



**Master's Thesis**

**International Marketing Management**

**School of Business and Management**

# **Employer branding in the ICT-sector: Aligning external prejudices with internal experiences**

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# Abstract

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This thesis by nature is a study of one ICT-conglomerate's employer brand and a roadmap for strategically developing it. The thesis first introduces the reader to the topic through latest trends and reasons behind the chosen topic. The theoretical section seeks to establish a good base, on top of which it's easy to build the empirical section on. Following the theory, one can find the research methodology, which thoroughly explains the used tools and methods for reaching conclusions. The empirical section is divided into three major parts: ideal employer characteristics, employer brand (perceived and experienced) and alignment / conflict of the two. The conclusions answer to the established research questions and hypotheses, also offering a roadmap for future development of the ICT-conglomerate's employer brand.

The research is completed only within the Finnish marketplace, although the conglomerate is multinational. The perceived employer brand data is gathered from university students of three major subjects: information technology, industrial engineering & management and economic sciences. This, because these three groups in particular are potential and desired future employees of the conglomerate. The experienced employer brand was collected from employees of the eight subsidiaries that operate in the Finnish marketplace. Seven of these eight participated in this research.

In the research it was found out, that the way the company's employees experience the company as an employer don't align at all with the students' perceptions. The perceptions vary by gender, field of study, length of study and industry knowledge. It's apparent, that the

external communication of what's it like to be employed in the company hasn't generated the desired results. In general, students perceive the company as a worse employer in all 32 studied characteristics, than it actually is according to the experiences of the employees.

In the study, a significant internal problem also emerged. As the conglomerate has eight subsidiaries across Finland, the experienced employment varies greatly between them. Because of this, the company can't utilize a unified conglomerate employer value proposition, but rather is forced to control eight unique ones. Moving forward from this research, a roadmap was generated for improving the employer brand both internally and externally. The next step for the studied company is to study the best practices across subsidiaries and duplicate them in the hopes of aligning experiences, before exporting them as marketing to alter perceptions.

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## ***Audentes fortuna iuvat***

*("Fortune favors the bold")*

***Petteri Rantamäki***

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# 1. Introduction

Employer branding is a phenomenon that is still living its early stages. As more and more companies witness concrete benefits from exercising employer branding strategically, the idea has gained traction in the field of scientific research. This, because through scientific study, vague phenomena are turned into concrete and actionable end-results. Where there is value, there are companies trying to claim that value. Brand-related topics are harder to quantify and exhibit, which is where scientific study comes in. If we take a look at the phenomenon's history in two different comparisons: scientific papers written & Google search-engine searches completed, we can prove this growth in interest both in the scientific space and also outside of it.

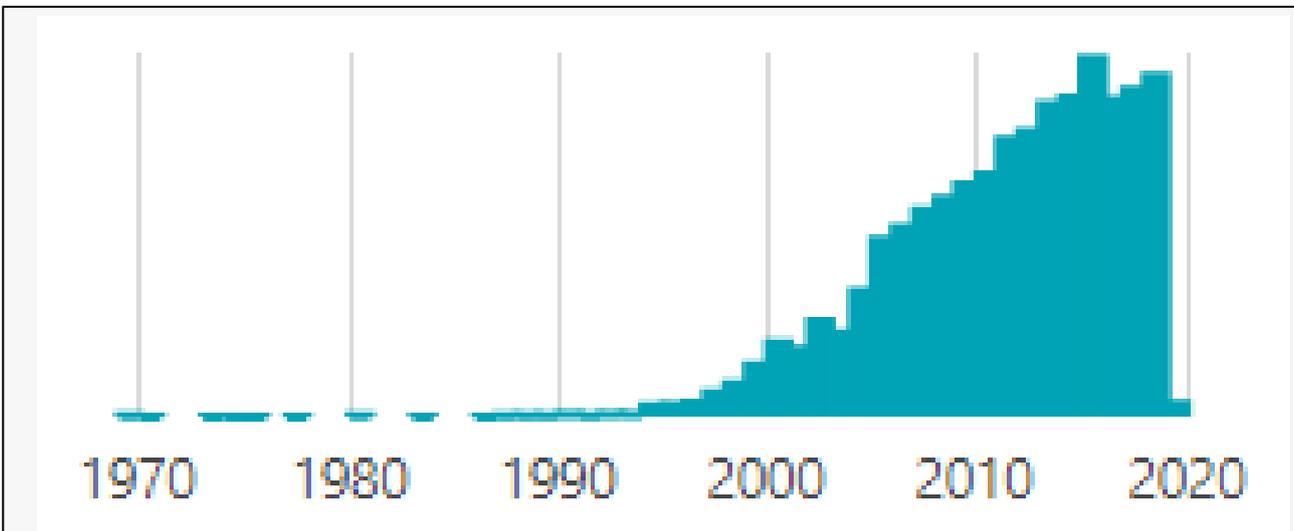


Figure 1 - Amount of scientific papers written about "employer branding" between the years 1970-2019. (Lappeenranta Academic Library, 2019)

In Figure 1 above, we can witness the amount of scientific papers and materials written with the keyword "employer branding" emerging. The height of the bar is naturally determined by the amount of material published inside that one year. In total, we can currently find 6382 e-articles, 2925 newspaper-articles, 659 other textual materials, 333 dissertations and 133 books, with some other smaller sources included. The real spike in research started in late 1990's, growing steadily from there on, as seen in Figure 1 above. (Lappeenranta Academic Library, 2019)

As a not-so-scientific insight, we can utilize the Google Trends-tool. Through it, we can see how specific keywords appear in Google’s search-engine data. As Google is a tool that is free for use by nearly every consumer in the world (excluding China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea and some others), we can expect it to be a good indicator of public interest towards a specific keyword. In Figure 2 below, one can see two lines depicting two different branding concepts. The red line represents the keyword “product branding”, while the blue line represents the keyword “employer branding”. These lines exhibit “Interest over time”, which means: “... search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for the given region and time.” (Google Trends, 2019)

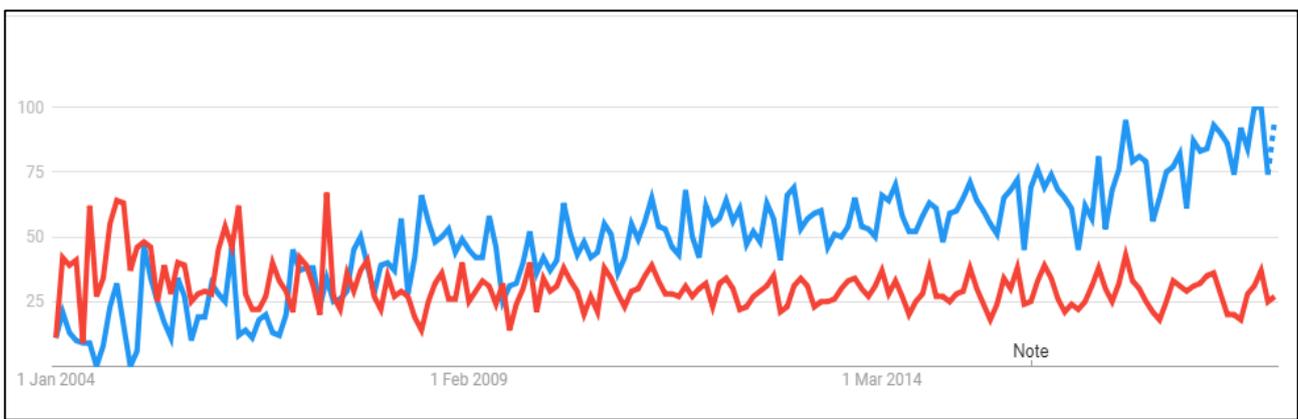


Figure 2 - Employer Branding vs Product Branding, interest over time. (Google Trends, 2019)

Product branding is losing interest, as it drags a slightly declining line. This, meanwhile employer branding in search terms reached its new highest peak just recently, in October-November of 2018, witnessed by the blue line touching the 100-level on the Y-axis. Therefore, we could claim that employer branding is a recent and developing phenomenon, worth examining further.

This specific paper will focus on employer branding in the ICT-sector. More about the reasons behind this decision will be found in the next chapter. Within this research, we are most interested in how external prejudices align with the internal experiences of the employer brand of a specific conglomerate. To be more clear, with external prejudices we mean how people that are in no mutual relationship to the company experience it as an employer and what kind of assumptions they make based upon the things they have heard, read or seen. These could be advertisements, social media pages, someone talking about

their experience within the company, keynotes, all possible points of contact between an external person and the company in question. Then, with internal experiences we mean how people inside the company – all employees - experience it as an employer.

After both pools of data have been gathered, we can compare them and see exactly how the external prejudices from specific student groups align with the actual experiences of current employees. This will then offer clear indicators about how the brand is doing and as to how this conglomerate could positively develop its employer brand in the Finnish employer space. Through further studies, the goal is to offer a roadmap towards improving an ICT-company's employer brand. The next chapter, 1.1, will answer the questions regarding the reasons behind this research.

## **1.1 Background**

The biggest reason for undertaking this research topic is the phenomenon of rising difficulty in recruiting skilled workers in the Finnish employer space. The market is very limited, as the population of Finland stands only at 5,553,222 individuals. This population is only expected to shrink, as fertility rate has stuck to ~1.8. Naturally, with this phenomenon, the median age of the population is expected to grow rapidly by two years by the year 2040. Meanwhile, the fertility rate is expected to shrink even further. (Worldometers, 2019) On top of this, it is estimated that by the year 2020 in the European Union there is a demand of almost one million digital business professionals. (Computerworld, 2015) The current trend on which we are riding translates to a 3% annual increase in demand for skilled ICT-industry employees. (Tivi, 2015)

When we seek employees in such surroundings that are expected to be at the same time skilled and culturally fit, one can't rely on them to come your way automatically anymore. Companies are growingly becoming proactive, going after employees, rather than passively waiting or wishing for the right candidate. This is where employer branding jumps in. It helps companies retain existing and recruit new employees, reduces costs, can make a company's employees their ambassadors and improves employee engagement. (Cubukcu, 2018) As seen in the introduction-chapter, the desire to understand the concept better has

seen drastic growth from the late 1990s to this day. And, through Google Trends we saw that just by the end of 2018 was the highest number ever of conducted searches with the term “employer branding” on a global scale.

In the Finnish marketplace we can find 10,553 information and communication-technology (ICT from now on) companies. These employ 85,000 people, generating 5.1% of the turnover in the whole of Finland. (Statistics Finland, 2017) If we expect a majority of these ICT-companies to drive business growth, the already booming headhunting of these 85,000 people will see tremendous growth. The use of headhunters will be expensive and doesn't promise a flow of fit candidates. Instead, these companies should rather put effort into establishing and communicating an image as an exceptionally delighting place to work, grow and develop in, with a promising future for both parties. This inbound way of pulling candidates carries a lot of benefits with it, that will be considered later.

Organizational culture can bring its own problems into this topic. If a company is only interested in employing people without other prerequisites, like behavior, values etc. it can easily end up with a bunch of individuals that are conflicting with each other. This can happen, because the candidates are not culturally fit or the company isn't capable of establishing an aligned company culture in the first place. In order to avoid this problem, the ICT-company's employer brand must be aligned with its targets' – the potential & desired employees'.

## **1.2 Research questions**

In order to have a clear focus for the research, we form some guiding research questions to which the aim is to answer to in the latter section of the research. These questions then function as the backbone for the data gathering in both from the internal and the external sources. The questions are exhibited below in order of priority and role in this research and opened up afterwards:

- 1. How could ICT-companies develop their employer brand in order to attract both skilled and culturally fit candidates?**
- 2. How are the external prejudices of university students aligned with the internal experiences of the conglomerate?**
- 3. What do the potential & desired young university students appreciate or demand from their future employer?**

Later in the research five different hypotheses are established, that act as the preliminary answers to the above stated questions. After these, the empirical research is completed with a goal of quantifiably testing, whether the assumptions were correct or false.

Question number one is expected to bring more concrete answers to ICT-companies when it comes to developing an/the employer brand. The goal is to establish actionable operations that would make it possible to claim the benefits that positive employer branding brings with it. Question number two works as the backbone of everything that is done in this research. The terms I opened up earlier, so I expect this question to be understandable. One could read this question also as: *“Do university students think of the ICT-sector and companies operating in the same space as an EMPLOYER the same way as people inside these companies?”* By researching student preferences and prejudices (Question 3) we can see, if ICT-companies are currently offering their potential and desired employees the things that they desire and expect from their future employers.

First, we will seek to understand if the thoughts are aligned. Then we make sure that we understand what traits the students expect and appreciate. Based upon these findings then we can build a roadmap of recommended actions towards building a better employer brand that is capable of pulling more skilled and culturally fit employees into a specific ICT-company. Also, we can witness if there are blind spots in the perception – are there some traits that the students don't currently witness, but which a company could utilize?

### **1.3 Preliminary literature review**

A more thorough inspection of the theory behind employer branding can be found from chapter two. This preliminary review seeks to only provide a quick insight into the themes and models examined later.

Branding-strategy as a whole is behind the phenomenon of employer branding. Employer branding is just a completely new manifestation of the branding ideology in a new context. Branding as a strategic task has its roots deep in the history of humankind, developing in complexity from the early farm cattle marking to all the various ways the concept is utilized nowadays. At its core, branding aims to differentiate products and services from those of competitors, aiming to make them unique and valuable at the same time in the eyes of the consumer. (Kotler & Pfoertsch. 2010)

Employer branding is related to branding, as it's about developing a unique and valuable brand identity to a specific company as an employer. The first academic definition of the term was made by Ambler & Barrow in 1996. The researchers were inspired by the rising competition for a limited pool of talented employees, which is also behind this research. They started to realize the importance of the employees as a crucial asset of a company. The same researchers divided the employer branding into a concept, which is built of three segments: psychological, economical and functional benefits. (Ambler & Barrow, 1996)

After the previous research laid the basis for employer branding, further research was conducted on how employer branding could positively enhance the loyalty of the already existing employees. If employees of a company are satisfied with their work, they're more likely to be loyal and remain a member of the group. This translates to better outcomes in new recruitment and functions also as a positive influence on the company's customers. (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001)

In the latter theoretical section of the work, the research of Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) will be used when talking about building and developing a company's employer brand. They

established the first framework to develop internal employer branding. They were the first researchers that also claimed, that employees of the company actually have a very significant role in developing the employer brand. It wasn't only a function that was controlled from the top. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

Two supporting concepts were developed around employer branding soon after. The other was employer image concept and the other was employer brand equity. Employer brand image simply refers to the way people experience the brand through what they hear and see. (Ewing et. al. 2002) Employer brand equity on the other hand was proposed by Collins & Stevens (2002). They defined the concept as "*attitudes and perceived attributes about the job or organization made by potential employees*". (Collins & Stevens 2002) Soon after this definition, employer brand equity was seen as a part of the overall attractiveness of a company as an employer. (Berthon et al, 2005)

Edwards (2009) researched who was behind building an employer brand. He realized that the HR-department and marketing were both in charge of this. In order to establish a solid employer brand, both functions of a business had to have the same strategic objective in mind. Employer branding is simultaneously an internal and an external function, and therefore both parties carry a significant role. HR mostly focuses on building a healthy internal culture and atmosphere, meanwhile marketing is expected to export this info to the external stakeholders. (Edwards, 2009)

There is plenty of research starting from the late 1990s going to this day on employer branding, as was claimed during the first paragraphs of the work. The topic is experiencing a growing trend with the new findings cumulating on top of the older research. The latter theoretical section of the work will dive deeper into the concepts and terms used here, building a solid foundation for the empirical section and conclusions to follow.

## 1.4 Framework of Study

The theoretical framework is supposed to exhibit the research in a simple, understandable and illustrated way. For this research, the theoretical framework is made of the following blocks: Groups, Concepts & End results. Underneath in Figure 3 one can find the illustration of this research, explained in further detail afterwards.

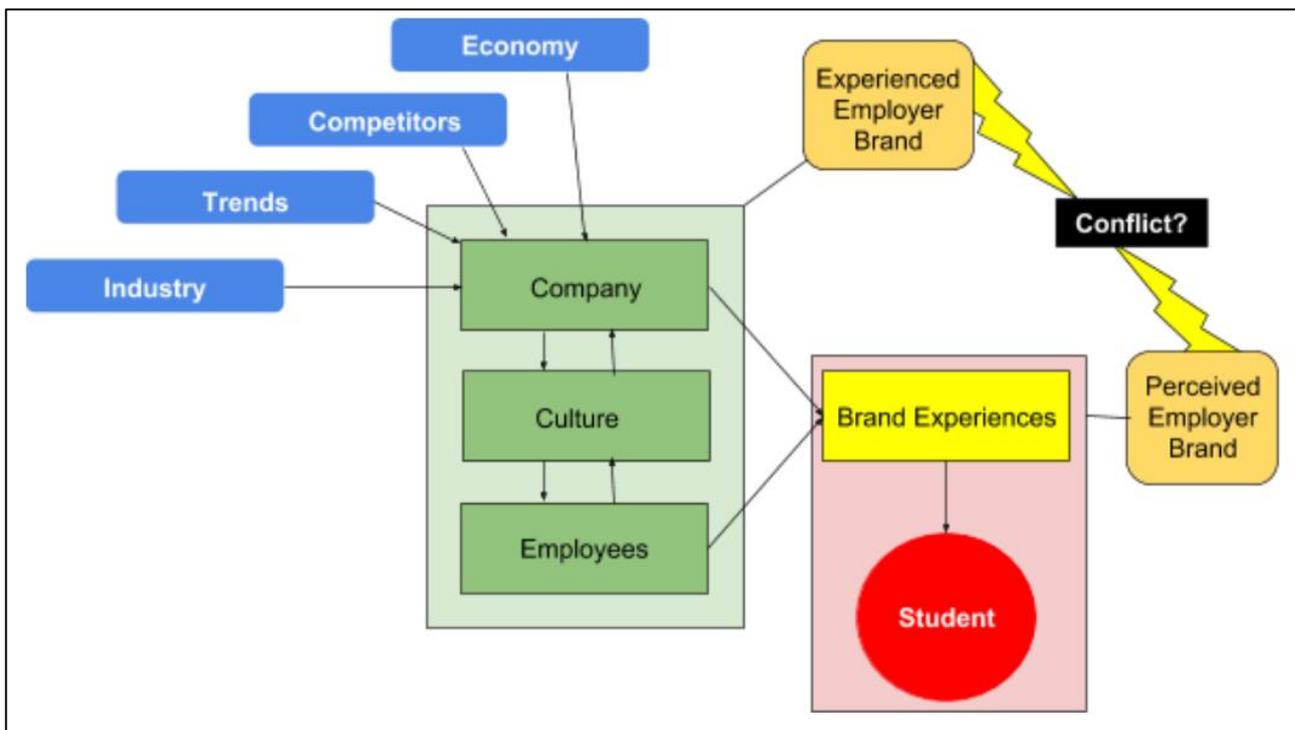


Figure 3 - Theoretical framework for experienced (EEB) and perceived (PEB) employer brand.

### 1.4.1 Macro-level factors

This theoretical framework illustrates what factors build an employer brand for a company both internally and externally. On the upper left-hand corner in blue blocks, we can find elements that affect the company and its performance. All companies in the world are chained to the chosen industry and the fluctuating economy, while a wide range of trends and the actions of their competitors require either proactive development or reactive decisions to remain relevant. These factors are external and very influential to everything the company does, but it can't significantly touch or affect these. The economy is a whole, that consists of a wide range of actions and participants, fluctuating freely in most parts of the world. In this framework, these work as the macro-level factors.

With competitors here, it signifies both direct and indirect competition. All companies are affected by their competition and this naturally affects the health of a business. In the modern business environment, companies need to consider where their future threats could come from, as various big enterprises have witnessed drastic damage from indirect competition. The “FANG”-companies (Facebook, Amazon, Netflix and Google) acting as a good example. The industry goes hand in hand with competition, as it’s the macro level for the business space in which a company operates in. It includes all the players, culture, formal and informal rules and associations that govern the future of the industry.

Lastly as an external factor, we will place trends. Various social, political and ecological trends can have great influence on the strategy and performance of a business. Current such phenomena are the likes of eco-friendliness, equality, work-life balance, corporate social responsibility and other that either have a direct influence on the product or the functions within the business. As an exaggerated comparison for this thesis, we could compare the following based on trends:

- 1. An environmentally damaging business, which favors men and doesn't positively develop the social surroundings that it operates in.*
- 2. An eco-friendly business that promotes equality between genders and race, offers flexible working hours and co-operates with the community it's involved in.*

Solely based on this trend-related information, many people would most likely be able to make their mind on which employer they'd favor as their own. Trends have tremendous power on any business and the surrounding society. They determine how much human resources will be available for any vacant job. Therefore, it belongs into the macro level factors, effecting the company and its culture & employees.

#### **1.4.2 Company level factors**

These green blocks in the theoretical framework depict how the experienced employer brand is established within the company. This is the area that the company can control and through strategic decisions establish an employer base that builds a desired culture. First, in this illustration we see the company on top, which is being influenced directly by the macro-level

factors examined previously. With the company piece, we mean the business model, processes, products, strategy and all operational functions that are required to fulfill desired business goals. It's at the core of the framework, as it is in control for operations and responsible for future outcomes. This factor here on the other hand excludes the symbolic, very significant pieces of the company: culture and the employees.

All these three company level factors are in a continuous exchange relationship with each other, evolving because of each other and by the pressure generated by the external macro-level factors. Changes in any one of these affects the others in quite uncontrollable ways. There are ways of channeling the development through systematic and strategic operations though. The company in question should naturally have a mission, vision and values. These factors should then determine the desired culture of doing things, which translates to what kind of employees the company desires. In this model, the employees mean current ones that are already inside the company and the already existing culture within.

These three pieces together are then the ones that build the experienced employer brand. That's how the employees inside the company see it as an employer, based on their factual past experiences and future visions. It's in the middle of everything, being molded by macro-factors, internal decisions and external perceptions. In this research, this and the following perceived employer brand are in the center of the study.

### **1.4.3 Perceived employer brand**

This acts as the last group of factors for this research. With brand experiences here (in yellow), we mean all interaction a student (red) has with the brand (events, marketing, products, speaking with employees). All these events together mold a general understanding of the company and build prejudices within the minds of the students in regards to what it would be like to work there.

Behind the brand experiences are the company level factors. The brand experiences are the concrete representations of the company, its culture and the employees to the outside world. In this framework, the student is at the receiving end of the experience, as we are

focusing on how different university student groups perceive the conglomerate as an employer. The relationship between the brand experiences and the student build the perceived employer brand, which stands for how the brand is perceived as an employer by someone, who doesn't currently belong or work in that space.

#### **1.4.4 Conflict**

In the upper-right hand corner, one can see the black box, which stands for conflict. This depicts the relationship between the experienced employer brand (EEB from now on) and the perceived employer brand (PEB from now on) and whether there is a conflict in aligning these two viewpoints. A company might have a great EEB, but it's bad at communicating this. In that case, the PEB might be very different and far from the truth, driving potential and desired employees away from the company. The same can work the other way around too - a company might be perceived as an amazing employer thanks to great experiences like marketing, but the actual EEB is worse.

This is the part that we'll be mostly studying in this research, trying to see what the situation currently is and how could companies operating in the ICT-space align EEB and PEB to reach employees (university students) that are both capable and suitable for the task at hand. By studying this conflict between the two sides, we can determine the current situation and build steps to change the situation towards a more desired outcome.

#### **1.5 Definitions**

For this research, it's crucial to define some concepts to ensure clear understanding of what's being studied. By defining certain terms, we want to remove doubt or vagueness from the research. This will then decrease the potential for misunderstandings or wrong interpretations of the research and its findings. Most concepts and terms are expected to be clear and understandable, so we will only define a limited number of these in order to make sure that the biggest terms, crucial for this research, are interpreted in the same way.

## **Employer Branding**

Employer branding acts as a function to communicating benefits to the potential & desired employees. Employer branding is a strategy for maintaining a healthy talent pool. (Biswas & Suar, 2016) At its core, employer branding is a great tool for acquiring new talent, developing the existing and ensuring an employee retention, that doesn't jeopardize the business. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Mandhanya & Shah, 2010)

Pauline Drury (2016) in her paper about employer branding defines the components well, so we will reference her words. A company's employer brand is a sum of the benefits offered, that people associate with a company. These benefits can be divided into three different groups: economic, psychological and functional. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to separate these into two attribute groups: functional and symbolic. The functional attributes of employer branding include the likes of income, perks, healthcare plans or the possibility for a leave among others. The symbolic attributes are more abstract and harder to communicate, but a good source for differentiation when it comes to employer branding. These include the likes of culture, employee development plans and opportunities and the status gained for working for that specific company. (Drury, 2016)

In a practical sense, employer branding is about communicating to external stakeholders, what's it like to be employed in that company. It's a function shared by marketing and human resources, which through videos, blogs, events and other ways of generating brand experiences tries to positively influence perceptions about the company as an employer. Where traditional product branding aims to sell more products and services, employer branding aims towards convincing people to work for a specific company, or selling a job.

In this research, employer branding is divided in two because of its internal and external nature. Instead of solely focusing on altering the external perceptions, it's crucial to understand the internal experiences. By measuring and comparing the experiences with the perceptions, a company can establish a starting point. From that point on, it should focus on exporting positive, desired and truthful experiences from within, avoiding the pitfalls of a false employer value proposition.

