

EMPLOYER BRANDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE INTENTION TO
JOIN AND EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

by

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DISSERTATION

Presented to the Swiss School of Business and Management Geneva

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree

DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SWISS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT GENEVA

<MONTH OF GRADUATION, YEAR>

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation marks the culmination of a long academic and professional journey, and I am deeply grateful to all who have contributed to its completion. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr Minja Bolesnikov for their continuous guidance, insightful feedback, and encouragement throughout this research process. Their expertise, patience, and intellectual rigour have been instrumental in shaping the quality and depth of this study.

My appreciation also extends to the academic staff and research committee of University, whose constructive critiques and administrative support ensured that this work adhered to the highest scholarly standards.

I am profoundly thankful to the professionals and employees who participated in this research, generously sharing their time, experiences, and perspectives. Without their openness and cooperation, this study would not have been possible.

To my colleagues and peers, thank you for your camaraderie, constructive discussions, and words of encouragement that sustained me during challenging times.

A heartfelt thank you to my family members for their unwavering love, patience, and support. Their belief in me provided strength and motivation throughout this demanding academic journey.

Finally, I dedicate this work to all scholars and practitioners striving to advance understanding in the field of human resource management and employer branding, whose passion for knowledge continues to inspire excellence.

ABSTRACT

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2025

This study explores how employer branding affects the behavioural outcome of employees in the areas of intention to join and turnover intention in the medium and large organisations in the United Kingdom. With the growing competition in the labour market and changing expectations of employees, organisations are now compelled to develop genuine and consistent employer brands that will attract and retain talented employees. The research questions the role of certain elements of employer branding, including the employee value proposition, organisational culture, leadership and benefits in employee attraction and retention. It also examines the mediating impact of organisational commitment and the moderating impact of generational cohort, the influence of digital employer reviews on the perception of authenticity. The explanatory sequential design was adopted as a mixed-method design. The quantitative data were obtained comprising 342 full-time employees working in five sectors and qualitative data was obtained due to 20 semi-structured interviews with human resource and employer branding practitioners. Regression and structural equation modelling were used to test the relationships between variables using statistical methods and thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative data.

The findings showed that organisational culture, credibility of leadership, and well-defined employee value proposition play a critical role in increasing attraction and decreasing turnover intentions. Perceived brand consistency was determined as the key determinant affecting commitment and retention because inconsistency in the promises made externally and internal experiences enhanced the risk of turnover. Organisational commitment was identified to mediate the employer branding-employee retention linkage, and the generational differences moderated these effects because the Millennials and Generation Z were more sensitive to flexibility, inclusiveness and development opportunities compared to the GenX. Digital employer reviews were identified to shape the perceptions of authenticity and influence recruitment and retention. The study adds to the expanding list of literature on strategic human resource management in that it proves that employer branding is not simply a marketing instrument, but a key organisational competency. In practice, the results can guide leaders and practitioners on how to match brand promises and staff experience and promote engagement, commitment and kind retention in the new workplace.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The modern business landscape has created employer branding as a strategy that has a direct impact on attracting and caring talent. As the processes of globalisation, digitalisation, and demographic changes become more active, more companies are forced to distinguish themselves not exclusively in their products and services but also in their reputation as a workplace (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2024). Employer brand is the image, values, and identity of an organisation used by existing and future job applicants, which involves the culture, leadership, and career progression of an organisation, compensation plan, and overall value offer (Theurer et al., 2023). Employer branding is an important factor of sustainable competitiveness in an age, where knowledge-based economies are largely grounded in human capital.

Today, the labour market is marked by the fast technological change, post-pandemic requirements in the labour market, and the so-called war for talent (Minchington, 2023). Standard forms of incentives, like competitive pay and job security, are becoming inadequate by themselves. Rather, all holistic forces, including work-life balance, inclusive culture, psychological safety, and alignment with organisational values, become important to employees (Uduji et al., 2023). High employer brand organisations have more chances of recruiting applicants, boosting employee loyalty, and lowering voluntary turnover and hence seen operational and financial cycle loss witnessed when organisations experience high turnover rates (Patel et al., 2024).

Attraction and turnover are two sides of the same coin of talent management. Whereas the attraction strategy deals with the creation of a favorable employer reputation to attract new recruitments, the retention strategy involves continued motivation and

loyalty of employees. Studies have shown that a good employer brand would translate to better organisational commitment, more employee engagement, and decreased turnover intentions (Oladipo and Oginni, 2022; Kaur and Sharma, 2024). Particularly in service and healthcare sectors, an employee experiencing an organisational culture and career development resources that seem supportive to them are much more likely to remain on the job when competitive alternatives are available elsewhere (Brown and McIver, 2022). Therefore, recruiting them under the guise of employer branding will not only become a recruitment solution, but also a competitive force encouraging organisational sustainability in the long term.

An additional complexity of the employer branding is the element of generational dynamics. Within the global labour market, admittedly making up the majority, millennials and Generation Z recognise meaningful work, growth opportunities, and diversity promises as factors that cannot be overlooked when choosing prospective employers (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). A recent international study showed that only slightly less than 75 per cent of the Gen Z-workers would like to stay at the same job to be given internal mobility and inclusion, which could challenge the few-year-old stereotype of young workers as job hoppers (Taylor, 2025). Against this backdrop, Generation X employees are likely to focus on stability and worklife balance more than Baby Boomers who are likely to focus on pension security and legacy. All these differences point to the fact that employer brands need to be adequately adjusted to changing generational value audiences to achieve attraction and retention of innovative cohorts of workforce (McDonnell et al., 2023).

The impact and the reach of employer branding have been increased with the digital era. Social networking websites, including Linked In, Glassdoor, and Indeed, have provided clear ground, where employees and job seekers can have genuine discussions

about work place culture. Reputations of employers are more co-created than determined indicating that the narrations by the employees as well as peer reviews determine how society views the company (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024). Organisations are working hard on technology-based branding like artificial intelligence-enhanced employee recruitment and personal-level interaction devices (Chen and Li, 2024). These help companies to target their employer brand messages to workforce segments. Nonetheless, with this openness there is the risk of reputations. Trust building with the best talent can be ruined swiftly due to negative feedback regarding the brand promises or perceived gaps between these promises and the experiences received by employees (Singh et al., 2023).

Employer branding goes much further in terms of performance implications even in recruitment pipelines. Good employer brands correlate to better worker engagement, increased innovation and productivity. In the case of companies enumerated on best place to work lists, there is always better financial performance and customer satisfaction than those with even worse achievements in reputation building (Jones, 2025). On the other hand, low employer brands are a source of disengagement, presenteeism and attrition, which have cost implications of high magnitude. According to the Work Institute (2025), in 2024, more than two-thirds of employee exits would be prevented, which is most commonly correlated with lack of career planning and progression, poor management, and a lack of flexibility. The projected financial requirement of talent retention via good branding measures was estimated to be approximately 33 percent of the annual earnings implying how much a company would spend to lose a good employee because of ineffective talent management (Work Institute, 2025).

Academic sources emphasize the fact that employer branding is a multidimensional construct, which involves both internal and external points of view. The external employer brand concerns the impression that a prospective employee has of

the organisation and the internal brand is connected to the experience that current employees have (Theurer et al., 2023). When such views do not align, it results in brand dissonance that removes trust and increases the potential of turnover (Sultan, 2022). As an illustration, when organisations boast of being inclusive employers externally, but do not combat prejudice internally, the reputational backlash is usually punitive. Through this definition, genuine sense and consistency have become emerging key metrics of company brands success (Wilden et al., 2023).

The results of employer branding are also very context specific. According to the studies of the hospitality industry, compensation, integrity, and working conditions are the major factors that contribute to turnover intention (Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023). Translating into healthcare-focused practice, professional identity, trust, and career process have even more influential positive impacts on the retention (Oladipo and Oginni, 2022). Employer branding specifically in the area of innovation, learning, and culture is key in the technology sector where the rivalry in digital talent is so intense (Singh et al., 2023). These distinctions imply that the most effective employer branding would have to respond to strategic and operational implications of the industry in which it operates and not adopt a generic strategy.

Another similarity is that employee well-being has seemingly emerged as part of the employer branding. Companies that provide mental health programs, flexible work models, and holistic medical intentions have lower rates of staff turnover and steeply increase work investor interest. Universum (2024) discovered that in some organisations the turnover had decreased by 30% upon strategic incorporation of well-being within its employer brand. This is more indicative of a larger shift to the humanistic work environment where a brand can be gauged not by its slogans but by actual employee reviews.

Even with the emerging literature, there are still a number of gaps in concepts as well as practical gaps. To begin with, much of the extant research addresses employer branding as the generalised phenomenon without taking into consideration the idea of various elements (e.g. EVP, leadership, or work life balance) influencing attraction and retention differently (Kaur and Sharma, 2024). Second, stuttering research has covered the mediating organisational commitment in associating employer branding with turnover intentions (Uduji et al., 2023). Third, although digitalisation has changed the nature of employer branding, the role played by online attention, AI-guided campaigns, and online narratives are a comparatively underresearched subject in the literature (Chen and Li, 2024). Fourth, generational differences have been noted yet with lack of in-depth empirical study particularly in the interpretation of authenticity and career progression by the younger generation in employer branding.

Practically, the impact of these gaps that are not bridged is huge. Mismanaged organisations face the danger of losing not only finances, but also forecasting damaged reputations over the long term, and finding it harder to attract and keep talent under competitive labour market conditions. On the other hand, companies that promote a well-matched employer brand in line with staff values, generational interests, and online resources have a greater potential to gain workforce sustainability.

Finally, employer branding is no longer a marginal HR activity but a strategic core one, which is an activity that determines organisational competitiveness. It has a direct effect on attraction and retention, employee engagement and productivity as well as interaction with wider societal issues, including DEI and well-being. The more subtle lines of influence that employer branding has on turnover, the reality-based context which attaches itself to its results, and the place of digital and generational forces are little charted, however. A thorough explanation of these gaps is an answer to why this

research study is potentially important, as the academic and practical reasons behind a particular change focused on exploring the influence of the employer branding on employee intention to join and turnover in contemporary organisations.

1.2 Research Problem

The world job market is hyper competitive at this moment, and businesses are experiencing the pressure to attract and retain talented employees. The standard values such as high pay and job protection are no longer working due to a growing reliance on Digital tech, an unstable economy, and a shifting workforce (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). Employees are seeking something beyond a paycheck - they require meaning, values compatible with their own, flexibility, and a place of work that not only can but does support them. Thus, there is the topic of employer branding that has become an attraction and retention tool.

Although this is easily known, still, companies find it challenging to make employer branding play the way they wish. Turnover has always been a giant HR pain point since when individuals do leave it costs a fortune, recruiting, training, onboarding, but what kills it enough is the hidden costs such as low morale, loss of valuable knowledge and productivity. According to the Work Institute (2025), the cost of replacing a person is approximately 33% of their annual salary and most of such exits can be narrowed to lack of career future, poor managers and lack of flexibility. This indicates a lack of alignment of employer promises in their branding to the reality on the ground at the daily workplace (Wilden et al., 2023).

One more difficult area is that employer branding tends to be used as a one-size-fits-all phenomenon, both in scholarly and business discourse. As a matter of fact it appears differently in industries and worker groups. As an example, in hospitality and retail, pay, conditions and honest managers are paramount, whereas in health care, the

trust, identity and career development are the king (Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023; Oladipo and Oginni, 2022). In technology, a trend of innovation, learning, and culture in branding prevails (Kaur and Sharma, 2024). Nonetheless, studies are spotty, and businesses can hardly pin down sector specific branding strategies.

There is another stratum layer of generational mix at work. Each generation has its own expectations in relation to its upbringing and norms, with Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z all having different expectations. Stability, pensions, and loyalty always appeal to boomers, but Millennials and Gen Z prefer flexibility and inclusion as well as tangible career growth (Taylor, 2025; McDonnell et al., 2023). But companies tend to be indifferent to these variations, and the result is a lack of engagement. The age-old stereotype about Gen Z is job-hoppers is flipped now, as the study reported that they remain when they can see the chances of in-house mobility and inclusion as well as a purpose (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). In the absence of generational -conscious branding, businesses are missing a valuable opportunity to reduce turnover. Online platforms have also revolutionized the game and we are yet to comprehend the impact. Such websites as Glassdoor, Indeed, and LinkedIn highlight the reputation of firms, and current and former employees go out of their way to spill tea on what it is like (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024). These internet narratives pre predetermine how job seekers feel way before you even begin to hire them. Social media promotion and employee narration allow companies to express the positive-positive vibes and attract younger audiences, but negative comments or scandals go viral quicker and destroy successful brand development (Singh et al., 2023). To preserve the facade of authenticity and how to avoid reputational hiccups, Academia only began researching the effects of these online dynamics.

Remazning lacks the innumeracies of the mechanism that branding follows in reducing those who wish to quit. We are aware that there is a connection between

branding and staying, but between the processes involved are fuzzy step by step. It appears that when a person feels good about the brand of a firm, they are more loyal and they will not turn into the next victim (Uduji et al., 2023). And we never tested this in terms of industries and ages. Nor have we tabulated and ascertained, whether the same tactics of branding speak with that identical ring to every generation, or whether they have a different weight of each. These mechanisms remain invisible without their being ripped open and brand strategies remain abstract.

