questionnaire, and the importance of their honest and accurate responses. This proactive communication strategy aimed to maximize participant engagement and ensure a coherent understanding of the task, facilitating a more meaningful and reliable collection of data.

The responses gathered through the survey questionnaire formed the fundamental dataset for subsequent data analysis. The utilization of the online survey method proved advantageous due to its efficiency, accessibility, and the ease with which participants could respond, providing a streamlined approach to data collection within the telecommunications industry.



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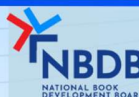
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Data Analysis

The data analysis was divided into two phases:

Qualitative Data Analysis:

The qualitative phase involved analyzing data from interviews and focus group discussions with telecommunications managers. Verbatim transcripts of these interactions served as the primary source of qualitative data. Two methodologies were employed: content analysis and narrative analysis.

Content Analysis: This method involved systematically examining the transcripts for recurring themes and patterns (Mayring, 2015). The goal was to identify key ideas, understand organizational objectives, recognize biases, and uncover differences in communication depending on context.

Narrative Analysis: This approach focused on understanding how participants constructed their own stories and narratives (Nie, 2017). Researchers analyzed the structure of these stories to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences and perceptions. Accurate transcriptions, including natural pauses and off-the-cuff comments, were essential for this analysis.

The qualitative phase generated unique statements that served as indicators or Likert scale items for the subsequent survey design.

Quantitative Data Analysis:

The quantitative phase involved analyzing survey data gathered through questionnaires based on the qualitative findings. Factor analysis was the primary statistical technique used to identify underlying patterns, dimensions, and relationships between variables.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA): EFA was used to uncover the underlying structure of the survey items, reducing them to a smaller number of unobserved variables called factors. This technique helped identify patterns in the data without predefined hypotheses (Kline, 2014).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA): CFA was employed to test the factor structure identified by EFA. This method assessed whether the observed variables aligned with the expected structure based on theoretical assumptions or prior research. CFA validated the factor structure by exploring associations between observed and latent factors, bridging the gap between theory and observation.

In summary, this study used qualitative methods to explore internal branding determinants and quantitative methods to validate and quantify these findings. This comprehensive approach provided robust insights into internal branding within the telecommunications industry in the Philippines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study determined significant factors as determinants of Internal Branding for the Telecommunications Industry. The objective stated at the beginning of this paper, to examine determinants of Internal Branding in the Telecommunications Industry using an exploratory sequential approach, was achieved.

On Q1: "How do employees or internal stakeholders show their attachment to the corporate brand?" (Employee Attachment to Corporate Brand) - The research revealed that employees and internal stakeholders exhibited strong attachment to the corporate brand by actively advocating on social media and public forums, participating in company events, incorporating brand language in communication, providing feedback to enhance products and services, expressing loyalty through attitudes and behaviors, promoting the company's message across various media outlets, contributing expertise to brand building, and advocating for the company within loyal communities through community involvement initiatives. These activities collectively reflected a robust commitment to the organization.



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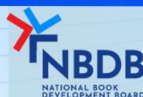
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On Q2: "What policies or programs exist in relation to promoting the corporate brand inside the organization?" (Policies and Programs for Brand Promotion) - The research underscored the pivotal role of a well-structured internal brand promotion framework. This encompassed multifaceted elements including meticulous brand guidelines, comprehensive training programs tailored to instill brand values, strategic advocacy initiatives fostering employee engagement, recognition schemes to acknowledge brand ambassadors, establishment of dedicated internal communication channels, consistent awareness campaigns spanning various platforms, and substantial investment in marketing resources. These concerted efforts significantly fostered a cohesive internal connection and instilled a sense of brand loyalty among the workforce.

On Q3: "How can the top management show that the corporate brand is being promoted within the organization?" (Top Management's Role in Brand Promotion) - The study emphasized the pivotal role of top management in promoting the corporate brand within the organization. Actions taken by senior leadership included crafting compelling brand messages, ensuring brand identity consistency, conducting employee training, setting an example through personal commitment to the brand, effectively communicating brand strategy, allocating resources for brand promotion, measuring brand performance metrics, and celebrating brand successes. These actions not only reinforced the corporate brand internally but also contributed to creating a positive work environment and enhancing the company's overall reputation.