## **Potential & Desired employees**

Often before and throughout this paper we will refer to these two groups of employees – potential & desired. These are the two groups, towards whom employer branding is being executed. They're the target of communicating the functional and symbolic benefits of the employer in hopes that they recognize the employer and are at least willing to work for if not eager to.

A potential employee is an individual, who almost has the competencies to start work in the company. For these individuals, employer branding attempts to spark the interest towards employment whilst communicating what skills or further development is required from them. Desired employees on the other hand already harness all that is required to start employment. The employing company wants this person to work for them right away and through employer branding is attempting to at minimum meet their requirements. As the competition for the desired pool of employees naturally is tougher, companies need to positively differentiate themselves, in which the symbolic attributes mentioned previously are crucial.

## ICT-Sector

This research will focus on the ICT-sector so a clear definition builds a framework for the study. *“Information and communications technology (ICT) is the infrastructure and components that enable modern computing... ICT as a term is understood to mean all devices, networking components, applications and systems that combined allow people and organizations to interact in the digital world.”* (Rouse, 2017) ICT includes a wide range of components ranging from old technology, like radio to the inventive, like AI and robotics.

The ICT-sector is the range of companies operating within the same competitive space, working with one or more of the components of ICT (see Figure 4) as their core business. The sector is a network of competition and co-operation, as some actors provide solutions to other ICT firms, some only to specific industries and some to all. At their core, the companies operating in the ICT-sector provide others with cost-savings, new opportunities and conveniences in their operations. (Rouse, 2017)



Figure 4 - Components of ICT (Rouse, 2017)

## 1.6 Delimitations

By building certain chosen limitations for the research, we can better narrow down the scope of the research and its findings. Through doing this, we can also establish conclusions that answer a quite specific area of interest with practical implications and new theoretical outputs.

Firstly, this research is completed in the Finnish marketplace exclusively. The students who answer the questionnaires are from Finnish universities and speak the Finnish language. The students themselves are also divided into three distinct groups: students of information

technologies, students of economic sciences and students of industrial engineering and management. This, because these are the main three potential and desired groups of students for the ICT-sector and their prejudices and perceptions are most crucial in shaping of an employer branding strategy.

This research is also excluding all other sectors, focusing solely on the ICT. The findings from the questionnaires and the conclusions are only applicable for the world of ICT. Thus, this research can provide findings to other sectors, but only indirectly. Furthermore, the internal experiences within the ICT-sector are focused on one conglomerate, which has many autonomous subsidiaries in the Finnish marketplace. Therefore, the EEB will be unique and doesn't translate well to other ICT-companies. This case-company will be further discussed in the research design and methods chapter.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

Research methods are compiled of the practices and operations that make it possible to distinguish findings from the gathered material. (Alasuutari 2011, 82) This research will be completed through quantitative methods of gathering and studying information. These methods are required for the empirical part of this research, as we seek to answer the proposed research questions and examine whether our hypotheses were true.

For this thesis, the chosen tool for the gathering of the quantitative data is Google's Forms and Sheets services. This is a simple, free and safe cloud service that makes it possible to gather big amounts of data reliably, whilst making organizing and analyzing it simple within one Google account. (Google, 2019) The questionnaire will be manually built within the service and peer-evaluated by employer branding experts and tested on a small sample before spreading. Afterwards, it will be distributed as a simple link, behind which individuals can start filling it. With this tool, sharing of findings is also a straightforward process, which makes co-operation with other parties possible.

The quantitative questionnaires will be completed both internally and externally. The students (external) fill an anonymous questionnaire first during the early-spring of 2019 and

the internal questionnaire will be completed by the employees of the conglomerate during the early-summer of 2019. In order to reach the university student groups, we approach student unions, who have an established crowd to whom the questionnaire introduction and link will be shared to. Inside the company, this same process will be carried out by approaching the HR-departments, who will then work as the intermediary.

This design will work well for answering the research questions and hypotheses, as we are gathering the information directly from the people who affect this issue. The students are the target of the employer branding, meanwhile the employees are the creators of the perceived employer brand. By gathering the information from these parties and comparing them, we are getting honest and reliable data for comparisons. The research design and methods will be further opened in the chapter after the theoretical background.

## **1.8 Structure of the study**

This research will follow the traditional guidelines of a master's thesis with all of its formalities. The research began with the introductory section, which acts as the framework in which this research operates in. After the first chapter, the background for this research and the questions focused on are clear. The theoretical framework that depicts the factors behind the research has been established with useful definitions and delimitations stated afterwards. Next, is the theoretical section of the research, which aims to clarify what the discussion around employer branding currently is. What models have influenced the studies and what sort of conclusions have other researchers come up with. This will then in part work as the reinforcing section for the research design and empirical research that follows.

The research design and methods will cover more in depth, how the data for this research was gathered and how reliable and valid it is. In that chapter the questionnaire is thoroughly opened up and the whole process from draft to completion is framed. The goal there is to remove doubt around the data gathering and prove that the research is scientifically acceptable.

In the findings-chapter, we will go through the gathered data and return to the research questions in the hopes of answering them. And finally in the last chapter of this research are the conclusions, where one can find the theoretical contributions and practical implications of the study. One can find the utilized forms from the attachments section, at the last pages of the research. They are in Finnish language, as that's the mother tongue of the students inquired. The utilized questions are translated to English language on the last page of the research for examining.

## **2. Employer branding theory**

This chapter contains the theoretical background to reinforce the empirical section of this research. It builds a solid foundation in the form of theory for employer branding and the phenomenon that it has generated from the late 1990s to this day. For this research, we want to open two of the major concepts that are in the focus of this study - employer branding and its perception. In the preliminary literature review chapter, we listed some of the most significant findings in the research of employer branding, which are opened up more thoroughly throughout this chapter.

Employer branding has been briefly defined in a previous chapter, but as it's such a big term, we should understand it and its components more thoroughly. In this research, we are studying both external perceptions (PEB) and internal experiences (EEB). These two groups of individuals are very different, and the actions taken to positively develop or steer PEB & EEB are very different. Also they're most often executed by different departments within a company. Therefore, in this theoretical section we will study the theory behind internal employer branding and external employer branding.

As mentioned, we will also cover the area of employer brand perception. It simply put is the sum of factors that differentiate a business from its competition in terms of employing. It's the set of symbolic and functional attributes related to being employed within the company, which attracts the potential and desired employees to join the company's forces.

### **2.1 Employer Brand**

As a phenomenon that started from the late 1990s, employer branding still is a concept that demands further studying. As it mixes a wide range of academic disciplines between each other, it's a term that has been studied by a wide spectrum of researchers through varying styles and from many perspectives. Employer branding is a mixture of economic, social and psychological sciences, as the employer brand itself is formed through a relationship between the people, the business and the macro-environment in which it operates. As more and more cross-disciplinary studies are conducted on the phenomenon, we can better understand the birth and functionalities of employer branding.

As stated in the introductory and later in the literature review, currently there are thousands of scientific articles published about this topic. Therefore, we wish to rather focus on a smaller selection of the most significant pieces in order to avoid further complexity. The next paragraph is about these pieces and the researchers behind the topics, that will be further analyzed in the following chapters.

In the realm of establishing and strengthening a company's employer brand, the work of researchers like Backhaus & Tikoo (2004); Biel (1999) and Ambler & Barrow (1996) are of great value. That's close to the goal of this research, as we are studying the current situation, whilst building suitable recommendations to positively influence the situation in the future. Then, as we are gathering the data from a pool of Finnish students, we are interested in how companies can attract more potential & desired employees. In this area, Edwards (2009) and Berthon, Ewing, et al (2005) have done significant work. Meanwhile, most companies are also interested in decreasing their employee retention rate to a suitable level. Retention has a clear relationship with employer branding, as through effective internal employer branding the devotion and happiness of a company's employees should be high. In this field we can utilize the work of Rampl and Kenning (2014); Knox & Freeman (2006) and Ewing et. al. (2002).

Employer branding is a long-term strategy, with a goal of making the company either maintain its current situation or strive for better results. Through putting emphasis on both PEB and EEB, the employer brand can also develop brand equity. Seeing employer branding as a valuable asset amongst other branding operations, we look at the work of Foster, Punjaisri et al. (2010).

Employer branding is a concept that is a cross-functional long-term effort. Internally the human resources department is responsible for connecting the right people with the right work and the right environment. It might be, that in many companies some practices should be changed in order to make the process of establishing a positive employer brand even

possible. Berthon et al. (2005); Collins & Stevens (2002) and Donath (2001) are some of the most significant researchers in this front.

By going through the work of these previously mentioned researchers, we will build a solid base for employer branding - both internal and external - and better understand how external groups perceive their potential future employers. First, we will divide employer branding to its two main dimensions: internal and external.

### **2.1.1 Internal employer branding**

Internal employer branding is about building a healthy relationship and culture inside the company between the employer and the employee. By communicating the company's brand values and delivering the promised education to its employees, a company can successfully deliver the brand promise. (Burmam et al. 2009) Companies doing recruitment often have such promises for their potential & desired employees. These can often be found from the company-websites under titles, such as "Company X as an employer", "Career at Company X" etc. These sites deliver the employer promise in simple form and attempt to attract new employees.

The main reason behind doing internal employer branding is the reinforcement of the bigger corporate brand. These efforts should assist the employees to behavior, which is aligned with the broader concept of their brand. The goal therefore is to support commonly accepted brand citizenship behavior. (Hoppe, 2018) If the values of the brand and those of the employee are closely aligned, this may facilitate a sustainable competitive advantage to the company. (Pringle & Thompson, 2001) This aligning of values is possible through internal marketing, which at its core is the promotion of the specific brand inside the company to its employees. (Drake et al. 2005) The reason that internal employer branding is growing in popularity, is that these committed employees are better at delivering the company's brand promise further down the line to their customers. (Thomson et al., 1999)

As the values of the company and the employee are aligned, they're more likely to stay as a member of this community and their loyalty towards the employer is high. (Dutton et al,

1994; Van Dick, 2001) Identifying with the brand and its values is a base level requirement for employer commitment. (Burmamann & Zeplin, 2005) Loyal and committed employees are less likely to leave the company, deliver higher performance and lead to better results throughout the business. These individuals are a great source for internal employer branding, working as a catalyst for further driving improved loyalty and commitment.

There are two distinct groups of factors, that affect how an employee reacts to and deals with the internal employer branding. Personal variables (age, education, experience in company) and situational variables (relationships, perceptions towards rewarding and autonomy). According to the findings of Punjaisri & Wilson (2011), positive situational variables lead to stronger effects of internal branding. Good relationships, accepted and clear compensation and freedom at work increase commitment and loyalty towards the employer. Employees, who are dissatisfied with the situational variables needed to be influenced more by the internal employer branding. (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011)

Personal variables were also found out to influence the importance of internal employer branding. Older employees are likely to be less influenced by the internal branding efforts, as they're more committed and loyal to start with. Employees with a higher level of education require internal employer branding to make them more loyal to the current employer. These individuals have a tendency to be ambitious towards further career development and don't commit as deeply as employees with a lower level of education. Lastly, the length of service indicated that the longer an employee had been in the company, the bigger the impact of internal employer branding had on their behavior. (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011)

In internal employer branding, the target of actions taken are the current employees of the company. The main functions besides strengthening the brand, is to make employees more committed to the work they do and loyal to the company itself. In addition, the target is to make these employees proud of their employer and become an advocate for the company's brand as a great employer. At its core, internal employer branding is a function controlled by the human resources department. At an operational level, this is about motivating the employees, making sure that they are engaged in their work and in the company and developing them on a continuous basis. (Sengupta, Bamel et al., 2015)

### 2.1.2 External employer branding

External employer branding is the opposite of internal employer branding in many ways. It's close to the common branding work that a company does. The goal is to positively build trust and reputation in the minds of various external stakeholders by communicating through different medians. In the previous sentence, the stakeholders, in this context are the potential & desired employees. External employer branding is about establishing an attractive (and also authentic) brand in the minds of the potential & desired employees in order to hire the most suitable ones from the available labor market to work for the company. (Heilmann et al. 2013)

Five different traits have been discovered, which are most significant in making employees interested in working for a company: economic, interest, social, development and application traits. The economic simply can mean the amount of salary and interest translates to interesting work. The social trait means a pleasant workplace while development stands for potential future opportunities to advance. Application trait is about how the employee sees that his or her own knowledge could be implemented at work. (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005)

Later in 2010, Srivastava & Bhatnagar suggested eight specific traits that have a correlation as to how an external person views the company as an employer. These are listed in the following Table 1:

<b>Caring</b>	<i>How does the company take care of its employees</i>
<b>Enabling</b>	<i>How well does the company let an employer utilize their capabilities</i>
<b>Career growth</b>	<i>Is there potential for promotions</i>
<b>Credibility &amp; fairness</b>	<i>Is the behavior towards employees fair</i>
<b>Flexibility &amp; ethical behavior</b>	<i>The company doesn't take part in unethical actions</i>

<b>Customer brand image</b>	<i>How do the customers see the brand</i>
<b>Positive employer image</b>	<i>How is the company seen as an employer by its current employees</i>
<b>Global exposure</b>	<i>Is there a possibility of traveling and / or working abroad</i>

*Table 1. Eight traits that determine the employer attractiveness. (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010)*

The traits by themselves don't do much. The company needs to communicate them to the people that it wants to reach, in this case the potential & desired employees. First, the company must understand the values and preferences of the employees it currently has. Then, based on how the traits in Table 1 above work in the company, they should formulate an employer value proposition (EVP). This EVP should deliver an authentic (and desirable) summary, of what it would be like to work for the company. Then the goal of this EVP naturally is to retain employees that already work in the company, while attracting the potential & desired employees. (Sengupta, Bamel & Singh, 2005)

In order to get this formulated EVP in front of the right people, it's crucial for businesses to state these clearly at the career-section of their business website. This way its available for anyone searching for that specific information, no matter the situation. In addition, other tools like newsletters, seminar participation and social media coverage can work as a median to articulate the company's EVP. (Vatsa, 2016)

Through successful external employer branding, a company should be capable of delivering their employer value proposition to the right stakeholders. This then could lead to job candidates of higher quality (not necessarily quantity), if the company delivers an authentic and desirable promise comprising of the eight factors suggested by Srivastava & Bhatnagar (2010). To conclude these two dimensions of an employer brand, there's a Table 2 below listing the differences between them.

	Internal (EEB)	External (PEB)
Target	<i>Current employees, that already work inside the company.</i>	<i>External stakeholders, the potential and desired employees.</i>
Actor	<i>Human resources department</i>	<i>Marketing department with human resources department</i>
Means	<p><i>Motivating the employees and making sure that they're engaged in their work and in the company.</i></p> <p><i>Developing the workforce on a continuous basis.</i></p>	<i>Establish a clear and desirable EVP and communicate it to the external stakeholders through different medians.</i>
Goal	<p><i>Retain the current employees, making them more committed and loyal to the work they do.</i></p> <p><i>Make employees proud of their employer and make them advocates of the brand.</i></p>	<p><i>Deliver the employer value proposition to those external stakeholders, which the company would want to work for them.</i></p> <p><i>Increase the quality and quantity of applicants to vacant jobs.</i></p>

*Table 2. Differences between internal and external employer branding.*

## 2.2 Frameworks for employer branding

Next, we want to establish some basic frameworks from the past research. As employer branding was only born in the late 1990s thanks to the research completed by Ambler & Barrow (1996), the two simultaneously generated the first theoretical framework to support the new concept. Before employer branding, the focus had for a long time been on corporate branding or product branding, without focusing too much in this recent phenomenon. Their pioneering research will be the focus of the next chapter. After that one, we will take a look

at Backhaus & Tikoo's (2004) framework, Gaddam (2008), Knox & Freeman (2008) and lastly that of Dukerich & Carter (2000).

### 2.2.1 Benefits of a strong employer brand

Employer branding is directly related to branding, as it's about developing a unique, valuable and desirable brand identity to a specific company as an employer. Ambler & Barrow made the first academic definition of the term back in 1996. The researchers were inspired by the rising competition for a limited pool of talented employees and started to realize the importance of employees as a crucial asset of the company. The same researchers divided the employer branding into a concept, which is built of three segments: psychological, economical and functional benefits. (Ambler & Barrow, 1996)

Twenty years later in 2016, Ambler & Barrow returned to the topic and established their own framework about the benefits of a strong employer brand. These benefits are listed below and then opened up in more detail afterwards:

1. *Increased equity*
2. *Lower cost of recruitment*
3. *Increased employee engagement*
4. *Enhanced delegation*
5. *Increased agility*
6. *Fewer middle managers*
7. *Less waste*
8. *Improved inter-departmental cooperation*
9. *Better performance measurement*

Ambler & Barrow (2016) here propose, that a company can witness such benefits through its efforts towards employer branding. (1.) **Increased equity** means the feeling of belongingness into the company. Through employer branding, the existing employees can better understand and adopt the values shared throughout the organization and deepen their relationship towards it this way. Employer branding also (2.) **lowers costs related to recruiting new people**. Efforts put towards developing an employer brand that includes the

traits suggested in Table 1 earlier by Srivastava & Bhatnagar (2010) make the employer more attractive. These reinforcing traits included caring, enabling, career growth, credibility & fairness, flexibility & ethical behavior, customer brand image, positive employer image and global exposure. As a company establishes an employer brand that meets these eight traits, recruiting new people will become a more straightforward process and save in costs.

Internal employer branding efforts will also make the employees (3.) **more engaged** in the company and the life inside of it. The goal is to make the employees proud of their employer and work, letting them play around in the environment. By giving the individuals freedom to mold the place into one that looks and feels personal and unique, they'll become more attached to it and feel central. (Ambler & Barrow, 2016)

Employer branding can also positively (4.) **develop delegation** at the workplace. A robust employer brand tends to improve the relationships between people in different functions and hierarchies. This way the cross-functions will perform better and raise the performance of the company's various functions. It will also make the employees (5.) **more agile**, as they don't have to be afraid about their future in the company. Change won't be a frightening thing at this point and the workforce can quickly react to required alterations. (Ambler & Barrow, 2016)

(6.) **Fewer middle managers** are required to control the operations, as employees are trusted and they're given autonomy to make judgements. (7.) The **amount of unnecessary waste will also decrease**, as employees and teams are free to develop and optimize their own processes. A natural learning curve will occur and make some previously utilized resources redundant. The next point, (8.) **improved inter-departmental cooperation** goes hand in hand with previous number four (develop delegation). Lastly, employer branding will (9.) **better the performance measurements**, as the human resources and marketing departments are cooperating in order to prove the results of their working efforts towards establishing and reinforcing an employer brand. Through systematic measuring, it's possible to prove the effectiveness and course of actions. (Ambler & Barrow, 2016)

To conclude this long list of benefits of a strong employer brand, we could state the following. Employer branding at its core is attempting to enhance the performance and productivity within the company, make the whole recruitment process straightforward, improve the engagement and loyalty of its employees and provide a good base upon which to build future scenarios for the business. (Ambler & Barrow, 2016)

### 2.2.2 Conceptualizing employer branding

Figure 5 below depicts the framework built as a result of the research of Backhaus & Tikoo (2004). They saw employer branding as “a long-term strategy to improve recruitment and retention, while increasing the value of the human capital.” (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) In their research, Backhaus & Tikoo divided employer branding into two blocks, just as in this research – internal and external. Internal (EEB in this research) is how the employees inside the company experience it as an employer through actual experiences and interaction. External (PEB in this research) is about how the company is seen as an employer to stakeholders outside of the company.



Figure 5 - Employer branding framework. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

Employer branding results in developing or increasing two valuable resources for the company: **brand associations** and **brand loyalty** (marked in red highlight above). Aaker (1991) described brand associations as the thoughts and ideas the brand (name, logo, sound...) evokes in the receiver. This definition is initially for products and services, but transforms into the realm of employer branding as well. Associations can be developed through systematic employer branding, but it'll also be affected by resources that are uncontrollable to the specific employer. Associations work as a requirement to develop an

employer image. If associations exist, then the potential & desired employees will develop an image based upon these. These upper-level concepts in Figure 5 are more a function of marketing. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

Past research has shown that employer image correlates to the attractiveness in the eyes of a potential employee. One important concept is the person-organization fit. This indicates that as people are thinking about or being a part of a recruitment process, they compare their own needs, personality and values to those associated with the employing company. Naturally, if there is a clear fit between the three previously mentioned factors between the person and the company, the two are more attracted towards each other. (Schneider, 1985; Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Cable, 1997)

In the world of marketing we also see, that when a brand image resonates with the consumer, the brand equity strengthens. (Keller, 1998) As the equity grows and people start to become growingly aware of the brand, these people are more likely to develop positive identifications of the brand. Moreover, when a brand's image grows as a positive force, the people are more attracted to it and identify themselves in it. At this point, potential and desired employees will actively seek to become a member of the organization and utilize the promises that membership delivers. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

Employer branding and image in relation to the attraction is extremely crucial, when it comes to operations within the same industry. In definitions, we talked about functional and symbolic attributes that come with employment in a certain organization. The functional attributes included: income, perks and other such, while symbolic were: culture, development plans, opportunities and status gained. (Drury, 2016) Organizations operating within the same industry tend to offer quite similar functional benefits. Therefore, it's difficult for organizations to differentiate themselves from the competition with these. In order to generate an attractive and favorable employer image, symbolic attributes should be highlighted and communicated. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

The bottom functions in Figure 5. are more of a function of the human resources department. The organization identity contributes to loyalty. At its core, organization identity means how the employees inside the company perceive their own employer. If the identity is seen as a positive entity, the employees identify more with the organization. Deeper identification will then develop loyalty in the employees towards their employer. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2005) Management can alter this identity through organizational goals, policies and practices. (Gioia et al., 2000)

The organizational culture can deliver significant information to the job-seeker before employment. The employer branding should deliver factual information about the culture, as it will decrease the amount of misperceptions and candidates, who aren't fit to the organization. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) If the culture doesn't match the expectations, the psychological contract made between the employer and the employee is violated, leading to retention and harmful word-of-mouth.

Employer brand loyalty was the second of the two highlighted boxes in Backhaus & Tikoo's (2004) framework. In terms of product branding, Aaker (1991) defined loyalty as the attachment a consumer has with a specific brand of product. If a consumer is loyal to a specific brand, it's very unlikely that they will impulsively change their mind about which one to spend their limited resources on. At the core of loyalty is the formation of a mutual trust relationship between the receiving and the offering party. (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) divide product loyalty further in two – behavioral dimension and the attitudinal dimension. The behavioral dimension is about how likely a consumer is to complete a repurchase, while attitudinal dimension represents the level of commitment the individual has towards the brand. (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001)

The previously mentioned product branding traits translate to employer brand loyalty. It simply means the level of commitment the employee has towards their employer. It's a sum of how well the employee can operate and function within the organization's culture and identity. The term "repurchase" translates here into commitment to stay inside the organization and operate as a part of it now and in the coming future.

Lastly, increased employer brand loyalty leads to higher employee productivity. Employees, that are satisfied have a tendency to deliver better performance (Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985) and satisfy the company's customers better. (Ryan et al., 1996) Many of these productivity improving outcomes were analyzed in the previous chapter, which was about the benefits of employer branding established by Ambler and Barrow (2016). The relationship between employer branding, employer productivity and business profitability can also be shown through the figure below, proposed by Gaddam in 2008. In this model, employer branding enables employee satisfaction, which leads to commitment (employer brand loyalty previously). Commitment and satisfaction generates brand advocacy and attracts new employees. This cycle then translates to customer satisfaction and loyalty, turning into profits.

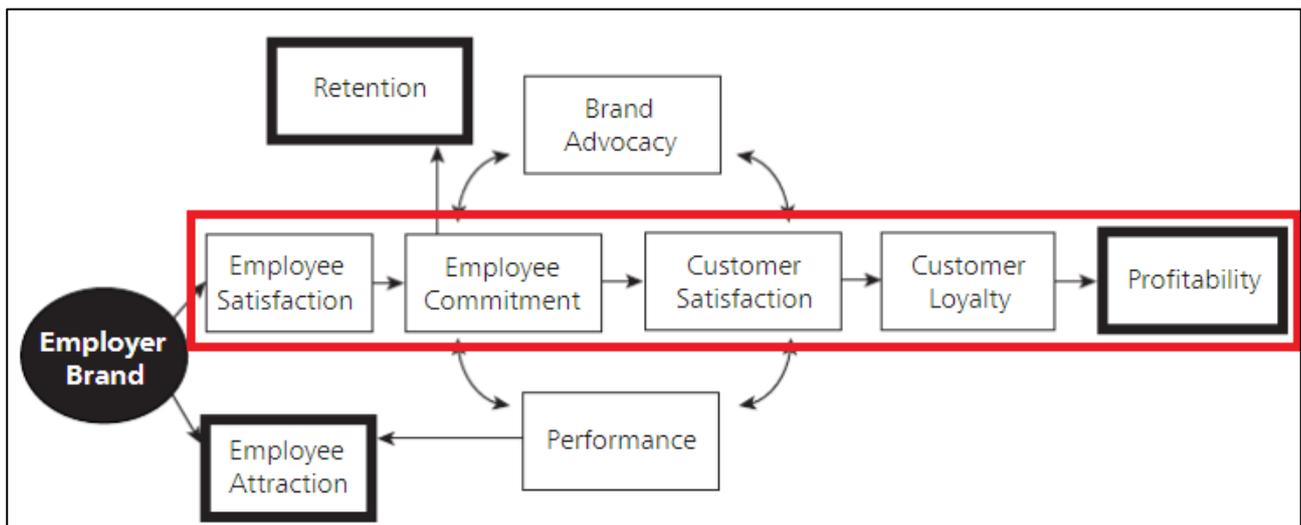


Figure 6 - Employer brand model (Gaddam, 2008)

## 2.2.4 Employer branding in recruiting

As a last theoretical framework, we'll introduce that of Dukerich & Carter (2000) and Knox & Freeman (2006). The research is focused on how employer brand image functions in the recruitment market and process. In recruitment literature, employer brand image can be used as a reliable way of predicting the actions done by potential & desired employees. Honeycutt & Rosen (1997) state as an example, that recruitment material of a company has a drastic effect on how the potential applicant views the company. If an organization highlights promotions and the salary, the employer brand image can easily be translated so

that they value dedication to the career at hand. If the focus of the material is in showing cohesion and cooperation, then those traits become the perceived image. (Honeycutt & Rosen, 1997).