Finally, but not the least the misfit between the label in and out is substantial. When companies boast about a thing in their marketing but are unable to support it, employees pick up on this and experience brand dissonance- such damage to trust, cultivation of cynicisms and accelerated turnover (Sultan, 2022). When a firm boasts about being extremely flexible and is unable to nail down hybrid work, it stands a chance of being called out to an online platform, not to mention disinspiration among employees. This is even more frightening in the technological era where the truth may occur immediately. All these demonstrate that knowledge derisuity still persists. The employer brand is a major tool of attracting and retaining talents, but we do not fully understand its industry, generation and digital specifics. We have little or no idea on what the specific aspects of branding, EVP, culture, and leadership seem to have the greatest influence, and how these mediating and moderating paths can influence results.

To address these gaps, my thesis examines the role of employer branding on the decision of people to join and their tendencies to move in various environments. The researcher is tracking which aspects of branding most associations worry talent acquisition, as the researcher has understood that organisational commitment is the intermediary variable, whether generation alters the impact, and how online employer reviews adjust the votes at authenticity and employment. The research can help

organisations learn how to master employer branding to achieve long-term workforce sustainability by illuminating on these gaps.

1.3 Purpose of Research

This research is aimed at critically exploring the contribution of employer brand to both employee attraction and retention outcome with references to intention to join and turnover. These two factors are key signs of organisational sustainability and stability in the workplace in contemporary organisations. Attraction indicates the organisational perception that potential employees see it as a great place to work, whilst retention is an indicator that captures how long and committed, as well as loyal, the existing employees stay. There is an upward trend in evidence that demonstrates employer branding has had a shaping effect on both of their outcomes, but the mechanisms, situational factors, and moderating effects are little studied (Kaur and Sharma, 2024).

The study would contribute to both theoretical and practical knowledge investment by analyzing the comparative strength of certain elements of the employer branding such as employee value proposition (EVP), organisational culture, leadership practices, and employee benefits on employee decision-making. The rewards, opportunities, and experience that an employer provides is increasingly viewed as a part of the branding strategy because of the opportunity to encapsulate that under the so-called employer value proposition (Theurer et al., 2023). But, empirical evidence of which components of EVP have the most profound pull impacting attraction and the greatest effect on retention among various segments of the workforce is lacking. A study based on the analysis of such dimensions will lead to clarity respecting the effectiveness of targeted branding initiatives.

The second purpose of the research is to examine whether organisational commitment mediates in the branding of employment-turnover relationship. Although

previous studies indicate that good employer brands breed a higher level of employee loyalty, the processes by which such an association can be explained are not well documented (Uduji et al., 2023). Organisational commitment can also be the psychological mediation where the positive impression of employer branding can be presented as lower turnover intentions. Because retention is largely involved with not only superficial branding but the deeper psychological impulse behind it, it is important to understand this mediation in organisations that aim to develop interventions that have a positive impact on retention.

The paper is also aimed at triangulating the fact that generational cohorts, especially those of Millennials, Generation Y, and Gen Z influence how they react to employer branding. According to the generational theory, the response of the working population to employer branding depends on personal expectations and career orientation varied according to the generational segments (Taylor, 2025). As opposed to older and more conservative generations, younger workforce requires purpose, inclusion, and mobility in the workplace. However, empirical studies which research the influence that generational differences hold in determining the outcome of employer branding are incomplete. By filling this void, the study will bring into focus the issue of whether standardized branding procedures can be used across all demographic backgrounds or custom designed solutions need to be adopted within specific contexts.

Also, the study covers the insufficiently researched area of digital employer branding. The opinions on probable candidates are getting facilitated by online reviews, employer ranking websites like Glassdoor and social media storytelling. Nevertheless, these digital signals and their contribution to the development of the perception of authenticity and the choices made by employees have been the subject of limited academic research (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024). The study will analyse the interaction

between digital employer reviews and online stories with formal branding initiatives, and the extent to which they reinforced or negated organisational attraction and retention strategies involving talent.

With such a multi-faceted scope of the study, the proposed study will serve both discussion and business as evidence-based sources of information. It will not only determine the existence of the employer branding effect on attraction and turnover, but define how, why and when employer branding produces the impact.

Finally, research addresses the DBA agenda by filling the gap between the theory and practice. In contrast to a traditional theoretical project, the project aims at producing practical information that can be applied by the senior managers, human resource leaders, and policymakers to ensure that branding strategy can respond to the changing workforce demands. In this regard, the study aim is not just to promote academic insight, but also provide practical benefits to organisations that are willing to stay afloat in increasingly dynamic and transparent labour markets.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research is important because it could lead to improvement of theory, practice and policy by giving us feelings of understanding the effect of employer branding in influencing attraction and turnover. This is a timely and relevant study due to the increasing realization that human capital has become a key determinant of competitiveness especially when companies have never experienced such a difficult time in attracting and keeping talent.

1.4.1 Theoretical Contribution

The study has a number of implications on the employer branding literature. First, it builds on the current frameworks by exploring sectoral differences in branding changes on attraction and retention. Other studies have emphasised the importance of industry setting at the time, e.g., the professional identity of employees in healthcare is likely to be more important than pay, but technology-oriented professionals might focus on innovation and further career growth opportunities (Oladipo and Oginni, 2022; Singh et al., 2023). Nonetheless, the comparative research in the field of sectors is not abundant. These differences are taken into consideration by this study and therefore provide a form of contextual richness to employer branding theory.

Second, the study enhances the depth of knowledge of psychological processes that connect branding to turnover by making them concentrate on organisations commitment as mediations. It is supported by the adoption of the Social Identity Theory and suggests that workers adopt organisational values during the work of stable brands, which leads to developing identification and loyalty (Sultan, 2022). At the same time, the Psychological Contract framework reveals unmet expectations as the causes that decrease retention. When these theoretical Orientations are merged, then a richer account of the role of employer branding in modifying employee behaviour is given.

Third, the research attractive to that theory is poor in practice compared to theory; therefore, it covers the digital aspect of branding. Cofunctionalism of digital brand creation questions the conventional unidirectional communication approach to employer communication. Through exploring the role of online reviews and employee-generated content to online authenticity, the study is an addition to emerging online employer branding theory (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024).

Finally, generational moderators add to the theoretical weight. It has been argued that generational research lacks empirical precision yet however it is still applicable in learning of emerging workforce demands (Taylor, 2025). This research will give feedback on the impact of branding on people of different ages at a time and it will shed light on the dynamics in intergenerational workforce management.

1.4.2 Practical Contribution

The study has simple managerial implications to practitioners. HR leaders and those managers, who are on the topmost level, usually fail to understand what exactly in employer branding should be invested in. This study will allow allocating resources more effectively and efficiently by prioritizing the differences between the components of EVP, leadership, or well-being that attract people and keep them in the company when considering the conflicting impacts of these factors on attraction and retention.

Additionally, what is known about the mediating effect of the organisational commitment can give insight into how branding can be translated into behavioural results. It argues that it is not enough to create only a positive image; organisations need to actually integrate promises made in the brand in employees experiences to build trust and loyalty. This is one of the insights that can be useful especially to HR managers in designing retention strategies.

The study also is empowering organisations in addressing the pressures of online transparency. The impairment of credibility by negative online communication and fake messaging can be overcome by understanding how workers and interviewees comprehend the digital messages, and employ methods by which companies reduce reputational danger. This incorporates the development of genuine employee

communications and congruency between the external communication and internal behaviors.

1.4.3 Policy Implications

On a macro level, the results are relevant to the policymakers and the institutions of employer rankings. With the growing transparency in labour markets, employer branding is a private organisational issue but also a social benefit that affects labour mobility and labour market efficiency. The findings of this research may be useful in formulating measures on how to treat employees in good faith, how to act concerning their welfare, and how to prepare the corporate reports. Further to this, the findings can be utilized by the policymakers to improve on frameworks on employer rankings such that criteria should capture factors that employees truly cherish, including inclusivity and authenticity.

1.4.4 Relevance to DBA Candidates

To graduate students of DBA programs and research scholars alike, the study illustrates that academic inquiry can serve as a viable way of tackling this socially burning managerial issue. The study reflects an applied orientation of the DBA since it incorporates theoretical depth and practical application into it. It underscores the need to combine academic constructions with managerial evidence to come up with action-oriented pieces of knowledge that enhance practice.

The research has also contributed to emphasizing the significance of course management research through adhering to international issues like employee welfare, diversity and job sustainability. Employer branding is a confined aspect through which organisations commitment in embracing responsible business practices can be judged, as

organisations are more and more being examined into their social and ethical responsibilities.

In a nutshell, this study would be very important in that it relates in the multi dimensional contributions of the study. In theory, it moves the knowledge of the employer branding mechanisms, contexts, and even the digital dynamics. In practice, it provides practical implications in managers who would like to hire and keep talent in unstable markets. At policy level, it enlightens labour market policies on sustainability and equity. To the DBA agenda, it represents applied scholarship, which spans both theory and practice. Combined, they contribute to the study to make it timely and meaningful.

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

1.5.1 Research Aim

To identify the role of employer branding in mobilizing a desire in employees to work in the organization as well as employee turnover phenomena in the modern organizational setting.

1.5.2 Research Objectives

- To examine how specific components of employer branding (such as EVP, organisational culture, employee benefits, and leadership) influence employee attraction and to analyse how the perceived consistency of these brand elements affects turnover intentions.
- To investigate how organisational commitment mediates the relationship between employer branding and employee turnover, and to examine how generational

cohorts (Millennials, Generation X, and Generation Z) moderate the influence of employer branding on employee behavioural outcomes.

- To identify the digital employer reviews (e.g. Glassdoor ratings) are they influencing perceptions of employer brand authenticity and impacting recruitment and retention outcomes.

1.5.3 Research Questions

- How do specific components of employer branding (such as EVP, organisational culture, employee benefits, and leadership) influence employee attraction, and how does the perceived consistency of these brand elements affect turnover intentions?
- In what ways does organisational commitment mediate the relationship between employer branding and employee turnover, and how do generational cohorts (Millennials, Generation X, and Generation Z) moderate the influence of employer branding on employee behavioural outcomes?
- To what extent do digital employer reviews (e.g., Glassdoor ratings) influence perceptions of employer brand authenticity, and how do these perceptions impact recruitment and retention outcomes

Chapter II:
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Employer branding (EB) has progressed beyond a marketing-impaired signal towards a strategic HR and organisational ability that purposefully influences two difficult outputs along the talent pipeline employee attraction (intention to join) and retention (lower turnover). In more competitive labour markets, where the digital platforms and employee rating ecosystems are more transparent, an employer image is no longer shared unilaterally; it is created through real experience, peer-based stories and algorithmically re-emerged cues. It is a change that moves EB out of slogans and glossy campaigns to the continuity of daily activity, the smooth operation of managerial behaviours, the shape of work, the opportunities of growth, and the sense of fairness that is experienced by insiders and the question of outsiders.

There are four strands that are synthesised in this review. To begin with, it explains what and how big EB is. EBs Modern work works narrows down to EB as a multidimensional system, which is underpinned by a workable Employee Value Proposition (EVP) and is operationalised by culture/leadership, development and mobility, total rewards (benefits, flexibility and well-being), and meaningful work. Most long-lasting EB architectures combine instrumental features (e.g. pay, security, location, flexibility) with symbolic features (e.g. purpose, inclusion, prestige), matching promises with the segments they seek to appeal to and experiences they are able to actually provide. Most importantly, EB is cross-external (signals to the candidates) and internal (experiences of the employees) layers; the consistency of the former and the latter is the foundation of authenticity.

Second, the review describes the effects of EB on attraction and turnover through mechanisms. Information asymmetry on the side of candidates is minimised by EB, according to the signalling theory, to influence organisational attractiveness and application behaviour in cases when signals are credible and distinctive. Understanding that at the firm level, social exchange and psychological contract logic takes hold, where employees find that EB promises are being kept, in terms of fair supervision, access to growth and friendly climates and so on, employees are in turn returned with affective commitment and discretionary effort to reduce turnover intentions. The retention-oriented perspective of job embeddedness compliments the above: EB that increases fit (values/work alignment), connects (social/learning networks), and sacrifices (perceived losses by quitting: status, skills, benefits) can bring quitting on a psychological and relational level. Empirically, a new trend is sequential mediation- EB improves commitment and embeddedness which further depreciates turnover intention.

Third, moderators which influence the intensity and direction of EB effects are evaluated in the review. Two are especially salient. The priority of value and risk-taking of generational cohorts (Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X) vary in a systematic manner with younger cohorts giving more weight to purpose, inclusion, skills mobility, and flexibility, and older cohorts to stability, autonomy, and recognition. Therefore, the same EB elements may produce different effects on cohorts, job families and career stages. The second moderator is digital transparency: review sites and an employee-created content have an impact on perceived authenticity. The effects of high-credibility, regular reviews may increase the attraction effect of EB; on the other hand, the negative stories or the revelation of say-do gaps may counteract even generous EVP. Practically, perceived brand authenticity acts as a content filter: when a match is found between it and EB, the

effect becomes stronger on EB to attraction/retention, and when not, the effect becomes weaker.

