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Impact of employer brand-equity promotion for effective talent recruitment of fresh graduates in Pakistan

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The current study was an attempt to investigate the impact of employer brand equity towards effective talent recruitment in telecommunication companies of Pakistan. As suggested by Ting and Paul (2011), the study also sought to test the mediating role of educational institutions. Two types of survey questionnaires, adapted (with slight modifications) from the study of Collins and Stevens, were used to obtain the data from 200 fresh university graduates and 273 employees of the five cellular companies located in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. SPSS 18 and AMOS 18 software were used for data analyses. Data received from the university graduates was used for rating these companies against different parameters, for which cross tabulation was used to statistically test the results. Whereas, the data collected from the employees was used to measure the mediating effect of educational institutions in relationship between employer brand equity and effective talent recruitment. The results of structural equation modelling show that the educational institutions play partially mediating role in hypothesized relationship. The study recommends that the organizations should seek help from the educational institutions to improve effectiveness of their brand equity and talent recruitment. The study has implication for organizations as well as the academicians for further research on the topic, including other variables.

Key words: Employer brand equity, fresh talent, recruitment, universities, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Employment branding and branding are the two primary sources of this study. First, there is a long history of the study of organizational attraction and secondly, there is tremendous growth in cross flow of research merge branding concepts from the consumer psychology (Turban et al., 2009) literature of organizational attraction and applicant job search behaviour (Gardner et al., 2010). This merging of employment brand with product and service brands is proficient, simply by recognizing employment as a monetary exchange between workers and employers and also resulting into improved brand equity promotion along with improved recruitment

process (Melin, 2005). Organizations traditionally hire new employees by determining job vacancies, advertising open positions, applicant's valuation and response to vacancy announcements, screening of applications and extending the job offer. There may be some other common paths used to complete the recruitment process. Conventionally speaking, the recruitment process is of two categories. One is of the employees who are already working somewhere and are known as the knowledge workers and second is the fresh talent recruitment. In this study, we will focus on the second category which is about the fresh talent recruitment by developing the strong and attractive brand image of employer through the educational institutions. On the other hand, it does not mean that employer brand equity does not exist, but it is about creating the awareness of the company before

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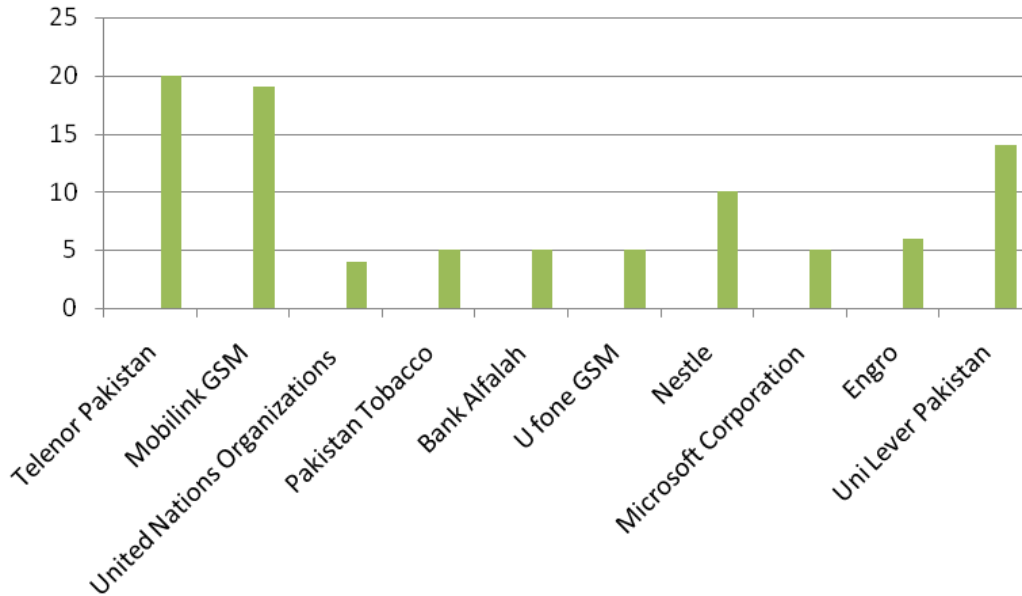*Corresponding author. E-mail: amarabaloch@gmail.com.

Figure 1. Pakistan's overall respondent's ratio (Rozeepk.com).

they can influence the job seekers; because what an applicant know about company affects his or her behaviour in the application process.

Though organizations generally focus their branding efforts towards developing products and corporate brands, branding can also be used in the area of human resource. The application of branding principal to human resource management has been termed as "employer branding". Employer branding is defined as "a targeted, long-term planning to manage awareness and perception of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to particular firm" (Sullivan, 2004). The employer brand puts forth an image showing the organization as a good place to work (Sullivan, 2004).

Employer branding is a concept of developed countries where the recruitment process is already in mature phase.

Pakistan is lacking in maturity of this process which is a missing element that results into less employer brand equity promotion in the fresh talent. If we talk about this concept of employer branding in Human resource area in Pakistan, there is no substantial study available which can be referred. It is a new area where the empirical study was required to make the concept obtainable. Currently in Pakistan, online recruitment and job posting is mostly exploited by the large organizations. Looking into the recruitment process of the famous companies of Pakistan as given by the largest job search engine (Rozeepk.com), Figure 1 depicts percentage of respondents which shows the substantial need for the employer brand awareness promotion.

If we come across region wise on respondent's ratio, it

is as shown in Figure 2.

Rationale of the study

In this study, the emphasis will be on developing new fad of companies brand equity in the mind of fresh talent through their educational institutes by the business organizations. In return, this will create repute of the employer in the mind of fresh graduates and will make their thought process mature while seeking for a job. According to Jiang and Iles (2011), it is "the process that leads employees and prospective applicants to be attracted to remain with the organization". "Researchers have tended to examine a narrow range of practices, even though there are a variety of human resources practices and other organizational activities that may attract potential applicants" (Barber, 1998).

Aim of the study

The aim is to develop an understanding of how organizational recruitment practices may affect fresh graduate job application decisions. It is about creating a strong relationship between industry and academia and developing employer specific brand equity in fresh graduates through their educational institutes. This study is going to cover two things. Firstly, it is going to assist the fresh graduates to decide and bring clarity in their mental attitude for applying the relevant jobs. Secondly, it will enable the companies to first create branding equity of
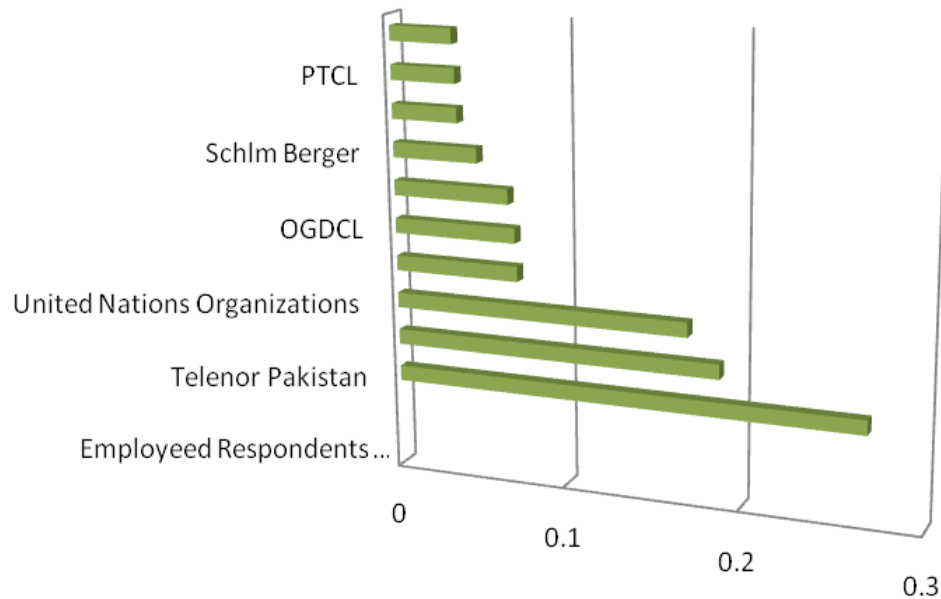
Figure 2. Region wise respondents' ratio (Rozeepk.com).

their company before they can influence job seekers.