The recruiter who is also dealing with the individual has great effect on how they view the organization. If the recruiter is seen as a friendly person, it channels the applicant to place positive characteristics on the whole employer-organization. Unfriendly recruiters naturally have the contrary effect. (Goltz & Giannantonio, 1995) This is important, as the recruitment-process experiences of those who apply to a vacant job have wide networks with which to communicate about the process. Negative experiences spread more than positive ones with potential that a single negative experience can negatively alter the perceptions of various stakeholders.

The employees of organizations are the ones who build the positive employer brand image. Therefore, it's crucial to recruit individuals who are likely to maintain and develop this further. The employees together generate the experienced employer brand, but also are a significant force in shaping the perceived employer brand. Paid communication to external stakeholders depicts the desired employer brand image, whilst the communication happening between the employees and the external groups is more potent and authentic. (Dowling, 2001)

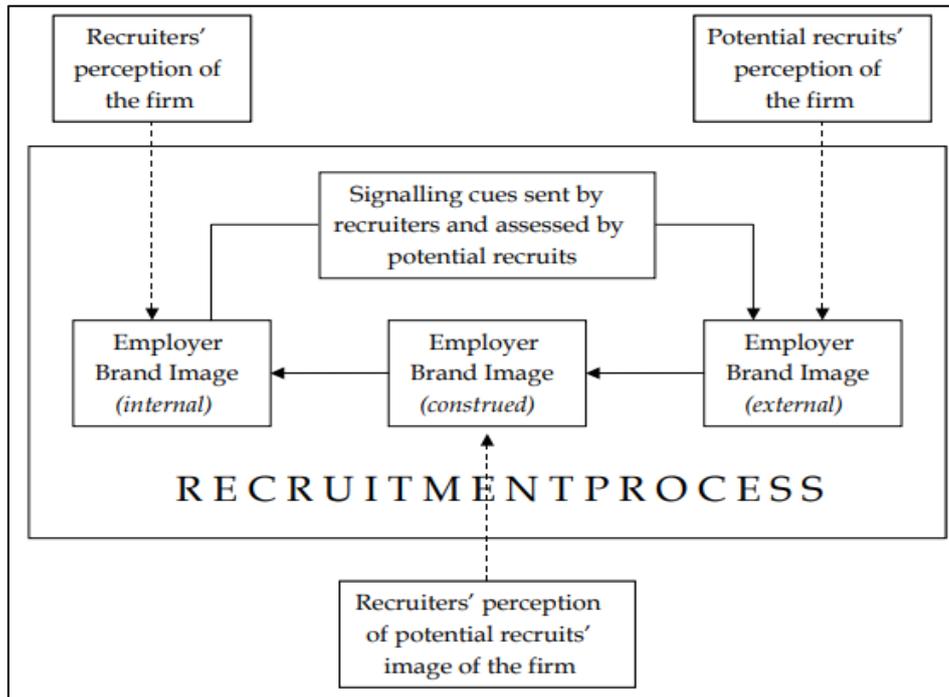


Figure 7 - Perceptions of employer brand image in the recruitment process. (Dukerich & Carter, 2000)

Figure 7 above is proposed by Dukerich & Carter (2000) to display how different groups throughout the recruitment process perceive employer brand image differently. In the original research, it was highlighted that companies should proactively manage their brand image. All negative and wrong perceptions should be spotted and fixed through working with the construed and external employer brand images. (Dukerich & Carter, 2000) Only this way the company can communicate the authentic employer brand image and attract individuals with the required capabilities and the person-organization fit. If the image is utterly wrong or otherwise unaligned with reality, the whole recruitment process as a whole is inefficient.

The proposed recruitment process framework bares some similarities to the theoretical framework of this thesis. The **external** employer brand image is the sum of brand experiences coming from the company and its employees to the potential recruit, in this study, the student. This is what we in this study will call “perceived employer brand” (PEB). The recruiting department sends signals to the potential recruits, attempting to positively influence the external employer brand image. The **construed** employer brand image on the other hand is the perspective, how recruiters imagine that potential recruits see the company

as an employer. Lastly, there is the **internal** employer brand image. It's the recruiters' hands on experience in regards to what is the organization like as an employer. This we will call the experienced employer brand (EEB) in this research. It requires the understanding of both PEB and EEB to deliver successful and efficient employer branding for long-term results.

Therefore, in this framework we see a cycle of employer brand image building and developing. This left side of Figure 7 is the current reality within the organization, which is attempting to align the external employer brand image (the right side) to align with reality. New recruitments will have an effect on the internal employer brand image, altering it through being a member of the group.

Employer brand image plays a crucial role in the process of recruiting and attracting new talent. In their research, Knox & Freeman (2006) concluded, that employer brand image directly correlates with the likelihood to apply for a job. On top of this, they also found statistically significant differences in how the employer brand image is experienced internally and externally. (Knox & Freeman, 2006)

## **2.3 Brand perception**

Previously we discussed mostly about the employer brand, but in this theoretical section we further discuss the employee side and its significance. In the context of employer branding, the perception of it is formed through the experiences that an individual comes across while acting as a member of a specific organization. The previously analyzed frameworks were about the benefits of employer branding, how to establish and develop it, how it's directly linked to profitability and how it's a crucial factor in the whole process of recruiting new talent.

Pauline Drury (2016), as mentioned previously, divided employer branding factors into two attribute groups: functional and symbolic. The functional attributes include income, perks and other such elements, as the symbolic attributes are more abstract: culture, development, opportunities etc. (Drury, 2016) These both attribute groups have a dramatic effect on employer brand perception, as they're the foundation of the relationship between

the organization and the employee. The goal in this regard is to naturally develop a positive internal brand perception (or experience). In order to evaluate the importance of various attributes, it's important to understand what external stakeholders are looking for and how the current employees are actually experiencing the attributes.

### **2.3.1 Attractiveness of the employer brand**

For this section of the work, we are going to be using a previously established framework to showcase how different dimensions of employer branding effect its attractiveness. This framework was established by Berthon, Ewing and Hah back in 2005. They define employer attractiveness as: *“the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization.”* In their research, they discovered five categories of values, that correlate with the attractiveness of a company as an employer. These value categories are: interest, social, economic, development and application, they're further explained according to the text of the researchers in Table 3 below. (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005)

The previously mentioned research of Ambler & Barrow (1996) divided employer branding into three segments, and the Table 3 below according to the researchers Berthon, Ewing & Hah functions as more of a *“refinement and extension”* of these. These three segments which build employer branding were: psychological, economical & functional. The relationship between these two pieces of research are included in Table 3, as according to the statements of Berthon, Ewing & Hah (2005).

Value category	Explanation
Interest	<p>How attracted the prospect is towards an employer, who delivers an exciting working environment, novelty, let's creativity fly and aims towards creating high-quality new products and/or services.</p> <p><i>Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996) would state these interest values as <b>psychological</b> benefits.</i></p>
Social	<p>How attracted the prospect is towards an employer, who delivers a fun and happy workplace, which emphasizes quality relationships and atmosphere.</p> <p><i>Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996) would state these social values as <b>psychological</b> benefits.</i></p>
Economic	<p>... who delivers higher than average wage, rewards, job security and future promotional prospects.</p> <p><i>Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996) would state these economic values naturally as <b>economic</b> benefits.</i></p>
Development	<p>... who delivers acknowledgment, pride, confidence, experience to boost a career and work as a “spring-board to future employment”.</p> <p><i>Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996) would state these development values as <b>functional</b> benefits.</i></p>
Application	<p>... who delivers the opportunity to teach what an individual has learned to others in an atmosphere, which is simultaneously customer oriented and humanitarian.</p> <p><i>Ambler &amp; Barrow (1996) would state these application values as <b>functional</b> benefits.</i></p>

Table 3. Employer branding value categories. (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005)

These value categories can then be examined further, as each one of them attracts a different personality. As prospects are individuals, they have their own mix of individual values. Other prospects value creativity and excitement, while others see great value in wage and future career development. It's then the job of the employer to communicate its values so, that it is capable of reaching candidates that are both capable and organizationally fit for the employment. Otherwise, the EEB will be negative and have potential for carrying undesirable consequences.

### **2.3.2 Relationship of brand personality traits to employer brand attractiveness**

Another interesting study when talking about employer brand attractiveness is that of Rampl & Kenning (2014). In this study, they *“tested whether brand personality traits affect employer brand trust as well as employer brand affect, and whether the latter two in turn affect employer brand attractiveness for potential employees.”* (Rampl & Kenning, 2014)

The core measurement variable in the study is employer brand attractiveness, which they defined as the intent of applying to a specific organization for the job and the acceptance of employment offers from this same organization. They researched employer brand attractiveness through online surveys carried out amongst German university students, who are often a target of employer branding actions from organizations. They adopted brand personality traits of sincerity, excitement, sophistication, ruggedness and competence in order to evaluate how significant each component is in building employer brand affect & trust and how strongly these two are related to employer brand attractiveness. (Rampl & Kenning, 2014)

Below, in Figure 8 one can see the structure of their study. On the left hand side are the brand personality traits, in the middle the building blocks of employer brand attractiveness. The lines with their values indicate how significant the traits are in relation to the next unit.

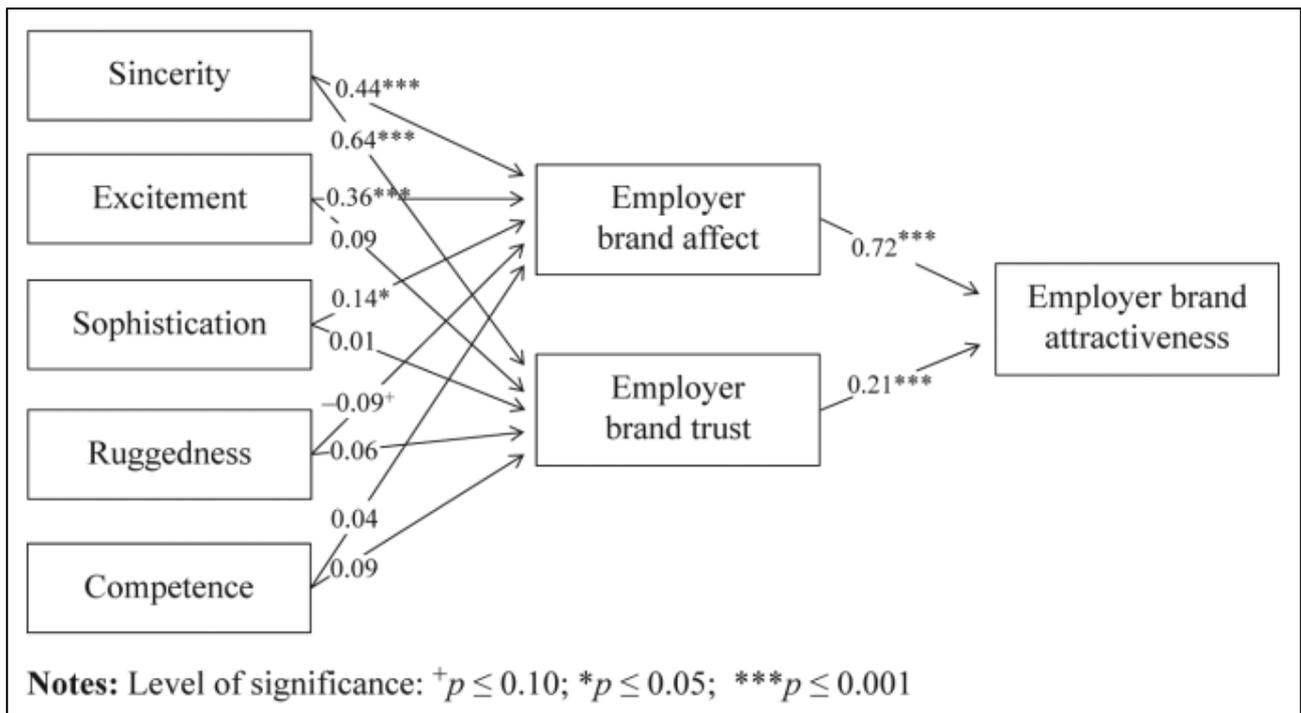


Figure 8 - Conceptual model and path coefficients. (Rampl & Kenning, 2014)

The research shows that a brand's sincerity is very significant in the formation of an employer brand affect and trust. Excitement is only significant when it comes to employer brand affect and the case is similar when it comes to sophistication. Ruggedness negatively effects the employer brand affect, meanwhile having little to none effect on trust. Lastly, competence didn't have a significant role in either. The two units in the middle – affect & trust – both had a statistically significant effect on attractiveness, with affect being a much more influential unit. Together the two units explained 71% of the employer brand's attractiveness. (Rampl & Kenning, 2014)

The research concludes that employer brand affect is affected by the brand personality traits of sincerity, excitement and sophistication, while employer brand trust is mainly affected by the sincerity trait. Employer brand affect is a much stronger determinant of employer brand attractiveness than employer brand trust. Rampl & Kenning (2014) state that companies seeking a competitive edge in recruitment and talent acquisition should pay more attention to how the five named brand personality traits are experienced when it comes to their organization. This greatly explains the employer brand attractiveness and can provide explanations as to why recruitment can be difficult. (Rampl & Kenning, 2014)

### **2.3.3 Internal attributes affecting employer brand attractiveness**

Employer brand attractiveness isn't only the sum of external perceptions of the brand and its traits. It is significantly affected by several internal variables – mainly the employees themselves. Here, building of a healthy relationship and culture inside the company between the employer and the employee is key. These efforts should assist the employees to behavior, which is aligned with the broader concept of their brand. The goal is to support commonly accepted brand citizenship behavior. (Hoppe, 2018) If the values of the brand and those of the employee are closely aligned, this may even facilitate a sustainable competitive advantage to the company. (Pringle & Thompson, 2001)

In this context, employee engagement is crucial. Kevin Kruse (2012) defines it as “... *the emotional commitment the employee has to the organization and its goals.*” If the employees are engaged to their work, they truly care about it and their personal impact on it. At this point, the interests and goals of the organization and its employees are aligned, instead of them seeking solely personal gains. (Kruse, 2012) In driving employee engagement, the functional traits of salary and bonuses shouldn't be utilized, rather the symbolic traits of e.g. culture and belongingness.

Kahn (1990) divides employee engagement into three different categories: emotional, cognitive and physical. The emotional side refers to how the employees inside the company feel about the company as a whole – managers, environment, and culture. The cognitive is simply about what unemotional thoughts the employees have about the company. The physical side is about what is required of the employees to carry out their own function within the organization. (Kahn, 1990)

Ajayi, O. Odusanya, K & Morton, S. (2017) researched how different organizational contexts effect employer engagement in SMEs. Prerequisites for developing employer engagement are psychological safety and availability. Psychological safety is the freedom to make decisions in regards to employees own work and is a result of a mutual trust relationship between the employee and his or her manager. Availability is a bit more straightforward – it means that the employee is given the required physical and emotional resources to do their

work. Availability is boosted by a culture of knowledge sharing in an organization. (Ajayi, O. M., Odusanya, K., & Morton, S., 2017)

Besides the prerequisites, they found out that adhocracy, which are suitable for agile alterations and new innovations, drives employer engagement. Flexibility and quick adaptation therefore can be seen as positive drivers for engagement. Also in their research they witnessed that a clan culture within an organization positively influences employee engagement. This clan culture is later defined as an environment, which encourages teamwork, empowers the employees and where the company is committed to its workers. A culture of creativity and innovation promotes employee engagement, which is further boosted by an absence of organizational charts. (Ajayi, O. M., Odusanya, K., & Morton, S., 2017)

These previous findings can be linked to the categories established by Kahn (1990). These building blocks of employee engagement carry significant benefits with them. In Table 4. below, we can see the previously listed building blocks, how they benefit the business and how they relate to the categories of emotional, cognitive and physical.

Building block	Benefit (Ajayi, O. et. al. 2017)	Kahn (1990)
Psychological safety	Employees are free to control their own work. This will lead to new ways of doing things and a greater sense of responsibility and impact.	<b>Emotional.</b> Psychological safety naturally molds the attention of the employee towards the company, its culture and the managers.
Availability	All employees have the required resources in their hands to complete their own work. This will lead to a growth in transparency and efficiency.	<b>Physical.</b> By having all required resources, the employees are capable of doing their jobs.
Knowledge sharing	Gives the employees the possibility to use previously gained capabilities and develop them further. Promotes innovation, curiosity and creativity amongst employees.	<b>Physical.</b> A culture of knowledge sharing further promotes availability.
Adhocracy	Makes quick changes possible and enables the organization and its employees to turn threats into opportunities fast.	<b>Cognitive &amp; Emotional.</b> Adhocracy is a model for running a business and the antithesis for bureaucracy.
Clan culture	Encourages the employees to take ownership of their own actions. Working in teams brings minds together to facilitate better ideas.	<b>Emotional.</b> A clan culture has a straightforward effect on individuals as to how they experience the company, its culture and managers.

*Table 4. Building blocks of employee engagement and their benefits on business.*

Employee engagement has a range of positive benefits to it, but also it can facilitate positive impact on the employer brand attractiveness. As employees gain psychological safety and availability, they're nearly autonomous to do their own work. This freedom and responsibility develops the employees and pushes them to become more intrapreneurial. An adhocratic culture enables the cultivation of novel ideas and procedures, while a clan culture promotes caring and co-operation. Engaged employees are more loyal and committed to their own work. In a previous chapter this was the goal of internal employer branding. Loyal and committed employees have a tendency to be proud of their employer and have a high chance of being employer brand advocates. By communicating this to external stakeholders, the attractiveness of the employer can experience a drastic gain.

## **2.4 Research hypotheses**

Next, we will form some hypotheses for this research, which we will analyze and conclude in the latter empirical section. These hypotheses here go hand in hand with the past chapter 1.2 of research questions, with claims made before any actual empirical research and data gathering. For this specific research, we divide the hypotheses into two major groups, as there are two different stakeholders in this: the internal and the external.

This research is about how the employer brand of a conglomerate is perceived externally (PEB) and experienced internally (EEB). The guiding theme throughout the research is, whether the external prejudices and internal experiences are aligned. Therefore, we will place hypothesis number one as the following:

***H1: The university students' perceptions of the conglomerate as an employer are not aligned with those of the internal experiences.***

By answering this hypothesis through the gained quantitative data, we can see whether the students see the specific company as an employer the same way, as the people inside of it. This will provide some very fascinating conclusions, as any anomalies between the prejudices and experiences means that there is a conflict in communication or a lack of it. Therefore, the answer to this hypothesis will also give clear indication as to what business

characteristics should be highlighted further in order to positively affect the attractiveness of the ICT-company in question. There are two more hypotheses, that are aimed towards the external group of students:

**H2:** *The three different student groups (1. economic sciences, 2. industrial engineering & management, 3. information technology) will have differences between them in how they perceive the conglomerate as an employer.*

**H3:** *The perceptions about the company & industry will vary according to the university and city of the student.*

In this research, the quantitative information is gathered from three different student groups: students of economic sciences, students of industrial engineering & management and students of information technology. These students are expected to have variations in their interests, values and expectations. Therefore, we expect different groups to focus on and experience different traits and characteristics differently. These three groups are further divided according to their location, as there are groups from across different universities across the country of Finland. We can find 10,553 ICT-companies across Finland employing a total of 85,000 people, generating a total of 5.1% of the turnover of Finland. (Statistics Finland, 2017) These companies are distributed unevenly across the country with each one of them generating unique area specific perceptions. Therefore, we can and should expect the perceptions to be different in different locations.

Next, we will establish a couple of hypotheses about the specific ICT-company, from which the internal experiences are gathered. This company will be explained in further detail in the following chapter of research design and methods.

**H4:** *The experienced employer brand is not aligned internally between the different subsidiaries.*

**H5:** *The human resources department and leadership see the employer brand as more attractive than other internal groups.*

In the research, one conglomerate is studied as a whole with the interesting underlying fact, that the conglomerate has eight subsidiaries across Finland. Each one of them has autonomy when it comes to running the business, so we can expect them to have different internal experiences amongst employees about the conglomerate as an employer. We will study the conglomerate as a whole, because that's what the potential & desired employees witness in their brand experiences. Few students even know that the conglomerate is divided into eight different companies and all of them carry the same logo.

In addition, we will expect the human resources department and leadership roles to see the employer brand as more attractive than the other groups. This, because it's their job to work with the phenomenon and study it in their own organization. We expect them to see the employer brand as a bigger image than those groups not involved in it. Furthermore, it's expected that they have a more positive perspective, as they're the internal forces attempting to steer the experienced employer brand to a certain direction. The other workers are the ones who actually experience the actions taken. Why we are interested in this hypothesis in this research is the fact, that in order to develop the employer brand, we must know whether the expectations or assumptions of HR and leadership are realistic, or worth developing.

These are the five underlying hypotheses we make before analyzing the data. They're based on the research questions and will be answered in the latter part, after the quantitative data is gathered and processed. How they are linked to the theoretical framework of the research is shown below in Figure 9. The hypotheses don't touch the macro-level factors in the framework, as we aren't studying them. The research is focusing mainly on EEB, PEB and their relationship - "Conflict?".

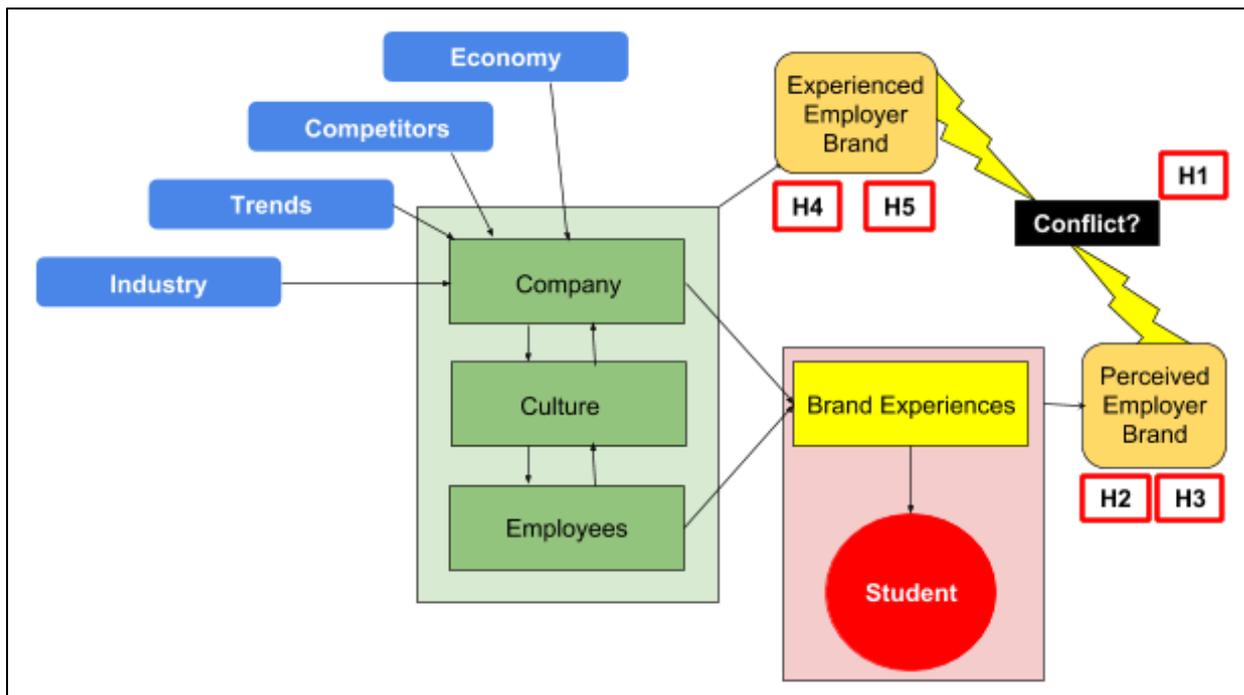


Figure 9. Hypotheses in relation to the theoretical framework.

<b>H1</b>	<i>The university students' perceptions of the conglomerate as an employer are not aligned with those of the internal experiences.</i>
<b>H2</b>	<i>The three different student groups (1. economic sciences, 2. industrial engineering &amp; management, 3. information technology) will have differences between them in how they perceive the conglomerate as an employer.</i>
<b>H3</b>	<i>The perceptions about the company &amp; industry will vary according to the university and city of the student.</i>
<b>H4</b>	<i>The experienced employer brand is not aligned internally between the different subsidiaries.</i>
<b>H5</b>	<i>The human resources department and leadership see the employer brand as more attractive than other internal groups.</i>

Table 5. Hypotheses of the research

### **3. Research design and methods**

In the following chapters, the goal is to explain the chosen methods of gathering and processing the research data. First, we will explain the research context, focusing on building an understandable environment for the research. In that chapter, we delve into the company, from where the EEB information is gathered from. The research process-chapter explains how the quantitative data gathering was completed as a process from the beginning to the end. The data collection methods-chapter afterwards clarifies how the data was gathered when it comes to utilized tools. After the collection, comes analysis. This then will focus on how the gathered data will be used in order to answer the research questions and tackle the established hypotheses. Lastly, we describe the reliability and validity of the gathered data.

