

## **IMPACT OF EMPLOYER BRAND ON WAR FOR TALENT PRACTICES ADOPTED IN IT SECTOR**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Employer branding has emerged as a crucial component of war for talent practices in contemporary organizational contexts. In today's competitive labor market, where skilled professionals have abundant options, employer branding plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of organizational culture, values, and attractiveness as an employer. Employer branding not only facilitates the attraction of top talent but also contributes to employee retention and engagement by fostering a sense of belonging, purpose, and alignment with organizational values. Through employer branding initiatives, organizations can differentiate themselves in the talent marketplace, cultivate a positive employer brand image, and create compelling narratives that resonate with current and prospective employees. This study tries to examine the role of employer brand on war for talent practices in IT Sector in Kochi, Kerala, India.

By examining the interplay between employer branding and war for talent practices, this article aims to provide insights into the mechanisms through which organizations can leverage their employer brand to attract, retain, and engage top talent in a competitive and dynamic labor market landscape.

**KEYWORDS:** Employer Brand, War for Talent practices, IT Sector, Kerala.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

In today's competitive job market, where talented professionals have abundant options and preferences, organizations are increasingly recognizing the pivotal role of employer branding in attracting and retaining top talent. Employer branding, the strategic management of an organization's reputation as an employer, has emerged as a critical component of talent acquisition strategies. This article aims to explore the significance of employer branding on talent practices and its implications for organizational success.

Nowadays Employer Branding is described as a strategy for winning the “war for talent” (Amelia & Nasution, 2016) that engages to make a good appeal to the present and future employees. Employer branding encompasses the image, values, culture, and reputation of an organization as perceived by current and prospective employees. It serves as a powerful tool for shaping perceptions of organizational attractiveness, differentiation, and alignment with

individual career aspirations and values. In essence, employer branding reflects the promise that organizations make to their employees regarding the employment experience and opportunities for growth and development.

Moreover, employer branding extends beyond mere recruitment efforts and encompasses the entire employee lifecycle, from attraction and onboarding to development, retention, and advocacy. It fosters a sense of belonging, pride, and loyalty among employees, driving higher levels of engagement, productivity, and organizational performance. Employer Branding serves as a communication tool through which an organization presents its attributes and offer (Love & Singh, 2011).

The study on employer branding and its impact on talent acquisition holds significant importance for several key stakeholders, including organizations, HR professionals, job seekers, and policymakers. It influences strategic decision-making, enhance organizational performance, and contribute to a positive employee experience. By understanding the dynamics of employer branding and its impact on talent acquisition outcomes, organizations can position themselves for long-term success in today's dynamic and competitive business environment.

Despite the increasing emphasis on employer branding as a strategic tool for talent acquisition, many organizations struggle to effectively communicate their employer value proposition (EVP), cultivate a compelling employer brand image, and differentiate themselves as employers of choice. This has led to a number of key issues and challenges, including:

**Lack of Alignment with Organizational Values:** Many organizations face difficulties in aligning their employer branding efforts with their organizational culture, values, and strategic objectives. This disconnect between employer brand messaging and the employee experience can lead to inconsistencies and undermine the organization's ability to attract and retain top talent.

**Limited Resources and Expertise:** Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and organizations with limited resources may lack the necessary expertise, budget, and infrastructure to develop and implement comprehensive employer branding strategies. This can result in suboptimal employer brand perception and competitiveness in the talent marketplace.

**Difficulty in Measuring ROI:** The intangible nature of employer branding makes it challenging for organizations to measure the return on investment (ROI) of their employer branding initiatives. Without clear metrics and benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of employer branding efforts, organizations may struggle to justify investments in talent acquisition and employer branding activities.

**Negative Online Reputation:** With the proliferation of online review platforms and social media channels, organizations are increasingly vulnerable to negative employer brand perception and reputation damage. Negative reviews, poor employee experiences, and lack of responsiveness to candidate feedback can tarnish the organization's reputation and deter top talent from considering employment opportunities.

