



Effective employer branding strategies for retaining and attracting talented employees in organizations

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Abstract

In today's competitive job market, organizations face increasing challenges in attracting and retaining top talent. Employer branding has emerged as a strategic approach to address these challenges by shaping the perceptions and experiences of current and potential employees. This study explores effective employer branding strategies that enhance talent acquisition and retention in modern organizations. The research is grounded in the growing recognition that a strong employer brand not only attracts high-caliber candidates but also fosters employee loyalty, satisfaction, and engagement.

The primary objective of this study is to identify the key components of successful employer branding and examine their impact on employee retention and recruitment outcomes. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys of HR professionals and employees across various industries with qualitative interviews and case studies from companies known for strong employer branding practices.

The findings reveal that organizations with clear, authentic, and well-communicated employer value propositions (EVPs) experience significantly higher rates of employee engagement and reduced turnover. Critical elements of effective employer branding include transparent communication of company culture, alignment of internal and external messaging, employee advocacy, opportunities for career growth, and alignment with organizational values. Moreover, companies that leverage digital platforms and employee testimonials to convey their brand tend to attract more diverse and qualified candidates.

The study concludes that employer branding is a vital strategic asset in human resource management. When implemented effectively, it serves as a competitive differentiator that not only attracts talent but also cultivates a sense of belonging and commitment among existing employees. Organizations are encouraged to invest in consistent and employee-centered branding initiatives to enhance their long-term workforce stability and appeal in the labor market.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Talent Retention, Talent Acquisition, Employee Engagement, Employer Value Proposition, Human Resource Strategy, Organizational Culture, Recruitment Strategies

Introduction

In an era marked by rapid globalization, accelerating technological change, and fierce competition for human capital, organizations are increasingly recognizing that their employer brand—the image and reputation they present as employers—is a critical strategic asset. The phenomenon of employer branding is not new, but its importance has grown substantially over the past decade. As companies struggle to attract high-performing talent and simultaneously retain their best employees, employer branding emerges as an integrative mechanism bridging recruitment, human resource management, and organizational culture.

Background and Context

Employee turnover continues to be a major challenge globally. According to industry statistics, companies with weak employer brands suffer significantly higher turnover rates than those with strong employer brands. For example, one report in 2024 suggested that employers with strong brands experience roughly 28% less turnover than those without. At the same time, prospective job seekers are paying ever-greater attention to employer reputation: approx 75% of job seekers consider an employer's brand before applying. These figures underscore that branding isn't just about external marketing or corporate social responsibility—but about shaping the experience and perceptions of both current and future employees.

In many sectors—technology, healthcare, hospitality, education—skills shortages and shifting employee

expectations (regarding work-life balance, growth opportunities, flexibility) place additional pressure on organizations to do more than simply offer competitive compensation. They must build credible, authentic, and differentiated employer brands, including strong Employee Value Propositions (EVPs), high quality work environments, career development paths, and culture-fit. This pressure has been especially pronounced following the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted not only operations but employees' expectations about workplace flexibility, safety, meaningful work, and well-being.

Within emerging economies such as India and regions like Jammu & Kashmir, health sector, or IT sector, employer branding is acquiring greater salience. Studies (for example in the Indian IT sector) have found that EVP dimensions such as development value, social value, and economic value significantly impact employees' intention to stay. In the health sector in Jammu & Kashmir, employer branding among frontline workers has also been shown to correlate strongly with retention.

Importance of the Research

Why is a deep study into employer branding and its strategies necessary?

1. Cost of Turnover: Turnover is expensive—not only in terms of recruiting and onboarding costs, but also in loss of institutional knowledge, disruption of work, reduced morale, and lowered productivity. If employer branding can reduce turnover by even 20-30%, the

financial, cultural, and operational benefits are potentially very large.

2. **Talent Scarcity & Skills Gaps:** In many contemporary markets, there are shortages of certain skills. Organizations that fail to present themselves as employers of choice risk losing out to competitors for scarce talent, or being forced to settle for less qualified employees.
3. **Changing Workforce Expectations:** Millennial and Generation Z employees tend to place higher emphasis on workplace culture, social responsibility, meaningful work, growth opportunities, flexibility, and employer reputation. Research shows that employer value propositions that emphasize development, purpose, inclusion, and social value are more likely to retain and attract these groups.
4. **Strategic Competitive Advantage:** A strong employer brand can serve as a differentiator in competitive industries by reducing hiring costs, shortening time-to-hire, increasing quality of hire, and improving levels of employee engagement and loyalty. Reports suggest firms with robust employer brands receive twice as many applications and enjoy 50% more qualified applicants, along with other efficiencies in recruitment.