On Q4: "What signs can manifest to show that the corporate brand is being accepted or lived by people inside the organization?" (Manifestation of Corporate Brand Acceptance) - Signs indicating the acceptance and embodiment of the corporate brand by individuals within the organization included the consistent use of brand messaging in communication, adherence to brand guidelines in both internal and external communications, active brand advocacy by employees promoting products and services, alignment with company values fostering a sense of community, positive brand sentiments reflected in attitudes and interactions, and observable behaviors such as how employees communicated special offers, promotions, and their attire displaying the brand logo. Collectively, these demonstrated a living commitment to the corporate brand within the organizational culture.

On Q5: "Are there significant factors that can be generated as determinants of Internal Branding for the Telecommunications Industry?" (Factors as Determinants of Internal Brand) - The research successfully identified and delineated two paramount factors that distinctly determine Internal Branding within the Telecommunications Industry. The first factor, Shared Culture and Policy, was an external influencer, while the second factor, Employee Brand Advocacy, pertained to internal dynamics. These factors collectively defined the landscape of Internal Branding within the telecommunications sector, delineating their critical roles in shaping and solidifying the internal brand identity and culture within these organizations.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data was gathered from 456 respondents. Following an exhaustive analysis of the gathered data, the study yielded the following findings:

Mixed-Method / Exploratory Sequential Approach:

- **Qualitative:** The research strategy intertwined qualitative and quantitative methodologies through an exploratory sequential design, starting with qualitative inquiry followed by quantitative investigation. The initial phase involved collecting and analyzing qualitative data through one-on-one interviews or focus groups. These interviews were meticulously transcribed and evaluated for qualitative essence, forming the basis for subsequent quantitative studies.
- **Quantitative:** The subsequent quantitative phase involved deploying survey methodologies to quantitatively explore and validate the identified themes or factors from the qualitative phase. This quantitative effort focused on scrutinizing and substantiating the emergent dimensions or factors related to internal branding within the telecommunications sector. The sample consisted of 456 managers or supervisors from various telecommunications companies, each with at least three years of industry experience.



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Qualitative:

- **One-on-One Interviews or Focus Group Discussions:** The initial qualitative phase involved conducting one-on-one interviews or focus group discussions to gather valuable information. These interviews were meticulously transcribed and analyzed to extract qualitative content. Forty distinct and unique statements emerged from these interviews.
- **Categorization - Unique Excerpts and Initial Coding:** The 40 unique statements were organized into distinct categories or thematic groups. This process aimed to systematically arrange these statements based on shared themes or recurring patterns, reducing the number of unique statements from 40 to 30 excerpts.
- **Exploratory Sequential Approach:** The study advanced towards a quantitative approach by employing a survey questionnaire methodology, constructed based on insights from the qualitative data. The quantitative phase aimed to measure the level of alignment or consensus among respondents regarding the identified determinants of internal branding. Thirty questionnaires were administered, and responses were collected using a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Continuing Content Analysis:** This phase led to the development of Initial Codes, Categories, and Final Themes columns, grouping codes according to their shared objectives. The analysis identified six internal categories: Employee Engagement and Behavior, Training and Education, Communication and Consistency, Management and Strategy, Measurement and Metrics, and Training and Communication. Four external themes were also identified: Brand Advocacy, Impact on Morale and Community, Business Events and Participation, and External Brand Promotion.

Quantitative:

- **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:** This statistical method evaluated the interrelationship among observed variables, indicating substantial correlations among the variables under analysis and supporting the suitability of the dataset for factor analysis.
- **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure:** The overall KMO value of 0.959 signified excellent suitability for factor analysis, indicating strong correlations among variables.
- **Factor Statistics:** SS Loadings and Cumulative % indicated that two factors explained the variance within the original variables, confirming the appropriateness of using two factors in this study.
- **Eigenvalues:** The analysis identified two significant factors with Eigenvalues greater than 1, confirming the suitability of retaining two factors for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).
- **Exploratory Factor Analysis:** This method identified underlying factors from a cluster of variables. The dataset was refined to 19 indicators, retaining only those with loadings above 0.32 and removing indicators associated with more than one factor.
- **Model Fit Measures:** These provided insights into how well the model aligned with the actual data, with moderate to good fit indicated by RMSEA, TLI, BIC, and Chi-Square values.
- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis:** This statistical technique confirmed the proposed structure of relationships between observed variables and their latent constructs, validating the derived themes or factors from the EFA.
- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis with Discriminant Validity:** The analysis confirmed discriminant validity, indicating that the constructs were distinct from each other.
- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis with Reliability Test:** The validated constructs significantly surpassed thresholds for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, confirming their reliability.

The comprehensive qualitative and quantitative analyses successfully addressed research question number five, establishing determinants of Internal Branding within the Telecommunications Industry.