**Talent Pipeline and Succession Planning:** Failure to cultivate a robust talent pipeline and succession plan can impede an organization's ability to address future talent needs and leadership gaps. Inadequate succession planning and talent development initiatives may result in talent shortages, leadership vacancies, and disruptions to organizational continuity and growth.

**Competitive Talent Market:** In a highly competitive talent market, organizations must contend with fierce competition for top talent from rival firms and emerging disruptors. Failure to differentiate the employer brand and offer compelling value propositions may result in talent drain and loss of competitive advantage.

Addressing these challenges requires organizations to adopt a holistic approach to employer branding and talent acquisition, encompassing strategic alignment, resource allocation, measurement frameworks, online reputation management, talent development, and competitive positioning. By acknowledging and addressing the key issues outlined in the statement of the problem, organizations can develop effective employer branding strategies that resonate with top talent and support long-term organizational success.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) proposed a model that suggests that employer branding transforms organizational identity and culture, leading to enhanced loyalty to the company's brand. Barrow & Mosley, 2005 viewed that increased loyalty, in turn, boosts employee productivity and engagement. Furthermore, Employer branding shapes stakeholders' perceptions of the employer brand, influencing the employer's image. Consequently, a positive or negative employer perception affects the attractiveness of the company to potential employees, either increasing or decreasing its appeal (Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

Stephan Rathgeber (2017) likens building a successful employer brand to attract top talent to building a community, stressing that a strong community is crucial to a positive brand image. He notes that companies like Google, and P&G, which have effective employer branding strategies, integrate their approach with community engagement. This approach prioritizes social responsibility and considers the interests of five key stakeholder groups. However, Rathgeber advises companies to focus on aspects genuinely related to their characteristics, rather than simply jumping on popular trends.

Effective employer branding within an organization necessitates deliberate management, akin to traditional branding efforts. Employer branding management encompasses the strategic coordination of people, talent management, and performance, with a focus on developing leadership, enhancing recruitment and on-boarding processes, and driving business growth and profit margins. According to Mosley (2014), this discipline has a more significant impact on organizational success compared to other Human Resource functions, emphasizing the importance of thoughtful and comprehensive employer branding management. By prioritizing these efforts, organizations can unlock greater potential for growth and profitability.

According to Van Dam (2006), employer branding is a strategic process aimed at achieving a single key objective: to attract and retain current and future ideal employees by showcasing a strong employer appeal. Companies that embody this definition typically offer a range of benefits, including: a positive reputation in the labor market, high recognition, a strong psychological contract with employees, comprehensive economic and psychological packages, special attention to employee needs, differentiation from other employers and stability-enhancing policies. By implementing effective employer branding, organizations can establish a strong identity, foster loyalty, and boost productivity, ultimately attracting top talent and driving business success.

As companies continue to leverage employer branding to attract new talent and retain existing employees, aligning them with the company culture and strategy according to the view of Mokina (2014), it's essential to recognize that employer branding strategy is a targeted approach. It focuses on identifying and attracting specific individuals whose skills and expertise align with the company's business objectives and goals. This strategy also involves promoting job openings and the work environment externally, showcasing the company's value proposition to potential candidates as per the thoughts of Mosley and Schmidt (2017). By doing so, companies can effectively appeal to top talent and drive business success.

Collings et al. (2017) emphasized the significance of identifying and managing key positions within an organization's strategy, segmenting talent, and selecting top performers for critical roles. To attract and retain talent, organizations must differentiate their Human Resource practices, such as proactive recruitment and talent pooling, rather than demand-led hiring. A talent management framework was developed to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and enhance job performance. The findings revealed that: talent segmentation, based on role strategic importance, has an indirect positive impact on performance, differentiated Human Resource practices foster talent commitment and motivation; by considering employees as a key strategic resource, organizations can Leverage their talent to drive differentiation in the market and increase overall value by customizing the talent management framework to meet their needs. (Collings and Mellahi, 2009)

A traditional brand is defined by a unique set of attributes, including its name, slogan, design, and symbols, which differentiate it from competitors. A brand comprises two key components: brand identity and brand image. Brand identity refers to the visual and messaging elements crafted by an organization to communicate its values and personality to its target audience through various channels. In contrast, brand image represents how the brand is actually perceived by individuals, shaped by their personal experiences, interactions, and interpretations of the projected identity as per American Marketing Association, (2016).