Critical analysis and gap identification

The proposition of the study was focused towards the investigation and analysis pertaining to the relationship building between industry and academia for effective talent recruitment through promotion of employer brand equity in conjunction with educational institutions. Employer branding is a relatively new approach towards recruiting and retaining best possible human talent in developing countries. A recent study was carried out by Gul et al. (2011) in Pakistan about the employer brand equity but they only measured the perceived brand image in the labour market. They assumed that employer brand equity was already prevailing in the market.

Pakistan's educational institutions have been producing about two million fresh graduates of different disciplines to the labour market each year. Up till now, Pakistan's education system has been directing the huge bulk of these new masses to enter the labour market. The outcome was twofold bind where fresh talent are unable to find relevant place in the market and at the same time, employers grumble that they cannot find required fresh applicants for job postings.

This study was carried out to fill the gap mentioned in the Ting and Paul (2011) study about employer branding through universities in the mind of fresh graduates and strengthening the industry academia relationship. The gap or suggested future study by them was to investigate how fresh graduates value company image as an employer in University recruitment and how the healthier relationship among the organization and educational institutions might fortify charisma of employer branding to generate awareness in fresh graduates in particular.

Research objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

i. Find out the relationship between employer brand-equity and effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan
ii. Investigate the mediating role of educational institutions in relationship between employer brand equity and effective talent recruitment
iii. Obtain the rating of different mobile companies of Pakistan as prospective employer for fresh graduates, against different parameters

Research question

1. What significant relationship exists between the employer brand equity and effective talent recruitment in mobile companies of Pakistan?
2. To what extent do the educational institutions mediate the relationship between employer brand equity and effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan?
3. How do the fresh graduates of Pakistan perceive different mobile phone companies as prospective

employer against different parameters?

Delimitations of the study

Limitations of the study were the recruitment strategies of the organizations and the existing culture which prevails in the labour market.
There are other aspects of brand equity promotion for recruitment but the current study will only cater the given context in the model.
Our focus group for the study was the fresh graduates of today. Other groups of the labour market have been excluded in this research.

Concepts and definitions

Employer brand equity: Employer branding is known as the latest trend in the employment strategy and a world-wide notion which belongs to the effort constructing the uniqueness as an employer apparently. "Employer branding is a term often used to describe how organizations market their offerings to potential and existing employees, communicate with them and maintain their loyalty; advancing, internally and externally in the organization, a clear view of what makes a firm different and desirable as an employer" Backhaus and Tikoo (2004).

   Effective talent recruitment: The impact of globalization has squeezed the world and companies are continuously expanding their pawmarks, the want for a universal impend to talent attainment and the capability to access eminence domestic adept is a key for accomplishing decisive factor. The primary rationale of hiring is to build up masses of competent individuals.

   Educational institutions: Companies are now becoming conscious to invest in building up and overseeing masses of competent individuals globally in order to generate a legitimate competitive gain which ultimately in return can construct a sturdy relation with the academic bodies to hire fresh graduates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"The hottest strategy in employment" is known as employment branding (Sullivan, 1999). "It is a long term planning of the organizations to the shortage of talent problem. Most employment strategies are short-term and reactive to job openings; building an employment brand is a longer-term solution designed to provide a steady flow of applicants". For Feldwick (1996), "conceptual confusions surround brand equity as a gauge of brand attraction or value. Brand equity evolved from concept of brand image in the 1980s when brand values became apparent in financial terms and could be seen as the total value of brand as a separable asset". Employer branding

is the course of action of placing a reflection of a magnificent place to work (Barrow and Moseley, 2005) in the mentality of the fresh graduates. Product branding is a process of building up an enduring image in the brain of its end users; it will finally effect and link the quality of product or service available by the concerned business group. Employment does the same; it creates the image that creates people want to work for the organization because it is well managed where employees continuously learn and grow. "Once the image is developed, it generally results in steady flow of talented applicants. Employment branding uses the tools of marketing research, public relations (PR) and advertising to change the image applicants have of what it is like at the organization" (Sullivan, 1999). The concept of branding in HRM was first introduced by Ambler and Barrow (1996), depicting the employer as a brand and the employee as the end user. They describe employer branding as the box of purposeful, monetary and emotional benefits offered by employment and recognized by the employer. "Customer-based brand equity refers to beliefs held by individual consumers about a product's or a service's brand (that is, perceptions of the name or logo) that affect their preferences and purchasing decisions relative to other unbranded products or services with similar attributes" (Aaker, 1991; 1996; Keller, 1993).

   The term recruitment engrosses seeking out for and attaining prospective job applicants in adequate figures and superiority so that the organisation can plump for the suitable individuals to pile up its job requirements. Mostly, organizations are spotlighting their recruitment on embryonic professionals and fresh graduates. As a result, researches are putting attention particularly on the significance of these embryonic professionals. As per their view, these fresh graduates are assumed to be the potential prospect of this industry. Establishing well-built relations with fresh graduate masses provides the company an exclusive means to profile them as future employers and better augment their corporation likeness. "Research has indicated that one major determinant of an organizations ability to recruit fresh graduates is organizational reputation (Cable and Turban, 2003), referring to the status of a firm's name relative to competing firms" (Belt and Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993). We have taken reputation as comparable to a trademark and have taken employer brand equity in this regard. The recruitment narrative has shed light on job search verdicts as the eventual conclusion of their significance.