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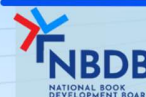
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Conclusion

1. Employee and Internal Stakeholder Commitment

The elaborate spectrum of behaviors, engagements, and contributions displayed by employees and internal stakeholders toward the corporate brand reflected their active participation and advocacy. This signified a deep-rooted attachment and commitment to the organization. Employees exhibited their strong allegiance through various activities, including advocating for the brand on social platforms and public forums, participating enthusiastically in company events, integrating brand language into their communication, and contributing their expertise to fortify brand building. Their efforts in providing feedback to enhance products and services, expressing loyalty through attitudes and behaviors, and perpetuating the company's message across diverse media outlets further amplified their commitment and contribution to the organization's success.

This robust and multifaceted commitment did not operate in isolation but interwove with the organizational fabric, profoundly influencing the company's standing in the public domain. The cumulative effect of such commitment radiated outward, significantly bolstering the company's positive image in the eyes of the public. Additionally, this level of dedication fostered a profound sense of community and pride among employees. It cultivated an organizational culture where employees felt connected, valued, and proud to be associated with the company, which had far-reaching implications.

In essence, the comprehensive manifestations of employee and internal stakeholder commitment to the corporate brand underscored not only their active participation but also their emotional investment and dedication to the organization's success. This allegiance, when translated into action, profoundly impacted the company's public image, internal culture, and overall resilience, positioning the organization favorably in the competitive landscape of the telecommunications industry.

2. Comprehensive Approach to Internal Brand Promotion

The comprehensive approach adopted by the company in internal brand promotion within the telecommunications industry served as a cornerstone in fostering a strong and enduring connection between the corporate brand and its employees. This multifaceted strategy encompassed a wide array of initiatives, ranging from the formulation and implementation of precise brand guidelines to the facilitation of extensive training programs tailored to instill brand ethos and values among employees.

The foundational aspect of this approach lay in the meticulous development and dissemination of brand guidelines. These guidelines defined the visual and verbal aspects of the brand and established the ethos, values, and mission that resonated throughout the organization. By providing a clear roadmap for employees to understand and align with the brand's identity, these guidelines served as a vital tool in unifying the organizational narrative and fostering a cohesive brand culture.

In parallel, the company's commitment to extensive training initiatives significantly contributed to reinforcing this brand culture. These training programs were thoughtfully designed to immerse employees in the brand's essence, ensuring that every individual understood their role as brand ambassadors. The training sessions aimed to inculcate a deep understanding of the brand's core values and its significance in shaping both internal and external perceptions. Furthermore, the implementation of advocacy programs and recognition initiatives emerged as a pivotal element in this holistic approach. These programs incentivized employees to actively participate in brand advocacy and acknowledged and rewarded their contributions. By recognizing and celebrating employees who embodied the brand's values and actively promoted its message, the company created a culture of appreciation and motivated others to follow suit.

The establishment of dedicated communication channels played a crucial role in maintaining a consistent and transparent flow of information related to the brand. These channels provided employees with platforms to engage, share insights, and align their efforts with the overarching brand strategy. This open communication fostered a sense of inclusivity and involvement, encouraging employees to actively contribute to brand initiatives.

The continuous awareness efforts further reinforced the brand's presence within the organization. These efforts, whether through periodic workshops, seminars, or internal campaigns, served as timely reminders of the brand's significance. They played a pivotal role in ensuring that the brand remained at the forefront of employees' minds, encouraging a sustained commitment and dedication to the brand's ideals.

Collectively, these initiatives contributed to the establishment of a robust internal connection and loyalty among employees. The cohesive integration of brand guidelines, training programs, advocacy initiatives, communication channels, awareness efforts, and resource allocation formed the bedrock of a unified brand culture.



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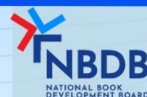
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This culture, built on a shared understanding of brand values and objectives, strengthened internal cohesion and amplified the brand's authenticity and resonance in the external landscape of the telecommunications industry.

3. Top Management's Role in Brand Promotion

In the contemporary landscape of the telecommunications industry, the role of top management in fostering a resilient and vibrant internal brand ecosystem could not be overstated. The culmination of various initiatives and strategies executed by top-level leadership underscored the criticality of their involvement in nurturing and fortifying the corporate brand within the organizational fabric. This comprehensive involvement encompassed multifaceted efforts aimed at solidifying the brand's presence, ensuring consistency, and instilling a sense of purpose among employees.