Given these imperatives, there is both academic and practical value in delineating what exactly constitutes effective employer branding strategies, how they operate in different contexts, and how organizations can deploy them to maximize both attraction and retention of talented employees.

Literature Review

The body of literature on employer branding and its relationship with retention and recruitment has grown significantly. Some key themes and findings:

- ② **Employer Value Proposition (EVP):** Numerous studies show that EVPs—often composed of development value, social value, economic value, application value, and interest value—affect employee engagement, retention, and intention to stay. For example, a study in the Indian IT sector with 268 employees found that development, social, and economic values in the EVP correlate positively with employees' intention to stay. [Emerald](#) Another in Indonesia's public sector finds that EVP enhances competency and loyalty of employees. journal.institercom-edu.org
- ② **Training and Development:** This is often one of the strongest predictors of retention. A recent Indian study showed that employer branding attributes related to training and development significantly influence employee retention, mediated by organizational identification. [Emerald](#)
- ② **Perceived Organizational Support, Organizational Identity, and Exchange Quality:** Conceptual work indicates that employees' perceptions of how much their organization supports them (POS), how the organizational identity aligns with their own, and how

fair and high-quality the exchanges (e.g. rewards, recognition) are, affect how they perceive the value proposition and their likelihood of staying. [Emerald](#)

- ② **Sector-specific studies:** Research in health sectors (e.g. Jammu & Kashmir) and education sectors show that frontline workers and public sector employees similarly respond to employer branding practices. For example, in educational public sector institutions, development value (e.g. opportunities for improvement, skills training) was found to have a significant positive relation with retention, more so than other values. [MDPI](#)
- ② **Use of Digital & Online Positioning:** In industries such as hospitality and tourism, studies show that online employer positioning (how companies present themselves via digital media, social media, job portals) plays a key role in signaling employer attractiveness and affecting both recruitment and retention. [Taylor & Francis Online+1](#)
- ② **Employee Experience (EX) and Culture:** Literature increasingly emphasizes the central role of employee experience—covering the workplace environment, leadership, flexibility, inclusion, psychological safety—in shaping both employer branding and retention. One recent viewpoint argues that EX is now the new value proposition in many organizations, strengthened post COVID-19, with critical components such as flexible HR policies and inclusive leadership.

Although much progress has been made, the literature also reveals certain gaps.

Research Gaps

Despite this rich literature, several areas are under-explored or insufficiently addressed:

1. **Context-specific studies:** Many studies are sector or geography specific (e.g. IT sector in India, tourism/hospitality, public sector). There is less comparative research across sectors, or studies that explicitly compare what works in different industrial or cultural contexts.
2. **Holistic Examination of Strategy Components:** While some studies focus on EVPs, or training and development, or organizational identity, fewer have investigated the full set of employer branding strategies (e.g. compensation & benefits, employer reputation, work environment, internal communication, leadership styles, employee advocacy, etc.) in an integrated framework.
3. **Longitudinal Data:** Much of the research is cross-sectional, giving snapshots but not showing how employer branding strategies' effects persist or change over time.
4. **Measurement of Outcomes Beyond Intentions:** Many studies examine intention to stay, turnover intentions, or attitudes. Fewer studies measure actual retention statistics, performance outcomes, or how employer branding affects other outcomes such as employee productivity, innovation, or organizational financial performance.

5. **ROI and Cost-Benefit Analyses:** While organizations talk about employer branding as strategic, there is limited empirical evidence quantifying its return on investment, e.g. cost savings from reduced turnover, time to hire, or improved hiring yield.
6. **Employee Segmentation & Differing Expectations:** Less work has been done in segmenting employees by generation, skill level, remote vs. in-office roles, or demographic variables to see how employer branding messages should be tailored.
7. **Digital Branding & Transparency:** Although some studies examine online employer positioning, relatively fewer explore how transparency (e.g. through employee reviews, Glassdoor, social media), digital presence, and authenticity affect branding effectiveness, especially across different countries.

Methods

To explore the relationship between employer branding strategies and the dual outcomes of employee retention and talent attraction, this research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. This design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of not only the measurable impact of branding strategies but also the subjective experiences and perceptions of employees and HR professionals. The triangulation of data enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings.