   Research on employer familiarity and knowledge has blossomed within the past decade. Cable and Turban (2001) has proposed that employer knowledge is comprised of familiarity, employer image (beliefs about employers) and reputation (perceived firms' evaluations held by other people); employer images, in turn, have
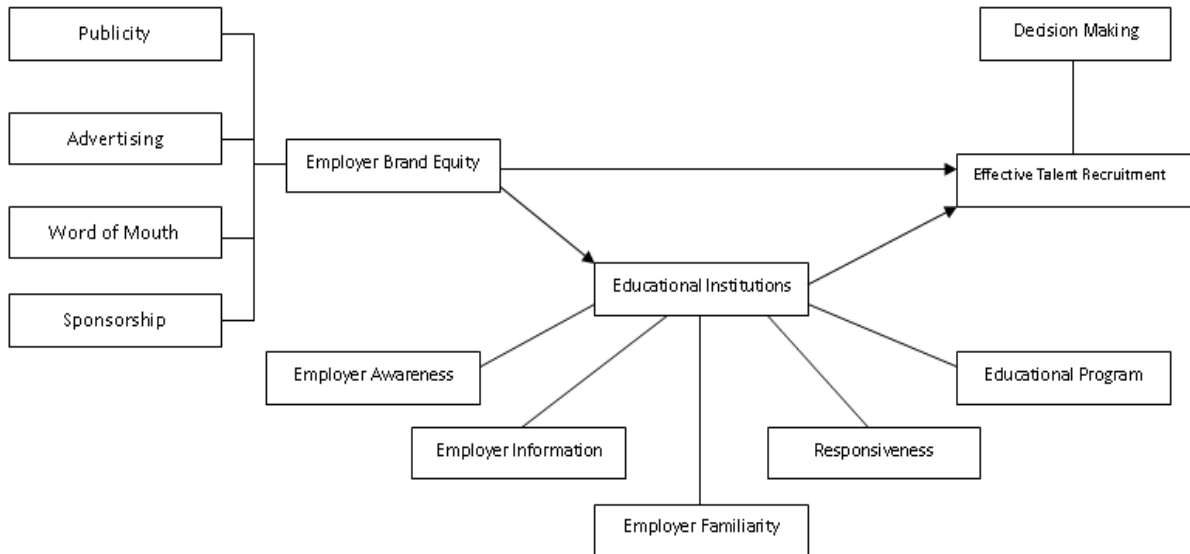
Figure 3. Proposed theoretical framework.

been described as containing both instrumental (job and organizational attributes) and symbolic content. Employer images consistently shows stronger relationships with job seekers intentions and attractions (Chapman et al., 2005) and have been shown to increase as a result of exposure to news stories (Slaughter et al., 2004), product and company provided information, and word of mouth transmission (Cable et al., 2000). Educational institution's student resource centres will be used as talent pools. It is a mechanism of HRM which is principally in the framework of staff hiring. If organizations have to pile up a job opening, they will be able to portray the talent masses and there seem to be ways of harmonizing the profile in the right candidates and job vacancies. Companies will first create awareness of their company image before they can influence fresh graduates.

Visits from organization's HR department to student resource centres of the educational institutes will update the information about the recruitment process and new employment openings in the organization. In this regard, organizations will need to implement information recruitment practices, therefore their recruitment sources will provide line up in general and positive images of the company using recruitment sources. They will provide more extensive information to fresh graduates through detailed ads, brochures, web sites and organizing events in campuses. These activities will propel the familiarity of the employer in the minds of fresh graduates. Database developed in the student resource centres will be according to their educational programs so that appropriate job offers can be conveyed to their relevant graduates. Publicity, word of mouth, advertisement and sponsorship will form the key attributes for fostering

employer brand equity.

Theoretical framework

In Figure 3, employer brand equity will be developed in the minds of fresh graduates through the educational institutions. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed based on our proposed theoretical framework:

H_1: Publicity as a component of employer brand equity is positively associated with effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan.
H_2: Word of mouth as a component of employer brand equity is positively associated with effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan.
H_3: Advertising as a component of employer brand equity is positively associated with effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan.
H_4: Sponsorships as a component of employer brand equity is positively associated with effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan.
H_5: Educational institutions of Pakistan play mediating role between employers and university students to create effective brand equity leading to the effective talent recruitment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The main source to gather the data was through questionnaires floated in the universities of Islamabad and in the selected

organizations. The items used were adapted from the previous studies with the permission of the authors. Questionnaires were based on the interval scale, that is, 5 point Likert scale. The main purpose was to measure the employer brand equity in the minds of fresh graduates as their future perspective employer. Research focuses on the telecom sector of Pakistan and has floated the instrument to measure the five existing companies' employer brand equity in the mind of fresh talent. Comparison among the companies analysis is made to find out the strong employer image.

Sampling criteria

The process of convenient and purposive sampling is adopted in the research by floating the questionnaires in the educational institutions and offices of the selected organizations of Islamabad.

Population and sample size

The targeted population for this study was the fresh graduating students from the universities and the employees of the selected organizations of Islamabad. A sample of 250 students was selected and questionnaires were distributed in various universities and a sample of 350 was selected from the employees. A total of 531 were returned, out of which 473 were found to be accurately filled and up to mark for further statistical analysis. Therefore, a response rate of 78% was achieved.

Type of study and time horizon

This study is of descriptive type and is a one shot study that is cross sectional in nature.

Instrument

Two types of questionnaire were used for the collection of the data. One was floated among the university final semester students and other was floated in the employees of the selected organizations. The questionnaire used in this study is adapted from Collins and Stevens research conducted in 2002 in USA. Employer brand equity dimensions measures were patterned as per according to the Pakistan environment. The items of the questionnaire were measured at five point Likert scale in which 1 was showing mostly and 5 was never. Instrument contained a total of 35 items in which publicity, advertising, word of mouth and sponsorship had 5 items each while employer awareness, information, familiarity and responsiveness were having 3 items each. Dependent variable had only one dimension and it was measured by 3 items. The questionnaire floated in the organizations was slightly modified in scale to obtain the opinions of employees. The questionnaire floated among the students was used for rating the companies against different dimensions.

DATA RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

We collected the data from the university students about the five telecom sector organizations of Pakistan and from the employees of the selected companies to measure the existing employer brand equity in the minds of these respondents.

Table 1. Reliability statistics.

Variable name	Cronbach alpha value	No. of items
Publicity	0.603	5
Advertising	0.613	5
Word of mouth	0.696	5
Sponsorship	0.646	5
Employer awareness	0.622	3
Employer information	0.692	3
Employer familiarity	0.619	3
Responsiveness	0.619	3
Decision making	0.691	3

Reliability

SPSS 18 was used for analysis of data. We first applied test of reliability for the instrument, the Cronbach's alpha statistics is shown in Table 1, the alpha values remained within the range of 0.603 to 0.696 for individual variables. As known by Sekaran (2006), a value of alpha greater than 0.60 represents acceptable range of inter item consistency for a newly developed instrument. The mentioned values in Table 1 sufficiently fulfil the desired criteria for a reliable instrument. The data was further tested for correlation amongst the variables.

To check the assumption of multicilinearity among the variables, correlation analysis was carried out. Table 2 results show significant correlation ranging from 0.121 to 0.565 which is well within the safe range, satisfying the assumption. As stated by Sekaran (2006), correlation beyond the range of 0.80 reflects multicolinearity amongst the variables, which was not the case in present study.

Hypothesis testing

Table 3 shows that the H_1, "publicity as a component of employer brand equity is positively associated with the decision making about the employer, amongst the fresh graduates of Pakistan" has been rejected by the study. This also shows that publicity, without mediation of educational institutions, does not affect the decisions about talent recruitment in selected companies of Pakistan. Similarly, advertising and sponsorship also show insignificant and negative relationship with decision making, rejecting H_3 and H_4, respectively. However, word of mouth as a component of employer brand equity has shown significantly positive association with effective talent recruitment, with a β and p values of 0.179 and 0.014 respectively.

To check the model fitness and the mediating role of the educational institutions between the employer brand equity and the effective talent recruitment, structural

Table 2. Correlations.