Krishnan and Scullion (2016) explored the challenges and opportunities of implementing talent management in medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). They noted that talent management approaches used in larger organizations may not be directly transferable to SMEs, as jobs are still evolving in these less hierarchical structures. Instead, SMEs need to adapt talent management practices to their unique context, focusing less on defining key strategic positions. By understanding how talent management practices evolve across different organizational life stages, SMEs can improve their ability to attract and retain talent. The authors also found that an organization's growth aspirations influence recruitment strategies: rapidly growing organizations prioritize person-to-organization fit, steadily growing organizations value person-to-job fit; to gain a competitive advantage, medium-sized organizations can adopt informal work practices to remain flexible and cost-effective. Implement innovative and creative practices to attract skilled talent, such as Recruiting soon-to-be-retired experienced talent and investing in talent development to build internal career paths. However, before investing in talent management practices, SMEs should achieve economies of scale and carefully evaluate and select new talent to increase organizational value.

Festing and Schäfer (2014) investigated the relationship between talent management and the psychological contract, focusing on how to tailor talent management to meet the needs and expectations of skilled talents across different generations, thereby reducing turnover rates.

They introduced a social exchange-based framework to analyse generational effects, individual differences among talented employees, and generation-related variations. The study's key findings indicate that Generational experiences shape work values, leading to differing expectations towards the workplace across generations. Younger generations prioritize work-life balance, development opportunities, work mobility, and flexibility, while older generations value job security and employer loyalty. cultural, gender, and industry-specific differences exist among talent pipelines, resulting in varying work-related values among talents within the same segment. Organizations that understand the psychological contract with their talents and adapt their strategic talent management practices to meet the diverse needs of their multigenerational workforce are more likely to retain skilled talents longer. Additionally, referring to all employees as 'talent' can lead to increased job performance, commitment, and satisfaction.

Miles and Mangold (2005) explored the connection between the psychological contract and employees' trust in their employers. They found that employees' trust is built on the promises made by employers and fluctuates based on the extent to which those promises are fulfilled. When employers fail to deliver on their commitments, they breach the psychological contract, leading to feelings of betrayal and decreased motivation among employees. Furthermore, employees may express their dissatisfaction through negative interactions with others, ultimately influencing not only their individual motivation but also the broader organizational culture. The psychological contract, therefore, plays a significant role in shaping employee motivation and organizational culture.

According to Herman and Giola (2001), an "employer of choice" refers to a company that employees deliberately choose to work for over other options in the market. This designation is earned by employers who establish a strong reputation for exceptional leadership, a positive culture, and a talent magnet – attracting and retaining top performers – regardless of their industry, size, or age. In essence, an employer of choice is a company that stands out as a preferred place to work, distinguishing itself from competitors and establishing a unique advantage in the labour market.

In the views of Barrow and Mosley (2005), a clear employer brand proposition is particularly beneficial for new companies, as it enables them to attract and retain top talent aligned with their growth objectives, despite having a relatively unknown business profile. Additionally, they highlight the advantages of strong employer branding for companies expanding internationally, as a cohesive and motivated workforce can facilitate a smoother transition into new markets. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of employer branding during periods of corporate transformation, such as rebranding or reinvention. A well-defined employer brand helps employees understand the new direction, commit to the associated promises, and connect with the customer experience through their own employee experience, ensuring a unified and effective transition.