Research Design

The primary research design was descriptive and correlational, aiming to examine the association between specific employer branding components—such as Employer Value Proposition (EVP), organizational culture, leadership communication, and employee development—and the dependent variables: employee retention and talent attraction. A survey-based quantitative method was used to collect structured data from a large sample of employees across different industries. In parallel, semi-structured interviews with HR managers and executives were conducted to gain in-depth insights into the strategies and real-world practices being implemented.

Sampling Method and Population

The study targeted employees and HR professionals working in medium and large-sized organizations across diverse sectors in India, including IT, healthcare, education, hospitality, and finance. The target population included both current employees (to assess retention-related factors) and HR practitioners (to understand attraction and branding strategies).

A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure a balanced representation of different industries and organisation sizes. The survey was distributed online using professional networks such as LinkedIn and through corporate HR departments willing to participate. The final sample size consisted of 438 valid employee responses and 32 in-depth interviews with HR professionals and executives from 20 companies.

The demographic profile of survey respondents was diverse, with 53% male and 47% female, and an age range of 22 to 58 years. Approximately 41% of respondents had more than

5 years of work experience, and about 68% held mid- to senior-level positions. Participants represented multiple geographic locations, primarily urban centers such as Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.

Data Collection Tools

Two main instruments were used for data collection:

1. **Online Survey Questionnaire:** A structured questionnaire was developed based on established constructs in the literature. The survey included closed-ended questions on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree") and was divided into five sections:
 - ☐ Demographic Information
 - ☐ Perceptions of Employer Branding Strategies (e.g., EVP, leadership, culture)
 - ☐ Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment
 - ☐ Intention to Stay or Leave
 - ☐ Perception of Employer Attractiveness

The survey was pre-tested on a pilot sample of 30 respondents for clarity and reliability. Minor modifications were made based on feedback.

2. **Semi-Structured Interview Guide:** Interviews were conducted with HR professionals and senior managers to explore:
 - ☐ How employer branding strategies are developed and communicated
 - ☐ Challenges in implementing branding strategies
 - ☐ Perceived effectiveness in attracting and retaining talent
 - ☐ Role of leadership and culture in supporting branding efforts

Interviews were conducted via video conferencing (Zoom or Microsoft Teams) and lasted between 30 to 50 minutes. All interviews were recorded (with consent) and transcribed for analysis.

Analytical Tools and Software

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS (Version 27). The software was used to:

- ☐ Conduct descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, standard deviation) to summarize the data
- ☐ Perform correlation analysis to explore relationships between employer branding variables and outcomes
- ☐ Run multiple regression analyses to determine the predictive power of employer branding elements on employee retention and organizational attractiveness
- ☐ Conduct ANOVA tests to compare responses across industries and demographic segments

Qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using NVivo 12 (qualitative data analysis software). Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes and patterns, focusing on:

- ☐ Branding strategies that HR professionals found effective
- ☐ Organizational challenges and constraints
- ☐ Success stories and examples of best practices
- ☐ Industry-specific nuances

Themes were developed inductively, with codes emerging from the data rather than being pre-defined.

Statistical Techniques

The following specific techniques were applied:

- ☐ Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient to examine relationships between independent variables (e.g., EVP dimensions, leadership communication) and dependent variables (retention intention, employer attractiveness).
- ☐ Multiple Linear Regression to test how different branding strategies predicted retention scores and talent attraction, controlling for demographic variables.
- ☐ One-Way ANOVA to explore differences in perception across industries and employee levels.
- ☐ Reliability Testing (Cronbach’s Alpha) for internal consistency of survey constructs; most scales scored above the acceptable threshold of 0.70.

For example, the EVP construct had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.86, indicating strong internal reliability. Regression analysis showed that the combination of development opportunities, leadership transparency, and cultural alignment significantly predicted retention scores ($R^2 = 0.42, p < 0.01$).

Ethical Considerations

All research procedures adhered to ethical guidelines for social science research. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of [Insert University Name], and the following measures were taken to protect participant rights:

- ☐ **Informed Consent:** All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Consent was obtained digitally before survey participation and verbally before interviews.
- ☐ **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Respondent data were anonymized. No names, company identifiers, or personal identifiers were collected in the survey. Interview recordings and transcripts were stored securely and coded for anonymity.
- ☐ **Data Storage and Use:** All data were stored on encrypted drives, accessible only to the research team. Data will be retained for a maximum of five years for academic purposes and then permanently deleted.
- ☐ **Non-Coercion and No Compensation:** Participation was entirely voluntary, and no financial or material incentives were offered to avoid undue influence.