Fourth, the review prefigures situational contingencies by industry and profession. Scheduling fairness, safety and oversight integrity are acutely sensitive in hospitality and retail, professional identity, psychological safety, career ladders are more decisive in healthcare, learning velocity, hybrid norms and innovation climate is decisive in technology and knowledge work. These trends suggest non-monolithic EB playbooks and portfolios of EVP that are based on operational reality and labour market options. They further elaborate cross-study differences in effect sizes: the same EB lever (e.g., flexible work) can be retention-important in one industry, and hygienic in the other.

The most common warning across the literature is brand dissonance the performance risk that occurs when the external promises are different than internal experiences. Dissonance destroys trust, instigates breach of a psychological contract, and appears on the public stage very fast, further escalating the turnover risk and raising the expenditures on attraction (more applicants must be offered per acceptance). The EB management, then, is not so much about amplifying claims as it is about regulating consistency in execution at touchpoints: behaviours of line managers, workload and resourcing, transparency of progression, practices of DEI, and well-being facilitates. In effect, operations are EB.

There are also a number of gaps, which methodologically explain why the present study is of interest. A lot of studies are still cross-sectional and self-report, which indulges the biases of common methods and restricts causation. Endogeneity is under-managed (e.g. are good places to work investing in EB, or is good EB making them good?). Very little literature combines multi-source information (e.g., correlating platform reviews with HRIS performance e.g., acceptance rates, internal mobility, and

actual quits), and longitudinal studies are relatively uncommon. The process of measurement must be improved as well: EB is often viewed as one index, which hides effects at the component level. To practice, the question that will not be answered is the importance of EB, but what factors are most significant to attraction or retention, to whom (cohort, role, tenure) or who under what authenticity conditions (digital sentiment, culture strength). Lastly, the generalisability is limited by WEIRD samples and non-representation of the SMEs and non-Western settings.

Such gaps influence the agenda of the study. In the first place, it will compare component-level correlations, i.e. how EVP facets (growth, flexibility, benefits, purpose), culture/leadership and work design affect intention to join, and how perceived brand consistency (promise experience alignment) affects turnover intentions. Second, it will examine organisational commitment as a mediator between EB and retention outcomes, which is in line with the social exchange and psychological contract theories. Third, it will evaluate generational cohort as a moderator, and find out where tailoring the EVP produces the highest marginal lift. Fourth, it will include online employer reviews as veracity indicators, assessing their predictive incremental ability on attraction and retention in addition to the official EB messages.

2.2 Conceptualising Employer Branding

2.2.1 Definitions and Scope

Employer branding (EB) is no longer a conceptualized marketing instrument, but a multi dimensional human-capital construct that integrates psychological, cultural and economic elements of the employment relationship. Origins of the EB EB was originally defined as package of functional, economical and psychological benefits of employment as attached to particular organisation (Ambler and Barrow 1996). Backhaus and Tikoo

(2004) took it a step further to define EB as a strategic process involving firms developing a unique employer image that recruits, involves and maintains talent. Later studies have always distinguished between EB and corporate branding: corporate brands are customer oriented, whereas employer brands are mainly aimed at current and prospective employees and are concerned with employment experiences instead of product usage (Theurer et al., 2018).

In recent studies, EB is becoming found in brand equity and brand organisational identity frameworks where the employer brand is perceived as a set of tangible and intangible employment characteristics that are stored in the minds of various stakeholder groups (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Sivertzen et al., 2020). In this respect, EB can be considered identity-based, i.e. basing the sense of belonging on the employees, and equity-based, i.e. establishing differentiation in the labour market (Love and Singh, 2023). As labour-market transparency has increased, EB has moved to even more evidence-based design of Employee Value Propositions (EVPs) and associated practices in the areas of leadership culture, career development, rewards, well-being and flexibility (Tanwar and Prasad, 2016; Kaur and Sharma, 2024). The EVP which is the key of EB is the combination of material and psychological advantages that employees get on the condition of their skills and dedication (Kashive and Khanna, 2022).

Recent systematic literature reviews in MDPI and SAGE journals to prove that EB is a multidimensional construct affecting not only the recruitment but also the engagement, satisfaction and long-term retention (Saini, 2023; Hussain et al., 2024; Vasantha and Samuel, 2025). Such reviews necessitate component, as opposed to single index, analysis of EB dimensions like EVP clarity, leadership credibility, inclusion, flexibility and development. According to Minchington (2023), it is necessary to match symbolic attributes (reputation, culture, leadership integrity) with instrumental attributes

(pay, security, flexibility) instead of using slogans to make EB sustainable. Massive data on posting jobs demonstrates that when organisations distinctly express various elements of EVP like development, inclusion and flexibility, the level of applicant engagement is significantly enhanced (Lo et al., 2025).

EB may consequently be considered to be an organisational system in which three pillars are interdependent, namely: (1) the proposition, which is the offer made to the employees; (2) the practices, which concern the idea of how this offer is fulfilled through leadership behaviour, and the HR policies and work design; and (3) the perceptions, which refer to how internal and external stakeholders view the fact that the offer was fulfilled as per the promise(s) (Wilden et al., 2023). Meta-analyses show that discrepancy between HR practices and EB communication causes a loss of credibility, diminished identification and turnover intentions (Zhang et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2023). The strength of employer brand therefore relies not so much on the marketing presence but rather on the uniform organisational behaviour and realistic employee advocacy.

On the whole, EB is nowadays theorized as the process coordination that influences the perception of employees and their experience and psychological attachment. It relates the HR practices and brand strategy to coherent image of employment that distinguishes the organisation in the labour markets and maintains internal interaction (Sultan, 2022; Thang and Anh, 2024). The given conceptualisation provides the foundation of the current study that focuses on the EB elements which are most closely related to attraction and turnover intentions and on the mediating influence of authenticity and commitment.

2.2.2 Employer Brand Authenticity and Consistency

The authenticity is central in Post 2020 literature made EB. Authentic employer branding refers to the degree to which the promises made to the outside and the

experiences lived by the employees are coherent, transparent and credible in all the employment touchpoints (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024; Wilden et al., 2023). When employees commit to the notion that organisational behaviour aligns with recruitment messages and EVP promises, they develop a sense of authenticity; brand dissonance (differences between image and experience) destroys trust and generates cynicism and increased turnover intentions (Tanwar and Prasad, 2016; Patel et al., 2024). The empirical research offers strong evidence that genuine EB has a positive impact on the organisational commitment and brand loyalty that further foretell retention (Onur and Yildiz, 2024; Hussain et al., 2024). Wilden et al. (2023) demonstrate that authenticity boosts affective commitment which subsequently results in greater advocacy and reduced attrition based on the longitudinal modelling. Studies in the service sector also establish that authentic dialogue regarding the balance of work and life and leader support enhances a sense of safety and loyalty (Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023; Oladipo and Oginni, 2022). Authenticity deals with two aspects, and they are interrelated. Outwardly, job seekers decipher cues by employers including social media posts, the Best Place to Work lists, and CSR stories. Inside, the current staff measures leadership behaviour, employee allocation and achieved career advancement (Brown and McIver, 2022). The identity that employees internalise when these external and internal cues are congruent leads to the development of the employee-organisation relationship which is stable in terms of emotion. Their failure to do so leads to the perception of the violation of the psychological contract, which results in disengagement and increased voluntary turnover (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Eisenberger et al., 2020). According to recent research published in Sustainability and Administrative Sciences journals at MDPI, EB authenticity is not only employee-retaining, but also beneficial to organisational resilience through innovative cultures and supportive management (Kilson, 2025; Azhar,

2024). Conversely, the most extreme campaigns that promote EB cause reputational risk because the employees publicly dispute the inconsistencies in websites like Glassdoor or LinkedIn (Chen and Li, 2024). The digital feedback therefore makes authenticity no longer a normative desire but a strategic requirement. A sequential mediation model demonstrates that the authenticity-commitment-loyalty-retention is a strong cause-effect construct (Hussain et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). When authenticity is present, EB positively affects job embeddedness (fit, links, sacrifice), and cognitive dissonance, which are influential predictors of turnover intentions (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2014). Moreover, genuine EB can lead to employee advocacy that can make employees testable brand representatives whose testimonials increase the external appeal (Lievens et al., 2022). There is also the concept of authenticity which affects the outcomes of recruitment. Meta-analytic data indicate that perceived authenticity of employer communication predicts more strongly the rates of job-offer acceptance as compared to salary competitiveness status quo (Kaur and Sharma, 2024). The interpretation of congruence between reviews, espoused values and recruiter behaviour is found to be a reliability cue by the candidates, hence, raising the intention to join (Sivertzen et al., 2020). Meanwhile, authenticity may be disturbed by organisational restructuring, leadership change and settlements based on hybrid-work practices as it breaks the continuity between promises and lived experience (Schneider et al., 2023). The researchers hence suggest integrating authenticity into the governance by cross-functional alignment between the HR, communications and line management and open, participative leadership in the change management (Thang and Anh, 2024). Overall, sustainable EB is based on authenticity and consistency. Its strategic power is not in enhancing positive messages but in coordinating them with behaviour and experience. Authentic EB is a

moral and performance framework that facilitates commitment, minimizes turnover and safeguards reputation in extremely transparent and digitally mediated labour markets.

2.3 Theoretical Foundations

2.3.1 Signalling Theory and Brand-Equity Logic

Signalling Theory provides an explanation of the essence of EB in shaping the intentions of attracting and joining. Signalling theory (Spence, 1973) is an idea in the area of labour economics, suggesting that organisations employ observable signs to minimise information asymmetry with potential employees. Since job employers cannot have direct information on the quality of the workplace, they deduce the quality using secondary characteristics like reputation, awards, employee feedbacks and recruitment messages (Connelly et al., 2011). EB is therefore a positive indicator of organisational quality, values and reliability. Transparent leadership communication, credible sustainability promises, inclusive culture stories and work-life balance promises, among others, are some of the signals that are more attractive and application intentions increase when perceived to be consistent and trustworthy (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Sivertzen et al., 2020). Untrustworthy or excessively hyped assertions, on the contrary, undermine credibility and job-pursuit intentions (Uen et al., 2022). These mechanisms are proven by large-scale empirical studies. In a sample of 6,000 job seekers in the AsiaPacific region, Shen and Zhu (2023) discovered that attraction intentions were explained by the reputations and perceived authenticity of employers together with more than half of the variance, exceeding pay expectations or location. Jiang and Iles (2024) also noted that sustainability and inclusion signals are proxies of organisational integrity amongst the candidates, and they positively affect attraction and contact behaviour. Based on the brand-equity concept developed by Aaker (1991), Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) theorised

the employer brand equity as brand associations (cognitive beliefs and affective beliefs about the employer), perceived quality of employment and brand loyalty (commitment to stay). Theurer et al. (2018) also incorporated this into a brand-equity logic where EB is an intangible organisational capital that produces preference, loyalty and advocacy in the long term among employees and job seekers. The employer brand equity built through EB messages during the employee lifecycle stages including recruitment, onboarding, internal communication, performance management, and alumni relations accrue employer brand equity that serves as a reputational buffer and minimizes recruitment costs (Kashyap and Verma, 2018; Wilden et al., 2023). Employer-brand equity is also linked to high voluntary turnover and high discretionary effort (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022; Hussain et al., 2024). The combination of signalling theory and brand-equity logic suggests that the process is two-stage. First, the signal of quality is passed to outsiders by EB, which forms attraction. Thereafter, the regular performance on these cues will generate employer brand equity, which strengthens retention and loyalty. Successful EB therefore requires signal clarity and credibility and constant reinforcement with real-life experiences of employees. That rationale gives us a reason to incorporate employer-brand consistency as a key construct in the current research.

2.3.2 Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Psychological Contract

Whereas the signalling theory is the theory of attraction, the Social Exchange Theory (SET) can explain why employees stay. The theory of SET (Blau, 1964) assumes that the social relationships can be controlled by reciprocity: employees feel committed, they develop citizenship behaviours and diminish turnover, as soon as they feel that their organisation has invested in them through fair rewards, development, respect and flexibility (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In EB studies, SET is operationalised in

terms of the psychological contract, which is the unwritten expectations involving the employer and employee (Rousseau, 1995). EB messages implicitly make development support, quality leadership, inclusion and work-life balance promises; the fulfilment of those promises creates perceived organisational support (POS) and psychological contract fulfilment, which reinforces affective commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2020). On the other hand, imbalance between EB promises and actual experience will result in a breach of psychological contract and a lack of trust, which will trigger withdrawal and resignation (Parzefall and Hakanen, 2010; Robinson and Morrison, 2021). Zhao et al. (2023) demonstrated that EB credibility had a positive effect on affective commitment and negative effect on turnover intentions, and most of these effects were attributed to psychological contract fulfilment. Similar findings were made by Onur and Yildiz (2024), who discovered that authentic EB leads to higher commitment through perceived organisational justice which means that the notion of reciprocity is not limited to monetary incentives but to the perception of fairness. SET also justifies the potential of non-financial EB drivers, e.g., recognition, autonomy and inclusion, to be stronger retention factors than salary. These qualities are indicators of respect and relationship reciprocity, and satisfy socio-emotional needs of employees (Shore et al., 2022). With high reciprocity expectations, the goals of the organisation are internalised by the employees and EB becomes a psychological commitment instead of image management (Ahmad and Oranye, 2010; Mercurio, 2015). Recent studies in applied behavioural science use SET to describe emotional exchange and the role of authentic leadership communication on the relationship between EB and commitment, especially in remote-work settings in which emotional communication sustains the quality of relationships and alleviates virtual burnout (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024; Kwon and Jeon, 2020). Boundary conditions are also explained in SET: the reasons of transactional motives can prevail

when external labour markets are particularly uncertain or precarious, which breaks the connection between EB and commitment (De Cuyper et al., 2019). EB programmes, which emphasize rewards and fail to establish relational exchange are thus not likely to achieve retention in the long run. In the current research, organisational commitment holds a mediating position between EB and turnover intentions as the SET and psychological contract theory confirm the hypothesis.