Variable	Pub	Adv	Wom	Spo	EA	EI	EF	Res	DM
Pub	1								
Adv	0.438**	1							
Wom	0.446**	0.367**	1						
Spo	0.121*	0.233**	0.253**	1					
EA	0.258**	0.387**	0.285**	0.493**	1				
EI	0.342**	0.240**	0.442**	0.350**	0.433**	1			
EF	0.236**	0.203**	0.322**	0.358**	0.505**	0.533**	1		
Res	0.176**	0.151*	0.333**	0.254**	0.290**	0.372**	0.510**	1	
DM	0.234**	0.188**	0.441**	0.278**	0.261**	0.483**	0.519**	0.565**	1

Key: Pub – publicity, Adv – advertising, Wom - word of mouth, Spo – sponsorship, EA - employer awareness, EI - employer information, EF - employer familiarity, Res – responsiveness, DM - decision making. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Hypotheses testing.

Variable	B	P
Publicity	-0.099	0.140
Advertisement	-0.123	0.161
Word of mouth	0.179	0.014
Sponsorship	-0.060	0.325
Dependent variable	Effective talent recruitment	

equation modelling (SEM) was applied, for which AMOS 18 software was used. To fulfil the assumptions of SEM, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to confirm the discriminate and concurrent validity of the instrument. Tables 4 and 5 show the results of first and second levels CFA analysis (Figure 4). During the first level analysis, first item of independent variable "publicity" naming "company reputation" with factor loading of 0.411 was removed. Some other items also had factor loading less than 0.50, however, they could not be removed in the first level as having interrelationship with other significant items.

During the second stage of CFA, some other items causing factor loading less then the desired value of 0.50, were also removed. Item number 4 "top officials of the company are on media" and 5 "employees are loyal with the company" from the first dimension of independent variable publicity were removed due to lower factor loading.

Similarly item numbers 1 and 5 " job advertisements in newspapers" and "job advertisements are clear and show required information" respectively, from "advertisement" could not qualify the criteria and got removed. Item number 3 "PR of organization" and 5 "reliability as an employer" were also removed due to lower factor loading problem. From sponsorship item number 4 "offer any student study loans" and item number 5 "sponsorship for university magazines" were also removed. Revised

model is shown in Figure 4. To improve the model fitness and relevant indexes, several modifications, as suggested by the software, were applied one by one. On the whole, 12 modifications were applied.

Table 6 shows the results of model summary indexes, where the direct and indirect models have been compared for the fitness. The CMIN/DF value (chi square/ DF) value shows good fit, that is, within the range of 1 to 3. However, the indirect model shows better strength with a value of 1.905 in comparison with direct model. The value of goodness of fit index (GFI) as 0.872 for each model reflect a good fit, as stated by Raykov and Marcoulides (2006) that it should be close to one. Root mean square residual (RMR) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be closer to zero which are 0.114 and 0.058 respectively in the case of current study which fulfils the criteria. The ideal values of critical fit index (CFI) and Trucker Lewis index (TLI) are also closer to one, which also fulfil the criteria in this case with values of 0.869 and 0.847 for direct model and 0.869 and 0.848 for indirect model. Although the model fit indices for both models remained equal in most of the cases, slight difference in TLI shows that indirect model is better than the direct one and confirms the partial role of mediator.

As hypothesized, educational institutions of Pakistan were found playing partial mediating role between employers and university students to create effective

Table 4. First level CFA.

Adv1	<---	Wom	0.414
PC1	<---	Pub	0.415
PC5	<---	Pub	0.454
PC4	<---	Pub	0.455
Wom5	<---	Adv	0.458
Adv3	<---	Wom	0.465
Spo5	<---	Spo	0.468
Adv5	<---	Wom	0.48
Spo1	<---	Spo	0.489
PC3	<---	Pub	0.525
Adv4	<---	Wom	0.525
Adv2	<---	Wom	0.526
Spo4	<---	Spo	0.527
Wom4	<---	Adv	0.542
EF1	<---	Res	0.561
Wom3	<---	Adv	0.566
DM3	<---	DM	0.57
EA1	<---	EA	0.576
Res1	<---	EF	0.577
Spo3	<---	Spo	0.581
PC2	<---	Pub	0.584
EF3	<---	Res	0.589
EA3	<---	EA	0.595
Wom1	<---	Adv	0.607
EA2	<---	EA	0.623
EI1	<---	EI	0.627
EI3	<---	EI	0.633
Wom2	<---	Adv	0.646
Res3	<---	EF	0.65
EF2	<---	Res	0.653
Spo2	<---	Spo	0.663
Res2	<---	EF	0.664
DM1	<---	DM	0.684
DM2	<---	DM	0.708
EI2	<---	EI	0.738

Table 5. Second level CFA.

Adv2	<---	Adv	0.464
Adv3	<---	Adv	0.464
Spo5	<---	Spo	0.469
PC5	<---	Pub	0.472
Spo1	<---	Spo	0.488
PC4	<---	Pub	0.504
PC2	<---	Pub	0.516
Adv4	<---	Adv	0.52
Spo4	<---	Spo	0.527
Adv5	<---	Adv	0.528
PC3	<---	Pub	0.546
Wom4	<---	Wom	0.549
EF1	<---	Res	0.56
Wom3	<---	Wom	0.57
DM3	<---	DM	0.571
EA1	<---	EA	0.572
Res1	<---	EF	0.577
Spo3	<---	Spo	0.582
EF3	<---	Res	0.59
EA3	<---	EA	0.598
Wom1	<---	Wom	0.603
EA2	<---	EA	0.625
EI1	<---	EI	0.627
EI3	<---	EI	0.633
Wom2	<---	Wom	0.638
Res3	<---	EF	0.649
EF2	<---	Res	0.653
Spo2	<---	Spo	0.663
Res2	<---	EF	0.665
DM1	<---	DM	0.683
DM2	<---	DM	0.709
EI2	<---	EI	0.738

brand equity leading to the decision making about the prospective employers. The modified SEM models (direct and indirect) were tested for mediation and significance of the paths. Figures 6 and 7 show the results of direct and indirect models respectively. The direct model shows the relationship between employer brand equity (IV) and effective talent recruitment (DV) without controlling the direct path which shows fulfilment of all the three assumptions of Baron and Kenny (1986) method for partial mediation.

As shown in the Table 7, the first path that is from independent variable EBE to mediating variable EDI is significant with a coefficient of 0.743. Similarly, the second path that is from mediating variable EDI to the dependent variable ETR is also significant with a beta value of 0.995. The third path that is EBE to ETR was found to be insignificant with a significance value of 0.505, which fulfils the requirement. However, the beta estimate, which was to supposed to be zero for perfect mediation, came to be -0.077, showing partial mediation. By controlling the direct path, the value of relationship between EBE and EDI reduced to 0.731 and between EDI to ETR 0.916 showing slight variations from the direct paths. This also confirms the partial mediation affect.