#### **3.1 Research context**

Context we define here as the environment in which the research is completed and in which the results can be utilized in. These findings are from the Finnish employer marketplace. The PEB data is gathered from university students across the country, while the EEB data is gathered from eight different subsidiaries of a specific ICT-conglomerate. As explained in the introductory chapter, Finland is suffering from a lack in ICT-industry experts and the employer market is very competitive for skilled employees. Employers can't simply compete with functional, aka. monetary benefits anymore. The evolution is towards symbolic benefits, as employers are attempting to attract the potential & skilled workers to join them. We wish to study what university students appreciate and require from employers and how do they see the ICT-industry and this specific case-company as an employer.

This research is completed in cooperation with a North-European ICT-conglomerate. The internal data is gathered from this entity and then compared to the external data of the students. Through these findings, the company is capable of utilizing the gained results in its own recruitment efforts and develop its employer brand to a more desired end result. In order to provide more context, we will explain the company in more detail.

The company is a private Scandinavian business-software company, which mostly grows through M&A operations. New subsidiaries routinely change their name to align with the conglomerate-level brand, but otherwise the autonomy remains in the subsidiary itself. The conglomerate resembles a holding company in many ways.

As a whole, the conglomerate helps companies and organizations in 17 different countries do things smarter through utilizing cutting-edge cloud software innovations. The headquarters are located in Oslo, Norway and globally the employee count in 2018 stood at 8,500. As of 2017 the company revenue reached 8,537 million Norwegian Krone, translating roughly to 873 million Euro.

This research is focused on the Finnish marketplace and operations in this specific environment. In Finland, the conglomerate has eight subsidiaries. These companies combined offer over 30 different software solutions and employ 1,200 people for a wide range of business and R&D functions. The company is gaining recognition, but currently the brand image and knowledge still varies significantly according to location. It was for the first time awarded the “Great Place to Work”- certification in the category of big businesses in Finland in 2019.

### **3.2 Research process**

The research process itself started well before the writing part. Most plans and timelines were established in November-December of 2018, while the external groups were approached already in January of 2019, two months before the questionnaire was supposed to be sent out. Figure 9 below represents the data gathering process, explained in more detail below.

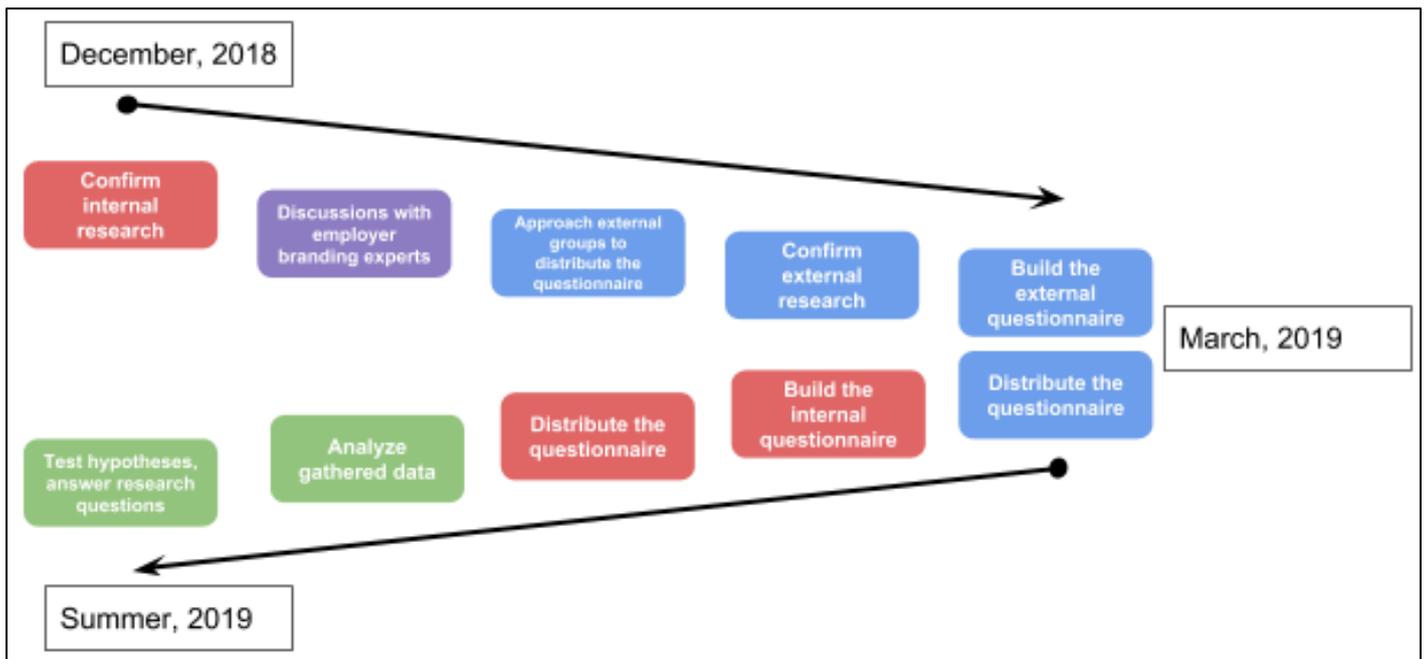


Figure 10. The research process

This research process is color-coded into four different sections. The whole process began by getting internal acceptance from the conglomerate to carry out this research. Soon followed the discussions with people, who already had experience with employer branding in order to get an objective perspective into the field. The process continued to the blue section, which stands for co-operation with external groups – universities and their student unions. After the acceptance was gained to distribute the questionnaire to their follower-base, the questionnaire itself was finished and soon distributed. As the answers from the external groups were gathered, it came time to do the similar data gathering internally. This then would provide the material to carry out comparisons between EEB and PEB. As all the required data was gathered, then came time to analyze the data and naturally test the stated hypotheses and answer the research questions.

Through this straightforward research process, the data was relatively easy to gather and analyze. The most crucial section for this research was that of gathering the external data. This part had the most risks with it, as there were many groups to simultaneously handle in order to gain the desired quality and quantity of data points.

### **3.3 Data collection methods**

So in order to gain the desired data, we need some methods of gathering material that is reliable and valid for this research. As this research is quantitative, the information was collected through a questionnaire which was filled by both external and internal stakeholders. The structure of these questionnaires are both listed in the attachments at the end of the research.

The questionnaire building tool used for this data gathering is Google Forms. The tool is easy to use and connected to other Google-services, mainly Google Sheets. The data is thus easy to move around and between parties in the later analysis period. The data is securely stored in the cloud and therefore we can rely on the fact that no data-points will be lost throughout the process.

#### **3.3.1 The questionnaires**

First, we will open up the external questionnaire. At its core, this questionnaire is a basic Likert-scale set of opinions about employers and about the conglomerate. It was formed by utilizing the research of others, combined with the interests of this research and the company involved. It was presented to and accepted by the company's employer branding specialist before spreading and pre-tested by 10 students. This was carried out, as we wanted to be sure that it's understandable and easy to fill. In addition, it was important to see how long it takes to fill the questionnaire, so that the questionnaire could be marketed through its quick nature.

The questionnaire begins with a set of four demographic questions so that we can compare the answers according to city, field of study, study year and gender. Otherwise the nature of the questionnaire is anonymous and no information is gathered from the participants. Through this demographic distribution we can later in the empirical section compare for instance how female students of economic sciences in Eastern-Finland see the ICT-sector as an employer compared to male students of information technology in the capital of Helsinki.

After the demographic section, the questionnaire moves to a segment where on a scale from 1 to 5 the students rank the importance of various characteristics and values of employers. Here 1 stands for “Not important” and 5 as a “Very important”. For example, here a student can state that for him/her personally “Nordic values” aren’t important, yet being global (“Is international”) is very important in order for them to work for a specific company. The section is compiled of 32 characteristics and values, which are later divided into three categories: company characteristics, working & community. From these three the students will choose the most important and second most important for them. Besides just that, they’re also asked to choose the least important characteristics.

These 32 characteristics have three different sources behind them. Six of them are a straight copy from the conglomerate’s employer value proposition. This means, that through the questionnaire we will see if the future potential & desired employees even find the six values as significant to their decision making. Then there are 17 characteristics from the research of Simon Knox & Cheryl Freeman (2006). In their research, they utilized 20 different attributes, while studying how to measure and manage employer brand image in the service industry. (Knox & Freeman, 2006) These attributes translate well into this research context, so we will utilize some of them here. On top of these 23 characteristics, we present 9 more. These ones are just additional dimensions into which we wish to get more insight into. This section generates the base for understanding what different university groups appreciate and demand from their future employers.

The next section calibrates the students to think of ICT-companies and the industry in general as an employer. The questionnaire asks the participants, which ICT-companies of the selected 14 they know. The list is a way for us to understand how well the person answering the questionnaire knows the ICT-industry. The list includes very well-known companies in Finland: Nokia, Microsoft; quite well-known: Reaktor, Visma, Tieto; and others that have a low expected recognition rate. The point here is that if we can see that the answerer knows various companies – big & small – they’re likely to be well-aware of the ICT-industry and therefore their answers have a different kind of significance compared to the other extreme. If a person doesn’t recognize the companies, we could imagine that they’re answering more based upon their emotions and feelings. If a person recognizes

more, we can suppose that their opinions and thoughts are based on something more than just feelings. A person who can identify only the very well-known companies can be expected to hold differing prejudices of ICT-companies in general also. That we will find out later in the empirical section. In this same segment, there is the logo of the conglomerate, of which we explained earlier, with a question asking: “Do you know which company’s logo is shown below?”

At this point, the questionnaire splits in two. If the person recognizes the logo, they will move to a section which is specifically about the prejudices they have towards the case company. If they can’t recognize it, they will move to a section covering prejudices towards the ICT-industry as a collection of companies. This section provides us with the PEB that we will compare to the internal EEB. The questionnaire ends by asking the participant, whether they have applied for a job in an ICT-company, or whether they’re planning to do so. Thus giving us insight into what kind of people are willing to apply to work for either the case company or to the industry.

This section of the research process is completed before the internal data gathering. As seen in Figure 9 earlier, the external data gathering is followed by the internal. The internal questionnaire follows a similar structure, so that the results are comparable. The demographic section is modified to answer in which subsidiary the person works in, what city they work in and how much work experience they have with the conglomerate. Naturally, we will also remove the section regarding the “ICT-company recognition” and modify the “applying for a job”-section.

The questionnaire is spread through chosen channels. The external data is gathered in cooperation with student guilds. The guilds spread the questionnaire to their members, while the HR-departments spread the questionnaire internally within the case company. Both external and internal questionnaires are attached at the end of this research. On the last page of the research, one can find the utilized 32 employer characteristics.

### **3.4 Data analysis methods**

When the data has been gathered both externally and internally, we need to process it somehow in order to answer the established research questions and to see if our hypotheses are fiction or fact – and prove it. The data is gathered through Google Forms and therefore we can easily transfer the data to Google Sheets for further analysis and grouping. At a very basic level, we are doing data point comparisons of different demographic groups in order to answer our questions and hypotheses. These cross-demographic comparisons can provide interesting information regarding the external employer brand of the conglomerate, while also showing us the differences in requirements towards employers that the students have. Also this cross-demographic comparison can show us how the EEB between subsidiaries compares and if the EEB is aligned throughout the conglomerate.

In this research, we utilize exploratory data analysis methods. This simply stands for the approach to analyze gathered data sets by summarizing the most significant characteristics. (Chatfield, 1995) These summaries are made with visual methods, by utilizing statistical graphics. In the empirical section one can expect to find a wide range of tables and charts used to compare the EEB and PEB. The goal therefore is to use visualizations of the quantitative data in order to point out emerging phenomena and trends. We seek clusters and trends that might not have been witnessed before.

The data is analyzed in demographic groups, not as a big whole. Such traits as the university, major subject, studying year, gender, ICT-company recognition and willingness to be employed in the industry are utilized to group answers. Internally we can group answers by subsidiary, length of employment, role etc.

### **3.5 Reliability and validity**

As we are making claims based on gathered data, it needs to be trustworthy. Otherwise, the data and the emerged conclusions will be based on fictional, unreliable information. This then could lead the data to be interpreted and utilized in ways that lead to results that seem counterintuitive and unaligned to the findings.

As this research is quantitative, we need a sample size big enough to build concrete findings from. In Finland in 2018, there was 16,817 university students in the field of trade & management. This group represents the students of economic sciences and industrial engineering & management. For information technology the same number in 2018 was 12,880. (Education Statistics Finland, 2019) To gain reliable and valid information, we want the margin of error to be as low as possible. As the sample size grows, so does the margin of error decrease. Therefore, we seek to gain the highest amount of answers, as we can possibly reach. The amount of gained answers will be shown in the first sub-chapter of findings.

The external data will be gathered from 17 different student guilds around Finland. The guilds are independent actors and their members are completely free to either fill or not fill the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire answers are totally random in the total population. Thus, we can expect the gained data to be from individuals solely motivated to provide information towards this specific research by sharing their thoughts and opinions. The answers come from individual students of three different fields: economic sciences, industrial engineering & management and information technology.

The internal data was gathered from eight different subsidiaries that operate in the Finnish marketplace. They're all separate companies, but operate under the same conglomerate brand. For the internal data, filling is free and anonymous. Only demographic data gathered are the subsidiary, department and experience with the company with the promise, that the data will only be used for this specific research. Therefore, the answers aren't skewed towards positive feedback only and the true performance of the EEB is evaluated.

The quantitative information is made reliable by volume. As the amount of gathered data grows, the effect of potential outliers decreases and averages & patterns emerge. Therefore, a requirement for making the research reliable and valid is the fact that we need a significant number of data-points. Reliability and validity will be further analyzed in chapter 4.1, which covers the nature of the gathered data in more detail.

## **4. Research findings**

The following chapters will cover the nature of the data and build findings upon them. This empirical section of the work seeks to answer to the earlier established research questions and related hypotheses.

### **4.1 The data**

The data gathering as a whole spanned a time of three months. The data was gathered in two parts, as there were two major target groups for the questionnaire. The whole preparation process leading up to the spreading of the questionnaire was a long one, because relationships had to be established and built to the organizations and individuals who would be in control of the coverage. Naturally, this was more difficult towards the external data coming from students, as there was zero past communication with these entities. The internal data from the conglomerate was easier to accumulate, as a clear communication structure exists, it is easier to find the right people and a mutual trust relationship is taken for granted.

As the questionnaire structure was satisfactory, it was sent to the actor in charge of spreading it with a brief information package about the questionnaire and why an individual should fill it. This, because we didn't want to cause excess stress on them besides using their member base. We rather wanted to offer a complete package ready for a quick spread. For a long time we thought about utilizing some sort of incentive to fill in the questionnaire, like a gift card, a piece of technology etc. This idea of incentivizing answering was discarded, as a common belief held strong that it could alter the results negatively and bring in answers that were solely motivated to seek the prize without putting effort into the research itself.

The information was first gathered from the external university groups to provide the perceived employer brand (PEB) section for the later comparisons. The process was smooth by nature, as the student groups shared the questionnaire to their members and the answers started to flow in to the system. No complications emerged during the process, although some parties had to be reminded and gently pushed towards sharing the questionnaire still while the answer-gathering phase is still on. The number of answers ultimately soared to

159 across eight different cities in Finland. The amount of cumulated answers is satisfactory, making most of intended comparisons and analyses possible. In order to build city or guild specific findings, we would've needed more answers. This research doesn't seek to go that precise with the findings, so such more specific testing could be a topic for future research.

After the student data was gathered and the questionnaire closed, it was time to gather the internal experienced employer brand (EEB) data. This was straightforward, as the questionnaire with a similar information package was delivered to all the HR managers of the subsidiaries for spreading. The process was much faster and straightforward, compared to the student data. The whole process took only two weeks and 294 answers cumulated from seven subsidiaries across Finland. The amount is highly satisfactory, making most intended comparisons possible and reliable.

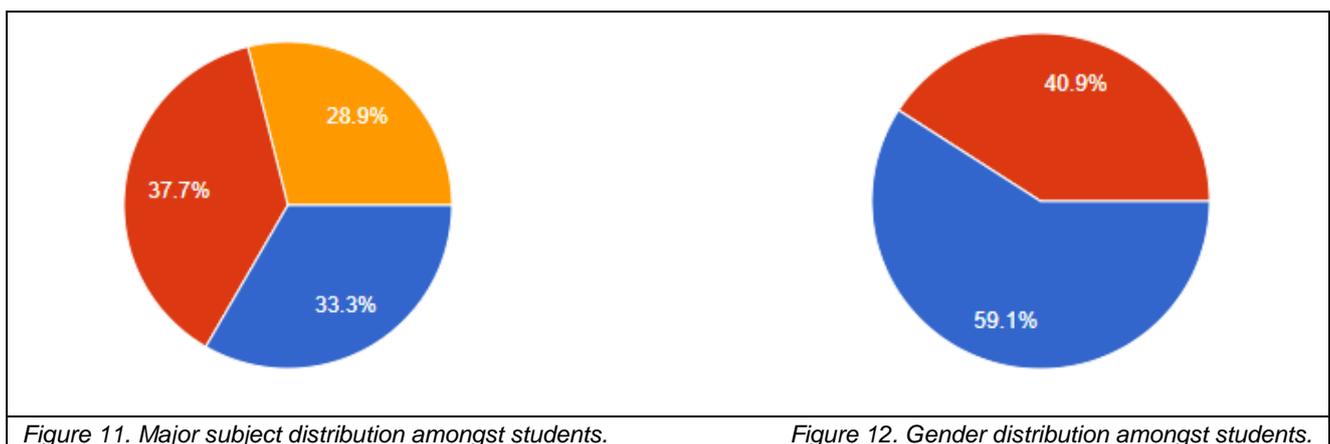
#### **4.1.1 Student demographics**

The student data was gathered with the goal in mind, that we could group the answers based on demographical traits. The objective is to understand what modern students seek from their ideal employer and what kind of perceptions do they hold of the case-company and ICT-industry in general when it comes to them being an employer. This data was also gathered in order to make valid and reliable comparisons between the experienced and perceived employer brand, as the results can indicate an unaligned opinion and highlight points of improvement.

The answers to the questionnaire came from eight different universities. The involvement varied greatly, as some universities had all three researched major subjects in their syllabus, while others had only one. The sheer size of the universities also ranged greatly and surely a wide set of other reasons affected the amount of cumulated results. The greatest amount of answers came from Lappeenranta University of Technology, covering 35,2% of the whole data set. Aalto University from Helsinki, Jyväskylä University and Oulu University all took a segment close to 15%. Smaller pools of answers came from HANKEN Business School, Tampere University, Turku University and Vaasa University. The set of data is quite

heterogeneous, with Lappeenranta University of Technology being the only segment with an exceptional amount of answers compared to the rest.

Three groups of major subjects were the target of this research: Information technology, Industrial engineering and management & Economic sciences. The distribution between these three demographic factors carried out exceptionally well, as they all were close to 1/3 of 100%. This distribution can be witnessed in Figure 11 below. Information technology claimed the biggest segment (red) with 37,7% of the total answers. Economic sciences came in second (blue) with a precise third of the total answers. The smallest, yet still significant group are the students of industrial engineering and management (yellow) with 28,9%.



A gender distribution close to 50/50 was sought after, with a 60/40 distribution being the end result. This can be seen in Figure 12 above. This distribution is acceptable and makes cross-gender comparisons possible, even though the population of male answerers is higher. This difference can be easily explained with the difference in gender amongst information technology answerers. From the information technology group, 88% of answers came from men. The other major subjects were close to a perfect division.

The student data also provided a good set of heterogeneity in the amount of academic years spent at the university. It seems that the students of first and second year are more willing to answer questionnaires, as from the total pool, 20,8% of answers were from 1<sup>st</sup> year

students, 34% from 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. This in total makes up more than 50% of the answers. 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students provided 15,7% of the answers, 4<sup>th</sup> year accumulated 13,8% and the groups after this each had about 5% each. We have to keep this in mind when building conclusions and an interesting future research topic could revolve around how preferences and perceptions evolve throughout the academic journey of a student.

In the midpoint of the questionnaire before the answerer moves to ICT-industry or conglomerate-specific questions, they're tested on ICT-industry knowledge and primed to answer with these ICT companies in mind. 15 companies were listed in the section only with their name, no logo or other information. The students were asked: "*Which of the following ICT-companies can you recall?*" The list of companies ranged from very well known all the way to small companies. The average amount of recognized companies from the list was 8,3. According to this average, three further groups were generated - low, medium & high industry knowledge. If a participant recognized six or less, they belong into the below average knowledge group. Between seven and nine means medium and a ten or higher indicates that they have higher than average industry knowledge. Only one participant from the whole population claimed that they recognized all of the companies.

71,7% were capable of recognizing the conglomerate's logo in the questionnaire and were thus channeled to answer questions specifically about perceptions regarding the company. The rest, 28,3%, were channeled to answer questions about perceptions of the ICT-industry as an employer. The questionnaire ends by asking whether the participant has applied to a job in either ICT or in the conglomerate and whether they're willing to seek employment if an opportunity emerges. As the population was divided in two, also two sets of answers were generated, seen below in Table 6:

	Yes (ICT)	No (ICT)	Yes (Conglom.)	No (Conglom.)
Have you applied?	<b>49%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Will you apply?	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>

*Table 6. Willingness to work for an ICT-company or the conglomerate.*

### **4.1.2 Company demographics**

The internal experienced employer brand data was gathered in order to provide factual information about what's it like to work in the company. This data can be further compared with the perceived employer brand information to see, whether the experience and perception align and how do they align – negatively or positively. In this chapter, the demographic traits that will be utilized in later analysis are examined.

The questionnaire was supposed to be distributed in each of the eight subsidiaries, but for reasons beyond our influence, one subsidiary didn't participate. Thus, the data was gathered from seven companies and accumulated 294 responses. As the companies vary greatly in size, so do the number of answers. The biggest subsidiary group generated 31,1% of the answers, 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest came up with 24,6%, 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest 21,8% and the four smaller ones divided the rest between them. The amount of answers from each subsidiary makes it possible to compare the experiences across subsidiary borders.

The participants placed themselves into their own area of work: marketing, sales, human resources etc. Only two significantly big groups emerged – 33,8% of answers were from product development and 21,8% from customer service. The other groups claimed significantly smaller shares: Sales, 8,2%; IT, 7,8%; Marketing, 5,5%; Finance, 4,8% and so on. Most significantly, five out of the possible eight CEOs answered the questionnaire with also six human resources managers answering. For the further analysis, an interesting section will be comparing CEO & HR views against those experiences of others.

A great distribution of population is visible when it comes to length of employment. This is good, because we can then witness and compare whether experiences change across the years and experience. 26,6%, a quarter, of the questionnaire participants have only worked in the company for less than 12 months. The biggest group of one to three years of employment experience in the conglomerate account for 31,7% of total answers. 17,7% of the answers came from people with four to seven years of experience and 23,9% from individuals with over seven years of experience.

Interestingly, the gender divide is very similar to that of the externally gathered student data. Among students, 59,1% were male and 40,9% female. This was mostly a result of the group of information technology students. In the conglomerate and among the 294 participants, 59,2% were male and 40,8% female. This only means that a difference of 0,1% between external and internal data exists when it comes to sex.

Lastly, before the questionnaire ended for the answerer, they were asked to provide a grade from one to ten on how probably they would recommend the conglomerate to someone as an employer. This is what we call an employee net promoter score (eNPS from now on). eNPS was established to measure customer experience and to predict future business growth. A score of 9 to 10 means that a person is extremely likely to promote, 7 to 8 means passive yet satisfied and scores lower than 6 (amplifying closer to 0) means that the person is a detractor. Detractors are unhappy and the most likely individuals to cause damage to the brand and development. (NICE Satmetrix, 2019)

In the comparisons, we will take a look at different eNPS numbers. This, because we should expect different results especially in the conglomerate-specific section of the work. Individuals who belong in the eNPS 10 group are naturally expected to be more positive and optimistic about their employer than those, who have given a 6 or a lower eNPS grade. Below you can witness the distribution of eNPS in Figure 13. The biggest group is eNPS 9, followed by eNPS 10 and eNPS 8. As a population of 7 and also under 6 exists, we want to study those populations more thoroughly.

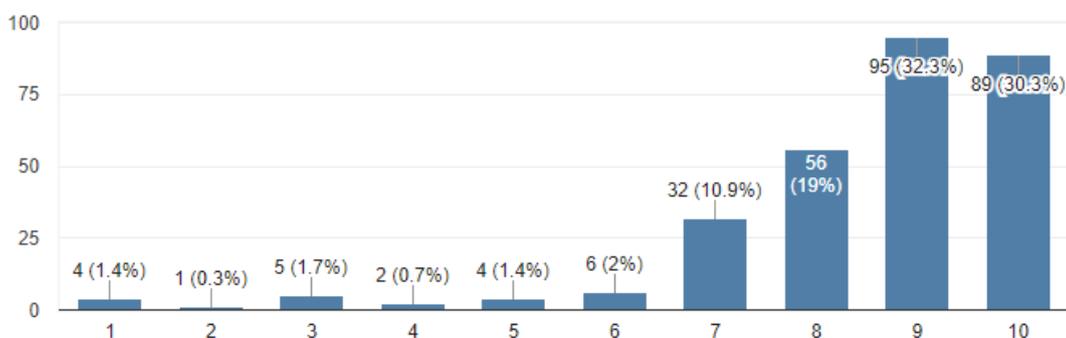


Figure 13. How likely are you to promote the conglomerate as an employer?