A fundamental component of top management's commitment to fortifying the corporate brand lay in the artful crafting of a compelling brand message. This message, carefully curated to encapsulate the brand's essence, values, and aspirations, served as the cornerstone for internal alignment and external communication. By articulating a clear and resonant message, top management laid the groundwork for a unified understanding of the brand's identity and aspirations among all stakeholders within the organization.

Consistency in brand identity emerged as another pivotal aspect of top management's initiatives. By ensuring consistency across various touchpoints, from internal communications to external representations, top-level leadership fostered a cohesive and uniform brand image. This concerted effort toward consistency helped solidify the brand's identity, reinforcing its recognition and credibility both within and outside the organization.

Conducting comprehensive employee training sessions stood as a testament to top management's dedication to fostering a brand-centric culture. These training sessions, meticulously designed and executed, served as vehicles to imbue employees with a profound understanding of the brand's ethos and values. They equipped employees with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively embody the brand's essence, aligning their actions and behaviors with the overarching brand strategy.

Leading by example was a defining characteristic of effective leadership in the realm of internal branding. When top management actively exemplified and upheld the brand's values and commitments, they set a precedent for the entire organization to follow suit. Their embodiment of the brand's principles not only reinforced the brand culture but also inspired employees to emulate these values, thereby creating a ripple effect that permeated the organizational culture.

Investment in brand promotion initiatives and the diligent measurement of performance metrics further exemplified top management's commitment to brand fortification. By allocating resources towards brand promotion and meticulously evaluating performance metrics, leaders demonstrated their dedication to nurturing and evolving the brand. These actions not only ensured the brand's visibility but also enabled continuous improvement, adapting strategies to align with the evolving landscape.

Celebrating brand success and milestones served as a powerful motivational tool within the organization. When top management acknowledged and celebrated the achievements linked to the brand, it reinforced the positive aspects of the brand culture. These celebrations acknowledged individual and collective efforts and served as a testament to the brand's resilience and success, motivating employees to continue their dedication to the brand's cause.

In summation, when top management diligently undertook these initiatives, they forged a robust internal brand ecosystem that transcended mere marketing or communication strategies. Their proactive involvement in crafting a compelling message, ensuring consistency, conducting training, leading by example, communicating strategy, investing in promotion, measuring performance, and celebrating success contributed to a positive work environment. This environment not only fortified the corporate brand within the organization but also enhanced the company's overall reputation, fostering sustained success and resilience within the dynamic telecommunications industry.

4. Insights into Determinants of Internal Branding

The comprehensive analysis conducted throughout this study offered valuable insights into the determinants of internal branding within the dynamic landscape of the telecommunications industry. The convergence of various indicators and behaviors observed among employees underscored a profound and multifaceted commitment to the corporate brand within the organizational culture.

One of the pivotal findings highlighted in this study revolved around the consistent use of brand messaging across various touchpoints within the organization. The pervasive presence of brand messaging in internal communications, coupled with its seamless integration into everyday conversations, reflected a strong alignment with



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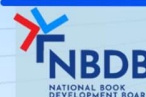
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the brand's narrative. This consistency in messaging served as a cohesive force, unifying employees under a shared understanding of the brand's essence and values.

Brand advocacy emerged as another influential determinant encapsulating the employees' proactive involvement in promoting the brand. The active participation of employees in advocating for the brand's products, services, and values amplified the brand's visibility and credibility. This advocacy extended the brand's reach and signified a genuine belief and loyalty to the brand's offerings, fostering a sense of ownership among employees.

The alignment with company values represented a cornerstone of internal branding determinants identified in this study. The study underscored the significance of employees' alignment with the organization's values as a reflection of their commitment to the brand's principles. This alignment cultivated a sense of belonging and community among employees, fostering a cohesive brand culture deeply embedded within the organizational fabric.

Positive sentiments expressed by employees towards the brand signified an emotional connection and satisfaction with the organization. These sentiments, whether conveyed in attitudes, interactions, or feedback, reflected the employees' belief in the brand's mission and contributed to a positive brand perception within the internal environment.

5. Key Determinants of Internal Branding

The culmination of this comprehensive exploration into the determinants of Internal Branding within the Telecommunications Industry illuminated two pivotal factors that significantly influenced the establishment and sustenance of brand identity and commitment within organizations. These factors, Shared Culture and Policy and Employee Brand Advocacy, represented distinct yet interwoven elements that played instrumental roles in shaping the internal brand landscape.