2.3.3 Job Embeddedness Theory

Job Embeddedness Theory (JET) is the complement to SET: it also addresses structural and relational forces, which tie employees to organisations. JET suggests that three elements determine retention, they are fit (compatibility of personal values and organisational culture), links (formal and informal associations with colleagues and communities) and sacrifice (costs of quitting including benefits, relationships or status) (Mitchell et al., 2001). EB has effects on every dimension.

The ability to signal organisational values and culture accurately helps EB to attract candidates whose personal values are in line with the organisation, which increases fit (Lee et al., 2014). EB programs with a focus on socialisation, use of teams and mentoring create connections, and developmental rewards and special benefits add sacrifice by raising departure costs (Felps et al., 2009). Ramesh and Gelfand (2023) demonstrate that EB authenticity has a positive effect on job embeddedness, which reduces turnover intentions, and an embeddedness pathway has a significant proportion of intention-to-stay variance. According to Hassan et al. (2024), career development, leadership level, and inclusive culture are the key features that increase embeddedness in IT professionals and counterbalance the external job opportunities.

The meta-analytic findings prove that the embeddedness becomes a good predictor of voluntary turnover among industries (Lee and Mitchell, 2024). The latest

literature notes that hybrid work reinvents the connection between the weak ties of informality and the stronger ties of digital connection, which necessitate EB strategies that develop embeddedness in an online environment (Wang and Chen, 2022). JET, therefore, highlights that EB is not only about talent attraction but also about creating an organisational ecosystem where fit, connections as well as perceived sacrifice collectively contribute to retention.

Produced through SET, JET proposes that EB influences relational (reciprocity-based), and structural (network- and cost-based) retention strategies. This forms the basis of the incorporation of job embeddedness as one of the essential results affected by EB authenticity and mediated by commitment in the present research.

2.3.4 Theoretical Perspective of integration

By merging signalling theory, SET and JET, a multilevel view of the EB impacts on attraction and turnover would be obtained. EB signals minimise information asymmetry and predetermine first impression (signalling). In the organisation, when the EB promises are fulfilled, perceived support and psychological contract fulfilment are created, which leads to affective commitment (SET). However, as time goes by, embeddedness becomes solidified through fit, links and sacrifice, making the exit less appealing (JET).

This built-in chain makes EB both a communication mechanism (signalling) and a relational-structural mechanism (social exchange and embeddedness), which fits the purpose of the study, which is to test component-level EB effects, the mediating characteristic of commitment and the moderating characteristic of generational and digital factors.

2.4 Core Dimensions of Employer Branding

2.4.1 Employee value proposition (EVP)

The EVP articulates the exchange between the employer and the employee which is what the employees get in the form of rewards, development, meaning and flexibility in exchange of their skills and effort (DiVanna, 2003). A well-defined EVP serves as a cognitive device that empowers the attachment to the employer brand and commitment, engagement and performance (Kashive and Khanna, 2022; Wilden et al., 2023). Regular reinforcement of EVP messages in the internal communication cultivates the perceptions of promise-experience congruence, which facilitates trust and satisfaction (Minchington, 2023).

It has been found that EVP signals could be categorized into general financial (pay, security, benefits), purpose-based (ethics, sustainability, meaningful work) and experience-based (flexibility, growth, culture) ones (Shen and Zhu, 2023; Lo et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the literature on the attributes that have the strongest impact on attraction and retention between cohorts and job families has been scarce, thus indicating a major empirical gap that this study will fill.

2.4.2 Organisational Culture and Leadership

The lived aspect of the employer brand is the organisational culture, the norms, values and practices that guide the experiences of employees, whereas leadership is a manifestation of the former (Schein, 2017). A recent meta-synthesis determines that learning-focused and inclusive ethical cultures are core in attracting, engaging and retaining talent; employees working in these cultures state an increase in commitment and reduced turnover intentions (Vasantha and Samuel, 2025; Brown and McIver, 2022). The

brand credibility is boosted by leadership authenticity, in which managers share organisational values (Alvesson and Svingsson, 2015).

On the contrary, the lack of alignment between espoused values and managerial behaviour soon kills trust and increases turnover, particularly in the hospitality and healthcare sectors (Oladipo and Oginni, 2022). Transformational and participative leadership approaches enhance the brand loyalty as they enhance psychological safety and engagement (Kaur and Sharma, 2024). Culture and leadership are thus the key modes of delivery of EVP and authenticity.

2.4.3 Benefits, Flexibility, and Well-being

Although payment is not unimportant, in the modern environment, employees are more concerned with holistic well-being and flexibility. It was found out that satisfaction and commitment directly depend on the benefit design such as healthcare coverage, paid leaves, recognition, and wellness programmes (Laundon et al., 2019; Hussain et al., 2024). COVID-19 increased flexibility and hybrid work as a discretionary benefit to core EB differentiators (Kwon and Jeon, 2020). Managerial trust and manageable workloads go hand in hand with flexible arrangements, which substantially decrease turnover intentions, especially in the cases of knowledge workers and carers (Nguyen and Tran, 2023).

Its use as a preference versus a benefit type, however, differs among demographic groups with the younger staff focusing more on mental health, autonomy and recognition, and the older ones focusing on security and stability (Taylor, 2025; Singh et al., 2023). This dissimilarity highlights the fact that generationally sensitive EVP design is necessary.

2.4.4 Career Growth and Learning

The other EB levers that are important in fast changing labour markets and where employees are afraid of becoming obsolete are career development and learning. The existence of opportunities to improve, reskilling and lateral mobility are indicators of fairness and future opportunities that will enhance the sense of reliability and equity (Jeske and Shultz, 2016; Kilson, 2025). Research indicates that unambiguous career path, mentoring and reskilling programs enhance affective commitment and decreases turnover intentions (Hassan et al., 2024; Uduji et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2025). On the other hand, one significant factor contributing to voluntary exits is perceived stagnation; Work Institute (2025) notes that a significant share of them is caused by the lack of career advancement. Learning ecosystems, manifested as formal training, job rotation, mentoring and digital upskilling, therefore enhance the credibility of the employer brand and acts as a bridge between attraction and retention by defining the employer as a career partner over the long term.

2.5 Employer Branding and Attraction

The employer branding determines the way potential employees assess the organisational attractiveness and make their decision to apply, accept offers and eventually join. Organisational attractiveness indicates how desirable a company is to the job seekers (Highhouse et al., 2003). It is motivated by both formal and informal stimuli (job ads, EVP statements), online reviews, and social media.

It has always been evidenced that excellent EB enhances the volume of applications, offer-acceptance rates, and the quality of applicants (Kaur and Sharma, 2024; Saini, 2023). A one-star change in the rating of the employer provides a significant increase in job-view-to-application conversion, and Glassdoor (2023) notes that digital

reputation is a potent source of information. Higher rating and sincere employee feedback is perceived by the applicants as indicators of favourable working conditions (Jeske and Shultz, 2016; Wilden et al., 2023).

In addition to quantity, EB has an impact on qualitative attraction outcomes including perceived person-organisation fit and motivation. Upon having a sense of value congruence, job seekers tend to seek and accept job opportunities, which mediates the link between employer reputation and job-pursuit intentions (Cable and Turban, 2003; Uen et al., 2022). The attraction and retention effects are connected in that the candidates attracted by genuine EB not only apply in bigger numbers but are also more committed post-entry.

Digital recruitment analytics highlight evolving preferences of the candidates. Adverts with development, flexibility, and inclusion get more engagement compared to those with pay only (Lo et al., 2025). Themes that pertain to purpose like sustainability and diversity are particularly relevant to younger cohorts (Taylor, 2025; Nguyen and Tran, 2023). Nevertheless, when applicants find a discrepancy between external EB claims and internal checks, i.e. flexibility promoted by the advertisement but not offering it in reality, perceived attractiveness plummets (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2023). EB therefore becomes more and more a form of reputation checking as opposed to one-way projection with employee generated content either confirming or disaffirming official communication.

2.5.1 Organisational Attractiveness and Application Behaviour

Organisational attractiveness is defined as the level at which job seekers find a company attractive work (Highhouse et al., 2003). It is the direct response of the psychology to the signals of the employer, formal (e.g., job advertisements, EVP statements) and informal (e.g., online reviews, social media). Practical experience always

proves that a large employer brand improves the number of applications and the level of offers acceptance and quality of employment (Kaur and Sharma, 2024; Saini, 2023).

Recent massive research shows the quantifiable impact of EB on the results of digital recruitment. The aggregated data of Glassdoor and LinkedIn Talent Insights indicate that organisations that only improved their publicly available employer ratings by one star reported up to a 35% increase in job-view-to-application conversions in six months (Glassdoor, 2023). These results demonstrate that the reputation of the employer is viewed as an informational cue which affects early-stage funnel behaviour, especially click-to-apply and apply-to-accept ratios. Applicants understand high ratings, honest employee reviews, open communication as a sign of favourable organisational environments (Jeske & Shultz, 2016; Wilden et al., 2023).

In addition to the effects of quantitative applications, EB also has some effects on qualitative attraction outcomes, e.g., applicant fit and motivation. There is also increased likelihood of offers to be pursued and accepted by a candidate who finds greater congruence in personal and organisational values (Uen et al., 2022). The association between the reputation of the employer and job-pursuit intentions is mediated by this person-organisation fit. Cable and Turban (2003) claim that the EB cues help the job seekers to filter their prospective employers based on anticipated fit and this minimizes cognitive uncertainty during the decision making process. As it has been applied in practice, candidates who are attracted by genuine EB not only have a higher chance of applying but also are likely to remain once employed which supports the dual effects of EB on the recruitment-retention spectrum.

The digital recruitment research can help in gaining further knowledge about candidate journey behaviour. Indeed and LinkedIn analytics show that vacant positions with references to development, flexible working, and inclusion are much more engaged

than those whose emphasis is only on payment (Lo et al., 2025). Purpose-driven features like environmental responsibility, diversity, and community impact are also more attractive to younger generations in the brand (Taylor, 2025; Nguyen and Tran, 2023). This confirms the significance of the alignment of EB with changing workforce values and the need to convey them in an authentic manner using online channels.

Notably, the results of attraction are based on the credibility of signals. In case candidates find the discrepancy between external promises and internal reviews, the perceived attractiveness starts to reduce drastically (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Zhang et al., 2022). This highlights the fact that what EB can do best is not so much projection but reputation verification where employee generated content proves what the employer says. As an example, companies with publicly advertised flexibility policies but negative internal feedback regarding flexibility policies experience a low applicant trust, thus lowering the rate of conversion despite good salaries (Singh et al., 2023).

2.5.2 Symbolic or Instrumental Attributes

EB signals can be generally fitted into instrumental (job elements which are tangible like pay, benefits, location and security) and symbolic (job elements which are intangible like prestige, purpose, innovation and caring culture). Based on the research on brand image, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) suggested that employer brands should be treated in the same way as the product brand: the symbolic cues serve the identity and self-expression needs and the instrumental cues satisfy the utilitarian needs. Instrumental features are also still important, especially in transactional labour markets and in frontline positions where financial benefits are the most important (Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023; Work Institute, 2025). Symbolic characteristics, in turn, are particularly dominant in professional and knowledge-based careers in which the contents of meaning and identity coincidence are of utmost importance (Lievens, 2022; Theurer et al., 2018). The

empirical data indicate that symbolic qualities can explain a significant part of organisational attractiveness among graduates, and instrumental qualities are more relevant to mid-career applicants or in such fields as retail and healthcare (Shen and Zhu, 2023; Jiang and Iles, 2024). Symbolic and instrumental signals are not substitutes, as they are mutually reinforcing. Symbolic resonance may increase the perceived value of instrumental rewards: the flexibility of work, in particular, is better perceived when it is a part of a larger story of trust and empowerment, and fairness and recognition increases the perceived value of competitive pay (Sivertzen et al., 2020; Tanwar and Kumar, 2022). Proper EB architectures thus combine these two dimensions into consistent stories, namely what you get and who you become, and recruitment communication is an identity co-construction process.

2.6 Employer Branding and Retention

2.6.1 Commitment as the Central Mediator

The most known mediator in between EB and retention is affective commitment which is the emotional attachment to together with identification with and involvement in the organisation (Meyer and Allen, 1991). As the EB heralds development, fair leadership and inclusion are achieved, the employees have a sense of psychological-contract fulfilment, sense organisational support and build trust (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 2020).