## **4.2 Ideal employer characteristics**

This section of the work will be the first done with the data gathered from the questionnaire. The questionnaire itself was divided into two major segments. The beginning part covered the traits of an ideal employer and the latter part was about ICT-industry & case conglomerate traits. In this ideal employer characteristics chapter, we take a look at the traits that both students and the employees appreciate in an employer. In this section, emphasis is put on the students, as the third research question was about what kind of traits do modern students expect and appreciate in their future employers. The reason for gathering this information is simply to witness, how close or far the conglomerate's PEB is from that of an ideal employer. Instead of seeking similarities, the idea is to witness differences and extremes between data populations. More emphasis in this research is put on the following chapter 4.3, which goes through the results of experienced employer brand and perceived employer brand.

### **4.2.1 Student data on ideal employer characteristics**

The gathered student data is open for observation in Figure 14, attached at the end of this chapter. The figure is read in the following way:

1. Left blue cells are the groups into which the student data was divided into based on for example major subject, length of studies, industry knowledge.
2. The blue cells above the numeric data symbolize the questionnaire questions, thus making it possible to cross-compare student groups and the questions themselves. The questions will be used in their verbal form across the analysis, but also attached on the last page of the research in English.
3. Grey boxes just right of the student groups symbolize the size of the sample.
4. The grey box on the bottom left hand corner and the array of numbers continuing to the right symbolize the total score of a specific employer trait across all student groups, providing a total score to the importance of the trait.
5. The numbers across the scale are the mean of answers in the population for that specific question. As a Likert-scale from 1-5 was used, the possible maximum score is 5 and the lowest is 1. The closer to 5 the score, the more do the students appreciate that characteristic in an employer. To make analysis and reading more

straightforward, the cells have been conditionally formatted to show bright green colors when the score is closer to 5 and bright red when closer to 1.

First, we will take a look at the population of all students, which comprises of the 159 answers gathered in total. Of the 32 traits, 12 reach a score higher than 4, while 6 get a below 3. The range between 2,8 and 3,5 can be interpreted as a “neutral score”, or not significant when it comes to evaluating employers. “Extreme” traits are listed in Table 7 below with the specific question attached, scores are kept out, available in Figure 14.

Q(x)	A score above 4 (Important trait)	Q(x)	A score below 3 (Not important trait)
Q12	Employer is equal towards everyone	Q8	The employer is a big organization
Q13	...is interested in the well-being of its employees	Q9	...is well-known
Q14	...allows personal development and the learning of new skills	Q11	...is international
Q15	...invests in teaching and developing the employees	Q25	...offers clear working hours (e.g. 08:00-16:00)
Q16	...enables future career development	Q28	...is officially certified as a great employer (e.g. Great Place to Work-certificate)
Q17	A mutual trust relationship exists between the employer and the employee	Q32	The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs)
Q18	...is flexible when it comes to work hours and place		
Q19	Success in the company is achieved through personal merits and accomplishments		
Q21	...makes a healthy work-life balance possible		
Q22	...is open towards the employees making their own initiatives		
Q24	Workdays involve variation		
Q29	The employer employs delightful colleagues		

*Table 7. Ideal employer traits, most important and least important traits.*

This list of traits provides the general answer to what students as a total population expect and desire from their employers. Instead of finding these macro-level results satisfactory, we will next look at how different demographic groups compare to each other. Emphasis is put on cross-group differences, not on repeating similarities.

The first group is the gender-division into male students and female students. In the dataset, we can witness a difference based on gender to several questions. And to begin with, the male students scored 11 characteristics with a score above 4, while the women scored 18 characteristics with an above 4 average grade. Q1 and Q2 immediately build a big difference, as the female students on average give a 0.45 points higher score to “Employer is innovative” and a 0.51 points higher score to “Employer is ethical” than the male students. The women also emphasize Q10: “Employer has a good reputation” with an average score higher than men of 0.38 points. Both genders strongly agree on the importance of Q12: “Employer is equal towards everyone”, but among female participants this was scored 0.43 points higher than among men. Therefore, we can expect women to be more sensitive towards workplace equality.

The biggest difference of 0.75 points is in Q25: “The employer offers clear working hours (e.g. 08:00-16:00). Male participants strongly disagree with this characteristic, seeking flexible work-hours. The women remain neutral with a score of 2.97 in this, making this characteristic non-significant for them. Three more characteristics divide the genders: Q26, Q28 and Q32. Again, in each one of these the women are the ones who score significantly higher. Women see a 0.49 points higher significance in Q26: “The employer makes it possible for me to use the skills that my studies has provided me.” Although still quite neutral with the score of 2.74. The last source of difference is the last question Q32: “The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs”. Both genders score this characteristic quite neutrally, but the female students score it 0.48 points higher than the men do.

Based on these answers, we can draw conclusions that the female participants in this research have a wider range of important factors that influence the perceived employer brand, than males. The male student participants only scored 8 characteristics higher than

the women, with low differences in those 8. This means that in this population, the women see 24 characteristics as more significant than the males with the previously stated questions highlighting a significant difference in experienced importance.

Next, we observe the differences between students of information technology (IT), industrial engineering and management (IEM) and economic sciences (ES). Naturally, these three classes follow the patterns of the total population, but variation between them is witnessed. Solely based on what the major subject of the questionnaire participant is, 10 characteristics experience significant differences. The remaining 20 don't showcase significant cross-disciplinary anomalies.

By looking at Figure 14, one can witness the first polarization in Q3: "The employer is entrepreneurial". Although all three groups are neutral on the question, IEM and ES students see it as a slightly favorable trait (3.13 & 3.23), whilst IT-students (2.92) see it as a not important factor in an employer. Q5 "The employer is a growing company" is neutral among students of IT (3.12) and ES (3.19), but among IEM students the 3.48 means that the characteristic is close to being a significant factor. Q8 and Q9 generated negative results in all three groups, meaning that the two are characteristics that really don't have an impact on how the student perceives the employer. Q8 stands for "The employer is a big organization", and Q9 for "The employer is well known". In both questions, the lowest score came from students of IT. The score of 1.82 in Q8 means, that big size is not important and can even have a negative impact on the PEB of IT students. The difference in this question to the other two groups is 0.50 points. The low scores in Q9 mean that the future employer doesn't need to be a well-known corporation. This again highlighted among IT students (2.35) with also IEM (2.63) and ES (2.66) students following the same ideology.

Q11 "The employer is global" received an under 3 score from IT and ES, while IEM with 3.17 is the only group that sees being global as an important characteristic & a positive influence on PEB. Q18 "The employer is flexible, when it comes to work hours and location." Is most appreciated by the IT-students (4.32), followed closely by IEM (4.11), while ES (3.91) is the only group with a score under 4. Anything above a 4 can be thought of as a highly influential

characteristic. We could state then, that IT-students appreciate a more fluid, relaxed system of employment and the ES-students a slightly more rigid and fixed system.

This point of flexibility can be further viewed in Q25, where differences of opinion emerge again. Q25 stands for “The employer provides clear working hours. (e.g. 08:00 – 16:00)”. Neither group has scored this an over 3, but a difference of 0.59 points exists between IT (2.22) and ES (2.81). This means that ES students are quite neutral when it comes to working hours, but IT students, being so close to 2, see fixed hours as a negative characteristic in an employer. This flexibility can be further proved with Q31 “The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture”, where IT students are the only group to score over 4 with 4.03. IEM students see informal culture as a neutral characteristic with 3.15 and ES as a slightly influential one with 3.64.

The two last characteristics we want to highlight are about the community – Q30 and Q32. Q30 “The employer employs people, that are congenial” and Q32 “The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs) bring forth an interesting matter. The questions are nearly the opposites of the other and this can be seen from the scores. IEM students are most in favor of a work community that is congenial – having people similar in nature, personality, tastes, habits and interests. IEM score was the only one above 4 with 4.09, while both IT and ES scoring 3.85. The scores flip in Q32, as ES score of 3.21 is the only one on the positive side, seeing work community diversity as a slightly desirable characteristic. IT (2.72) and IEM (2.74) therefore prefer to work in a community that is more homogeneous, as ES-students are more open for a heterogenic community.

What we can conclude based on these results is, that in many aspects the three groups carry a similar set of preferences. The ones listed in the past paragraphs are the 10 out of the 32 characteristics that clearly had a divide in cross-disciplinary preference. Student groups are different by nature and characteristics that have a big impact on one student’s perception of an employer, may have small impact on the perception of another. The differences highlighted must be taken into consideration, when planning a roadmap for developing the perceived employer brand in the eyes of the targets.

The third division in the population of the students was that of amount of academic years spent at the university. This group was divided further into two segments: studied two years or less, studied over two years. Interestingly, the length of studies only brings forth four significant differences in ideal employer preferences. Those, who have studied less than two years score 0.39 points higher in Q2 “The employer is ethical”. This 4.15 score compared to the 3.76 score of over 2 years studied is quite a significant difference. From where this difference emerges, has potential for future research.

Significant score difference can also be found from Q25, Q26 and Q28. Those who have studied for less than two years are more towards neutral when it comes to working hours, as those who have studied over two years see clear working hours as a negative thing. New students also emphasize the possibility to utilize skills learned from their degree more than those, who have studied for longer. Lastly, new students are quite neutral on employer certifications, while students with more academic background see such certificates as insignificant to their perception of the employer.

The industry knowledge division to high, medium and low industry knowledge based on company recognition is an interesting category in many ways. Students with low industry knowledge place more value on the employer being a big organization and well known than those individuals with medium to high ICT-industry knowledge. Same fact emerges when talking of employer certifications and workday variation. One interesting category where low industry knowledge scores lower than medium or high is Q19 “One can succeed in the company through merits and personal achievements.” The difference isn’t big, but future research could study whether employee industry knowledge has a direct link to career success.

Individuals with high industry knowledge give a very low score to the employer being a big organization, being well known, being global, clear working hours, employer certifications and workplace community diversity. These individuals appreciate learning new skills and personal development the highest, with mutual trust between employee and employer and

employee wellbeing among the most positive influencers on perceived employer brand. It seems like ICT industry knowledge has somewhat of an impact on how an individual perceives an ideal employer. The less the student knows of the ICT industry, the higher the average scores appear to be in this particular questionnaire for an ideal employer, vice versa. The last group of applying to a job in the ICT-sector or to the conglomerate don't display significant findings between them and won't therefore be taken into consideration here.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	
All (Students)	159	377	397	308	325	325	388	213	253	394	292	447	452	458	428	449	462	412	410	349	445	409	388	411	253	392	358	240	442	392	365	289	
Male (Students)	94	359	377	310	326	332	380	204	244	379	284	430	440	450	422	441	452	415	412	357	434	403	390	398	222	372	349	217	424	309	369	269	
Female (Students)	65	403	428	306	325	314	405	400	228	268	417	305	472	468	437	460	477	408	408	337	462	418	385	429	297	422	371	274	452	395	358	317	
Information Technology	60	357	390	292	323	312	392	375	182	235	387	275	435	458	460	432	432	457	432	407	357	452	410	392	395	222	383	363	232	457	385	403	272
Industrial Engineering & Management	46	385	391	313	335	348	393	400	233	263	391	317	441	433	420	467	454	411	415	350	437	400	393	422	261	400	337	241	428	409	315	274	
Economic Sciences	53	392	411	323	319	319	385	392	232	266	406	291	466	460	455	432	453	475	391	409	340	445	417	379	419	281	396	370	249	456	385	364	321
Studied less than 2 years	87	384	415	320	316	331	390	384	220	259	395	299	460	454	461	425	459	472	410	405	351	452	407	383	416	274	405	353	260	443	382	360	293
Studied more than 2 years	72	368	376	294	336	317	390	393	206	247	393	285	432	449	454	432	438	450	414	417	347	438	413	394	404	228	378	364	217	440	404	371	283
Low industry knowledge (6 or lower)	47	385	419	317	340	326	385	394	243	279	406	304	462	457	451	417	466	464	411	398	353	460	411	383	438	300	419	343	281	438	381	353	302
Medium industry knowledge (7-9)	52	363	396	294	312	321	390	385	200	246	387	298	444	446	450	433	437	456	404	410	335	437	398	375	392	252	367	360	219	440	402	362	275
High industry knowledge (over 10)	60	382	382	313	325	327	393	387	202	240	392	278	438	452	470	433	447	467	420	420	358	442	418	403	405	217	393	368	227	445	392	377	290
Will apply to a job	113	378	397	310	323	321	391	391	211	247	395	296	457	458	461	433	452	466	409	413	350	449	405	386	409	255	396	356	258	442	391	366	284
Won't apply to a job	46	374	398	304	330	333	380	220	270	393	285	424	435	450	417	441	452	420	402	348	437	420	393	415	248	383	363	196	439	393	361	300	
Total (Score total across categories)		49	52	40	42	42	51	50	28	33	51	38	58	59	59	56	58	60	54	53	45	58	53	50	54	33	51	47	31	57	51	47	38

Figure 14. Ideal employer characteristics (Student data)

The questionnaire held a part within it, where the participants were asked to prioritize the 32 employer characteristics into “Most important”, “Important” and “Least important”. The characteristics were further divided into three subcategories, each being ranked: “Company characteristics”, “Working” and “Work community”. Results of this section of the questionnaire are listed in Figure 15 below.

Students	#	Company characteristics			Working			Work community		
		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Male:	94	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q14	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q28
Female:	65	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q14	Q17	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q32
IT	60	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q14	Q18	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
IEM	46	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q14	Q16	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q28
ES	53	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q14	Q17	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Under 2 years	87	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q14	Q17	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q32
Over 2 years	72	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q14	Q18	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q28
Low know	47	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q14	Q17	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q28
Mid know	52	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q14	Q17 & Q21	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q28
High know	60	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q14	Q18	Q25	Q29	Q30	Q32

Figure 15. Group prioritization of employer characteristics (Students)

The groups are defined on the left with the prioritization categories on the top. The numbers 1, 2 and 3 stand for the importance with 1 being “Most important”. 2 stands for “Important” while 3 stands for “Least important”. The results are shown in Q(x) form, each term representing a specific characteristic. From this chart, it’s easy to witness that all student groups have a tendency to agree on the “Most important” and the “Least important” characteristics. Differences mostly emerge on the “Important”-section.

In company characteristics, a consensus emerges; Q13 “The employer is interested in the wellbeing of its employees.” is the most important characteristic, while Q8 “The employer is a big organization” is the least important one. The “Important”-section (2) divides groups in all comparison segments: gender, study, academic years and industry knowledge. Men, IT-students, those with over 2 years of academic experience and high industry knowledge score Q6 “The employer has interesting products and services” as the second most important characteristic. Women, IEM & ES-students, under 2 years of academic experience and low to mid industry knowledge see Q12 “The employer is equal” as a more crucial trait.

In the category of “Working”, the results are again very similar. Q14 “The employer makes it possible to learn new things and develop” emerges as the most important characteristic. Q25 “The employer provides clear working hours. (e.g. 08:00 – 16:00)” is the least important by a large margin. The “Important”-category experiences some variety, as Q16, Q17, Q18, and Q21 appear. Men appreciate a healthy balance between work and life (Q21) while women appreciate a mutual trust relationship with the employer (Q17). IT-students appreciate flexibility (Q18), IEM-students career development (Q16) and ES-students mutual trust (Q17). Number of academic years and industry knowledge sees a divide between the past characteristics.

The last division is for the work community. All groups agree, that Q29 “The employer employs delightful colleagues” is the most important. The “Important” group is divided between Q30 “The employer employs people that are congenial” and a few Q31 “The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture.” The least important category in work community is an interesting one. Most groups state, that Q28 “The employer is certified. (e.g. “Great Place to Work”-certificate)” is not important, but three distinct groups think differently. Women, students with under 2 academic years and high industry knowledge participants see Q32 as the least important characteristic “The work community is diverse. (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs.)”

Through this group prioritization of employer characteristics we can see that on a bigger scale, students agree on most and least important factors when it comes to the characteristics of an employer. If any of the “Most Important” characteristics aren’t fulfilled in the perception of the student, the employer brand is dysfunctional. Those characteristics are the base on top of which further analysis of the other “Important” characteristics takes place. All groups expect an employer to be interested in the wellbeing of its employees (Q13), the employer makes it possible to learn new things and develop (Q14) and that they employ delightful colleagues (Q29).

#### **4.2.2 Employee data on ideal employer characteristics**

As stated in the beginning of the last section of the research, more emphasis is placed on how the students view their ideal employers. We aren't interested in how the employees of the conglomerate see this topic yet, but a very brief comparison is in place to understand the population a bit better before dwelling into the experienced employer brand. As for the student data, the employee data is exhibited in a similar way in Figure 16 and Figure 17. This data set contains more groups within it than the student data. The questionnaire answers have been divided into gender, subsidiary, eNPS, length of employment and the participant's role.

Solely based on gender alone we can see that almost 50% of the 32 characteristics have significantly different results. Biggest point difference (0.56) between men and women can be witnessed in Q18 and Q21. A clear consensus between genders exists only in Q8, Q9 and Q32.

The answers were also divided to be subsidiary specific. Seven subsidiaries participated in the research, with one subsidiary only giving the answer of their CEO. Two of the seven need to be cautiously studied, as the number of answers is under 10. There is clear variance between subsidiaries when examining the results, but these will be further studied in the next section focusing on the conglomerate's employer brand. This ideal employer data will be used later to compare, whether the subsidiary currently meets the desires of its employees.

The eNPS results (eNPS 10 all the way to eNPS 6 or lower) highlight an interesting trend. The higher the eNPS result, the higher the total amount of points given to the ideal employer. By adding up each Q(x) Likert-scale answer, we can witness that eNPS 10 give a total of 131.75 points throughout the questionnaire. eNPS 8 give 120.60 and eNPS 6 or lower give 112.56 points. For future research, it would be interesting to study, whether individuals that give a high eNPS score also put emphasis on a wider range of characteristics than low eNPS, as they remain more neutral throughout the questionnaire. Direct correlation between

eNPS and employer satisfaction can be seen in the experienced employer brand section later.

Length of employment doesn't seem to make a big difference, when it comes to ideal employer characteristics. Most of the questions receive very similar average scores, with only two pieces of significant difference highlighted. Those with employment under 1 year long (3.78), are more neutral about the importance of a low hierarchy (Q27) than those, who have worked for 1-3 years (4.24) or over 4 years (4.02). Lastly, when the answers are divided into groups based on function: product development, sales, marketing, customer service, CEO, HR, finances or IT, the differences are tremendous. This categorization is the only one, where differences on average of over 1 whole point exist. The closer the score is to 5, the more favorable the group is of the Q(x). Differences of over 1 point indicate a significant dissimilarity in employer perception. Below are a few examples of how big the differences can be between function averages.

**Q9 “The employer is well known”**

CEO (3.60) – Product development (2.48)

**Q25 “The employer provides clear working hours. (e.g. 08:00 - 16:00)”**

Customer service (3.16) – Marketing (1.88)

**Q27 “The employer has a low hierarchy”**

Finances (4.36) – IT (3.57)

**Q32 “The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs)”**

Marketing (3.75) – IT (2.83)

Some interesting points also emerged in the data, worth mentioning. Q6 indicates, that product development is least impacted by the employer having interesting products or services. Every CEO that answered the questionnaire gave a 5 to Q7 “The employer is dynamic and future-oriented.” HR interestingly gave a positive, yet lowest score to Q12, Q13, Q14 and Q15 of all functions. The reason that this is so surprising is that Q12 is workplace equality, Q13 is employer wellbeing, Q14 is the employee's possibility to learn

and develop and Q15 is “the employer invests in teaching and developing its employees.” All these revolve heavily around the HR-department, so it’s surprising to see them as the group reacting the least positively towards these characteristics.

Surprisingly, sales was the function that scored the lowest on Q19 “One can succeed in the company through merits and personal achievements.” Stereotypically salespeople are seen as competitive and meritocratic, but that doesn’t hold true amongst the salespeople of this conglomerate, at least according to this question. Customer service is the only group that scored an over 3 (3.16) in Q25 “The employer provides clear working hours. (e.g. 08:00 - 16:00)”. When it comes to Q28 and employer certifications, IT doesn’t see them as significant with a score of 1.96. Other groups are more neutral of this characteristic with CEOs giving easily the highest score of 3.80.

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32
All	294	408	413	353	362	369	415	420	246	288	402	298	456	465	463	438	439	472	458	423	371	463	427	389	415	257	369	403	246	451	393	419	327
Male	174	399	405	349	353	364	406	407	233	272	389	289	442	456	455	429	428	465	456	420	366	460	421	373	403	253	355	389	234	445	387	413	304
Female	120	421	369	312	335	322	376	381	236	270	371	277	416	415	411	392	388	422	400	373	332	404	376	353	373	228	340	361	222	397	345	367	307
Solutions	91	418	421	364	363	389	426	427	236	289	409	276	463	467	467	438	444	475	457	436	368	458	436	402	424	245	349	426	277	451	398	429	342
Consulting	64	373	394	302	333	316	381	389	208	234	375	270	427	453	445	434	423	458	441	405	373	452	395	358	381	214	350	381	181	434	372	398	314
Software	72	417	422	358	372	356	419	421	261	300	404	308	457	457	456	433	424	469	457	417	382	461	426	383	417	294	376	385	260	453	388	401	317
Financial Solutions	29	400	403	376	372	400	417	424	293	341	417	348	466	472	466	428	455	483	459	417	362	472	438	400	428	283	403	400	255	462	397	424	310
Megallex	7	457	386	329	371	414	471	457	243	300	457	371	457	500	471	471	471	486	471	429	414	486	457	429	443	186	343	443	229	443	386	414	314
Passell	4	425	425	400	400	425	425	500	300	300	375	375	475	500	500	450	475	450	450	425	375	450	425	425	425	200	375	400	325	475	425	450	425
Tampuri	26	392	392	373	350	377	396	408	254	300	381	292	446	446	462	419	431	454	465	408	315	458	412	377	396	288	396	373	227	438	396	438	315
NPS 10	89	437	429	376	398	407	429	451	266	312	419	315	475	478	481	456	466	483	463	447	383	471	444	415	437	260	389	426	296	467	421	429	349
NPS 9	95	402	415	361	349	374	424	421	247	297	406	295	460	466	462	440	443	479	458	423	377	457	431	396	411	260	367	395	251	445	382	421	340
NPS 8	56	389	416	329	355	350	402	398	239	254	373	293	439	446	450	413	409	455	457	409	361	459	404	357	400	266	348	388	227	455	386	420	313
NPS 7	32	394	384	316	366	347	397	409	241	291	409	325	450	463	456	447	431	463	456	419	366	469	431	378	403	263	375	394	184	444	384	400	303
NPS 6 or lower	22	382	377	345	282	273	382	364	182	241	382	214	409	459	436	409	400	455	445	364	332	459	391	359	395	200	341	395	164	414	359	391	255

Figure 16. Conglomerate ideal employer characteristics, part 1.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	
Length of employment, under 1 year	79	405	414	346	367	371	406	418	262	301	411	309	457	467	468	442	449	468	451	423	368	459	410	378	415	265	381	378	266	452	397	406	330
Length of employment, 1-3 years	93	411	417	344	346	363	422	420	228	267	397	309	459	468	462	449	446	471	457	420	374	463	439	395	409	234	363	424	213	448	391	423	339
Length of employment, over 4 years	122	407	410	366	370	371	416	421	249	297	401	282	452	461	460	427	427	475	464	425	370	465	428	393	419	269	366	402	258	453	392	424	316
Function: Product development	99	403	413	333	360	347	395	409	226	248	381	255	448	453	463	433	432	467	452	409	357	467	418	363	401	256	358	403	217	448	388	414	306
Function: Sales	24	388	400	379	350	388	438	417	267	338	404	321	438	458	450	421	425	467	471	404	396	446	429	396	429	250	354	421	258	442	367	429	342
Function: Marketing	16	400	456	369	363	350	400	438	225	313	425	338	469	481	469	444	463	469	463	419	338	463	456	356	450	188	375	425	250	456	413	431	375
Function: Customer service	64	438	422	384	400	411	442	441	281	339	442	333	483	483	480	464	455	486	467	444	397	467	450	419	431	316	392	419	298	458	405	433	369
Function: CEO	5	460	460	420	400	460	420	500	240	360	460	360	480	500	480	460	480	460	460	460	380	440	460	440	420	180	360	420	380	460	380	440	340
Function: HR	6	433	433	383	400	383	400	433	267	283	383	283	433	450	433	417	433	483	450	417	333	500	383	433	483	283	400	400	267	433	383	400	350
Function: Finances	14	421	414	350	386	371	429	436	221	257	400	300	493	479	471	457	450	486	471	464	393	464	436	429	436	214	357	436	250	464	400	407	357
Function: IT	23	396	391	304	339	352	422	417	239	257	396	322	448	487	470	457	443	470	452	439	387	474	417	391	413	252	352	357	196	465	417	409	283

Figure 17. Conglomerate ideal employer characteristics, part 2.