Ambler and Barrow (1996), viewed that employer branding is particularly valuable for high-value-added services, where salaries are higher and employee numbers are fewer, making the employee-employer relationship crucial. To understand the context of employer branding, it's essential to consider the concept of a brand having a personality, as highlighted by many scholars. The "brand-as-person" concept emphasizes how a brand's personality traits can increase its trustworthiness. In the context of employer branding, this means that a company's



personality and values can foster a strong, trusting relationship with its employees, making it an incredibly beneficial strategy for organizations. By developing a strong employer brand, companies can attract and retain top talent, drive engagement, and ultimately, achieve business success.

The employer branding concept has faced criticism and challenges in being understood as a distinct concept, particularly in its differentiation from similar concepts like corporate culture. A study by Ambler and Barrow (1996) revealed that respondents struggled to clearly define the boundaries between employer branding and company culture. While the study acknowledged some benefits of employer branding, such as psychological and awareness advantages, these benefits were deemed low-priority compared to other concerns. Moreover, respondents criticized the management of employer branding, citing difficulties in holistically managing the employee experience. They emphasized the need for a senior management figure to oversee employer branding efforts, highlighting that a lack of top-level support, weak Human Resource structures, and internal politics pose significant obstacles to developing an effective employer branding strategy, particularly due to its long-term investment nature.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To analyse the Employer Brand factors influencing War for Talent practices in IT Industry.
- To examine the impact of Employer Brand on War for Talent practices.
- To assess the Job satisfaction factors influencing the War for Talent practices Talent in IT Sector.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The Researcher has attempted to study the Impact of Employer Brand on War for Talent practices adopted in IT Industry. Utilizing a descriptive research design, the study employed simple random sampling to collect primary data via questionnaires from 75 employees within the IT industry in Kochi, Kerala, while simultaneously gathering secondary data from journals, books, and websites; Regression and Henry Garrett Ranking test were used for analysis.

### **LIMITATIONS:**

The study's scope is limited to employees within the IT industry in Kochi, Kerala, and as such, its findings cannot be generalized. Furthermore, the sample size is confined to 75 individuals, potentially impacting the representativeness of the results, while acknowledging the possibility of biased opinions from the respondents.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

#### **Employer Brand Factors influencing War for Talent Practices:**

The perception of the Employer Brand factors influencing the War for Talent practices in IT sector are Values and Culture, Well Managed, Challenging Opportunities, Strong Performance, Industry Leadership, Talented Employees, Continuous Development, Inspiring Mission, Colleagues Support and Job Security.

#### **Table.1- Employer Brand factors influencing War for Talent practices**

Employer Brand Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Values and Culture	27	22	21	4	1
Well Managed	23	36	15	1	0
Challenging Opportunities	15	37	16	5	2
Strong Performance	11	41	19	3	1
Industry Leadership	12	29	30	3	1
Talented Employees	18	32	23	2	0
Continuous Development	31	25	18	1	0
Inspiring Mission	19	34	16	5	1
Colleagues Support	22	31	19	2	1
Job Security	25	30	17	3	0