Hussain et al. (2024) embraced the modelling of sequential mediation to demonstrate that EB has a telling effect on retention through affective commitment and brand loyalty. Onur and Yildiz (2024) reaffirm that authentic EB raises commitment based on the perceptions of organisational justice and support. On the other hand, the

breaches of an EB-reality fit (stalelated career advancement or indifferent leadership) sabotage the psychological contract, reduce commitment and increase turnover intentions (Robinson and Morrison, 2021).

Employees who are highly affectively committed will be more prone to become brand champions and they are less susceptible to external offers, despite the fact that competitors may offer them a higher payment (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022). In this way, the retention effect of EB is not so much concerning the amount of communication but to do with the continued presentation of the employment proposition.

2.6.2 Job Embeddedness and Experience Consistency

Job embeddedness provides a structural prism to retention since it focuses on fit, connections and sacrifice (Mitchell et al., 2001). EB is associated with embeddedness when the messages about recruitment are realistic in terms of their reflection of culture and values and when the post-entry experiences support the messages so that new employees could find the value match and create social networks (Lee et al., 2014). Continued EB consistent practices such as mentoring, collaborative teams, recognition system strengthen ties and make the reasons why one leaves appear more painful (Ramesh and Gelfand, 2023). Research demonstrates that the probability of employees who have low congruence between employer brand and actual experience, to find alternative employment is much higher than that of employees with high congruence (Hassan et al., 2024). Reinforcement of EB themes frequently throughout the onboarding process increases initial embeddedness and retention over the long term (Zhang et al., 2022). According to this interpretation, EB can only be effective in cases where symbolic pledges are made real into everyday experiences.

2.7 Digital Employer Branding, Transparency and Authenticity

Digitalisation of recruiting and work has radically changed EB. Organisations no longer hold the power to narrate the employers alone; existing and ex-employees, applicants and even consumers add to the continuously developing digital image. Every single Glassdoor, Indeed and LinkedIn offer publicly available and constantly updated signs of employer quality.

2.7.1 Reviews, Rating and Reputation

Transparency is a structural aspect of labour markets made by online employer-review websites. Ratings and salary information, anonymous ratings and reviews, form an open data on the reputation of employers. The industry research indicates that the slight improvement in the overall ratings is linked to a substantial rise in the applicant engagement indicators (Glassdoor, 2023). On the other hand, the ongoing poor attitude towards leadership, culture or flexibility may delay pipelines and raise the cost of recruiting (Jeske and Shultz, 2016; Wilden et al., 2023). In addition to the attraction, retention is influenced by the digital reputation. The unrealistic pictures are over idealised online and lead to disappointment when the reality is not as ideal, which leads to a rush to leave. The organisations that have a realistic and consistent online presence that aligns with the internal conditions have larger chances of hiring employees whose psychological contract expectations are fulfilled and stabilize the commitment (Hassan et al., 2024). Digital reputation systems thus punish EB: employers are being kept in the spotlight to make sure that their internal operations correspond to the external stories.

2.7.2 Employee-Generated Content and Narrative Control

The most significant perceived authenticity source has been employee-generated content (EGC) posts, reviews, blogs or vlogs created by employees, alumni and candidates. As a rule, peer accounts appear more believable to the applicants than company messages (Dabirian, Kietzmann and Diba, 2017; Collins and Kanar, 2021). Inclusion stories, learning or supportive leadership stories increase the credibility of EB and result in spontaneous employee advocacy, but negative stories can quickly affect the planned campaigns (Wilden et al., 2023). The studies state that when organisations interact positively with online responses to the feedback and promote open dialogue, they are considered more credible (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). According to Glassdoor (2024), companies that address the reviews both intelligently and responsibly, including negative ones, have a higher employer trust and internal morale. That the top management is visibly engaged in online discussions related to culture and diversity further enhances a sense of authenticity (Kaur and Sharma, 2024). Simultaneously, digital transparency threatens to disintegrate the narrative in case the voices of employees are uneven or polarised. Instead of trying to have a tight rein, organisations are advised to offer assistance on appropriate and positive engagement of social-media and permit authentic expression. In that regard, EB is collaboratively produced as a result of ongoing interactions within digital reputation systems and authenticity is transformed into a moral and strategic necessity.

2.8 Generational Cohorts as Moderators

2.8.1 Differentiated Expectations

A variety of socio-economic and technological situations determine the generational peculiarities. The typical values of Gen X (1965-1980) include job stability, autonomy and clear career paths, as well as the careers created in the restructuring and early digital age (Twenge and Campbell, 2018). The post-globalisation, post-digitalisation, and post-social-awakening generation of millennials (1981-1996) and the new generation of generations Z (1997 onwards) are more focused on flexibility, purpose, inclusion and constant learning (Nguyen and Tran, 2023; Taylor, 2025). Empirically, it has been established that different generations have different responses to EB themes. In hospitality, employees in the Millennials and Gen Z age bracket respond better to employer brands that focus on purpose, inclusion and growth, but Gen X employees respect stability, benefits and autonomy (Oladipo and Oginni, 2022; Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023). EB can improve retention to generations, whereas affective commitment has a more significant impact among younger categories where meaningful work and clear leadership are of greater importance (Uduji et al., 2023). Cohorts are also further differentiated by digital nativity. Online reviews and social media have become the most important tools that help millennials and Gen Z assess employers; a majority of Gen Z job seekers visit websites like Glassdoor before submitting their applications, and it is less than half of Gen X (Glassdoor, 2024). In younger generations, the social proof and authenticity can be much more influential than traditional prestige, which is why, in this case, digital employer branding has a great moderating power (Dabirian, Kietzmann and Diba, 2017; Wilden et al., 2023). Gen X workers frequently leave the company because of stagnant career growth or politics, whereas Millennials and Gen Z leave the company because they believe there is a mismatch of values or they have lost their

meaning (Kaur and Sharma, 2024; Work Institute, 2025). Younger employees have a higher average tenure and so ethics, inclusion, sustainability and growth messages in EB are more effective among them. All in all, generational cohorts influence the EB to retention relationship by moderating the salience of brand attributes and their strength to drive commitment levels and turnover.

2.8.2 The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) Segmentation

Nevertheless, in spite of these differences, generic EVPs are still used in many organisations that do not consider the value drivers that are unique to cohorts. The text-mining of job postings hints at the disproportionate focus on the financial and purpose-related EVP indicators and the relative lack of attention to the experience-based ones like flexibility, autonomy and employee voice (Lievens, 2022; ResearchGate, 2024). This does not balance attraction and retention with cohorts that have more experiential priorities. The resonance can be enhanced with the segmentation of EVP communication to address the needs of generations. In the case of Generation Z, growth, mentoring, inclusion and social impact take the first place among the most valued features (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). Millennials respond to EVPs which emphasize developmental mobility, work-life balance and purpose fit (Taylor, 2025). Gen X is more likely to attract autonomy, recognition, stability and long-term security, which is not well-represented in digital EB stories (Hassan et al., 2024). Given that the implementation of EVP communication increases application conversion and turnover reduction among demographic cohorts within 12 months, a meta-analysis suggests that tailored communication should be provided to each demographic group (ScienceDirect, 2024). According to Wilden et al. (2023), affective commitment can also be promoted with the help of cohort-sensitive EB since it fulfills identity needs and reinforces a psychological contract. In the current research, this would mean that generational cohorts are

moderators of the effect that certain EB variables have on attraction and turnover intentions.

2.9 Occupational and Sectoral contexts

Recent EB studies are no longer conceptual studies but rather more empirical operationalisation. EB is usually gauged as a multidimensional construct that has functional (rewards, flexibility, development), psychological (attachment and belonging), social (prestige and relationships) and economic (pay, security) value (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018; Tanwar and Kumar, 2022). Nevertheless, it is difficult to distinguish EB and other related concepts like reputation of the organisation and internal organisational culture (Lievens, 2022). To solve this, the more recent research proposes a component-level analysis of discrete EB dimensions such as EVP clarity, leadership credibility, inclusion, rewards, and their own distinct effect on outcomes such as attraction, commitment and turnover (Collins and Kanar, 2021; Hassan et al., 2024). The measures of authenticity, which are often determined through items like my organisation does what it promises to employees, have proven to be strong predictors of commitment and turnover intentions and the focus of the current research on consistency. The behavioural and sentiment data contributed by rating websites like Glassdoor, Indeed and Linked In are added through digital employer branding (Glassdoor, 2023; Wilden et al., 2023). Such digital reputation systems offer external measures of employer image which can be related to in-house HR measures, such as applications, offer acceptance, retention, and allow multi-source models. New longitudinal models and sequential mediation models (e.g. EB → commitment → loyalty → retention) have enhanced causal inference (Hussain et al., 2024). The mixture of the survey-based perceptions, digital sentiment and behavioural results offers a deeper operationalisation of EB and its

processes, especially in the context of the current study focus on authenticity, commitment, generational dissimilarity and digital transparency.

2.10 Measurement and Operationalisation

Empirical research on employer branding (EB) has significantly developed in the recent years beyond the conceptual debate and includes quantifiable constructs and scale validation. Nonetheless, EB is multidimensional and perceptual, which poses an ongoing measurement dilemma, especially in differentiating EB to the various but related constructs, i.e. organisational reputation, organisational culture and corporate social responsibility (CSR). More recent research (2020-2025) has thus attempted to narrow the method of operationalisation of EB, to better isolate its specific impact on attraction, commitment and turnover. This part discusses the key methods to assess EB, record digital data, and assess the outcomes of interest and mediatory processes as the basis of the methodological framework of the current research.

2.10.1 How to Measure Employer Branding

Recent research conceptualises EB as a multidimensional construct which consists of both functional (rewards, flexibility, development opportunities) and symbolic (identity, culture, purpose) aspects. EB is operationalised using the empirical models that use composite scales to measure employees perception on Employee Value Proposition (EVP), leadership credibility, inclusion climate, growth, recognition systems, and work-life balance (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022).

The most popular measurement models are based on Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), which have since been developed based on confirmatory factor analysis by Theurer et al. (2018) and more recently by Patel et al. (2024). The investigations confirm a multidimensional structure of EB that usually has:

- Functional Value -perceived material and developmental value;
- Psychological Value -emotional attachment and belonging;
- Social Value- prestige, relationships and community at workplace; and
- Economic Value- payment and satisfaction.

Nonetheless, measurement ambiguity still exists between EB and organisational reputation and internal culture in spite of conceptual advancement. Reputation is usually a manifestation of the opinion of external audiences, whereas EB incorporates internal (employee experience) and external (candidate image) facets (Lievens, 2022).

Organisational culture, on the contrary, represents, perceived brand value. Construct discriminant validity is therefore the problem that keeps on reemerging.

To overcome this EB studies have been indexed under PMC (20232024), the suggested component-level analysis that evaluates the unique effect of each dimension of EB, including EVP clarity, leadership credibility, inclusion, rewards, and flexibility, on particular outputs like attraction or retention. This granular method is more explanatory and fits well with the objectives of the present paper. Also, psychometric studies recommend the application of validated Likert-based EB perception scales and structural equation modelling (SEM) to record latent constructs and examine interrelations (Collins and Kanar, 2021).

The other new methodological improvement is the combination of authenticity indices, which are an assessment of the perceived congruity of brand promise and employee experience. The ratings of authenticity, which are usually measured with the help of survey questions, like My organisation does what it promises to employees, are strong predictors of organisational commitment and turnover intention (Hassan et al., 2024).

2.10.2 Capturing Digital Signals

Digital employer branding (DEB) provides alternative sources of observable and behavioural data that are complementary to the perceptual measure of a survey. The ratings and reviews data on websites like Glassdoor, Indeed, and LinkedIn are becoming more popular among scholars to proxy the external employer image. When cleaned and structured, these datasets will provide measurable indicators of in the opinion of the public, the reputation of the employer and the perceived quality of leadership (Glassdoor, 2023; Wilden et al., 2023).

New AAA Publications (2024) show high level of methodology of gathering and processing such data. Techniques include:

- Ratings and textual reviews data scraped and extracted through web-scraping and API;
- Natural language processing (NLP) to recognize sentiment polarity and thematic content (e.g. career development, flexibility, culture);
- Tracking rating patterns over time to identify changes in rating patterns after HR interventions; and
- Connection with internal HR analytics including job applications, acceptance of offers and voluntary turnover.

Such hybrid data allow sound model testing of the effects of digital EB, which are needed to consider more objective measures of employer reputation. Using both a combination of external sentiment data and internal behavioural measures researchers will be able to investigate the effects of online employer image on actual HR performance, including time-to-fill vacancies or premature attrition levels.

Online reviewers can also be biased by sampling and self-selection, which is another factor that is important to control, as online researchers observe (Scholars 1).

High tech models have used weighted sentiment analysis or bayesian corrections as a correction of the review volume and recency effects (ScienceDirect, 2024). Such a methodological development improves the validity of digital information as the proxy of external employer branding performance.