In order to compare the selected companies in terms of promoting employer brand equity amongst the University students through their respective educational institutions, cross tabulation of each item was carried out. As shown in Table 8, the comparative analysis depicts that the items of Mobilink was ranked as having the strongest
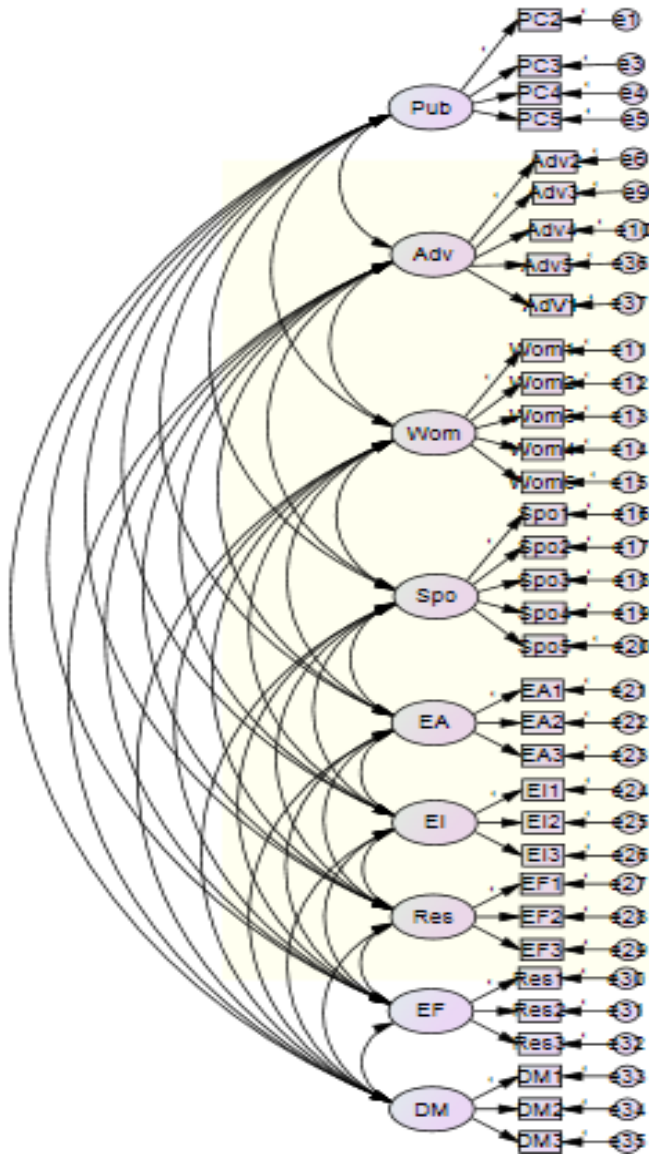
Figure 4. First level CFA.

Table 6. Model fitness summary.

Indices	Direct model	Indirect MODEL
CMIN/DF	1.910	1.905
RMR	0.114	0.114
GFI	0.872	0.872
TLI	0.847	0.848
CFI	0.869	0.869
RMSEA	0.058	0.058

reputation in the minds of fresh graduates while Warid is the weakest one as far as the items pertaining to the first
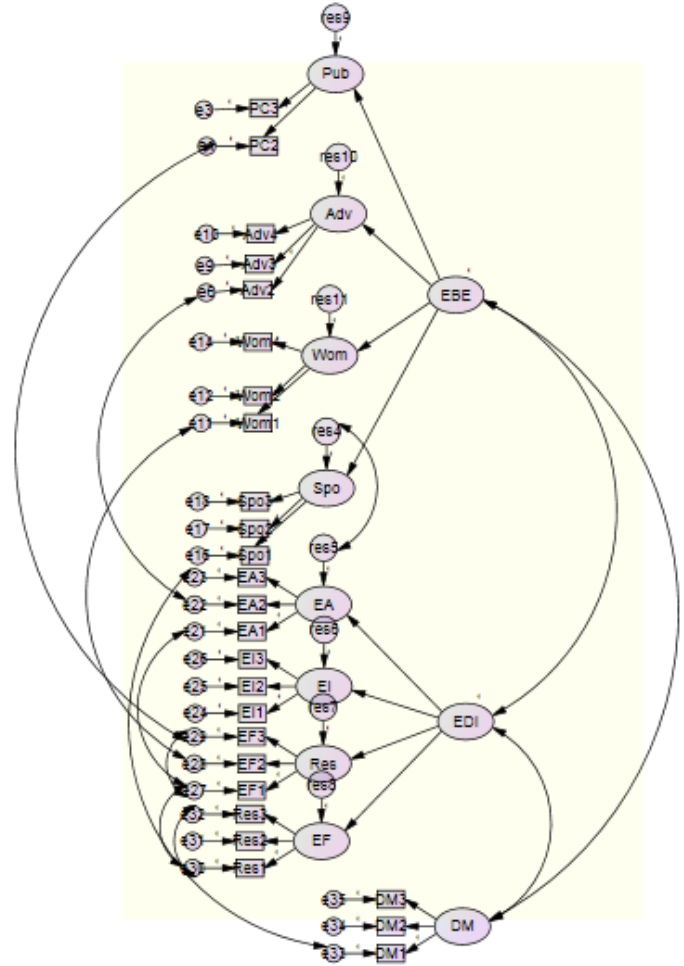
Figure 5. Second level CFA.

independent variable publicity is concerned. Telenor was ranked excellent in terms of providing good corporate culture, social welfare, media representation and employ-yees loyalty towards the company. Over all, in terms of publicity, Telenor is the mostly known company by the fresh graduates.

The results pertaining to the advertisement as a dimension of the employer brand equity was rated as highest in favour of Mobilink, however, on the whole, mixed opinions were found for different items. The results show that Mobilink dominates in publishing the job advertisements in different newspapers and sending the alumni of the same institutes as their brand ambassadors and post; whereas, Ufone is rated highest for attractive job brochures. Telenor led by attaining highest points among others in billboards and Zong in terms of providing clear and proper information required for the job.

The university students considered Mobilink as the mostly heard company as far as the third dimension of employer brand equity "word of mouth" was concerned, where as Telenor was found to be the highly attracting

Figure 6. Direct diagram.

Table 7. Paths estimations.

Paths	Direct estimates	Indirect estimates
ETR (DV) <--- EBE (IV)	-0.095	0.000
EDI (IIV) <--- EBE (IV)	0.743	0.731
ETR (DV) <--- EDI (IIV)	0.995	0.916

Table 8. Cross tabs.