Source: primary data

Chart 1: Employer Brand factors influencing War for Talent practices

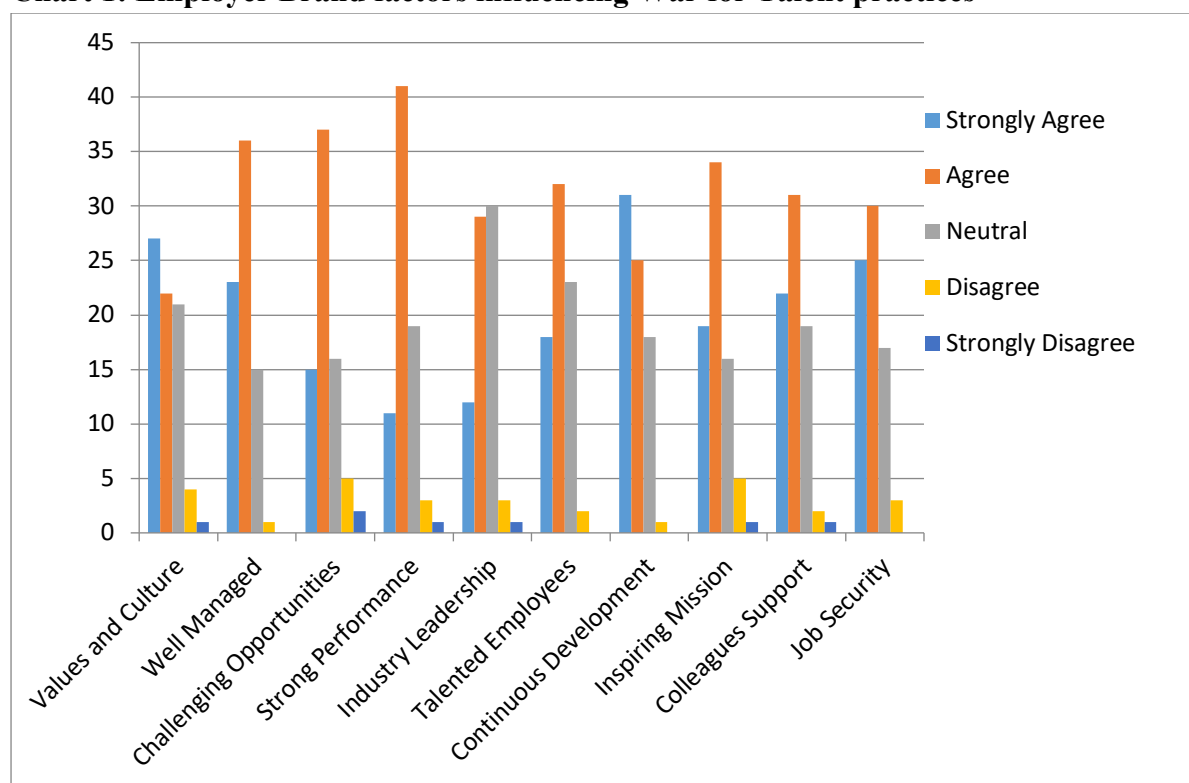


Table 1 denotes that majority of the respondents strongly Agree (31) that Continuous Development influences War for Talent practices. Majority of respondents agree that Strong Performance (42) and Challenging Opportunities (37) influences, while majority of respondents feel neutral about Industry Leadership (30) influences war for Talent practices.

### Impact of Employer Brand on War for Talent practices:

Regression analysis was used to analyse the effects of Employer Brand factors on war for Talent practices in IT Sector.

Table.2- Impact of Employer Brand on War for Talent practices

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error in the Estimate
1	0.784 <sup>a</sup>	0.638	0.643	1.0377
a. Predictors: (Constant), Working Environment, Internal Culture, Development Opportunities, Monetary Incentives				

**Source: Primary data**

The table shows that R was 0.784, indicating a positive association between all four independent variables. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.638 indicates that the independent variables explained 63.8 percent of the variation in the dependent variable, while other factors accounted for just 36.2 percent, as shown in Table 2. This indicates that the regression model's explanatory and predictive foundations are strong.

**Table.3 - Regression coefficient**

Coefficients						
Model		Coefficients of unstandardized		Coefficients of Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.904	1.690		2.219	0.032
	Working Environment	0.476	0.094	0.294	3.762	0.000
	Internal Culture	0.125	0.086	0.362	4.513	0.000
	Development Opportunities	1.183	0.067	0.257	3.756	0.000
	Monetary Incentives	0.357	0.073	0.373	3.582	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Talent Management						

**Source: primary data**

Organizational Performance = 5.904 + 0.476 (Working Environment) + 0.125 (Internal Culture) + 1.183 (Development Opportunities) + 0.357 (Monetary Incentives)

The regression analysis reveals that Working Environment, Internal Culture, Development Opportunities and Monetary Incentives have statistically significant relationships with Talent practises.