Students	#	Company characteristics			Working			Work community		
		1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Male	174	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Female	120	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q14	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Solutions	91	Q13	Q7	Q8	Q17	Q14	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Consulting	64	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Software	72	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Financial Solutions	29	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q16	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Megaflex	7	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q16	Q18	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Passelli	4	Q7	Q12	Q8	Q14	-	Q25	Q31	-	Q32
Tampuuri	26	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q14	Q25	Q31	Q29	Q28
NPS 10	89	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
NPS 9	95	Q13	Q7	Q8	Q17	Q14	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
NPS 8	56	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
NPS 7	32	Q13	Q7	Q8	-	Q16	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
NPS 6 or lower	22	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q21	Q18	Q25	Q31	Q27	Q28
LOE, under 1 year	79	Q13	Q12	Q8	-	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
LOE, 1-3 years	93	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
LOE, over 4 years	122	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q18	Q25	Q31	Q29	Q28
Product development	99	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28
Function: Sales	24	Q13	Q6	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	-	Q27	Q28
Function: Marketing	16	Q13	Q7	Q8	Q14	Q18	Q25	Q30	Q31	Q28
Customer service	64	Q13	Q12	Q8	Q17	Q16	Q25	Q31	Q29	Q28
Function: CEO	5	Q6	Q13	-	-	Q16	Q25	Q27	Q29	Q28
Function: HR	6	Q12	Q13	Q8	Q17	Q21	Q25	Q30	Q29	Q28
Function: Finances	14	Q13	Q12	Q8	-	-	Q25	Q29	Q27	Q32
Function: IT	23	Q13	Q7	Q8	Q14	-	Q25	Q29	Q31	Q28

Figure 18. Group prioritization of employer characteristics (Employees)

Similarly to the student data, the employees were also asked to rank the 32 employee characteristics into “Most important”, “Important” and “Least important” in the same three categories. It seems to be a very straightforward for the employees to pick the most important and the least important characteristics, while again variance can be witnessed in the column “2”, “Important”. These answers are almost identical with the similar student version with one big, understandable difference. In “Working” category, all student groups stated Q14 “The employer makes it possible to learn new things and develop” as the most important characteristic. From Figure 18 we can see, that the employees highly state Q17 as the most important: “A mutual trust relationship exists between the employer and the employee”. In this prioritization, we can conclude that students place high value on learning and development, while employees highlight mutual trust.

### 4.3 Employer brand

The second part of the questionnaire focused on employer branding, especially on that of the studied conglomerate. The questions by nature measure how true the employer characteristic is, when talking about this specific conglomerate. A score of five translates to “Highly accurate” and a one to “Not at all accurate”. The same questions were asked from the students as from the employees of the company, providing this research with data for EEB and PEB. Through studying the perceptions first, we identify how the 294 participants experience the company as an employer and compare these results to the 159 students, who have no experience of being an employer, but only rank it based on their perceptions. Through this comparison, we can identify, whether the employer brand is aligned internally and externally. The results will be summarized in section 5. From this section of the questionnaire, one of the 32 characteristics was removed for its unfit form: Q28 “The employer is certified. (e.g. "Great Place to Work"-certificate)”. In this form, Q28 is answered either “Yes” or “No”, which doesn’t fit to this 5-point Likert-scale. Besides this, the rest 31 questions are identical with the ideal employer section.

#### 4.3.1 Experienced employer brand

The experienced employer brand (EEB) is how the various employees within the company experience it as an employer. The data is utilized in the same way, as in the previous chapter, by cutting it into smaller segments after first being analyzed as a whole. Without putting too much emphasis on neutral employer characteristics, the positive and negative highlights will be examined. This, because the extremes are great information upon which to alter and take action later on.

From the whole EEB data (Figure 19 at the end of the chapter), there are five positive highlights (a score over 4.1) and four negative highlights (score under 3.5) worth mentioning. The conglomerate, according to its own employees, excels in the following employer characteristics (ranked in descending order from highest score):

1. Q5: The employer is a growing company (**4.44**)
2. Q29: The employer employs delightful colleagues (**4.28**)
3. Q18: The employer is flexible, when it comes to work hours and location (**4.21**)

4. Q21: The employer enables a healthy balance between work and life (**4.16**)
5. Q31: The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture (**4.13**)

These particular EEB characteristics are solid arguments to utilize, when attempting to modify potential and desired employee PEB. These positive highlights are genuine and come from the employees themselves, so they're also actionable. There is no need to modify anything in order to promote them, as they already exist and are available for promotional usage. In chapter 4.4 the alignment of EEB and PEB is further studied, showcasing whether these thoughts and opinions are shared amongst students also.

On the contrary, from the total data mass of 294 answers, four characteristics stand out with lower scores than the most of them. Only one characteristic of the 32 accumulated a below neutral (<3.00) score, translating to general denial. The other three had a score below 3.5, still being above neutral, but under the average score of 3.82 and therefore worth highlighting. These characteristics are listed below in descending order from worst score:

1. Q20: The employer pays an above average salary (**2.80**)
2. Q23: The employer makes it possible to move freely from one area of responsibility to another within the company (**3.34**)
3. Q15: The employer invests in teaching and developing its employees (**3.45**)
4. Q32: The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs) (**3.50**)

These negative highlights of EEB work as counter-arguments to working for the conglomerate. The four characteristics are potential pieces of improvement in the hopes of developing the employer-employee relationship. The development of these characteristics is especially crucial, if the students align their perceptions with these experiences. That means that the negative and dissatisfied message has delivered itself to the potential and desired employee pool and is well known.

These highlights rise from the total questionnaire population, and next we need to examine, whether differences in EEB exist between and amongst different segments of the data. These include EEB differences between gender, company, eNPS, length of employment

and role. Looking at the data (Figure 19), we can witness two differences between male and female participants. The men give a lower score in 25 of the 32 characteristics compared to women, signaling of a higher level of dissatisfaction. This phenomenon is not drastic, but one possibly worth examining further in the future. The only single score worth highlighting when it comes to gender is in Q12 (The employer is equal). Although women score their EEB generally higher than the men do, in equality their score is **0,34** points lower than that of the men. The score still signals satisfaction (**3.86**), but indicates that the employed men (**4.20**) experience the conglomerate as an “equal” entity more so than the women do.

As the conglomerate is made up of eight subsidiaries (seven used in this research), it's worth examining the differences between them. As they are highly autonomous and separated from one another, differences can and do exist, as can be witnessed. The data concerning the subsidiaries is reliable when it comes to volume, except for “Passeli” which has only four answers. Drawing conclusions solely on such a small set of answers is highly unreliable. What we can witness first hand though, is that we can rank subsidiary-specific EEB according to eNPS, as eNPS should be the most reliable determinant of satisfaction with employer.

1. (Passeli (**10.00**), unreliable data set)
2. Solutions (**8.85**)
3. Tampuuri (**8.62**)
4. Megaflex (**8.57**)
5. Software (**8.53**)
6. Financial Solutions (**8.28**)
7. Consulting (**7.72**)

One subsidiary within the conglomerate stands out from the rest with their eNPS average and that is “Consulting”. It's the only one with a score under 8 and also most of the 32 employer characteristics are scored below average. Previously we quantified the amount of positive highlights (over 4.1 score) in the whole data to be five, while negative highlights (under 3.5 score) was at four. Below in Table 8, you can witness how these positive and negative highlights distribute between the subsidiaries.

Subsidiary	eNPS	Positives (#)	Negatives (#)
Passeli	10.00	19	6
Solutions	8.85	13	1
Tampuuri	8.62	4	12
Megaflex	8.57	6	5
Software	8.53	7	5
Financial Solutions	8.28	7	5
Consulting	7.72	1	15

*Table 8. Cross-subsidiary distribution of positive and negative EEB characteristics*

Here we can immediately see that the differences are vast between the subsidiaries. “Solutions” has only one characteristic, which the employees score under 3.5, meanwhile “Consulting” has over 15 of them – almost half of all the 32. With such variances between subsidiaries, it’s problematic for the conglomerate to develop their employer brand systematically. The subsidiaries are simply put at a state, where no conclusions can be drawn between them to establish an aligned message of employment as “one conglomerate”.

To further prove the reliability of eNPS-scoring and its connection to EEB, we can do a similar table (Table 9) of negative and positive highlights:

eNPS	Answers (#)	Positives (#)	Negatives (#)
10	89	23	1
9	95	9	2
8	56	4	10
7	32	2	20
6 or lower	22	0	29

*Table 9. Cross-eNPS distribution of positive and negative EEB characteristics*

The eNPS distribution is fairly straightforward in EEB. The higher the eNPS-score, the better the experienced employer brand as a whole. The difference in scoring on average between eNPS 10 and eNPS 6 or lower is 0.82 points. The most unaligned characteristic is Q13 (“The employer is interested in the wellbeing of its employees”) with 1.47 difference and closest to alignment is Q8 (“The employer is a big organization”) with 0.23 difference. Length of employment doesn’t bring significant and mentionable differences with it, when studied solely as a time-related entity. In future studies, length of employment could be studied as a subsidiary-specific variable in order to witness, whether it plays a role between the subsidiaries. What can be witnessed from this dataset is a phenomenon of a “slump”. Employees with under 1 year or over 4 years of experience in the company are more positive in EEB than the rest. The 1-3 year bracket of the three are the least positive. This won’t be studied in this research, but acts as a recommendation for future studies: “What causes the new employees to be so positive and why is the first year followed by a slump during years 1-3?”

Lastly, the data is segmented into roles. As the positive highlight (>4.1) vs negative highlight (<3.5) comparison is best in examining the EEB between many entities, one can find how these groups differ in general EEB in Table 10 below.

Role	eNPS	Positive (#)	Negative (#)
CEO	10	21	4
HR	9.5	7	6
Customer service	8.86	14	1
Finances	8.86	8	6
Marketing	8.63	12	5
Sales	8.58	5	5
Product development	8.35	5	5
IT	7.83	6	9

*Table 10. Cross-functional distribution of positive and negative EEB characteristics*

First we can witness, that CEOs give their own companies a score of ten out of ten in eNPS. The HR-department follows closely with 9.5. The only group with eNPS-scores of under eight is the IT-department. Besides eNPS, the most positive to say about the experienced employer brand are the CEOs with 21 variables, customer service with 14 variables and marketing with 12 variables. As eNPS walks hand in hand with EEB, understandably IT was the most negative with nine variables scoring under 3.5. Interestingly, although HR gave a high eNPS-score to the conglomerate as an employer, their averages when it comes to scoring the 32 characteristics, are lower than those of the CEOs, customer service, marketing and finance.

This information will be used later, when comparing the experienced employer brand with the perceived employer brand. In that section, the datasets will be compared between each other as whole ones, not through the segments examined in this chapter. In future studies such exact population comparisons can be completed, if value in such exists. The goal of this chapter was to establish a base for understanding how the conglomerate average EEB is formed and what kind of phenomena are behind that. What we now know, is that the EEB is very different in each subsidiary and that it's affected by gender, length of employment and role within the company. The next chapter examines how the students perceive the conglomerate as an employer, moving on to the conflict & alignment chapter, which is the main focus of this study.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	NPS	
All	294	362	378	359	406	444	373	388	403	373	383	386	406	391	395	345	370	402	421	378	280	416	394	334	383	353	358	378	428	398	413	350	851
Male	174	344	383	347	408	439	361	372	405	368	378	389	420	383	390	339	363	398	419	380	275	414	386	326	373	352	353	371	424	395	408	348	842
Female	120	388	370	377	403	451	392	410	401	380	391	382	386	403	403	353	381	408	425	375	288	420	407	347	398	354	366	389	435	403	421	353	854
Solutions	91	388	408	395	424	468	397	419	405	388	401	404	419	433	424	374	407	430	435	399	276	427	419	375	392	354	369	404	441	413	436	380	885
Consulting	64	305	339	295	373	430	320	338	395	320	348	338	383	363	361	303	325	375	355	267	384	353	284	356	303	327	377	403	372	397	331	712	
Software	72	356	388	344	419	440	381	379	415	400	396	428	407	368	381	336	365	400	426	371	297	414	397	319	392	376	364	338	424	386	386	354	853
Financial Solutions	29	407	328	407	397	462	386	431	417	400	379	376	362	369	393	328	366	383	417	379	245	421	397	345	390	376	355	386	434	403	421	279	828
MegaTex	7	386	343	357	371	343	386	371	343	371	386	386	414	414	414	400	386	400	443	386	343	414	371	371	371	300	371	386	386	386	414	371	857
Passell	4	375	400	425	475	425	425	425	300	325	425	375	450	450	425	375	375	450	400	425	350	475	425	350	450	450	450	500	475	475	500	300	1000
Tampuri	26	346	377	338	365	388	354	354	373	327	346	319	419	365	381	346	342	362	438	346	262	415	369	315	358	377	335	342	423	400	392	335	862
NPS 10	89	411	419	406	433	465	420	437	410	396	438	417	447	444	443	403	428	453	445	424	315	453	449	394	429	373	406	422	458	430	444	384	1000
NPS 9	95	382	389	379	408	459	392	402	408	381	394	388	411	420	412	367	387	421	437	389	305	419	406	349	389	358	369	389	437	406	418	363	900
NPS 8	56	325	368	320	405	423	339	361	402	364	366	379	400	379	379	313	343	375	427	380	255	413	388	311	352	343	332	354	418	395	395	327	800
NPS 7	32	325	338	306	391	413	338	341	388	353	338	356	366	297	328	272	306	350	391	325	213	381	322	272	350	347	319	359	394	347	413	328	700
NPS 6 or lower	22	218	245	259	314	391	245	264	377	300	227	314	291	223	273	200	223	259	291	218	195	318	241	177	300	286	241	241	345	314	318	245	388
Length of employment, under 1 year	79	382	397	368	409	453	377	397	416	380	405	394	428	422	410	373	399	425	419	390	303	434	397	362	391	366	389	399	434	414	425	352	890
Length of employment, 1-3 years	93	354	358	351	397	443	362	390	391	369	366	360	388	360	387	323	359	382	426	366	265	406	378	328	369	340	342	387	416	387	408	324	809
Length of employment, over 4 years	122	354	380	359	411	439	380	380	403	372	383	401	405	395	392	343	360	402	420	380	278	412	404	321	389	355	351	358	434	396	410	369	858
Function: Product development	99	333	381	332	404	438	357	363	414	365	365	400	419	389	397	344	365	386	395	377	265	410	387	324	372	352	358	360	423	395	406	356	835
Function: Sales	24	367	392	358	400	429	388	400	421	404	375	388	400	363	363	333	371	366	446	383	325	413	366	329	388	375	329	363	429	388	400	342	858
Function: Marketing	16	375	388	406	431	463	369	394	381	375	400	350	425	406	425	363	388	413	444	363	256	431	438	319	381	350	388	425	431	419	413	350	863
Function: Customer service	64	408	386	392	431	456	422	425	408	408	411	402	417	419	417	358	391	430	442	373	289	441	408	372	408	397	381	403	434	414	431	369	886
Function: CEO	5	400	460	460	460	420	480	380	340	440	400	480	440	440	420	440	480	460	460	320	420	440	340	420	260	400	420	460	380	440	380	1000	
Function: HR	6	383	400	417	400	467	400	383	333	333	383	367	367	433	400	300	367	383	450	400	300	433	383	383	433	367	383	350	433	383	400	333	950
Function: Finances	14	429	400	379	407	471	400	414	400	364	429	414	336	407	386	343	379	400	429	371	271	400	379	336	364	321	364	407	457	386	464	350	886
Function: IT	23	348	361	322	396	443	330	387	409	348	378	387	391	378	396	343	365	409	435	413	278	417	383	335	396	335	343	383	435	413	396	352	783

Figure 19. Experienced employer brand within the conglomerate

### 4.3.2 Perceived employer brand

In evaluating PEB, we will also utilize the negative highlights and positive highlights in table-formats, as they provide easy to understand and interpret data about the perceived employer brand. The data is from students, who don't have actual experiences of the company as an employer and solely base their answers upon perceptions. We can't utilize the same thresholds as for EEB, as the scores are over 10% smaller on average in the student data. The phenomenon of scoring lower most probably is well linked to a lack of knowledge, not just to general negativity. As a threshold for positive perceptions we will use 3.6 and for the negative 3.2. Anything in between will be interpreted as neutral and emphasis put on extremes, as they have the most influence. The data used in this chapter can be found from the end of these paragraphs in Figure 20.

If we start with the whole data set like in EEB by examining positive highlights (>3.6) and negative highlights (<3.2), we get a good base for further study. In the whole data without any segmentation, the average score for a characteristic is 3.3 (3.82 in EEB). Eight characteristic reached an over 3.6 score in the total data set and also eight characteristics gained an under 3.2 score. The rest are located in the neutral limbo in between. These are the positively perceived in descending order:

1. Q5: The employer is a growing company (**3.72**)
2. Q9: The employer is well known (**3.69**)
3. Q10: The employer has a good reputation (**3.68**)
4. Q8: The employer is a big organization (**3.66**)
5. Q16: The employer enables career development (**3.64**)
6. Q7: The employer is dynamic and future-oriented (**3.63**)
7. Q12: The employer is equal (**3.62**)
8. Q4: The employer has Nordic values (**3.6**)

On average, these listed eight characteristics had more scores of four than three, which means that the characteristics can be connected to the conglomerate. The only one that is shared between EEB and PEB is Q5, which gained the highest general score both internally and externally. But, the rest are different and subject to further analysis in the last "alignment

& conflict”-part of this empirical section. These then are the negative characteristics in descending order starting from the lowest score:

1. Q27: The employer has a low hierarchy (**2.96**)
2. Q20: The employer pays an above average salary (**3.01**)
3. Q31: The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture (**3.04**)
4. Q6: The employer has interesting products and services (**3.06**)
5. Q3: The employer is entrepreneurial (**3.1**)
6. Q23: The employer makes it possible to move freely from one area of responsibility to another within the company (**3.14**)
7. Q22: The employer enables its employees to make initiatives (**3.18**)
8. Q24: The work days have variation (**3.2**)

All these eight accumulated a below average score, one being under three, indicating a majority “disagree” score. We could claim, that with 2.96 the characteristic isn’t true and that students see the conglomerate as one not having a low hierarchy. There are two characteristics that appear both in EEB and in PEB: Q20 and Q23. These eight can be interpreted as the most influential deal breakers in the eyes of the potential and desired employees.

From the general score, there are certain segments that are worth highlighting. The first one being gender differences. Male students perceive the conglomerate significantly less positive, scoring on average 0.19 lower points and giving four characteristics a positive (>3.6) score and nine a negative (<3.2) score. Women gave just 3 negatives and 13 positives – that means three times less negatives and three times more positives compared to men within this sample.

Tremendous variance can also be witnessed between the three subjects: information technology, industrial engineering & management and economic sciences. The average score, positives and negatives are in the following Table 11.

Subject	Average score	Positives (#)	Negatives (#)
Information technology	3.04	2	18
Industrial engineering and management	3.36	11	4
Economic sciences	3.48	19	3

*Table 11. Cross-subject distribution of positive and negative PEB characteristics*

What this table indicates, is that students of information technology are drastically less positive when it comes to the conglomerate being an employer. Opposite to that, both IEM and ES students see the conglomerate in a much more positive sense. The lowest score from IT was in Q6 (The employer has interesting products and services) with 2.42, indicating a high level of disagreement with the characteristic. The other subjects score this as being neutral. Possibly, because the knowledge of the whole product range in general is low.

The city and university of the student seems to have great impact on their PEB. This is understandable, as the visibility of the conglomerate varies. The subsidiaries are highly autonomous and others pursue positive coverage through campaigns, corporate social responsibility activities and other such. This coverage reaches the students in different ways through brand experiences. This comparison doesn't rank significantly high on the sense of reliability, since the amount of answers varies greatly city by city. Also, other cities had one of the subject groups, while others had all three. Further studies need to be carried out on this front to establish a better understanding of the differences. Below in Table 12, one can witness how big the differences are again in averages, positives and negatives.

City	Average score	Positives (#)	Negatives (#)
Lappeenranta	3.52	20	2
Vaasa	3.25	8	14
Tampere	3.23	10	12
Helsinki	3.11	2	14
Jyväskylä	2.95	2	21
Turku	2.94	5	23
Oulu	2.85	0	22

*Table 12. Cross-city distribution of positive and negative PEB characteristics.*

Length of studies brings an interesting perspective to PEB. Those who have studied less than two years score 11 characteristics as positives and 5 as negatives. The ones who have studied over two years are the opposite, scoring 10 negatives and only 3 positives. The link between age, studies and work experience in relation to employer brand perceptions is a subject for further studies.

As expected, industry knowledge plays a big role in PEB. The students were asked in the questionnaire, how many of the 15 ICT-companies they can recognize solely based on the name. The list included well-known brands, not so much known and some that very few know. From these answers, the students were grouped into low industry knowledge, medium and high. What we can draw from this segmentation is, that the less you know the better your perception is. Those who knew over 10 of the 15 ICT-companies scored the conglomerate an average of 0.30 lower in characteristics, had three times more negative scores (<3.2) and over five times less positives (>3.6).

The last grouping of answers was in the last question of the questionnaire. The students were asked whether they had applied for a job in the conglomerate and whether they would, if an opportunity emerged. Those who will apply, scored an average of 3.45 while those who

won't scored an average of 2.97. Those who will apply accumulated 19 positive characteristics and 2 negatives, while those who won't, scored 0 positives and 19 negatives. The lowest scores (from "won't apply") were in the following four characteristics:

1. Q20: The employer pays an above average salary (**2.56**)
2. Q27: The employer has a low hierarchy (**2.64**)
3. Q6: The employer has interesting products and services (**2.67**)
4. Q31: The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture (**2.75**)

Not all of the participating students recognized the conglomerate's logo and therefore answered questions about the ICT-sector in general. Those who didn't recognize the conglomerate logo see the ICT industry rather positively, with women who don't recognize the logo being the most positive group when it comes to ICT industry's perceived employer brand. The differences were significant, when comparing the data from those who recognized the brand with those, who did not. From Figure 20 this can be examined as the bottom section. From that figure, one can witness that the conglomerate specific PEB has clear negative and positive columns, while the ICT-industry PEB has a few negative cells, only Q25 (The employer provides clear working hours. (e.g. 08:00 - 16:00)) being a characteristic, which all segments disagree with.

In the next chapter, we compare the PEB and EEB results to find out if they're aligned or conflicted. That section will not provide answers towards how to seek alignment, which will be discussed in the last chapter of the research: discussion and conclusions.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32	
All (Students)	159	346	340	310	360	372	306	363	366	369	368	347	362	352	357	346	364	354	339	342	301	355	318	314	320	321	359	296	347	338	304	322
Male (Students)	94	324	335	298	366	368	285	340	368	363	348	334	369	352	340	329	363	340	331	340	287	347	311	306	306	321	340	289	345	329	310	316
Female (Students)	65	371	346	323	352	377	331	390	375	377	390	363	354	352	377	365	377	369	350	344	317	365	325	323	337	321	381	306	350	348	298	329
Information Technology	60	284	313	295	353	353	242	308	368	366	326	313	347	329	324	316	326	318	308	311	268	355	289	279	282	353	329	258	329	305	282	308
Industrial Engineering & Management	46	367	324	315	358	385	330	382	339	352	373	345	364	358	379	348	376	361	373	352	294	345	330	324	361	276	361	324	355	342	339	318
Economic Sciences	53	384	377	319	367	379	344	398	384	386	400	379	374	367	370	370	388	379	342	363	335	363	333	337	323	328	384	309	358	363	298	337
Studied less than 2 years	87	375	344	325	375	378	317	377	358	383	377	350	364	361	369	358	377	359	348	350	320	353	330	327	327	319	372	303	347	341	303	328
Studied more than 2 years	72	308	336	290	340	364	292	346	376	352	356	344	360	340	342	330	348	346	328	332	276	358	302	298	312	324	342	288	348	334	306	314
Low industry knowledge (6 or lower)	47	392	356	336	366	372	320	392	364	384	392	348	356	364	368	352	388	372	360	364	328	356	340	348	364	296	368	304	368	344	328	320
Medium industry knowledge (7-9)	52	356	361	310	334	378	305	393	361	385	378	359	378	366	368	371	373	373	344	349	320	373	329	317	310	322	368	302	363	349	300	329
High industry knowledge (over 10)	60	313	315	296	363	367	300	323	371	348	346	338	352	333	342	321	344	327	325	325	271	340	296	294	306	333	346	288	323	325	296	317
Will apply to a job	113	369	360	321	371	391	324	378	374	382	395	368	378	367	372	364	387	367	347	362	322	368	333	329	328	321	372	312	371	359	318	332
Won't apply to a job	46	294	297	288	336	331	267	331	347	342	308	303	328	319	325	306	314	325	322	300	256	328	283	281	303	322	331	264	297	292	275	300
Don't recognize logo (Male)	32	353	313	334	309	400	322	369	297	303	325	366	331	353	381	344	353	344	394	359	344	356	331	338	316	266	338	341	325	381	378	328
Don't recognize logo (Female)	13	462	346	392	323	454	369	438	331	300	362	469	331	392	423	423	454	392	446	385	400	392	377	346	400	285	408	369	346	400	415	308
Don't recognize logo (TITE)	22	373	318	350	345	395	332	391	332	323	336	386	314	382	391	359	366	355	391	359	373	350	318	323	300	268	341	332	336	377	377	305
Don't recognize logo (TUTA)	13	408	346	354	308	423	385	385	238	285	338	400	377	385	400	385	408	362	438	385	354	392	377	354	377	262	408	354	315	400	415	346
Don't recognize logo (KATI)	10	380	300	350	250	450	280	390	340	280	330	410	310	300	390	360	340	360	410	360	340	370	360	360	380	290	330	380	340	390	380	330

Figure 20. Perceived employer brand, student perceptions of the conglomerate

#### 4.4 Alignment and conflict

In their past research, Knox & Freeman (2006) found statistically significant differences in how the employer brand image is experienced internally and externally. In this chapter, we focus on comparing the total data sets with each other to see if this holds true between EEB and PEB in the case of this conglomerate. The goal is to find whether the students perceive the conglomerate the same way as an employer, as the employees within do. Below is the comparison of the 32 characteristics with student average being the PEB and the conglomerate average being the EEB. The difference-row indicates how far the perception and experience are from one another. Difference scores between -0.2 – 0.2 mean that the EEB and PEB are aligned in that particular characteristic, while anything less or more than -0.2 – 0.2 indicates difference. The bigger the “Difference” number, the further the perception is from the actual experience.