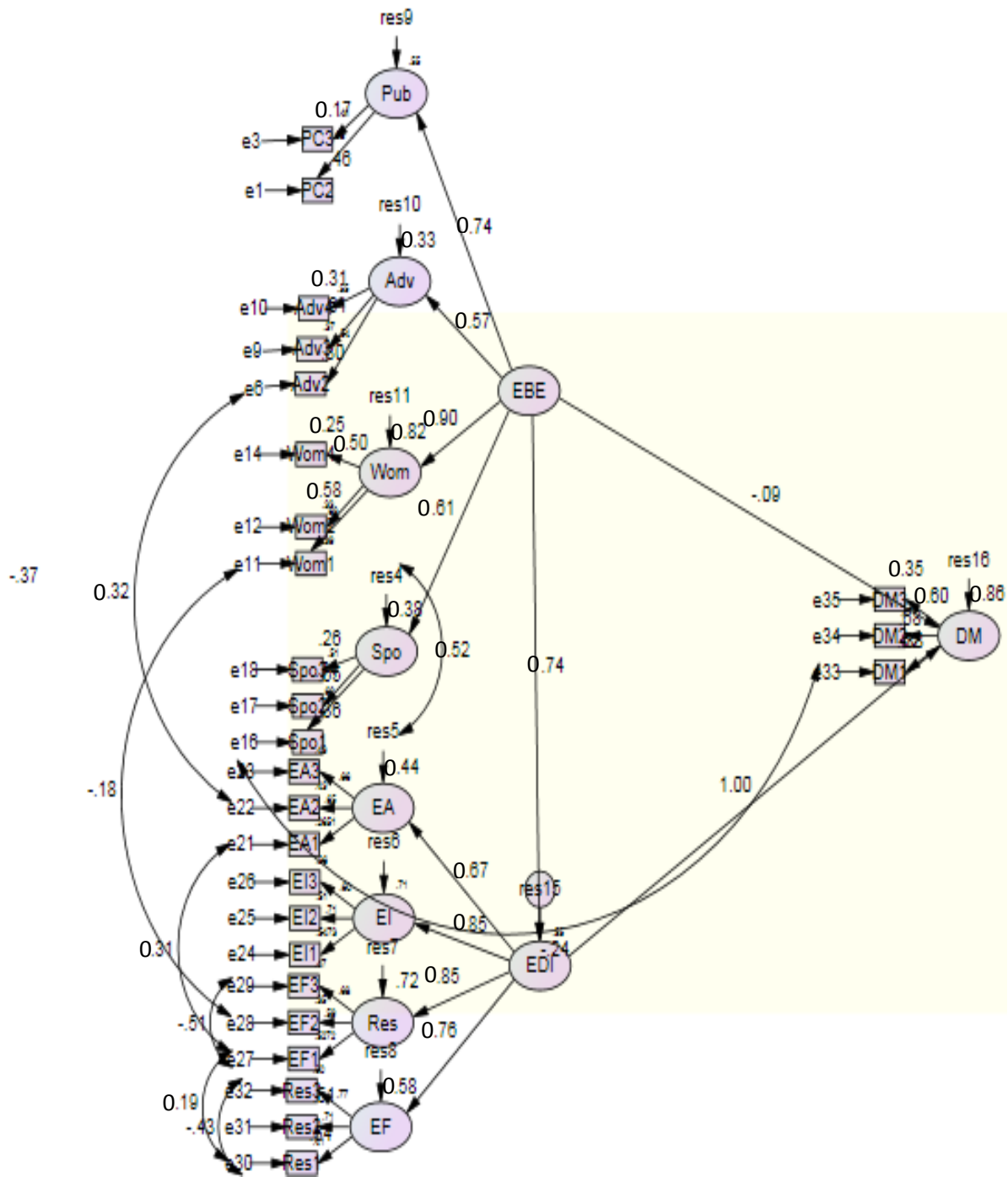| Parameter		Name of the company				
		Mobilink	**Ufone**	**Warid**	**Telenor**	**Zong**
Strong company reputation	Excellent	100	62	44	65	48
	Good	67	71	57	73	57
	Neutral	20	35	39	42	51
	Not good	5	25	26	15	32
	Very bad	8	7	34	5	12
Good corporate culture	Excellent	55	46	25	61	20
	Good	79	55	55	73	81
	Neutral	43	55	58	45	55
	Not good	17	21	39	16	25
	Very bad	6	23	23	5	19
Work for society welfare	Excellent	39	27	22	48	38
	Good	41	80	35	71	46
	Neutral	72	55	87	34	80
	Not good	41	32	37	26	20
	Very bad	7	6	19	21	16
Top officials of the company are on media	Excellent	43	46	23	44	25
	Good	57	56	48	59	53
	Neutral	50	47	51	52	56
	Not good	33	34	45	26	45
	Very bad	17	17	33	19	21
Employees are loyal with the company	Excellent	33	39	20	67	43
	Good	57	67	44	59	38
	Neutral	50	49	52	37	60
	Not good	32	16	45	19	27
	Very bad	28	29	39	18	32
Publicity	Mostly	24	13	8	26	8
	Sometimes	84	91	46	86	71
	Neutral	77	86	93	84	94
	Very few	15	10	45	4	20
	Never	0	0	8	0	7
Job advertisement in newspaper	Mostly	54	48	20	48	32
	Sometimes	65	52	46	64	61
	Neutral	45	37	58	41	50
	Very few	19	34	28	38	43
	Never	17	29	48	9	14
Attractive broachers for job adverts	Mostly	30	45	16	43	29
	Sometimes	79	52	52	48	62
	Neutral	39	48	46	45	62
	Very few	36	30	56	26	27
	Never	16	25	30	38	20
Bill boards	Mostly	38	51	17	63	33

Table 8. Continued.

	Sometimes	54	59	44	58	50
	Neutral	66	47	63	49	49
	Very few	25	21	31	17	40
	Never	17	22	45	13	28
University alumni visit your campus as their brand ambassadors	Mostly	49	35	24	30	24
	Sometimes	54	76	24	65	49
	Neutral	42	45	48	62	43
	Very few	31	8	51	29	41
	Never	24	36	53	14	43
Job advertisements are clear and show required information	Mostly	45	24	21	27	51
	Sometimes	62	57	49	60	41
	Neutral	49	69	40	49	49
	Very few	22	30	43	55	35
	Never	22	20	47	9	24
Advertising	Mostly	11	10	3	5	2
	Sometimes	91	81	34	92	62
	Neutral	69	81	88	86	99
	Very few	28	26	63	17	36
	Never	1	2	12	0	1
You have heard most about the company	Mostly	61	57	27	49	48
	Sometimes	63	52	41	60	49
	Neutral	25	52	49	36	57
	Very few	33	26	39	18	27
	Never	18	13	44	37	19
You feel attracted to the organization	Mostly	49	46	22	66	34
	Sometimes	50	62	32	40	49
	Neutral	57	44	61	38	51
	Very few	32	34	41	28	37
	Never	12	14	44	28	29
PR of organization	Mostly	46	57	27	41	36
	Sometimes	34	46	47	72	46
	Neutral	61	51	53	39	56
	Very few	46	32	48	26	36
	Never	13	14	25	22	26
Strong brand image as an employer	Mostly	44	52	27	53	34
	Sometimes	59	51	32	44	50
	Neutral	34	43	68	67	44
	Very Few	37	30	30	20	40
	Never	26	24	43	16	32
Reliability as an employer	Mostly	53	39	28	72	42
	Sometimes	46	63	47	48	53

Table 8. Continued.

	Neutral	39	51	33	35	47
	Very few	29	18	51	27	29
	Never	33	29	41	18	29
	Mostly	28	21	7	29	9
	Sometimes	61	67	37	69	62
Word of mouth	Neutral	81	91	98	80	96
	Very few	26	18	38	20	30
	Never	4	3	20	2	3
	Mostly	41	31	23	36	43
	Sometimes	48	58	35	56	40
Organizes events in your university	Neutral	62	43	56	43	57
	Very few	28	37	40	40	35
	Never	21	31	46	25	25
	Mostly	24	29	16	33	22
	Sometimes	53	50	44	51	47
Offers different scholarships for student	Neutral	58	51	45	45	54
	Very few	29	27	49	44	38
	Never	36	43	46	27	39
	Mostly	28	23	21	28	33
	Sometimes	46	50	33	58	42
Sponsors workshops and seminars	Neutral	59	51	58	65	54
	Very few	37	45	43	29	45
	Never	30	31	45	20	26
	Mostly	39	25	31	41	24
	Sometimes	34	39	32	44	32
Offer any student study loans	Neutral	51	52	44	42	57
	Very few	33	36	44	36	53
	Never	43	48	49	37	34
	Mostly	38	15	17	46	30
	Sometimes	38	47	27	44	34
Sponsorship for university magazines	Neutral	45	32	43	35	45
	Very few	29	42	44	28	45
	Never	50	64	69	47	46
	Mostly	11	1	1	6	7
	Sometimes	54	47	35	65	48
Sponsorship (Spo)	Neutral	84	93	85	86	87
	Very few	38	41	52	38	46
	Never	13	18	27	5	12
	Mostly	36	34	26	37	18
	Sometimes	65	29	39	39	54
Officials visits to your campus	Neutral	39	48	44	45	50
	Very few	30	43	27	40	41
	Never	30	46	64	39	37

Table 8. Continued.