- **Shared Culture and Policy (SCP) – External Factor:** This major factor emerged as a cornerstone external contributor to Internal Branding in the telecommunications sector. It signified the amalgamation of organizational culture and policies that resonated with the brand's ethos and values. It encapsulated the shared beliefs, norms, and principles that defined the organizational culture and dictated how the brand was perceived and embraced internally. Shared Culture and Policy served as the backbone of the brand's identity within the organization, fostering a unified approach and a sense of community among employees.
- **Employee Brand Advocacy (EBA) – Internal Factor:** This vital internal factor underscored the proactive engagement and endorsement exhibited by employees towards the corporate brand. It encapsulated a spectrum of behaviors, from active promotion and advocacy for the brand's products and services to embodying the brand's values and ethos in daily interactions. Employee Brand Advocacy epitomized the employees' intrinsic belief and dedication to the brand, transforming them into genuine brand ambassadors. Their advocacy extended beyond mere adherence to brand guidelines; it represented a heartfelt commitment and loyalty that resonated with colleagues and stakeholders alike, amplifying the brand's impact and influence.

The dichotomy between Shared Culture and Policy as an external factor and Employee Brand Advocacy as an internal factor showcased the intricate interplay between organizational structures and employee engagement in fostering a robust internal brand environment. While Shared Culture and Policy served as the bedrock, delineating the organizational ethos and values, Employee Brand Advocacy breathed life into these principles, manifesting them through employee actions, interactions, and commitment.

The study's findings asserted the fundamental role of Shared Culture and Policy in providing a cohesive framework, guiding employees towards embracing the brand's identity. Simultaneously, the significance of Employee Brand Advocacy could not be understated, as it represented the heartbeat of internal brand commitment, fueled by employees' genuine belief and active participation in propagating the brand's essence.

In conclusion, the identification and examination of these two pivotal factors, Shared Culture and Policy and Employee Brand Advocacy, elucidated the intricate web of determinants influencing Internal Branding within the Telecommunications Industry. This comprehensive understanding underscored the need for organizations to nurture a cohesive culture aligned with brand values and empower employees to become enthusiastic advocates. By intertwining these factors harmoniously, organizations could create a dynamic internal brand environment, fostering a strong sense of unity, commitment, and brand pride among employees. Ultimately, these factors laid the foundation for building a resilient and impactful brand within the competitive telecommunications landscape.



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Recommendations

1. Sustained Focus on Internal Branding Strategies

The multifaceted and profound expressions of employee and internal stakeholder commitment unveiled through this research underscored the imperative for sustained focus on internal branding strategies within the telecommunications industry. The study's findings resonated with a call to action for industry practitioners to harness the potency of active advocacy, participation in company events, integration of brand language in communication, and collaborative contributions to brand building. By strategically aligning these diverse manifestations of brand commitment, practitioners could nurture a vibrant internal brand environment, fostering unity, loyalty, and a shared sense of purpose among employees.

Future research endeavors should delve deeper into the nuanced impact of these multifarious manifestations of brand commitment on organizational success and resilience within the telecommunications landscape. Researchers could explore the quantifiable impact of active advocacy, event participation, and brand integration on key performance indicators such as employee satisfaction, brand loyalty, and overall company performance. By elucidating the correlation between these internal branding strategies and organizational outcomes, future studies could offer empirical evidence to fortify the significance of robust internal branding practices in enhancing company performance and longevity.

2. Holistic Approach to Internal Brand Promotion

The success witnessed in the implementation of internal branding strategies within the telecommunications industry served as a testament to the efficacy of a holistic approach encompassing brand guidelines, training, advocacy programs, recognition initiatives, dedicated communication channels, ongoing awareness efforts, and substantial marketing resources. These strategies collectively underpinned the need for industry practitioners to adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach towards internal brand promotion. However, amidst these successes, the imperative for continuous evaluation and measurement of the long-term impacts of these strategies on employee engagement and organizational performance emerged as a crucial recommendation for future research.

Future investigations should aim to delve deeper into assessing the sustained effects and long-term outcomes of robust internal branding initiatives within the telecommunications sector. Empirical studies focusing on the longitudinal impact of these strategies on various facets such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, retention rates, and overall organizational performance would provide invaluable insights. Quantitative analyses probing into the correlations between sustained internal branding efforts and key performance indicators could unravel the depth and scope of impact these strategies wield on the company's bottom line.

Integrating these multifaceted aspects of internal branding into the educational curriculum, universities and educational institutions could bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Such enhancements would better prepare students for the intricacies of the telecommunications industry, enabling them to navigate the challenges of cultivating a positive internal brand environment and fostering a culture of commitment and loyalty among employees.