2.10.3 Outcomes and Mechanisms

The operationalisation of EB involves going beyond measurement of brand perceptions and involves measurement of tangible HR outcomes and the processes that are associated with EB and HR outcomes. Conventional research involves attitudinal proxies, including organisational attractiveness, intention to apply and intention to stay (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). Recent longitudinal and analytics-based studies, however, measure to the behavioural and performance indicators, such as:

- Real turnover/retention rates;
- Time-to-fill; rate and offer-acceptance rate;
- Index of employee engagement and advocacy; and
- Embeddedness and internal mobility measures.

Sequential mediation models have been implemented in recent models (ScienceDirect, 2024), where the causal pathways are EB to organisational commitment to brand loyalty to retention were tested. As an example, cross-lagged SEM allowed Hussain et al. (2024) to establish the temporal order in this chain, showing that affective commitment is an instant reaction to perceived brand authenticity, which, in turn, leads to retention behaviour.

The shift toward longitudinal designs is a significant improvement, resolving the previous objections that most EB studies used cross-sectional data which could not be used to draw conclusions about causation. New analytics software currently incorporates employee lifecycle data, which tracks the response to change by EB communication or

EVP delivery to turnover in the next half or year (Wilden et al., 2023). Finally, the moderating factors that are becoming increasingly more operationalised in EB mechanisms are those of generational cohort, sectoral context, and digital authenticity signals. This can create multi-source, multi-level models by combining perceptual surveys, digital sentiment measures and behavioural outcomes and capture the multi-layered complexity and dynamism of employer branding.

2.11 Summary

The literature indicates that employer branding has become a strategic human resource capability that determines attraction and retention. EB combines functional, economic and symbolic returns of employment into a consistent employer promise (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Theurer et al., 2018; Tanwar and Kumar, 2022). Recent research defines EB as a multidimensional system that includes EVP, culture and leadership, benefits, flexibility and career development, and authentic alignment between promises and practices as a key factor to credibility (Sultan, 2022; Brown and McIver, 2022; Minchington, 2023). The theories are united in a similar mechanism. Signalling theory places EB as a tool of minimising information asymmetry in which believable signals of worthiness enhance organisational appeal (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Lievens, 2022). The perspectives of social exchange theory and psychological contract elucidate that the perception of support, fairness and affective commitment in response to fulfilment of EB promises lead to the reduction of turnover intentions (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger et al., 2020; Onur and Yildiz, 2024). According to Job Embeddedness Theory, EB reinforces fit, connects and perceived sacrifice, which is consolidating retention (Mitchell et al., 2001; Lee and Mitchell, 2024; Ramesh and

Gelfand, 2023). Collectively, these structures conceptualise EB as a signalling and relational-structural system that influences behaviour with the help of authenticity, reciprocity and attachment. The empirical study emphasizes that successful EB makes a distinction not only in terms of rewards but also in purposes, inclusion, development and flexibility that are especially appreciated by younger generations (Nguyen and Tran, 2023; Kaur and Sharma, 2024; Taylor, 2025). In attraction studies, organisational attractiveness is motivated by both symbolic and instrumental cue, whereas retention is made through perceived authenticity and commitment is the mediator (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022; Hussain et al., 2024; Hassan et al., 2024). EB has also been transformed through digital systems of employer branding and reputation. On Glassdoor, LinkedIn, and other platforms, ratings, reviews, and employee-generated content serve to act as visible dynamic signals of employer authenticity and affect candidate choices prior to formal contact and disciplines employers to make image and reality congruent (Jeske and Shultz, 2016; Glassdoor, 2023; Wilden et al., 2023; Chen and Li, 2024). These effects are mediated by generational cohorts: being digital natives, Millennials and Gen z attach more importance to transparency, inclusion and growth, whereas Gen X attaches more importance to autonomy and security (Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023; Work Institute, 2025). Lastly, methodological improvements in multidimensional scales, authenticity indices, digital sentiment measures and longitudinal mediation models enhance the empirical foundation to look at the mechanisms of EB (Collins and Kanar, 2021; Tanwar and Kumar, 2022; Hussain et al., 2024). In spite of this advancement, there are still gaps in the literature about the component-level impacts of particular EB dimensions on attraction and turnover, commitment and embeddedness mediation and the moderating effects of generational cohorts and digital reputation. The current paper fills these gaps by examining the impact of specific aspects of EB, and in particular authenticity, on

attraction and retention in digitally transparent labour markets and provides evidence-based recommendations on sustainable talent management.

Chapter III:
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

The study was done to understand the correlations between employer branding and employee behavioural results, particularly the intention to join and employee turnover in medium and large organisations in the United Kingdom. The growing level of competition on skilled talent coupled with the changing workforce expectations has made employer branding one of the key success factors of an organisation. With the modernisation of labour markets, the companies are not only competing based on salaries or job security but there are wider aspects of the culture, inclusion, employee well-being, and development prospects (Patel et al., 2024). This change has brought a necessity to organisations to develop authentic employer brands that does not just convey value propositions that would attract potential candidates but also believable experiences that would keep current employees.

Traditionally, employer branding has been considered as a marketing communication tool though, as recent research shows, it is a strategic human resource management practice that has a direct impact on engagement, commitment, and retention (Uduji et al., 2023). Regardless of this increased awareness, the gap in knowledge concerning the precise routes by which employer branding influences employee behaviour still exists. There has been a dissonance between what organisations promise to people and what they deliver internally as many organisations continue to witness high turnover even after heavy investment in terms of branding campaign. This brand dissonance tends to kill trust and depreciate retention in the long run. As a result, the current study attempted to investigate the influence of different components of employer

branding structure on employee attraction and turnover intentions, including leadership, organisational culture, employee value proposition (EVP), and perceived authenticity.

The research has been a reaction to the growing digitalisation of employer employee relationships. The workplace perception has become extremely transparent and dynamic due to social media, employer review websites such as Glassdoor, and virtual workplaces (Wilden et al., 2023). The employer brand is jointly created by job seekers and employees via online stories and experience. This way, organisations can no longer afford to be guided by a guided corporate messaging system; they need to make sure that the experiences of their employees are in sync with what they claim to be their values so that they can be reputable. This dimension was incorporated in the research through the analysis of the effects of digital employer review on the perceptions of authenticity as well as how the perception of authenticity moderates the relationship between the employer branding and employee behavioral outcomes.

Also, the workplace generational diversity contributes to the complexity of the employer branding behavior relationship. Employees in the millennials and Generation Z generations are more focused on purpose, inclusion, and flexibility, and in many cases, Generation X is focused on stability and autonomy (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). These cohort-related preferences are the ones that shape the way people react to branding activities, yet there is a lack of empirical studies that would cover these damping effects. The research combined the generational analysis, which offered the understanding of how the employer branding strategies may be adjusted to satisfy the specific demands of various age cohorts.

In general, this study was intended to fill the theoretical and practical gaps by evaluating the mediating and moderating effects of organisational commitment and the main effect of digital authenticity in the employer branding framework, respectively. The

study provided a holistic view of how authentic and context-sensitive employer branding can both drive attraction and turnover, through the application of a mixed-methods design, with quantitative data collected among employees and qualitative data among HR professionals and thus has a role to play in organisational performance as well as workforce sustainability.

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

The researchers built the study on three supplementary theoretical frameworks, namely, the Signalling Theory, the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Job Embeddedness Theory, which together yielded the explanations of the mechanisms between employer branding (EB) and employee attraction and retention outcomes. All the frameworks guided the operationalisation of the key constructs, in such a way that the variables measured both the perceptual as well as the behavioural aspects of employer-employee relationships.

3.2.1 Employer Branding (Independent Variable)

The operationalisation of employer branding was the multidimensional construct of the perceived overall attractiveness of an organisation as an employer by employees and job seekers. This definition is in line with that of Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) who have conceptualised EB to be the amalgamation of functional, economic and psychological utility of working in a particular organisation. The construct was evaluated using six dimensions used in modern research of the HRM and organisational behaviour (1) Employee Value Proposal (EVP), (2) organisational culture, (3) leadership credibility, (4) career growth and development, (5) flexibility and well-being, and (6) rewards and benefits.

Validated items were used to measure each dimension based on Tanwar and Kumar (2022), Lievens (2022), and Patel et al. (2024) and were measured in both symbolic (e.g., values, prestige, inclusion) and instrumental (e.g., pay, development, flexibility) aspects of EB. The respondents rated their perceptions on a scale of five with points on a Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample items were as follows: My organisation provides meaningful career development opportunities and The organisation provides flexible and supportive work environment. The multidimensional scale enabled component analysis to establish which dimensions of EB had the greatest influence on attraction and turnover.

This operationalisation was an expression of the logic of Signalling Theory, according to which employer brand signals decrease information asymmetry to job seekers and employees. High-quality and regular signals on the part of the employer, including observable leadership integrity, clarity in promotion opportunities and culture are useful in convincing people as to what it would be like to work in the organisation, hence affecting attraction and retention behaviour (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016; Wilden et al., 2023).

3.2.2 Brand Consistency (as perceived)

Perceived brand consistency was used to understand the level of correspondence between the promises of the external employer (as represented in the websites, advertisements, social media), and the internal experiences (as experienced by the employees). It is a crucial variable and the main focus of the study which focuses on brand authenticity, which becomes an influential factor of trust and commitment. Three items modified by Hassan et al. (2024) and Universum (2024) and focused on the congruence of the stated values and the actual leadership behaviour, the ability to workload, and the support of the development were used to measure the construct. Some

of the example statements were: the organisation gives what it promises the employees and my real work experience is what the organisation is projecting to the outside world.

This operationalisation was based on SET which assumes that with a perception of fairness and reciprocity (through fulfilment of the psychological contract) the employees will reciprocate by being more committed and having a lower turnover intention (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Poor branding, in turn, generates a discrepancy in cognition, which leads to mistrust and disinterest.

3.2.3 Organisational Commitment (Mediating Variable)

The mediating construct which was found to account the translations of employer branding to retention outcomes was identified as organisational commitment, especially the affective commitment. The research was based on Meyer and Allen (1991) three component model such as affective, continuance and normative commitment with the aim of emphasizing on affective commitment which is the emotional bond that makes employees stay out of their desire and not out of necessity. It was the 15-item scale created by Meyer and Allen and fined by Mercurio (2015) and Sharma and Dhar (2021). The statements were rated by the respondents: I feel emotionally attached to this organisation and I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career at this place.

The affective commitment played the role of the psychological link between the perceived employer brand value and the employee behaviour as per the principle of reciprocity of SET. Employees would establish trust and attachment when they have the perception that the organisation is doing everything it promises to do, and this in turn minimises turnover intentions (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

3.2.4 Employee Intention to Join and Turnover Intention (Dependent Variable)

Prospective employees would be willing to application and accept job offers of an organisation in the intention to join construct. It was operationalised on a modified three-item scale of Edwards and Peccei (2007) and Lievens (2022). Some of the example items were: I would think of applying to this organisation should a good position arise and I would accept a job offer in this organization.

Turnover intention on the other hand was operationalised as the likelihood of employees leaving their present organisation voluntarily which the employees were required to give a self report. The measurement was done on the six-item Mobley et al. (1978) scale that was later adapted by Hom et al. (2012) on contemporary working conditions like hybrid and remote work. Examples of representative items were: I always consider leaving the job and It is probably that I will actively seek another job within one year.

The two variables represented the behavioural outcomes of the employer branding process: attraction (external outcome) and retention (internal outcome).

3.2.5 Construct Validation and Reliability test

A pilot study was conducted on all the instruments using 30 respondents to determine the level of clarity, relevance and reliability. The alpha values of all constructs were greater than 0.80, which was used to identify the high level of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2022). Adequacy of sampling and construct validity was checked using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), and tests of sphericity created by Bartlett.

Overall, the operationalisation of variables was based on the theoretical background of the study as the signals (Signalling Theory), reciprocal exchange (SET), and employee embeddedness (Job Embeddedness Theory) were mapped onto

quantifiable constructs. This framework facilitated the fact that the quantitative tools and qualitative themes were conceptually consistent so that the empirical study of the relationship between employer branding and attraction and turnover via authenticity, commitment and generational interactions could be made.