Emails prompts about the organization by your PR office	Mostly	22	37	14	31	19
	Sometimes	50	48	28	46	53
	Neutral	63	42	52	40	66
	Very few	39	50	53	47	32
	Never	26	23	53	36	30
Contribution in your any on-campus event / activity	Mostly	23	18	11	48	32
	Sometimes	30	51	29	48	45
	Neutral	61	40	53	32	40
	Very few	54	45	52	31	59
	Never	32	46	55	41	24
Employer awareness	Mostly	10	9	3	16	0
	Sometimes	53	46	34	53	69
	Neutral	78	72	66	78	70
	Very few	46	56	62	30	44
	Never	13	17	35	23	17
Organization working atmosphere information as a workplace	Mostly	65	32	31	50	30
	Sometimes	43	51	26	73	33
	Neutral	38	32	36	39	71
	Very few	39	58	37	20	40
	Never	15	27	70	18	26
Job postings gave detailed information about job openings	Mostly	38	22	13	26	33
	Sometimes	48	35	36	70	37
	Neutral	60	68	56	45	51
	Very few	30	44	50	39	45
	Never	24	31	45	20	34
Organization offers summer internships to your campus student	Mostly	32	23	17	30	42
	Sometimes	41	45	27	44	34
	Neutral	52	63	56	46	45
	very few	44	31	41	43	46
	Never	31	38	59	37	33
Employer information	Mostly	23	11	5	15	20
	Sometimes	62	48	45	76	42
	Neutral	69	77	48	62	79
	Very few	36	52	61	34	40
	Never	10	12	41	13	19
A lot of alumni choose this organization as an employer	Mostly	36	38	25	41	23
	Sometimes	55	55	35	52	66
	Neutral	55	42	53	45	53
	Very few	38	36	34	41	33
	Never	16	29	53	21	25
At the job fairs at different places officials, are there to brief about the organization	Mostly	36	44	18	43	31
	Sometimes	37	42	36	53	38

Table 8. Continued.

	Neutral	54	58	53	45	69
	Very few	47	22	57	40	36
	Never	26	34	36	19	26
	Mostly	30	35	22	49	21
	Sometimes	48	50	23	49	38
Seminars arranged about the familiarity of organization as employer	Neutral	58	46	66	48	73
	very few	35	43	46	17	38
	Never	29	26	43	37	30
	Mostly	13	17	9	19	4
	Sometimes	70	55	37	66	61
Employer familiarity	Neutral	53	83	70	71	87
	Very few	59	37	61	34	34
	Never	5	8	23	10	14
	Mostly	44	38	19	64	20
	Sometimes	55	65	30	46	56
Your friends think the organization is good to work with	Neutral	54	33	57	30	60
	Very few	30	26	49	34	40
	Never	17	38	45	26	24
	Mostly	37	47	25	39	28
	Sometimes	53	46	39	46	37
Have favourable impression as an employer	Neutral	55	44	49	48	79
	Very few	44	30	40	42	35
	Never	11	33	47	25	21
	Mostly	32	40	26	53	28
	Sometimes	59	39	33	51	46
The company seems to be influential	Neutral	49	36	45	38	54
	Very few	32	42	41	24	44
	Never	28	43	55	34	28
	Mostly	19	17	4	23	6
	Sometimes	73	55	43	72	59
Responsiveness (Res)	Neutral	64	80	61	64	83
	Very few	35	28	63	26	39
	Never	9	20	29	15	13
	Mostly	50	39	22	63	26
	Sometimes	50	42	30	44	40
Organization you feel the most attractive	Neutral	39	55	57	28	68
	Very few	38	27	48	38	34
	Never	23	37	43	27	32
	Mostly	43	34	19	56	35
	Sometimes	54	49	40	37	41
Provides attractive pay scale	Neutral	41	47	56	44	60
	Very few	34	31	40	36	34

Table 8. Continued.

	Never	28	39	45	27	30
Heard about the job security in the organizations	Mostly	32	38	21	60	31
	Sometimes	39	43	32	29	36
	Neutral	67	56	52	47	66
	Very few	36	28	44	28	37
	Never	26	35	51	36	30
Decision making	Mostly	29	17	6	37	13
	Sometimes	63	45	47	53	50
	Neutral	49	89	52	60	79
	Very few	46	41	65	36	38
	Never	13	8	30	14	20
Employer brand equity	Mostly	7	1	0	1	0
	Sometimes	64	64	28	85	48
	Neutral	117	126	117	111	129
	Very few	12	9	46	3	22
	Never	0	0	9	0	1

organization. Ufone was rated as the best company in maintaining and managing in public relations. Ufone and Telenor were in close rating proximity in employer band image. While in employer reliability, Telenor took the lead from its competitors. On the whole, in word of mouth, Telenor and Mobilink almost stand together.

Zong stands as the most event sponsoring organization among others while Telenor was ranked at the top in granting study scholarships and study loans to the students. As per respondents of the study, Zong sponsors the seminars and workshops in the campuses more commonly. Mobilink was rated as "mostly" in sponsoring the in-campus magazines and newsletters. On the whole, sponsorship was rated at the lowest for Warid, whereas the other four companies remained close competitors to each other.

This study reveals that employers are not effectively using the educational institution to disseminate their brand equity, which was evident from the responses as being rated "neutral" for most of the items. Mobilink was rated as highest in paying visits to campuses while Warid remained at the lowest. The high frequency of e-mail prompts pertaining to the job openings lies with Ufone. Telenor and Ufone were found as the major event organizers in educational institutions. Regarding the information supply of organizational working atmosphere and detailed job posting, Mobilink was at the top whereas, summer internships were mostly offered by Zong thereby depicting overall unbalanced information of employers. The employer brand familiarity is measured by three components.

Telenor was ranked as the best and Warid the worst alumni preferred employers. The participation in the job fair was mostly done by Ufone and Telenor. As far as the third component, "arranging organizational familiarity seminars" was concerned, Telenor and Warid remained at the top and bottom respectively. Similarly, in "responsiveness", Telenor and Ufone were rated as the most and Warid as the least responsive organizations by the respondents. Telenor lead as the organization of choice as an employer in the mindset of fresh graduates, while responding the questions pertaining to dependent variable, decision making. The overall rating of all the selected organizations in terms of employer brand equity remained neutral in the mindset of fresh graduates as the highest rating went on to "neutral ".

By applying post hoc multiple comparisons, we compared the companies. In this study, students were asked to rank the given companies according to the image they had in their mind about these companies. Multiple comparison analysis was done to check the existing image of employer brand equity of the selected organizations in the minds of the students.