3. Top Management's Role in Internal Branding

The meticulous and dedicated efforts exerted by top management in shaping and fortifying the internal corporate brand within the telecommunications industry reflected a profound commitment towards cultivating a positive work environment and reinforcing the company's overall reputation. The multifaceted initiatives undertaken, including crafting a compelling brand message, ensuring consistency in brand identity, organizing employee training, leading by example in demonstrating brand commitment, effectively communicating brand strategy, allocating resources for brand promotion, monitoring performance metrics, and acknowledging successes, collectively contributed to nurturing a



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robust internal brand environment. These initiatives, while demonstrating their efficacy, raised the need for continued research to quantify and ascertain the specific impact of these endeavors on enhancing organizational reputation and bolstering employee satisfaction.

Future research endeavors should focus on meticulously quantifying the specific impact of these multifaceted initiatives undertaken by top management within the telecommunications sector. Empirical studies evaluating the direct correlations between these initiatives and their influence on organizational reputation, employee satisfaction, retention rates, and overall employee morale are crucial. Quantitative analyses that delve into measuring the precise contribution of these efforts towards enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction would provide invaluable insights into the strategic importance of internal branding initiatives.

Furthermore, the findings highlighted in this study underscored the criticality of integrating comprehensive internal branding concepts into management and leadership curricula. The dynamic nature of the telecommunications industry necessitated a thorough understanding of internal branding strategies among future professionals, especially those in managerial and leadership roles. Enhancing management and leadership curricula to incorporate case studies, practical applications, and theoretical underpinnings of successful internal branding strategies would equip future leaders with the requisite knowledge and competencies to effectively manage and nurture internal brand environments within the dynamic realm of the telecommunications sector.

4. Prioritizing Fundamental Components of Internal Branding

The discernment of consistent brand messaging, adherence to guidelines, brand advocacy, alignment with company values, positive sentiments, and observable behaviors as fundamental components within the telecommunications industry underscored the significance of prioritizing these elements within internal branding strategies. This understanding illuminated the importance of emphasizing these specific factors as key pillars in shaping an organization's internal branding initiatives.

Future research initiatives should aim to delve deeper into exploring the intricate interactions and the distinct impact of each identified factor on organizational culture and effectiveness within the telecommunications sector. A comprehensive investigation into the nuanced relationships between these factors and their influences on organizational dynamics, employee engagement, and brand alignment could offer invaluable insights into crafting more targeted and effective internal branding strategies. Exploring the subtle interplay among these factors could unveil how they collectively contributed to shaping a cohesive and resonant organizational culture and determine their efficacy in enhancing organizational performance and resilience.

5. Fostering a Supportive Organizational Culture and Promoting Employee Advocacy

The discernment of Shared Culture and Policy as an external factor and Employee Brand Advocacy as a pivotal internal factor within the telecommunications industry signified the imperative for industry practitioners to concentrate on fostering a supportive organizational culture and promoting employee advocacy to fortify internal branding strategies. The identification of these determinants as critical influencers of internal branding success highlighted the need for practitioners to proactively integrate these elements into their organizational frameworks.

To further enhance understanding, future research endeavors should delve deeper into exploring the intricate interplay between these determinants and their specific impacts on the efficacy of internal branding strategies within the telecommunications industry. An in-depth exploration could elucidate the nuanced dynamics between Shared Culture and Policy and its influence on fostering a supportive and cohesive work environment, while also examining the intricate mechanisms of Employee Brand Advocacy and its role in augmenting employee commitment and brand loyalty.



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Additionally, integrating these determinants into management and communication courses would substantially enrich the academic curriculum, equipping students with pertinent insights and practical knowledge regarding effective internal branding strategies in the ever-evolving landscape of the telecommunications sector. Infusing these determinants into academic syllabi would not only serve to broaden students' comprehension but also provide them with real-world examples and case studies, facilitating a deeper understanding of how these determinants significantly impact organizational success and brand resilience within the telecommunications industry.

In conclusion, the identification of Shared Culture and Policy and Employee Brand Advocacy as pivotal determinants in the telecommunications industry underscored the criticality of fostering a supportive organizational culture and promoting employee advocacy for robust internal branding strategies. Further research initiatives exploring the intricate dynamics of these determinants and their specific impacts on internal branding success, coupled with their integration into educational courses, would significantly enrich the understanding and application of effective internal branding strategies among practitioners and future professionals within the telecommunications sector.

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