Table 1: Instrument sources

| Construct | Scale Source | No. of Items | Response Format |
|--|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| Employer Branding (EVP, Culture, Leadership, Flexibility, Rewards) | Tanwar & Kumar (2022); Lievens (2022) | 24 | 5-point Likert |
| Brand Consistency / Authenticity | Hassan et al. (2024); Universum (2024) | 3 | 5-point Likert |
| Affective Organisational Commitment | Meyer & Allen (1991); Mercurio (2015) | 15 | 5-point Likert |
| Intention to Join | Edwards & Peccei (2007); Lievens (2022) | 3 | 5-point Likert |
| Turnover Intention | Mobley et al. (1978); Hom et al. (2012) | 6 | 5-point Likert |

Source: (Research data, 2025)

Table 2: Validity Model

| Construct | KMO Value | Bartlett's Test (χ^2, p-value) | AVE | CR | Factor Loading Range |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---|------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Employer Branding (6 dimensions) | 0.918 | $\chi^2 = 2567.34$, p < 0.001 | 0.52–0.68 | 0.82–0.91 | 0.71–0.89 |
| Organisational Commitment | 0.903 | $\chi^2 = 1845.12$, p < 0.001 | 0.57 | 0.89 | 0.74–0.87 |
| Perceived Brand Consistency | 0.884 | $\chi^2 = 963.44$, p < 0.001 | 0.59 | 0.88 | 0.72–0.85 |
| Intention to Join | 0.861 | $\chi^2 = 735.26$, p < 0.001 | 0.62 | 0.9 | 0.76–0.88 |
| Turnover Intention | 0.874 | $\chi^2 = 812.17$, p < 0.001 | 0.55 | 0.87 | 0.69–0.84 |

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Table 3: Reliability Model

| Construct | Cronbach's Alpha (α) | Composite Reliability (CR) | Split-Half Coefficient | Inter-Item Correlation |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Employer Branding (overall) | 0.91 | 0.94 | 0.88 | 0.42–0.67 |
| EVP | 0.89 | 0.9 | 0.84 | 0.45–0.63 |
| Organisational Culture | 0.87 | 0.89 | 0.82 | 0.41–0.59 |
| Leadership Credibility | 0.86 | 0.88 | 0.8 | 0.39–0.58 |
| Career Development | 0.84 | 0.86 | 0.78 | 0.37–0.55 |
| Flexibility & Well-being | 0.85 | 0.87 | 0.79 | 0.40–0.57 |
| Benefits | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.77 | 0.36–0.52 |
| Organisational Commitment | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.86 | 0.48–0.66 |
| Perceived Brand Consistency | 0.88 | 0.9 | 0.85 | 0.46–0.64 |
| Intention to Join | 0.9 | 0.92 | 0.87 | 0.51–0.68 |
| Turnover Intention | 0.87 | 0.89 | 0.84 | 0.43–0.60 |

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

This research was aimed at exploring how employer branding affects employee attraction and retention, and the questions which were addressed were the mediating role of organisational commitment, the moderating impact of the generational cohorts and the perceived authenticity of the digital employer brands. The paper aimed at filling the gaps in literature by recognizing several constructs as a single theory.

- How do specific components of employer branding (such as EVP, organisational culture, employee benefits, and leadership) influence employee attraction, and how does the perceived consistency of these brand elements affect turnover intentions?

- In what ways does organisational commitment mediate the relationship between employer branding and employee turnover, and how do generational cohorts (Millennials, Generation X, and Generation Z) moderate the influence of employer branding on employee behavioural outcomes?
- To what extent do digital employer reviews (e.g., Glassdoor ratings) influence perceptions of employer brand authenticity, and how do these perceptions impact recruitment and retention outcomes?

3.4 Research Design & Paradigm

The proposed study was based on the mixed-methods research design, and explanatory sequential approach presented by Creswell and Plano Clark (2023). The design was applied in two separate and complementary phases: a first phase, which is quantitative, and a second phase which is qualitative. The quantitative phase aimed at testing using survey data gathered on full-time employees the theoretical relationships of employer branding and organisational commitment to employee behavioural outcomes empirically. The qualitative stage, in turn, offered an interpretive dimension, relying on the semi-structured interviews with HR and employer branding experts to clarify the quantitative results and give them context. This chain enabled the researcher to point out the statistically significant trends and then investigate the causes and means of their occurrence.

The pragmatic paradigm of philosophy was the basis of the research design approach to justify the application of both objective and subjective epistemologies (Saunders et al., 2019). Pragmatism takes into consideration the fact that the complex social phenomenon, including employee perceptions and employer branding strategies, can not be understood by fully applying one methodological perspective. It

accommodates various data gathering and processing methods and combines the accuracy of data with narrative quality to create useful, real world knowledge. This philosophy fitted well with the applied nature of the DBA and allowed the researcher to come up with insights that were not only theoretically sound but also practically applicable to the management and HR practice.

The pragmatic research paradigm has been chosen because of the multi-layered and complex characteristics of employer branding as an object of measurement and as an experience of employees. The paper discusses employer branding as both a collection of visible actions and indicators (e.g., EVP, leadership, flexibility, digital reviews) and as an experience that employees are building, experiencing, and forming perceptions of based on their perceptions, commitment, authenticity beliefs, and generational identifications. In this way, no single epistemological stance, either of pure positivist or purely interpretivist, would be adequate in answering the research problem in a comprehensive way.

The focus on pragmatism is especially suitable as the main goal of the research is not to justify a philosophical standpoint, but to get an idea of what works in practice when employer branding has to be applied in attracting and retaining employees in digitally open labour markets. As part of the practical perspective of Saunders et al. (2019), knowledge is appreciated by its practicality in addressing genuine organisational issues. This is straight to the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) inclination of the study, which emphasises on applied, action insight and theoretical contribution.

The nature of the research design clearly demands the use of objective and subjective epistemologies, which pragmatism authorises. On the one hand, the research confirms hypotheses formulated on the basis of the theoretical assumptions with the help of quantitative data (e.g., regression analysis and Structural Equation Modelling) based

on Signalling Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory. Such analyses take employer branding elements, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions to be measurable variables and presuppose some objectively regular organisation behaviour. Conversely, the qualitative strand recognizes that the effectiveness of employer branding depends on the interpretation as well as context and meaning-making processes, especially when it comes to authenticity, generational expectations and digital transparency. This duality is accommodated by the pragmatic paradigm which, however, enables techniques to be selected in line with their explanatory worth and not philosophical loyalty.

Additionally, the explanatory sequential mixed-method design that was taken in this research is supported by pragmatism. Quantitative phase establishes statistically significant relationships and mediation / moderation effects, whereas the qualitative phase notes the explanation of why and how such effects are practiced. This is particularly significant since the study dwells upon the issue of brand consistency, authenticity gaps, and sectoral variation, which cannot be truly explained by means of numerical analysis only. Pragmatism thus allows triangulation of methods, which improves the credibility, validity and the richness of interpretations of the findings.

The context-sensitive character of employer branding which is demonstrated in the literature review is also in line with the paradigm. As evidenced in Chapters I and II, employer branding is applied differently in industries, generations and in the digital realm. Pragmatism also accepts the fact that organisational reality is not objective but conditional, dynamic and socially constructed especially in context where there are online reviews, employee-generated content and changing values of the workforce. This is so flexible that the study is able to include digital employer reviews as external cues in

addition to internal employee perceptions without compelling them to a single ontological framework.

The design was mainly guided by a deductive reasoning process because the hypotheses were based on the existing theories such as Signalling Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory which, together, can be used to explain the effect of employer branding on attraction and turnover outcomes. The deductive stage allowed the testing of hypothesised relationships with the help of statistical tools, i.e. regression analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Nevertheless, the research also involved the use of inductive reasoning via qualitative investigation especially when conducting thematic analysis of interviews. This synthesis enabled the researcher to build up and enhance the theoretical assumptions and discover additional contextual variables like digital brand authenticity and generational differences that determine the effectiveness of employer branding.

The quantitative part utilised cross-sectional survey design that is commonly adopted in the study of organisations and behavioural studies to investigate correlation between variables at a given time (Bryman, 2021). Perceptions on employer branding, organisational commitment and behavioural intentions of employees in various sectors were captured by the survey. The method allowed finding patterns and correlations and testing the mediation and moderation effects. Cross-sectional design was also practical in the field of cost, feasibility and response efficiency, which was appropriate in a research project that was doctoral level, and included several constructs.

The qualitative part involved semi-structured interviews among the HR and employer branding specialists. This was enabling detailed and insightful information on the way employer branding strategies are created and executed, and how they are perceived in actual organisations. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher

to explore more deeply themes that were revealed as a result of the quantitative analysis (e.g., the mismatch between what external employers promise and what is happening internally, and contextual specifics within various sectors and across different generations), as well as to build on the contextual specifics of specific industries and groups of generations.

The two phases developed a methodological triangulation (Bryman, 2021), which reinforced the overall validity and reliability of the study. Empirical generalisability was offered by quantitative findings and interpretive depth and theoretical richness was offered by qualitative results. This triangulation increased the reliability of findings by validating findings of various sources and methods. Furthermore, the combination of quantitative tendencies with the stories of experience enabled the study to fill the gap between the abstract theory and managerial practice.

Overall, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design helped the study to tackle the complexity of the employer branding as a measurable construct and lived organisational experience. It helped to conduct a thorough study of the influence of employer branding on employee attraction and turnover in terms of cognitive, emotional, and generational processes and yield results that are applicable to academic literature and HR strategic decision-making.

3.5 Conceptual Model

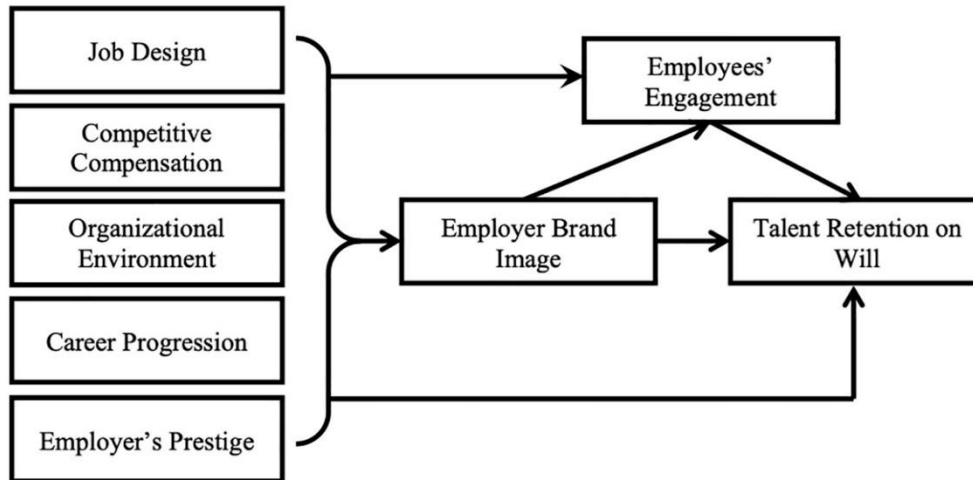


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3.6 Population and Sample

The sample of this research included the full-time employees and human resource (HR) professionals that were employed in the medium and large organisations located in the United Kingdom and were sampled in five major sectors of the economy, including finance, healthcare, information technology (IT), retail, and education. The industries were chosen to cover a broad spectrum of organisational situations that can be characterised by a variety of talent structures, labour needs, and employer branding levels. They all constitute an important percentage of the UK labour market, and were found by the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2024) to be some of the sectors with chronic issues in attracting and retaining skilled workers.

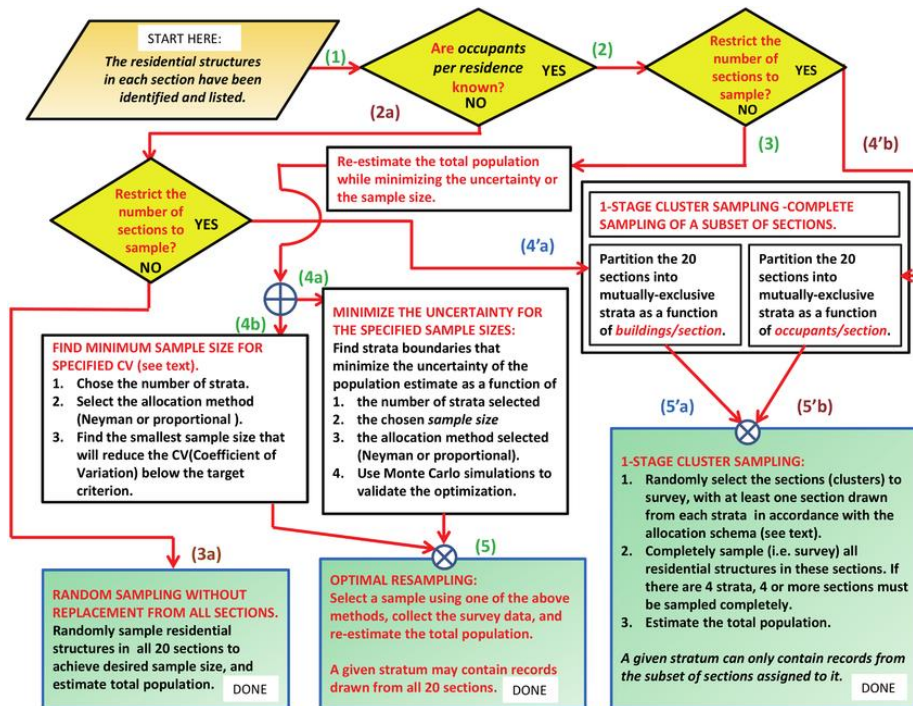


Figure 2: Sample Model

Source: (Creswell and Plano Clark (2023))

Such a cross-sectoral method was necessary in strengthening the external validity of the results. The effectiveness of employer branding can differ significantly among industry; compensation and job security prevail in healthcare and retail industry, whereas purpose, innovation and flexibility are more significant in the IT and education sector. The use of a multi-industry sample helped the research to make sure that the insights obtained could not be applied to a single occupational niche but would be useful in forming a generalised idea about employer branding dynamics in the UK environment.