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
<b>Student average (ALL)</b>	159	3.46	3.40	3.10	3.60	3.72	3.06	3.63	3.66	3.69	3.68	3.47	3.62	3.52	3.57
<b>Conglomerate average (ALL)</b>	294	3.62	3.78	3.59	4.06	4.44	3.73	3.88	4.03	3.73	3.83	3.86	4.06	3.91	3.95
<b>Difference</b>		-0.16	-0.38	-0.49	-0.46	-0.72	-0.67	-0.25	-0.37	-0.04	-0.15	-0.39	-0.44	-0.39	-0.38

Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32
3.46	3.64	3.54	3.39	3.42	3.01	3.55	3.18	3.14	3.20	3.21	3.59	2.96	3.47	3.38	3.04	3.22
3.45	3.70	4.02	4.21	3.78	2.80	4.16	3.94	3.34	3.83	3.53	3.58	3.78	4.28	3.98	4.13	3.50
0.01	-0.06	-0.48	-0.82	-0.36	0.21	-0.61	-0.76	-0.20	-0.63	-0.32	0.01	-0.82	-0.81	-0.60	-1.09	-0.28

Figure 21. Student average vs Conglomerate average, PEB vs EEB

What can immediately be witnessed from Figure 21 is that EEB and PEB aren't aligned. In total, there are seven characteristics (Q1, Q9, Q10, Q15, Q16, Q23, Q26), where the perception meets with real experience. This doesn't mean that they are viewed negatively or positively, but that employees and students are “on the same page” with these particular characteristics. The difference is in brackets after the characteristic.

1. Q15: The employer invests in teaching and developing its employees (**0.01**)
2. Q26: The employer makes it possible to use the skills learned from a degree (**0.01**)
3. Q9: The employer is well known (**-0.04**)
4. Q16: The employer enables career development (**-0.06**)
5. Q10: The employer has a good reputation (**-0.15**)

6. Q1: The employer is innovative (**-0.16**)
7. Q23: The employer makes it possible to move freely from one area of responsibility to another within the company (**-0.20**)

This means, that there are 24 characteristics (**77,4%**), where significant differences exist. This clearly indicates, that the students within this sample don't know what it actually is like to be employed by the conglomerate and hold false perceptions, some very drastic, of the conglomerate. In general, the students' scores are lower by nature, as they are a mixture of perceptions and ignorance. Lack of knowledge easily translates to neutral answers, which is also a solid conclusion from this research.

In the terms of eNPS, the student PEB average is closest to that of "eNPS 7"-category within the conglomerate average. Both "Student average (ALL)" and "eNPS 7" have an average score of **3.41**, but still aligned EEB and PEB is still only in 10 characteristics. Big differences (over -0.6 difference) in PEB and EEB exist in Q5, Q6, Q18, Q21, Q22, Q24, Q27, Q29, Q30 and Q31. These characteristics are ranked significantly less positively by the students, than by the employees. All these are listed below in descending order starting from the biggest difference.

1. Q31: The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture (**-1.09**)
2. Q27: The employer has a low hierarchy (**-0.82**)
3. Q18: The employer is flexible, when it comes to work hours and location (**-0.82**)
4. Q29: The employer employs delightful colleagues (**-0.81**)
5. Q22: The employer enables its employees to make initiatives (**-0.76**)
6. Q5: The employer is a growing company (**-0.72**)
7. Q6: The employer has interesting products and services (**-0.67**)
8. Q24: The work days have variation (**-0.63**)
9. Q21: The employer enables a healthy balance between work and life (**-0.61**)
10. Q30: The employer employs people, that are congenial (**-0.60**)

By examining these numbers we can conclude, that a conflict exists between EEB and PEB. The brand experience delivered by the conglomerate to the students establishes

perceptions that aren't aligned with the internal, experienced employer brand that is formed by the triangular dynamic relationship between the company, culture and the employees. The suggestions and strategic actions towards aligning EEB and PEB are discussed further in the next section of this research, which concludes the work.

Lastly, we will briefly study three sets of answers as comparison. Ideal employer characteristics from all students mirrored against perceived employer brand and experienced employer brand of the conglomerate. The comparison is exhibited below in similar form as past Figure 21.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15
IDE	3.77	3.97	3.08	3.25	3.25	3.90	3.88	2.13	2.53	3.94	2.92	4.47	4.52	4.58	4.28
CONG (PEB)	3.46	3.40	3.10	3.60	3.72	3.06	3.63	3.66	3.69	3.68	3.47	3.62	3.52	3.57	3.46
CONG (EEB)	3.62	3.78	3.59	4.06	4.44	3.73	3.88	4.03	3.73	3.83	3.86	4.06	3.91	3.95	3.45
DIF (IDE vs EEB)	-0.15	-0.19	0.51	0.81	1.19	-0.17	0.00	1.90	1.20	-0.11	0.94	-0.41	-0.61	-0.63	-0.83
DIF (PEB vs EEB)	-0.16	-0.38	-0.49	-0.46	-0.72	-0.67	-0.25	-0.37	-0.04	-0.15	-0.39	-0.44	-0.39	-0.38	0.01
DIF (IDE vs PEB)	0.31	0.57	-0.02	-0.35	-0.47	0.84	0.25	-1.53	-1.16	0.26	-0.55	0.85	1.00	1.01	0.82

	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q29	Q30	Q31	Q32
	4.49	4.62	4.12	4.10	3.49	4.45	4.09	3.88	4.11	2.53	3.92	3.58	4.42	3.92	3.65	2.89
	3.64	3.54	3.39	3.42	3.01	3.55	3.18	3.14	3.20	3.21	3.59	2.96	3.47	3.38	3.04	3.22
	3.70	4.02	4.21	3.78	2.80	4.16	3.94	3.34	3.83	3.53	3.58	3.78	4.28	3.98	4.13	3.50
	-0.79	-0.60	0.09	-0.32	-0.69	-0.29	-0.15	-0.54	-0.28	1.00	-0.34	0.20	-0.14	0.06	0.48	0.61
	-0.06	-0.48	-0.82	-0.36	0.21	-0.61	-0.76	-0.20	-0.63	-0.32	0.01	-0.82	-0.81	-0.60	-1.09	-0.28
	0.85	1.08	0.73	0.68	0.48	0.90	0.91	0.74	0.91	-0.68	0.33	0.62	0.95	0.54	0.61	-0.33

Figure 22. Student ideal employer characteristics vs conglomerate PEB & EEB

In Figure 22 the top row are the questions, second row is ideal employer characteristic averages from students, third row are the conglomerate PEB averages and fourth is the EEB. Below them are the quantified differences between the numbers, indicating how far the conglomerate PEB, EEB and the ideal characteristics are from each other.

What can be witnessed between the ideal employer characteristics and perceived employer brand is that only one of the 31 is aligned: Q3 (The employer is entrepreneurial), where both scores are neutral. The remaining 30 are conflicted. What this means is that the conglomerate isn't aligned with university students' ideal employer characteristics in their

own evaluations or that they don't know enough to make conclusions. When comparing the perceived employer brand to the experienced employer brand, more similarities emerge. In total, seven out of the 31 are aligned, as stated earlier in the first comparisons of this chapter. But most interestingly, when comparing ideal employer characteristics to experienced employer brand, we're comparing a dream employer to a real employer. In this comparison, a surprising total of ten characteristics align between the students and the employees, meaning an alignment of 32.3%.

What we can draw as conclusions from these three different comparisons is that the perceived employer brand is a lot worse, than what the reality is. If students mirror their ideal employer criteria to those of PEB, the conglomerate might seem like a bad choice. When the PEB is mirrored to the employees' EEB, the alignment shifts to a slightly more realistic one and when comparing the students' ideal employer characteristics to the real experiences of real employees, the amount of similarities grows to almost a third.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

In this last section of the research, the project is summarized by answering the research questions, testing the hypotheses and concluding the findings. A concrete set of strategic actions to positively influence the employer brand are proposed, after which the theoretical and practical implications of this study are stated. Lastly, a set of future research proposals are listed, which could provide more insight into understanding EEB, PEB and their relationship better in the future.

### **5.1 Research summary**

This research was based on the theoretical framework, exhibited below in Figure 22. The main focus of the research was to study the “Conflict?” between experienced employer brand, which stems from within the company and perceived employer brand, the perceptions of the university students. In part four of the research, both EEB and PEB were examined through studying the segments from which they were built. The first section studied the “ideal employer”-half of the questionnaire, showcasing what the university students appreciate in an employer. The latter half of the questionnaire was about the conglomerate in this research and the characteristics in relation to that. By studying these both, it was possible to understand the current situation of the experienced and perceived employer brands. The alignment / conflict was then examined in chapter 4.4, showcasing the magnitude of difference between EEB and PEB. The roadmap for aligning PEB and EEB is in chapter 5.2, providing a set of actions to strategically develop the brand towards a more sought after situation. This chapter will also work as the answer to the first research question RQ1: “How could ICT-companies develop their employer brand in order to attract both skilled and culturally fit candidates?”

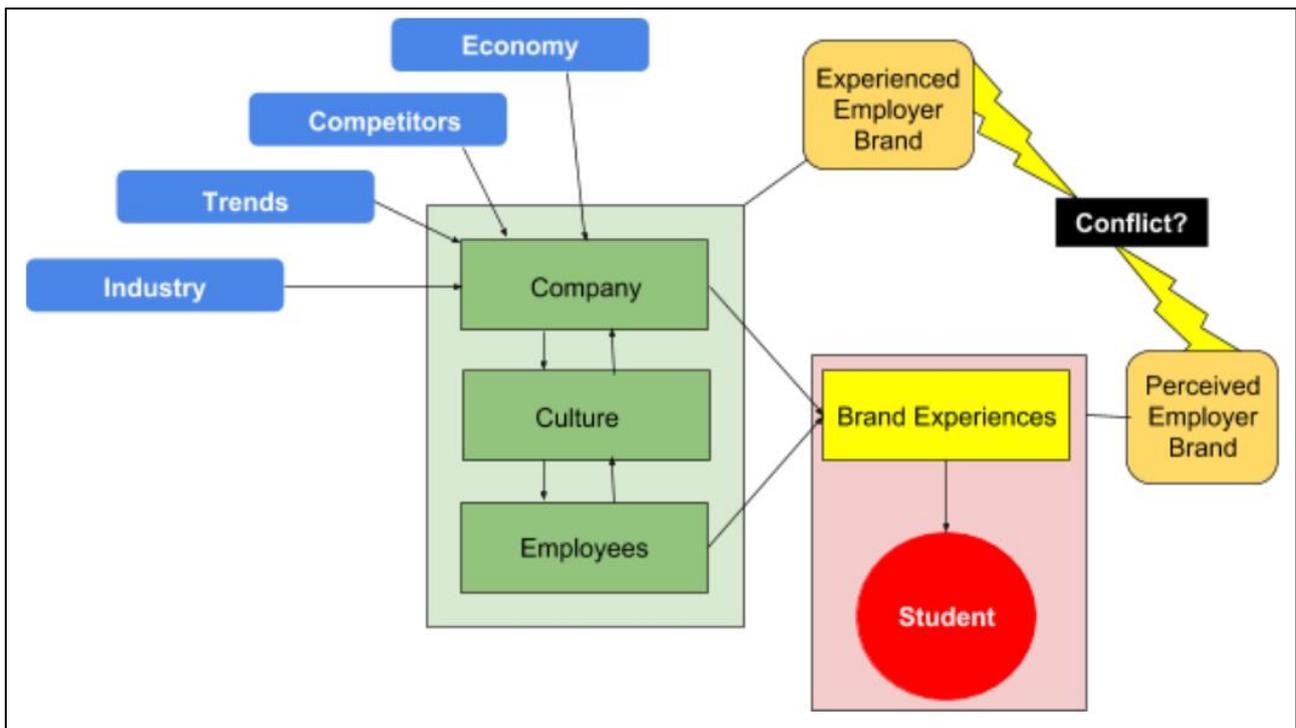


Figure 23. Theoretical framework for experienced (EEB) and perceived (PEB) employer brand.

**RQ2: “How are the external prejudices of university students aligned with the internal experiences of the conglomerate?”** As studied in the latter empirical part of this research, we can conclude that the external prejudices are very badly aligned with the internal experiences. A common, aligned, viewpoint only existed in four (**12.9%**) out of the 31 utilized characteristics. In general, it seemed that the students had lower scores across the characteristics, most probably because their knowledge of the characteristics is low and in the questionnaire, they’re forced to answer through their perceptions. Drastic disagreements emerged in 10 specific characteristics, where the employees had a much more positive experience than what the students perceived. Such situations are subject to quick fixing, as through targeted communication the internal, authentic, experiences can be shown to the potential and desired employees. Interestingly, the perception of an employer characteristic was in none of the 31 significantly more positive, than that of the employees.

**RQ3: “What do the potential & desired young university students appreciate or demand from their future employer?”** This research question isn’t directly linked to the study of EEB vs PEB conflict, but a good indicator of what sort of characteristics should modern companies cherish in order to persuade potential and desired employees to join

them. The traits were listed already into important and not important columns in chapter 4.2. That same table is showcased below:

Q(x)	A score above 4 (Important trait)	Q(x)	A score below 3 (Not important trait)
Q12	Employer is equal towards everyone	Q8	The employer is a big organization
Q13	...is interested in the well-being of its employees	Q9	...is well-known
Q14	...allows personal development and the learning of new skills	Q11	...is international
Q15	...invests in teaching and developing the employees	Q25	...offers clear working hours (e.g. 08:00-16:00)
Q16	...enables future career development	Q28	...is officially certified as a great employer (e.g. Great Place to Work-certificate)
Q17	A mutual trust relationship exists between the employer and the employee	Q32	The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs)
Q18	...is flexible when it comes to work hours and place		
Q19	Success in the company is achieved through personal merits and accomplishments		
Q21	...makes a healthy work-life balance possible		
Q22	...is open towards the employees making their own initiatives		
Q24	Workdays involve variation		
Q29	The employer employs delightful colleagues		

*Table 13. Important & not important employer characteristics*

This list of traits provides the general answer to what students as a total population expect and desire from their employers. By mirroring these results to PEB, we briefly studied how well this conglomerate is aligned with university student preferences. If these characteristics aren't perceptible to the students, it can be a deal breaker, as the students are forced to make employment decisions based on their own perceptions (aka. guessing).

**H1: “The university students’ perceptions of the conglomerate as an employer are not aligned with those of the internal experiences.”** The conflict between PEB and EEB was showcased in many ways throughout the empirical section of the research and we can reliably conclude that this hypothesis is true. The differences are drastic, as the students’ perceptions of just four characteristics are aligned with the experiences of the employees. Students score the conglomerate more pessimistically throughout the battery with their average scoring comparable to that of an “eNPS 7” individual within the conglomerate.

**H2: “The three different student groups (1. economic sciences, 2. industrial engineering & management, 3. information technology) will have differences between them in how they perceive the conglomerate as an employer.”** This hypothesis was proven true, as easily showcased in Table 11 in the chapter that concerned perceived employer brand. The students of information technology exhibited most negativity towards the conglomerate as an employer, while industrial engineering & management and economic sciences students saw it as much more positive employer. Big differences also emerged across the range of single characteristics, proving that the level of knowledge and emerging perceptions vary greatly.

**H3: “The perceptions about the company & industry will vary according to the university and city of the student.”** This hypothesis was shown to be true, when the cities were compared against one another in Table 12. These differences can be explained by the differences between the subsidiaries that work under the same conglomerate logo. Others are more active when it comes to publicity and social responsibility, helping the surrounding communities. The number of brand experiences therefore varies greatly, providing more touchpoints to other students, while some can be left only with their perceptions. The dataset wasn’t big enough to draw reliable conclusions on all the cities studied, so further geographical analysis will be a source of future research.

**H4: “The experienced employer brand is not aligned internally between the different subsidiaries.”** This hypothesis was shown to be true in Table 8. As the companies are highly autonomous, but work under the same conglomerate logo, they aren’t internally similar but attempt to seem like one entity to external parties. The average eNPS ranged

from a 10.00 to 7.72 with the average being 8.65. The seven companies had big differences between them in how they experienced the conglomerate as their employer. This means that the experienced employer brand isn't aligned internally, making the strategic development of the conglomerate's employer brand a challenging task. The subsidiaries have different strengths and weaknesses all with unique corporate cultures, making it hard to establish one single message to deliver to potential recruits.

**H5: “The human resources department and leadership see the employer brand as more attractive than other internal groups.”** This hypotheses is true to some extent according to this data. The CEOs are by far the most positive segment of the answers with an average eNPS-score of 10 and average characteristic score of 4.06. The HR is interesting, as the average eNPS was 9.5 (rank 2), meanwhile the average score was 3.73 (rank 5). The CEOs, customer service, marketing and finance experience the conglomerate overall as a better employer than the HR does. The experienced employer brand is best among CEOs and customer service and worst among product development and IT. Thus, the employer brand is seen more attractively by CEOs than other internal groups, but not by the HR as was hypothesized.

## **5.2 Roadmap for aligning EEB and PEB**

**RQ1: “How could ICT-companies develop their employer brand in order to attract both skilled and culturally fit candidates?”** A citation from earlier text: *“All negative and wrong perceptions should be spotted and fixed through working with the construed and external employer brand images. (Dukerich & Carter, 2000) Only this way the company can communicate the authentic employer brand image and attract individuals with the required capabilities and the person-organization fit. If the image is utterly wrong or otherwise unaligned with reality, the whole recruitment process is inefficient.”* As we witnessed in the last chapters of the research, there are plenty (27 out of 31) of negative and wrong perceptions of the conglomerate. In this chapter, we wish to exhibit a roadmap for aligning EEB and PEB.

The process of aligning EEB and PEB is essential to start with an internal audit of the current situation. As has been done in this research, the conglomerate's employer brand was thoroughly analyzed through gathering questionnaire answers from employees (EEB) and the potential and desired employees (PEB). The quantifiable metrics from this first measurement will work as the benchmark, which will be returned to later in the process. From this pool of data, the information has to be exported and handled in order to establish averages of both macro and micro level. It's important to understand the big picture, but also to understand what different segments within the complete data particularly think. This segmentation can be completed like in this research: gender, subsidiary, role, length of employment or through any demographic or psychographic variables desirable.

If the case is that the studied company is a conglomerate with various subsidiaries under it, it's advised to cross-compare the subsidiaries and seek points of alignment and conflict. By doing this, it's easier to find characteristics that can cause the employer brand to be confusing or fragmentary. As in this research was found out, the subsidiaries are very diverse when it comes to EEB and therefore a standard employment value proposition (EVP) can't be delivered. If that is done in a situation where EEBs conflict, the employed individual can feel betrayed and become a source of negative word-of-mouth (WOM). This, because the subsidiary isn't delivering what the conglomerate's EVP was.

The sources of conflict need to be examined and marked, as they're the characteristics that will be the target of later strategic fixing. Alignment needs to be embraced, as they mean that the subsidiaries share a similar perspective on a particular characteristic – negative or positive. As subsidiaries are compared, they will stand out from one another, others having more positive EEB than the rest. The subsidiaries that have better or exceptional results in EEB must be identified and further research needs to be carried out in order to identify best practices that have caused the positive EEB. These elements stem from two elements: symbolic and functional attributes. The functional attributes of employer branding include the likes of income, perks, healthcare plans or the possibility for a leave among others. The symbolic attributes are more abstract and harder to communicate, but a good source for differentiation when it comes to employer branding. These include the likes of culture, employee development plans and opportunities and the status gained for working for that

specific company. (Drury, 2016) These symbolic or functional attributes can be documented and duplicated, while seeking to align the EEB across the conglomerate. If no duplicable examples exist, the following actions can be taken to establish such. By nature they're mostly symbolic with a couple having functional nuances. The suggestions aren't all-encompassing, rather simple and quick to execute.

**Establish** values, a vision and a mission that are well defined, clear and understandable. By communicating and highlighting these across the business, the message will clarify and align the brand internally. **A company** needs to draw conclusions on what kind of a culture it wants to establish. By having clear guidelines for culture, it's possible to foster that culture and seek individuals that are person-organization fit. Without guidelines, the culture is vague and unusable in recruitment. **Involve** the employees in promoting the company's employer brand. 84% of people trust peer-to-peer recommendations over any advertisements. Utilizing social media platforms gets the message in front of new audiences and is an easy route for sharing stories from anyone within the organization. The individuals who are happy to share stories and news of their employer with their own profile are brand advocates, who are a company's best resource for authentic employer branding. (Pateman, 2016) **Storytelling** of a faceless corporate isn't suggestable. By using real people and real stories that are engaging, it's easier to attract employees that are capable of generating similar stories. Communicating these narratives will increase the probability of sought after candidates entering the recruitment process. By recognizing and rewarding such employee efforts, a company can establish an advocacy program. (Holzman, 2018)

**Gathering** feedback is a simple and straightforward way of cooperating with employees to establish a better place to work. By consistently asking for feedback and then acting on it, a loop of development is established. Such channels bring involvement, value and appreciation to the experience of being an employee. **Foster** a working environment that is pleasant. Healthy snacks, good working spaces, plants, beverages, art and other simple and quick ways to bring personality and wellbeing to the workplace will make it a place, where employees are happy to come. (Chignell, 2018) **Partnerships** can work well, when attempting to steer the employer brand. The range of possible B2B-cooperation efforts are endless and bring new interesting elements to the business. These partnerships can be from

the same industry or from a complete opposite. (Fitoussi, 2018) For instance, a software house can have partnerships with coffee producers, chili farmers or breweries in order to produce unique drinks, sauces and experiences exclusively to its own staff. Such experiences are unique, memorable and hard to copy by others. These events will also catch employees by surprise and make them advocates, as they're happy to share these experiences with their peers in Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat and in other platforms.

After implementing best practices, it's always crucial to measure the end result. Does it drive the other subsidiary towards the sought after end result? This cycle can and should be carried out indefinitely, if a goal of an aligned EEB is desired. Everything so far has been internal, mostly handled by human resources in collaboration with other departments. No external EVP should be delivered, until the EVP is truthful and desirable. When a company arrives in such a situation, it's time to start exporting EEB information. These are employer stories about growth, personal development, responsibility and experiences that highlight the strengths of the EEB. If the conglomerate or subsidiary has high results in innovativity, that should be highlighted. Same with diversity, equality, freedom to move between roles, employer training etc. By highlighting and exporting the strengths of the EEB, the conglomerate can deliver truthful statements about the EVP through real life stories to the people it wishes to employ in the future. Such stories should be carried out as a constant flow of information, not just as single and random actions among other flows of information.

Not all positive traits are worth highlighting though. As stated in early chapters: *“Organizations operating within the same industry tend to offer quite similar functional benefits (salary for example). Therefore, it's difficult for organizations to differentiate themselves from the competition with these. In order to generate an attractive and favorable employer image, symbolic attributes (culture for example) should be highlighted and communicated. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)”* The communication of the EEB must be strategic, reaching the targeted population in a way that is effective. At this point, the EEB moves to the hands of those responsible for delivering messages – usually marketing. Should the brand experiences be delivered through social media advertising, pamphlets, public keynotes, roadshows or the local news, is all determined by the sought after demographic. Different ways of communications have different outcomes, as the impact and

credibility of the message depends on the way of communicating. All this external communication with potential employees build the PEB. A lack of communications means a lack of brand experiences, leaving more room for perceptions to take control of the employer brand. At this point, the company cannot control it and is a victim of thoughts and opinions, not facts based on actual experiences.

As external communications launch with the goal of altering PEB in mind, the key performance indicators (KPIs) must be identified, benchmarked and followed in order to quantify the magnitude of the strategic actions. Be it the number of applications, application quality, website traffic and employer story views, the more data is followed, the easier it is to showcase the results of the communications. Later on, a PEB test through a characteristic questionnaire can be carried out again in order to see, how the PEB according to employer characteristics has evolved. The following of EEB and PEB should be made a reoccurring practice, as they will alter dynamically both internally and externally. The relationship between the company, culture and the employees is a never-ending exchange, just as the perceptions of the company are. These measurements are a source of reflection, where the whole process of driving the EEB and PEB towards an aligned outcome is measured and altered.

The roadmap established in this chapter is simplified and visualized in Figure 24. The process starts from upper right hand corner: "Internal audit". The whole green box area symbolizes EEB and the things happening inside the business. The red side on the contrary is PEB. The process is cyclical, with most time spent between boxes "Document & duplicate best practices (Establish New)" and "Measure and reflect upon executed changes". When that internal process is satisfactory, it's time to form an employer value proposition (EVP) that is truthful and especially desirable. There is no point on communicating information that doesn't positively affect the perceptions of the targets.