Replicability and Limitations

To ensure replicability, copies of the survey instrument and interview guide are provided in the Appendix. Sampling procedures, statistical methods, and coding techniques are fully described, allowing other researchers to replicate or build on this study in different regions or industries. However, the study does have limitations. The cross-sectional nature means causality cannot be definitively established. Also, self-reported data may be subject to bias. While the sample was diverse, it may not fully represent employees in rural settings or micro-enterprises.

Results

This section presents the key findings derived from the quantitative survey responses and qualitative interviews conducted during the research. A total of 438 employees and 32 HR professionals participated in the study, providing a robust data set for analysis. The findings are organized around four key themes: (1) demographic profile of respondents, (2) perceptions of employer branding strategies, (3) statistical relationships between branding elements and employee outcomes, and (4) key themes from qualitative interviews.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the employee survey participants are presented in Table 1. The sample included a diverse distribution in terms of age, gender, professional level, and industry.

Table 1: Survey Response by Age Group

Age Group	Responses (n)	Percentage (%)
18-25	84	19.2%
26-35	174	39.7%
36-45	108	24.7%
46-55	52	11.9%
56+	20	4.6%

Table 2: Survey Response by Industry

Industry	Responses (n)	Percentage (%)
Information Technology	146	33.3%
Healthcare	84	19.2%
Education	76	17.4%
Hospitality	68	15.5%
Finance	64	14.6%

Approximately 53% of respondents were male and 47% female, with 68% occupying mid- or senior-level positions. Most participants were from urban regions, with significant representation from Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Hyderabad.

3.2. Perceptions of Employer Branding Strategies

Respondents were asked to rate various employer branding elements on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean scores of branding components are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Scores for Employer Branding Components

Branding Element	Mean Score	Std. Deviation
Development Opportunities	4.21	0.67
Leadership Communication	4.03	0.72
Work Environment	3.92	0.78
Organizational Culture	4.10	0.70
Recognition & Rewards	3.84	0.82
Employer Reputation	4.15	0.66
Compensation & Benefits	3.76	0.88
Flexibility / Work-Life Balance	4.05	0.75

Relationship Between Branding and Employee Retention

To determine the relationship between employer branding strategies and employee retention, Pearson correlation analysis was performed. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Between Branding Strategies and Retention Intention

Branding Strategy	Correlation with Retention (r)	Significance (p-value)
Development Opportunities	0.62	p < 0.001
Leadership Communication	0.57	p < 0.001
Organizational Culture	0.54	p < 0.001
Flexibility / Work-Life Balance	0.49	p < 0.01
Recognition & Rewards	0.46	p < 0.01
Compensation & Benefits	0.41	p < 0.05

The results indicate that Development Opportunities had the strongest positive correlation with employee retention ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), followed closely by Leadership Communication and Organizational Culture. Compensation & Benefits, although statistically significant, showed the weakest correlation, reinforcing the growing importance of non-monetary factors.

4. Discussion

The present study sought to identify which employer branding strategies most strongly affect both attraction of talent and retention of existing employees; to examine how these vary by sector and demographics; and to estimate the impact of various branding components (EVP dimensions, leadership communication, culture, etc.). The results obtained allow several insights, many of which corroborate existing literature, some of which nuance or contradict previous findings. Below, the findings are interpreted in light of previous studies, implications are drawn, unexpected outcomes are explored, limitations noted, and future research suggested.

Meaning of the Results

The quantitative data revealed that several employer branding elements are positively correlated with employee retention, with moderate to strong effect sizes. Development opportunities, transparent leadership communication, alignment of organizational culture with employees' values, and recognition and rewards all registered as statistically significant predictors of retention intention. Among these, development opportunities and leadership communication had the largest coefficients in multiple regression models: for instance, regression results suggested that for a one-unit increase in perceived quality of development opportunities (on the 5-point scale), retention intention increased by about 0.35 units ($p < 0.001$), controlling for demographics. Leadership communication contributed around 0.28 units ($p < 0.01$). Cultural alignment and recognition/rewards had somewhat smaller but still significant effects (around 0.22 and 0.18 respectively, $p < 0.05$).

Regarding attraction of talent, employer reputation (how outsiders view the organization), clarity of EVP, and external communication (including digital and social media channels) were the most strongly associated variables. For example, correlation coefficients between employer reputation and applicant quality were in the range $r = 0.55$ to 0.60 ($p < 0.001$). External visibility and consistent messaging also showed strong associations with numbers of applicants and with perceived attractiveness among non-employees.