DISCUSSION

"Customer-based brand equity refers to beliefs held by individual consumers about a product's or a service's brand (that is, perceptions of the name or logo) that affect their preferences and purchasing decisions relative to other unbranded products or services with similar
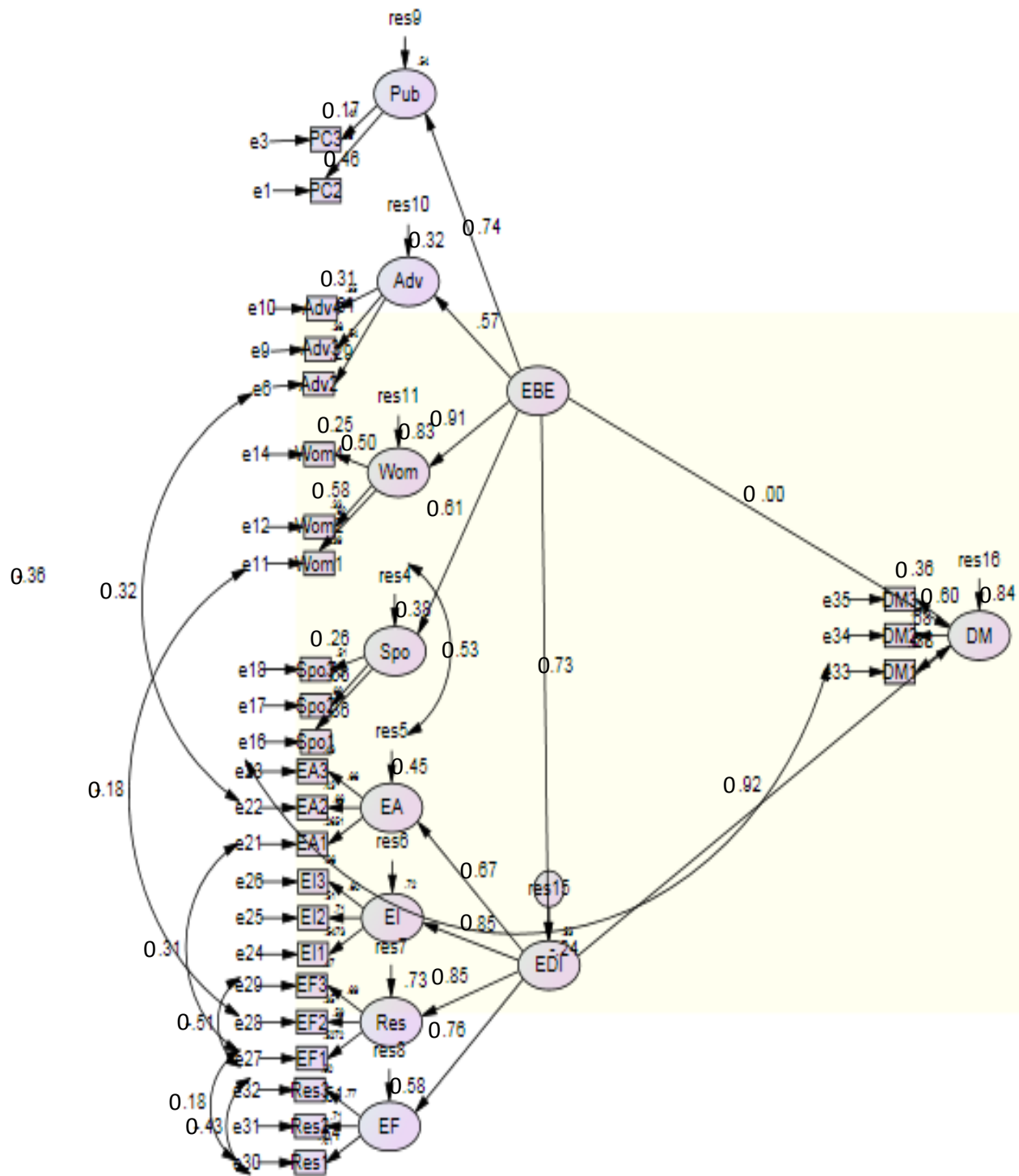
Figure 7. Indirect diagram.

attributes" (Aaker, 1991; 1996; Keller, 1993) seen in this study, such as emphasizing the need of creating employer brand equity among fresh talents in Pakistan in their decision making process; and complementing the

concept of branding in HRM which was first introduced by Ambler and Barrow (1996), depicting the employer as a brand and the employee as the end user. As per the study, the employer brand equity is the most important

element which needs to be cleared in the minds of fresh graduates so that they can better go on decision making about their future employer. The result of our study has evidenced that once the image has been developed in Pakistan's culture, it generally results in steady flow of talented applicants (Sullivan, 1999). The study analysis has demonstrated that none of the selected organizations of Pakistan showed strong presence in all attributes of employer brand equity. As per Sullivan (1999), employment branding uses the tools of marketing research, PR and advertising to change the image applicants have of what it is like at the organization. Our respondents appeared to be attracted by the PR tools used by the Ufone and have a good image of Mobilink and Telenor because of their advertisement campaigns. Good corporate culture image has splendid impact in promoting the notion of an organization as a good place to work as per the respondents thereby proved that employer brand puts forth an image showing the organization as a good place to work (Sullivan, 2004).

The study has indicated the need of an employer to be familiar with the university students as their future prospective workplace which was supported Cable and Turban (2001) that employer knowledge is comprised of familiarity, employer image and reputation. The study has maintained the impression that employer images con-sistently shows stronger relationships with job seekers intentions and attractions (Chapman et al., 2005) and has shown to be enhanced as a result of exposure to news stories (Slaughter et al., 2004) through media, as supported by the respondents. The study has strongly influenced the significance of information to be provided and word of mouth transmission by the companies (Cable et al., 2000). Company reputation has a strong impact in the minds of university students for their prospective employer which indicated that one major determinant of an organizations ability to recruit fresh graduates is organizational reputation, referring to the status of a firm's name relative to competing firms (Belt and Paolillo, 1982; Gatewood et al., 1993).

Overall three hypotheses were rejected and two were accepted. Looking at the labour market culture of Pakistan, the results have practical implications. Organizations are not paying any special attention of creating their brand equity to attract the new market entrants. Word of mouth is the only source of creating awareness about the organizations employer brand equity; interestingly, organizations have no role in that.

In general, the bottom line of results shows neutral ranking of employer brand equity resulting into the need of establishing a strong relationship between academic institution and industry so that academia can be well-built in creating and promoting employer brand equity of the organizations in the mindset of fresh graduates. The proposed model in this study shows the mediating role of the educational institutions; employers using this means can build a strong future labour force of their own choice.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Current study shows that educational institutions have a partial mediating role between employer brand equity and effective talent recruitment in mobile phone companies of Pakistan. However, the direct relationship between employer brand equity and effective talent recruitment is insignificant in absence of mediator, which proves the importance of educational institutions towards the relationship. Pakistan's educational institutions are producing about two million fresh graduates of different disciplines to the labour market each year. Up till now, Pakistan's education system is not directing the huge bulk of these new masses to enter the labour market. The proposition of this study was focused towards the investigation and analysis pertaining to the relationship building between industry and academia for effective talent recruitment through promotion of employer brand equity in conjunction with educational institutions in Pakistan.

The comparative analysis shows that the level of brand equity is almost similar for all the selected organizations, fresh graduates are not having any prioritise image of their employer in their minds indicating unawareness. Students were almost neutral for all the organizations depicting that they were not paying the required attention to create their strong employer image and to develop talent pools for them to select their future effective employees. Employer brand equity plays a magnificent role in making the fresh graduates mind set about their future employer. As per our model, educational institutions can be the best source for developing employer image in the minds of fresh graduates which has a weaker relationship in existing scenario.

The study recommends the organizations to seek active mediating role of educational institutions to improve the effectiveness of new talent recruitment. In the future, the research can be carried out on developing the curriculum in partnership with the industry for the final year students to remove the gap. Moreover, future research focus can be on developing the organizational culture which attracts the fresh talent.

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