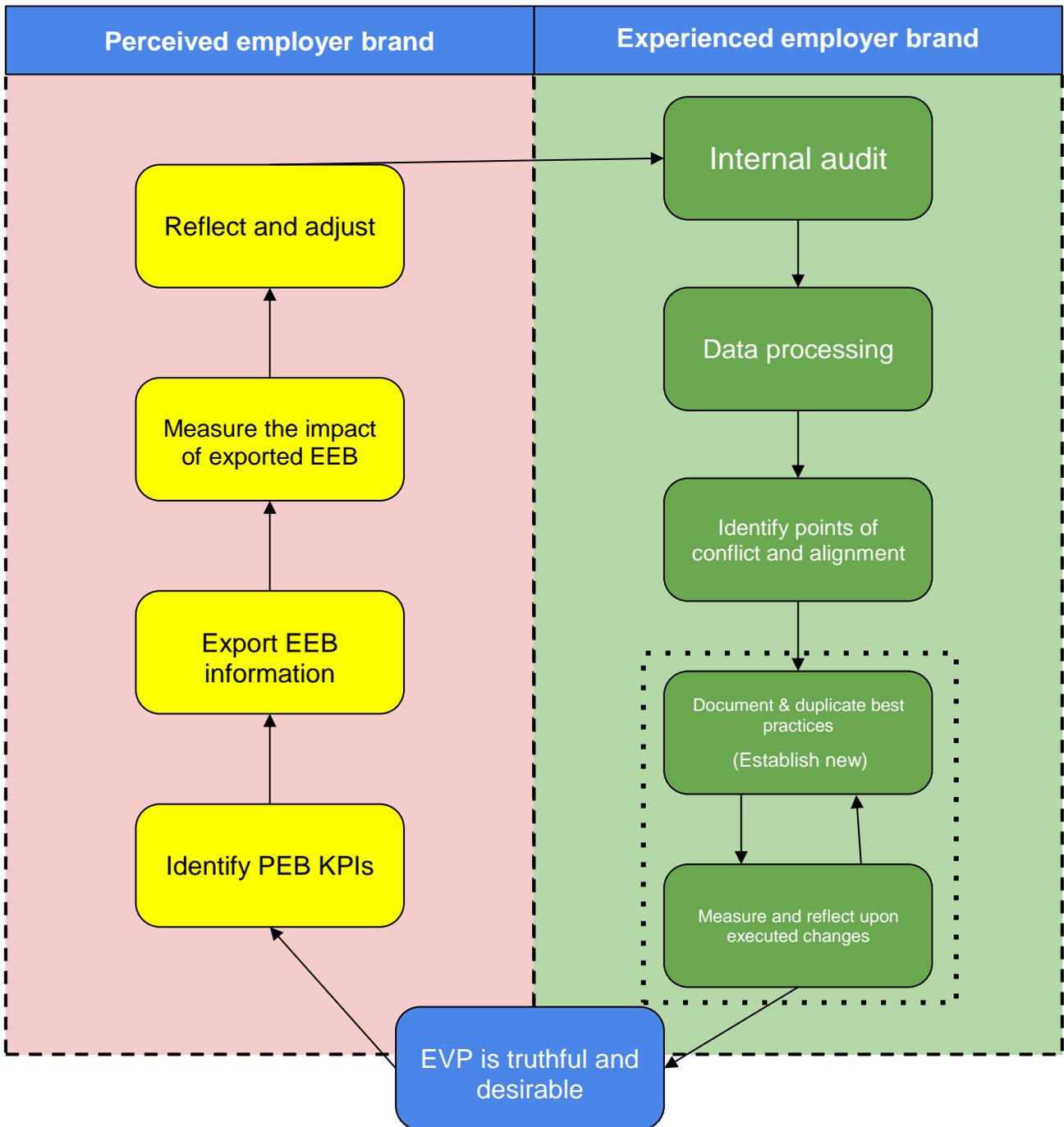


Figure 24. Employer brand development process

### **5.3 Theoretical contributions**

This research was very practical by nature. The theoretical framework was construed to showcase how employer branding is born both internally and externally, also examining a point of conflict. The EEB is born inside the conglomerate and its subsidiaries, as the company, culture and the employees act in this never-ending exchange. What builds the PEB are the brand experiences that are exported from the inner circle and are experienced by the receiving party. These experiences are both controlled and uncontrolled. Strategic marketing, press publicity, CRM, employees talking with “outsiders”, using of products, everything that provides a touchpoint between the conglomerate and the external person. These events form the PEB, which when compared to EEB tells a lot about the effect of the communication and how well the company’s strengths travel to the perceptions of others. Such a model hasn’t been provided before, which combines these relationships.

A flowing process model of developing the experienced and perceived employer brand was also exhibited in the previous chapter. The model is thorough and combines many theoretical bodies to one.

Instead of discussing internal and external employer branding, this research changed the terms to meet the actual phenomenon better. Employees “experience” the employer first hand and therefore everyone within the company is influenced by EEB. Instead of calling it the external employer brand, the use of “perceived employer brand” is used, indicating that everyone outside of the company-entity can only “perceive” the employer brand. The perception is subject to personal values and history, so the PEB is unique in each case, averages bringing populations together to quantify a common perception.

### **5.4 Practical implications**

This research has established an easy-to-follow roadmap to measuring the company’s internal EEB and if possible, test it against external PEB. The project-like structure and nature of the research can be copied where- and whenever. Especially for conglomerates with many companies under their umbrella brand, this is a system for measuring how and where alignment and/or conflict exists. Through this method of testing the EEB, a company

can get quantifiable information about the current situation, carry out strategic projects to develop the EEB and afterwards run the test again to see, what really happened. This is a system for quantifying the health and development of an employer brand. (See Figure 24)

The research also lists a roadmap for positively driving the EEB and PEB towards a more favorable situation. The roadmap is only designed for the case-conglomerate, but surely fits to other organizations and other circumstances. This research brought new, practical and easy-to-understand data to the human resources departments to understand and utilize. Previously the experienced employer brand hasn't been measured down to such detail and never has it been screened to the opinions of potential and desired employees. This way the company, in dire need of successful recruitments, can find leakages and correct especially the PEB through strategic external communication.

This research created a quantifiable method for measuring PEB and EEB. The measurements can be replicated in time and place, utilized to measure the current situation as well as measure the effect of strategic changes. The method will be adjusted by time and place, always attempting to best understand the employer brand and its components.

Misalignments, where PEB is lower than EEB, are easier to fix, as they just indicate a lack of external knowledge. EEB is harder to alter, as that means internal changes, not just communications. If a company finds themselves in the same situation as this research's conglomerate, it is mostly down to targeting and approaching the potential and desired employees and communicating what the real experience is like.

## **5.5 Limitations and future research**

This research was solely completed in the Finnish marketplace. All the EEB data was gathered from seven of the eight subsidiaries that the ICT conglomerate has in the Finnish market area. The PEB data was gathered from a wide range of Finnish universities that had students of economic sciences, industrial engineering & management and/or information technology. The data and roadmap was gathered and processed only with the specific case company in mind. The planning of the research took place in December of 2018, the data

was gathered in the spring of 2019, while the data was processed and summarized during the summer of 2019. The EEB and PEB data is sensitive to time, subject to even rapid changes.

For future research based on the findings in this research, we would propose the following:

- The female participants in this research have a wider range of important factors that influence the perceived employer brand, than males. Are women therefore more selective of their employer and is it more difficult for women to find an employer that meets their “ideal employer”-requirements than for men?
- Does employee industry knowledge have a direct link to early career success? And does it set a trajectory for continuous success?
- What causes new employees to be more positive and why is the first year followed by a slump during years 1-3 only to be followed with a rise in positivity?
- The link between age, studies completed and work experience in relation to employer brand perceptions is a subject for further studies.

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# Attachments

## 1. External questionnaire, sent to university students.

3/15/2019

Työnantaja-tutkimus

### Työnantaja-tutkimus

Suuri kiitos siitä, että tulit täyttämään tämän kyselyn!

Kyselyn täyttäminen vie noin 8 minuuttia.

Tämän kyselyn tavoitteena on tutkia kahta asiaa:

1. Mitä suomalaiset yliopisto-nuoret arvostavat työnantajassa?
2. Miten suomalaiset yliopisto-nuoret näkevät tietotekniikan alan työnantajana?

Kyselyn rakenne:

1. Perustiedot
2. Työnantajan piirteet
3. Tietoteknisiä yrityksiä
4. Tietotekniikan ala työnantajana

Kyselyssä mitataan 32 eri piirrettä, jotka toistuvat kahdesti. Täytä kysely niin, että et mieti vastauksiasi liikaa - toimi intuitiolla ja ennakkoluuloillasi. Näin täytät kyselyn nopeammin ja tulokset ovat todennukaisempia.

Jatkamalla eteenpäin suostut osallistumaan tutkimukseen.

\*Required



### Perustiedot

Jotta voimme luokitella tuloksia, tarvitsemme muutaman perustiedon alkuun sinulta.

Kysely on täysin anonymi, eikä sinun tarvitse täyttää muuta kuin alle oma yliopistosi, tieteenalasi, opintovuotesi ja sukupuolen. Näin voimme tutkimuksessa vertailla tuloksia eri vastaajaryhmien kesken ja tunnistaa trendejä.

**1. Yliopisto: \****Mark only one oval.*

- Aalto yliopisto
- Åbo Akademi
- Helsingin yliopisto
- Itä-Suomen yliopisto
- Jyväskylän yliopisto
- Lappeenrannan teknillinen yliopisto
- Oulun yliopisto
- Porin yliopisto
- Svenska handelshögskolan
- Tampereen yliopisto
- Turun yliopisto
- Vaasan yliopisto
- Muu, ei listalla.

**2. Tieteenala: \****Mark only one oval.*

- Kauppatieteellinen
- Tietoteknillinen
- Tuotantotaloudellinen

**3. Opiskeluvuosi: \****Mark only one oval.*

- Lukuvuosi 1
- Lukuvuosi 2
- Lukuvuosi 3
- Lukuvuosi 4
- Lukuvuosi 5
- Lukuvuosi 6
- Lukuvuosi 7
- Valmistunut

**4. Sukupuoli \****Mark only one oval.*

- Mies
- Nainen

**Työnantajan piirteet**

Alla on listattu 32 piirrettä. Luokittele niiden tärkeys omien mielipiteidesi perusteella.

Tässä tarkoitetaan työnantajaa hyvin yleisellä tasolla, ei mitään tiettyä yritystä tai toimialaa.

## 5. Vaatimukset työtä tarjoavalle yritykselle: \*

Täytä niin, että: 1 = Ei tärkeää; 5 = Tärkeää

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
Työnantajan yrityksessä menestyy meriteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajan tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on tunnettu	<input type="radio"/>				
Molempipuolinen luottamus työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien tutkinnosta opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="radio"/>				
Työpäivät sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajalla on hyvä maine	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on yrittäjähenkkinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajalla on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajan yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kollegoja	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on sertifioitu esim. "Great Place to Work"-sertifikaatilla	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on kasvava	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on iso organisaatio	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="radio"/>				
Työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajan yrityskulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on eettinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on kansainvälinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on innovatiivinen	<input type="radio"/>				

**6. Tarkempi luokittelu - Yrityspiirteet**

Valitse omalla kohdallasi työnantajan suhteen: Tärkein, Toiseksi tärkein ja Vähiten tärkein piirre.  
Tick all that apply.

	Tärkein	Toiseksi tärkein	Vähiten tärkeä
Työnantajan tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on kasvava	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on tunnettu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on iso organisaatio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajalla on hyvä maine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on eettinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on innovatiivinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on yrittäjähenkkinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on kansainvälinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. Tarkempi luokittelu - Työnteko**

Valitse omalla kohdallasi työnantajan suhteen: Tärkein, Toiseksi tärkein ja Vähiten tärkein piirre.  
Tick all that apply.

	Tärkein	Toiseksi tärkein	Vähiten tärkeä
Työnantaja maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Molemminpuolinen luottamus työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työpäivät sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien tutkinnosta opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajan yrityksessä menestyy meriiteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Tarkempi luokittelu - Työyhteisö**

Valitse omalla kohdallasi työnantajan suhteen: Tärkein, Toiseksi tärkein ja Vähiten tärkein piirre.  
*Tick all that apply.*

	Tärkein	Toiseksi tärkein	Vähiten tärkeä
Työnantaja omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajalla on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajan yrityskulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on sertifioitu esim. "Great Place to Work"-sertifikaatilla	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajan yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kolleegoja	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Tietoteknisiä yrityksiä**

Täytä alle, että tunnetko kyseisiä yrityksiä vai etkö ole ikinä törmännytään niihin.

Sen jälkeen vastaa, tunnistatko alla esitetyn logon.

**9. Mitkä seuraavista ICT-yrityksistä sinä tunnet? \***

*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Tunnen	En tunne
Solita	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Basware	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solteq	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nokia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eficode	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aureolis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vincit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reaktor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Digia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tieto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gofore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wapice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Microsoft	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Furice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**10. Tiedätkö, minkä yrityksen logo alapuolella on? \***

Jos et tiedä, vastaa: "En tiedä"

Mark only one oval.

- Gofore Skip to question 11.
- Digia Skip to question 11.
- Aureolis Skip to question 11.
- Solteq Skip to question 11.
- Tieto Skip to question 11.
- Futurice Skip to question 11.
- En tiedä Skip to question 11.
- Eficode Skip to question 11.
- Visma Skip to question 12.
- Reaktor Skip to question 11.
- Basware Skip to question 11.
- Nokia Skip to question 11.
- Solita Skip to question 11.
- Vincit Skip to question 11.
- Wapice Skip to question 11.

**Tietotekninen ala työnantajana on mielestäni:**

Minkälaisia ennakkoluuloja sinulla on tietoteknisestä alasta työnantajana? Voit pohtia edellisessä osiossa tuntemiasi yrityksiä. Minkälaisena työnantajana pidät niitä? Muuttujat ovat tässä kohtaa lähes samat, kuin aiemmassa "Vaatimukset työnantajalle"-kohdassa.

Älä mieti vastauksiasi liikaa, vaan vastaa tunteiden ja oletusten perusteella.

## 11. Tietoteknisen alan työnantaja ennakkoluuloissani... \*

Täytä niin, että: 1 = Täysin eri mieltä; 5 = Täysin samaa mieltä  
Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
...on yrittäjähenkkinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="radio"/>				
...on eettinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on usein hyvä maine	<input type="radio"/>				
...tarjoaa työpäiviä, jotka sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa luottamuksen työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="radio"/>				
...on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kasvava	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="radio"/>				
...on usein kansainvälinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="radio"/>				
...investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrittäjäkulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="radio"/>				
...tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="radio"/>				
...on innovatiivinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kolleegoja	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="radio"/>				
...on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on usein iso organisaatio	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="radio"/>				
...on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityksessä menestyy meriteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa omien tutkinnosta opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on usein tunnettu	<input type="radio"/>				

Skip to question 13.

## Ennakkoluulot Vismasta työnantajana

Koska tunnistit logon, toivomme että vastaisit ennakkoluuloihin Vismaan liittyen.

Minkälaisia ennakkoluuloja sinulla on Vismasta työnantajana? Muuttujat ovat tässä kohtaa lähes

samat, kuin aiemmassa "Vaatimukset työnantajalle"-kohdassa.

Se ei haittaa yhtään, vaikka et tietäisi yrityksestä sen enempää. Tämän kohdan tarkoitus on nimenomaisesti selvittää ennakkoluuloja. Vastaa siis rohkeasti omiin tunteisiin ja oletuksiin vedoten! Älä mieti liikaa!

## 12. Visma työnantajana ennakkoluuloissani... \*

Täytä niin, että: 1 = Täysin eri mieltä; 5 = Täysin samaa mieltä  
Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
...tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kasvava	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kolleegeja	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityskulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa omien tutkinnosta opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on tunnettu	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on yrittäjähenkinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa luottamuksen työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="radio"/>				
...investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="radio"/>				
...maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="radio"/>				
...on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="radio"/>				
...on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on eettinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on hyvä maine	<input type="radio"/>				
...on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="radio"/>				
...tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="radio"/>				
...on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on iso organisaatio	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="radio"/>				
...tarjoaa työpäiviä, jotka sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityksessä menestyy meriteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on innovatiivinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kansainvälinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="radio"/>				

Skip to question 14.

### Kiitos vastaamisestasi!

**13. Lopuksi vastaathan vielä näihin kahteen kysymykseen! \***

Mark only one oval per row.

	Kyllä	Ei
Oletko hakenut työpaikkaa ICT-alan yrityksestä?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aiotko hakea työpaikkaa ICT-alan yrityksistä?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Stop filling out this form.

### Kiitos vastaamisestasi!

**14. Lopuksi vastaathan vielä näihin kahteen kysymykseen! \***

Mark only one oval per row.

	Kyllä	Ei
Oletko hakenut työpaikkaa Vismalta?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aiotko hakea työpaikkaa Vismalta mahdollisuuden tullen?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 2. Internal questionnaire, sent to the employees of the organization

### Visma työnantajana-tutkimus

Suuri kiitos siitä, että tulit täyttämään tämän kyselyn!

Kyselyn täyttäminen vie noin 6 minuuttia.

Tämän kyselyn tavoitteena on tutkia:

1. Mitä piirteitä Visman työntekijät arvostavat työnantajassa
2. Miten Visman työntekijät kokevat Visman työnantajana

Kyselyn rakenne:

1. Perustiedot
2. Ihanteellisen työnantajan piirteet
3. Visma työnantajana

Kyselyssä mitataan 32 eri piirrettä. Täytä kysely niin, että et mieti vastauksiasi liikaa - toimi intuitiolla ja tunteillasi. Näin täytät kyselyn nopeammin ja tulokset ovat todenmukaisempia.

Jatkamalla eteenpäin suostut osallistumaan tutkimukseen.

\*Required



### Perustiedot

Kyselyssä ei kerätä henkilötietoja eli vastaukset ovat anonyymejä. Sinun tarvitsee vain täyttää alle oma Visma-yritys, toimenkuva, työhistorian pituus ja sukupuoli. Näin voimme tutkimuksessa vertailla tuloksia eri vastaajaryhmien kesken ja tunnistaa trendejä.

#### 1. Yritys \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Visma Solutions
- Visma Consulting
- Visma Enterprise
- Visma Megaflex
- Visma Passeli
- Visma Financial Solutions (ent. PPG & Duetto)
- Visma Public
- Visma Software
- Visma Tampuuri

**2. Mihin toimenkuvaan oma työsi liittyy: \****Mark only one oval.*

- Myynti
- Asiakaspalvelu
- Tuotekehitys
- Ohjelmistokumppanuudet
- Markkinointi
- Henkilöstöhallinto
- Taloushallinto
- IT
- Lakipalvelut
- Toimitusjohtaja
- Muu, ei listalla

**3. Työuran pituus Vismalla: \****Mark only one oval.*

- Alle 3 kuukautta
- 3 kuukautta - 12 kuukautta
- 1 - 3 vuotta
- 4 - 7 vuotta
- Yli 7 vuotta

**4. Sukupuoli \****Mark only one oval.*

- Mies
- Nainen

**Ihanteellisen työnantajan piirteet**

Alla on listattu 32 piirrettä. Luokittele niiden tärkeys omien mielipiteidesi perusteella.

Tässä tarkoitetaan työnantajaa hyvin yleisellä tasolla, ei mitään tiettyä yritystä tai toimialaa.

**5. Ihanteellisessa työnantajayrityksessä: \***

Täytä niin, että: 1 = Ei tärkeää; 5 = Tärkeää

Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
Työnantajan yrityksessä menestyy meriiteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajan tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on tunnettu	<input type="radio"/>				
Molemminpuolinen luottamus työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien tutkinnosta opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="radio"/>				
Työpäivät sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajalla on hyvä maine	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on yrittäjähenkinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajalla on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajan yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kolleegoja	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on sertifioitu esim. "Great Place to Work"-sertifikaatilla	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on kasvava	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on iso organisaatio	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="radio"/>				
Työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantajan yrityskulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on eettinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on kansainvälinen	<input type="radio"/>				
Työnantaja on innovatiivinen	<input type="radio"/>				

## 6. Tarkempi luokittelu - Yrityspirteet

Valitse omalla kohdallasi työnantajan suhteen: Tärkein, Toiseksi tärkein ja VÄHITEN tärkein piirre.

*Tick all that apply.*

	Tärkein	Toiseksi tärkein	VÄHITEN tärkeä
Työnantajan tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on kasvava	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on tunnettu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on iso organisaatio	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajalla on hyvä maine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on eettinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on innovatiivinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on yrittäjähenkinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on kansainvälinen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 7. Tarkempi luokittelu - Työnteko

Valitse omalla kohdallasi työnantajan suhteen: Tärkein, Toiseksi tärkein ja VÄHITEN tärkein piirre.

*Tick all that apply.*

	Tärkein	Toiseksi tärkein	VÄHITEN tärkeä
Työnantaja maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Molemminpuolinen luottamus työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työpäivät sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja mahdollistaa omien tutkinnoista opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajan yrityksessä menestyy meriteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 8. Tarkempi luokittelu - Työyhteisö

Valitse omalla kohdallasi työnantajan suhteen: Tärkein, Toiseksi tärkein ja VÄHITEN tärkein piirre.

*Tick all that apply.*

	Tärkein	Toiseksi tärkein	VÄHITEN tärkeä
Työnantaja omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajalla on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajan yrityskulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantaja on sertifioitu esim. "Great Place to Work"-sertifikaatilla	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työnantajan yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kolleegoja	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Visma Työnantajana

Tässä viimeisessä osiossa, vastaa muuttujiin oman Visma-yhtiön suhteen. Miten koet sen työnantajana?

Vastaa rohkeasti omiin tunteisiin, kokemuksiin ja oletuksiin vedoten, älä mieti liikaa!

### 9. Visma työnantajana... \*

Täytä niin, että: 1 = Täysin eri mieltä; 5 = Täysin samaa mieltä  
Mark only one oval per row.

	1	2	3	4	5
...tarjoaa selkeät työajat (esim. 08:00 - 16:00)	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kasvava	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityksessä on miellyttäviä kolleegoja	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityskulttuuri on rento, epäformaali	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa omien tutkinnosta opittujen taitojen hyödyntämisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on tunnettu	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa sen, että yrityksessä voi helposti liikkua tehtävästä toiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on yrittäjähenkkinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa luottamuksen työnantajan ja -tekijän välillä	<input type="radio"/>				
...investoi henkilöstön opettamiseen ja kehittämiseen	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa urakehityksen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kiinnostunut työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnista	<input type="radio"/>				
...maksaa keskiarvoa korkeampaa palkkaa	<input type="radio"/>				
...on töissä samanhenkisiä ihmisiä	<input type="radio"/>				
...on tasa-arvoinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on eettinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on hyvä maine	<input type="radio"/>				
...on dynaaminen ja tulevaisuusorientoitunut	<input type="radio"/>				
...tuotteet ja palvelut ovat mielenkiintoisia	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa uuden oppimisen ja kehittymisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa matalan hierarkian	<input type="radio"/>				
...on joustava työajan ja paikan suhteen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on iso organisaatio	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa työn ja vapaa-ajan tasapainon	<input type="radio"/>				
...tarjoaa työpäiviä, jotka sisältävät vaihtelua	<input type="radio"/>				
...yrityksessä menestyy meriiteillä ja omilla näytöillä	<input type="radio"/>				
...mahdollistaa omien aloitteiden tekemisen	<input type="radio"/>				
...on innovatiivinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...työyhteisö on monipuolinen (kansallisuudet, sukupuoli, uskomukset)	<input type="radio"/>				
...on kansainvälinen	<input type="radio"/>				
...omaa pohjoismaiset arvot	<input type="radio"/>				

Skip to question 10.

**Kiitos vastaamisestasi!**

10. Lopuksi, kuinka todennäköisesti suosittelisit Vismaa työnantajana? \*

NPS (1 = En suosittele; 10 = Todellakin suosittelen)

Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>									

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### 3. List of the 32 used company characteristics in the questionnaire

Q1	The employer is innovative
Q2	The employer is ethical
Q3	The employer is entrepreneurial
Q4	The employer has Nordic values
Q5	The employer is a growing company
Q6	The employer has interesting products and services
Q7	The employer is dynamic and future-oriented
Q8	The employer is a big organization
Q9	The employer is well known
Q10	The employer has a good reputation
Q11	The employer is global
Q12	The employer is equal
Q13	The employer is interested in the wellbeing of its employees
Q14	The employer makes it possible to learn new things and develop
Q15	The employer invests in teaching and developing its employees
Q16	The employer enables career development
Q17	A mutual trust relationship exists between the employer and the employee
Q18	The employer is flexible, when it comes to work hours and location
Q19	One can succeed in the company through merits and personal achievements
Q20	The employer pays an above average salary
Q21	The employer enables a healthy balance between work and life
Q22	The employer enables its employees to make initiatives
Q23	The employer makes it possible to move freely from one area of responsibility to another within the company
Q24	The work days have variation
Q25	The employer provides clear working hours. (e.g. 08:00 - 16:00)
Q26	The employer makes it possible to use the skills learned from a degree
Q27	The employer has a low hierarchy
Q28	The employer is certified. (e.g. "Great Place to Work"-certificate)
Q29	The employer employs delightful colleagues
Q30	The employer employs people, that are congenial
Q31	The employer has a relaxed, informal company culture
Q32	The work community is diverse (e.g. nationality, gender, beliefs)