Based on these findings, the IT sectors can prioritize increasing Development Opportunities and monetary Incentives, meanwhile it can also improve Work environment and internal culture prevailing in the IT sector.

**Employee Benefits and War for Talent practices:****Table.4: Job Satisfaction factors influencing War for Talent practices**

S. No	Elements of Employer Branding	Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	A competitive salary	2820	45.97	3
2	Attractive financial bonuses	2650	44.48	7
3.	On-site benefits	2920	47.48	2
4.	Career development opportunities	2950	48.19	1
5	Clear roles and responsibilities	2660	44.52	5
6	Role stability and security	2710	45.11	4



S. No	Elements of Employer Branding	Score	Mean Score	Rank
7	1:1 meetings and individual coaching	2180	40.00	8
8	Subsidized travel	2020	38.71	9
9	Hybrid or remote working opportunities	2650	44.50	6

**Source: primary data**

Table 4 shows that the majority of the people perceive that the Job satisfaction factor ‘Career development opportunities’ is prioritized by the respondents as it is ranked first with 2950 score points followed by ‘On-site benefits’ with 2920. The third and fourth rank is given to ‘A competitive salary’ and ‘Role stability and security’ with 2820 and 2710 scores. ‘Subsidized travel’ is ranked last with 2020 points.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

Based on the analysis of employer branding and its impact on War for Talent practices, here are some key suggestions for organizations looking to enhance their employer branding strategies and optimize talent acquisition outcomes. The organizations shall have a clear unique value proposition that offers to employees, encompassing factors such as culture, values, career development opportunities, benefits, and work-life balance.

The digital and social media platforms can be utilized to amplify employer brand messaging and engage with prospective candidates. They can use platforms such as LinkedIn, Glassdoor, and professional networking sites to showcase employer brand, share employee stories and testimonials, and actively engage with candidates and followers. The organizations can invest in employer branding campaigns and content marketing initiatives to increase brand visibility and attract top talent.

The organizations shall demonstrate a commitment to employee development, growth, and recognition to attract and retain top talent. Offer robust training and development programs, mentorship opportunities, and career advancement pathways that empower employees to reach their full potential. Recognize and celebrate employee achievements, milestones, and contributions to foster a culture of appreciation and engagement.

The companies shall establish metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of your employer branding initiatives and talent acquisition outcomes. Track metrics such as applicant conversion rates, time-to-fill, offer acceptance rates, employee turnover, and employee engagement scores to assess the ROI of employer branding investments and identify areas for improvement.

By implementing these suggestions and adopting a strategic approach to employer branding and talent practices, organizations can strengthen their employer brand reputation, differentiate themselves in the talent marketplace, and attract, engage, and retain top talent to drive organizational success and competitive advantage.

**CONCLUSION:**

Employer branding has emerged as a critical driver of success in talent acquisition and retention strategies for organizations worldwide. As the competition for top talent intensifies, organizations must proactively cultivate and communicate compelling employer value propositions to attract, engage, and retain high-performing employees. Through the analysis of

employer branding and its impact on talent acquisition, it is evident that organizations must prioritize authenticity, transparency, and employee-centricity in their employer branding efforts. By aligning their organizational culture, values, and practices with the expectations and aspirations of current and prospective employees, organizations can create meaningful and differentiated employer brand experiences that resonate with top talent.

Furthermore, the adoption of digital and social media platforms provides organizations with unprecedented opportunities to amplify their employer brand messaging, engage with candidates, and showcase their unique employer value propositions.

In conclusion, employer branding is not merely a marketing exercise but a strategic imperative that requires organizational commitment, alignment, and investment. By fostering a positive employer brand reputation, organizations can attract, engage, and retain top talent, drive organizational performance, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in today's dynamic and ever-changing business environment. Through a strategic and holistic approach to employer branding, organizations can position themselves as employers of choice, inspire employee loyalty and advocacy, and ultimately thrive in the global talent marketplace.

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