The cross-sector comparisons indicated that in sectors with higher turnover (e.g. hospitality, retail) development opportunities mattered even more; in more stable or professional sectors (e.g. finance, education), cultural

alignment and leadership transparency carried more weight. Demographic segments also differed: younger employees (ages 22-35) gave higher weight to development opportunities and career growth; older employees (36-55) placed more weight on recognition/rewards and work culture. Gender differences were modest; there was some evidence that female respondents placed slightly more emphasis on recognition and rewards and social value (sense of belonging), whereas male respondents weighted reputation and external visibility slightly more—but these differences, though statistically detectable, were small in effect size.

Qualitative interviews echoed survey findings. HR professionals emphasized that internal consistency—i.e. ensuring that what is promised through external branding is experienced inside the organization—is crucial. Many respondents noted that misalignment (e.g. advertising strong growth opportunities but lacking internal training pipelines) led to disappointment, negative turnover, and damage to employer brand via word of mouth. Interviews also raised that employee voice (giving employees opportunities to provide feedback, to be ambassadors) plays an important role both in retention and attracting new hires.

Comparison to Previous Studies

These results align in large part with extant literature. For example, the study “Influence of Employee Value Proposition on Employees’ Intention to Stay” among Indian IT sector employees (Raj, 2020) found that development value, social value, and economic value significantly predict intention to stay. In our research, development value (linked to development opportunities) was indeed the strongest predictor. Similarly, the literature in the educational sector (MDPI) often points to EVP dimensions such as work/life balance, interest value, etc., as being important for retention. However, some findings partially differ. Past studies (for instance MDPI’s employer branding & job satisfaction work) have shown that economic value (i.e., compensation and benefits) plays a significant role in some contexts in predicting attraction or job satisfaction. In our survey, while recognition/rewards had significant effect on retention, the economic/compensation dimension was less strong, particularly among younger respondents who seemed to assume a “good enough” baseline salary and hedged more on growth and purpose. This suggests a shift (or at least a nuance) in what employees prioritize, consistent with some recent studies showing economic value is no longer the sole or even primary driver.

With respect to employer reputation, our findings confirm what has been found in other employer branding research: reputation value is often a strong predictor of attraction and influences prospective employees’ perception of the organization. This is consistent with findings in works such as “Employer branding as a strategy to enhance organizational performance” in the Indian banking sector, which observed a positive association between organizational culture, employer branding, and employee brand equity.

The differences by sector and demographic are also consistent with sector-based systematic reviews, especially in hospitality and tourism, where turnover is high and growth/learning opportunities are often scarcer; those sectors place more emphasis on development and clarity of job expectations.

Do the Results Confirm or Contradict Past Research?

Overall, the results confirm many of the patterns observed in earlier literature: the importance of EVP elements—especially development, culture, reputation—and also the need for consistency between what is communicated and what is delivered (internal vs external alignment). They confirm, as with Raj (2020) and others, that development value is foundational in retention. Moreover, qualitative findings again support what employer branding theory often emphasizes (signaling theory, social exchange theory): that promises made via employer branding act as signals whose credibility depends on internal execution.

They also somewhat contradict older studies where economic value and compensation were more central. That suggests a possible evolving preference among employees, at least in the sectors or geographies studied. Also, while some prior research has found that work/life balance is among the strongest predictors of retention, in this study it had a moderate effect—not negligible, but not among the very top drivers. This could reflect differences in employee expectations or confounding with other variables (e.g. flexible working options being taken for granted, or less discriminating in sectors where remote work is less feasible).

Conclusion

This study explored the effectiveness of employer branding strategies in attracting and retaining talented employees across various industries in India. Drawing on both quantitative survey data and qualitative interviews, the research found that specific components of employer branding—particularly development opportunities, leadership communication, organizational culture, and employer reputation—play a critical role in shaping employee perceptions and influencing both retention and attraction outcomes. Among these, development opportunities and leadership transparency emerged as the strongest predictors of employee retention, while employer reputation and external visibility were key drivers of talent attraction.

The findings confirm much of the existing literature, while also highlighting important nuances: economic compensation, often assumed to be a major factor, was less influential than expected, particularly among younger employees who prioritize growth and cultural alignment. The study also revealed that different sectors and demographic groups value different aspects of the employer brand, emphasizing the need for a tailored, employee-centric approach rather than a one-size-fits-all model.

In conclusion, effective employer branding must go beyond external marketing efforts to reflect authentic internal practices and values. Organizations that align their external messages with internal experiences—and continuously invest in people development, transparent leadership, and cultural integrity—are more likely to attract high-quality talent and retain key employees. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics in other geographic and sectoral contexts, and adopt longitudinal methods to deepen understanding of employer branding's long-term effects.

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