Sample Selection






| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Example of this research | Full-time employees and HR professionals (HR) professionals employed in medium and large organizations located in the Und Kingdom |
| Major sectors |      Finance Healthcare IT Retail Education |
| No. of participants | 350 Quantitative sample (Quantitative sample) 20 HR and employer branding professionals |
| Generational cohorts | Generation X (1965–1980), Millennials (1981–1996) Generation Z (1997–2012) |
| Sampling method | Stratified purposive sampling |
| | |

Figure 3: Research Sampling Model

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

The participants were estimated to be around six million full-time workers, and it is the total number of people who are employed in the medium and large organisations in

the chosen sectors (ONS, 2024). Two samples were selected out of this population to justify the mixed-methods design:

- Quantitative sample: 350 full-time employees.
- Qualitative sample: 20 HR and employer branding professionals.

The 350 employees were selected as the quantitative sample according to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022) who claim that multivariate analysis, including regression and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), needs at least 10–15 observations based on the estimates of the parametric expression. This was sufficient to provide statistical power to ensure the study generalised the sample to the population parameters. The sample of the employee participants gave empirical results concerning their perception of the employer branding, organisational commitment and behavioural results (intention to join and turnover intention).

The qualitative sample was comprised of 20 HR and employer branding professionals. These participants were specifically chosen due to their participation in strategic employer branding, recruitment, internal communication and management of organisational culture. They were crucial to provide a balance in filling the gap in perspectives of employees with the views of people who design and execute employer branding activities. Adhering to Creswell and Plano Clark (2023), the sample size was adequate to achieve the data saturation so that repetitive themes were not recorded in an excessive number of redundant statements.

A stratified purposive sampling was applied. The stratification made sure that both industry and generational cohort had equal representation as they are aware that the employer branding experiences and expectations vary depending on the situations and demographics. In each field, there were respondents of Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-2012). Such stratification facilitated the

study to explore the possible moderating effects of generational identity on the association between employer branding and behavioural outcomes.

Employee participants were recruited through professional networking sites like LinkedIn, web-based HR forums and announcements on the intranet of the participating firms, which were complemented by organisational referrals. These were aligned with the recent methodological trends in HRM studies that use the digital professional platform as an opportunity to access dispersed and diverse samples (Bryman, 2021). The entry to the study was voluntary, and all the respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study, regulations of confidentiality, and the right of data utilization prior to their consent.

In the case of the qualitative phase, the purposive sampling was used to select the HR professionals that were directly involved in the management of employer branding or in any other related activity, i.e., employee engagement, recruitment marketing, or developing of the employer value proposition (EVP). The invitations were made through professional associations, HR networks and through the referrals of industry contacts. This strategy helped to ensure the presence of all the relevant knowledge and experience of each of the participants, which made the qualitative data rich with information (Flick, 2023).

This two-sample design offered the multi-level view of the studied phenomenon. The employees provided ideas on the lived experience of employer branding- the reality of the brand promise- and the HR professionals offered the perspective of strategy on how the branding activities are conceptualised and operationalised in organisations. The combination of these points of view enhanced the construct validity of the research, as well as its practical application.

Altogether, the selected population and sampling approach provided methodological consistency with the mixed-methods explanatory nature of the study, as it

allowed comprehensive study of the effect of employer branding on attraction and turnover. The stratified purposive sampling was effective in creating representativeness across the industry and generations as well as coupled with the pragmatic philosophical orientation of the study, data became contextually relevant as well as practical in addressing the current employer branding issues in the UK labor market.

The end result of the valid employee responses is a final quantitative sample of 342 responses, which was established as the result of a complex combination of statistical power requirements and structural equation modelling (SEM) conventions, required heterogeneity among the population, and feasibility considerations, as opposed to arbitrary numerical limits. This was to attain a sufficiently large sample size that would be able to provide sound estimation of complex relationships and at the same time be proportional to the size and design of the study.

To test direct, mediating, and moderating relationships between various latent constructs, the roles of employer branding dimensions, perceived brand consistency, organisational commitment, intention to join, and turnover intention, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilised in the study. SEM also demands bigger samples as compared to simple regression because more than one parameter is being estimated. According to Hair et al. (2022), when using SEM, the ratio of observations to the estimated parameter should be no less than 10 to 15 in order to obtain reliable results. In lieu of the fact that the suggested model incorporated about 2530 observed indicators and several latent directions, a statistically significant minimum sample of respondents was 300-350. This can be met comfortably by a sample of 342 to guarantee that the model is estimated with a stable amount of model estimation, reasonable fit indices, and sufficient statistical power.

Second, the issues of power analysis also justify the selected sample size. Based on the criteria provided by Cohen (1992), multiple predictors can usually be used with a sample size of more than 300 to detect a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$) at 95% confidence level. This was especially significant as the study involved mediation (organisational commitment), as well as moderation (generational cohorts) effects, which require stronger statistical sensitivity than direct effects only. A 300 sample would have been close to the adequacy threshold, but 342 would give a more conservative margin against Type II error and would not over sample the sample unnecessarily.

3.7 Participant Selection

In this study, inclusion criteria were used to select the participants since the criteria were explicitly stated to bring about relevance, credibility, and conformity to the objectives of the study. In the quantitative stage, the participants had to be fulltime employees who were in medium or large organisations with at least 250 employees. This criterion was necessary to make sure that the respondents were placed in structured corporeal setups where employer branding projects are usually formalised and conveyed via set HR systems. Moreover, the respondents had to have at least one year of service to their organisation. This made sure that they received sufficient exposure to the internal and external employer branding behaviours, and could judge the consistency and authenticity of organisational promises against the reality. The sample was also a cross-generational work force and included Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-2012) workers. This generational representation was part of exploring the moderating effect of age cohorts on employer branding and their consequent effect on intention to join and turnover.

In the case of the qualitative stage, the sample comprised of HR professionals and employer branding specialists who were chosen according to three criteria. To begin with, the participants had to be in an active position associated with human resource management, talent acquisition, or employer brand strategy so that they have a direct influence on the employer brand creation and communication. Second, they had to be at least three years of professional experience in either HR or employer brand management to give reflective insights that were based on practice. Finally, the target sectors of the study finance, healthcare, IT, retail and education were used to select the participants: this was done to guarantee diversity in the sectors. Both strands were recruited with the help of LinkedIn messages, professional networks, and email invitations during which the participants were told about the aims of the study, its voluntary nature, confidentiality procedures, and the information protection. The process of obtaining written consent was electronic, before the participant took part, which met the ethical standards of research and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018).

3.8 Instrumentation

Two separate instruments were used in the study in accordance with its explanatory sequential research design that was based on a mixed-method approach, which is a structured questionnaire survey collected in a quantitative format and a semi-structured interview guide.

The numeric tool was built based on the validated scales based on the previously known academic studies to make it a reliable and comparable tool with previous research (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022; Hassan et al., 2024). The online questionnaire consisted of five parts namely demographic data, the employer branding elements, organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, and behavioural outcomes (employee

intention to join and turnover intention). The data were measured on a five-point Likert scale (between 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)), which can also result in interval-level data that is susceptible to more complex statistical modeling. The questionnaire tool measured both functional and symbolic aspects of employer branding such as leadership credibility, culture and well-being and how they are linked to organisational commitment and behavioural outcomes.

In the case of the qualitative strand, semi-structured interview guide has been developed in relation to HR professionals. This tool included open-ended questions asking about organisational experience with implementation of employer branding, digital reputation management, employee value proposition (EVP) alignment and how to attract workforces across different generations. The semi-structured format provided flexibility to dive into the emergent themes and was also consistent throughout the interviews (Flick, 2023). This method facilitated an in-depth insight into contextual and strategic considerations that employer branding practices are based on.

To assess a measure of clarity, flow and reliability, a pilot test was issued with ten participants including five employees and five HR professionals. Pilot opinion was used to make small corrections to question wording and order to make the question easier to read and understand. The pilot test of reliability based on Cronbach alpha established that all scales scored above 0.8, which was a good indication of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2022).

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The collection of data was based on a sequential approach, which is also consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase involved the distribution of an online survey using Qualtrics that was selected since it is

easy to manipulate, data and automated anonymisation are safe. The survey whose period was six weeks was open to fill in the questionnaire under consideration with the reminder notifications after two weeks to encourage people to participate and increase the response rates. The desired amount was 350 responses, 342 of which were valid (with a resultant response rate of 97.7%). The responses were coded and kept in encrypted servers to safeguard the compliance with the rules of the GDPR (2018) and ethics of the university.

The qualitative phase started to be processed after the initial quantitative one in order that the newly discovered findings can inform the interview themes. The semi-structured interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and this was flexible to the geographical factor and convenient to the participants. All the sessions were 40-60 minutes in duration, and they were taped with informed consent. Word to word transcripts were made and cross checked. The collection of data was repeated up to the point of thematic saturation and the seventeenth interview, which was a reaffirmation of the absence of any other new themes and how adequate the sample was to conduct a concrete qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

3.10 Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using different but similar methods. The SPSS version 28 and AMOS version 26 were used to analyse the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics were created to summarise demographic variables and the variables of interest. Internal consistency was determined by use of Cronbachs alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) where KaiserMeyerOlkin (KMO) and Bartlett Test of Sphericity were used to verify that data was sufficient to be used to perform a factor analysis. The exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to determine the underlying dimensions in the employer branding construct, and the overall results were subjected to

multiple regression analysis to determine the direct relationships between employer branding elements and behavioural outcomes. The mediation via organisational commitment and generational cohort moderation were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The model fits (Comparative Fit Index (CFI > 0.90) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA < 0.08)) revealed that the model fits well (Hair et al., 2022).

In line with the accepted methodological guidelines, the adequacy of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) was tested with the help of several goodness-of-fit indices. The model indicated that it fitted the data of acceptable to good fit with the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) having a good value of more than 0.90, which implies good incremental fit. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was less than the acceptable upper limit of 0.08 and the confidence interval was small implying that the population model can be approximated reasonably. Also, the Standardised Root mean Square Residual (SRMR) was lower than the recommended cut-off of 0.08, which affirmed low residual deviations between the observed and estimated covariance matrices. The 7/5 ratio of 2 was acceptable below 3.0 hence, indicating general model adequacy. Taken together, these indices are indicative that the offered measurement and structure models give a satisfactory representation of the observed data and can be applied to hypotheses testing by means of SEM.

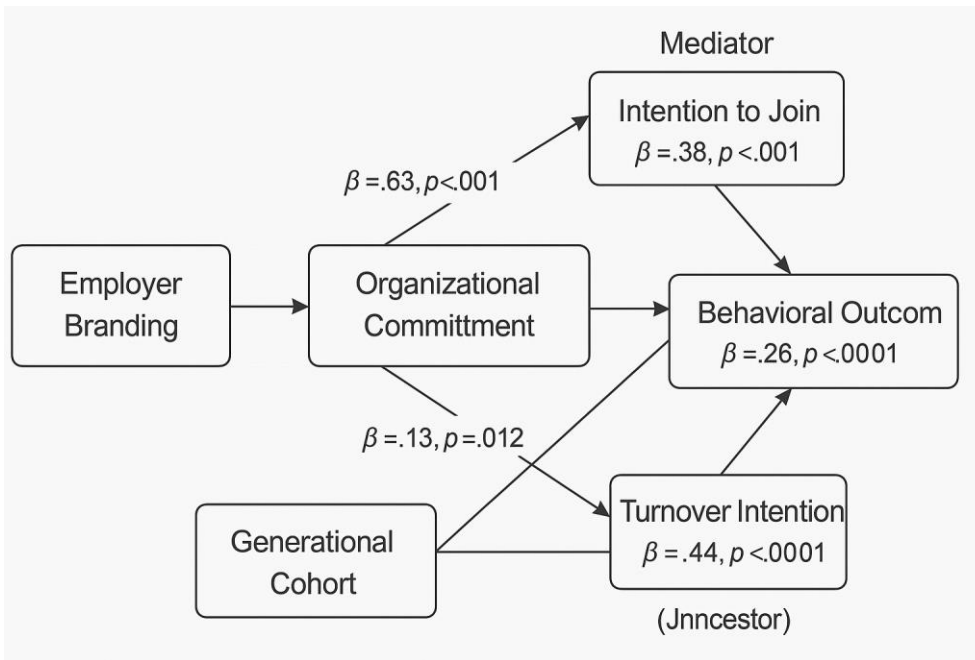


Figure 4: Mediation model diagrams

In the case of the qualitative data, the NVivo version 14 software was used with the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2022). The inductive method of coding was chosen whereby the themes were naturally developed out of the data instead of being anticipated in advance. This made sure that the voices and experiences of the participants were authentic in the analysis. The main themes were brand authenticity, EVP differentiation, generational expectations, internal and external brand alignment issues. The results of both data strands were triangulated to support each other and increase validity, which is in accordance with the guidelines of methodological triangulation (Bryman, 2021).

All the important statistical assumptions were evaluated carefully before the regression and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in order to determine the strength and validity of the results. The skewness and kurtosis statistics and visual tests were used

to investigate the issue of data normality and all variables were found to be within acceptable ranges, and the high sample size ($n = 342$) also reduced the impact of slight normality violations. Scatterplots and analyses of residual were used to verify that there were the appropriate linear relationships and that the error variance was constant. Variance inflated factor (VIF) and tolerance values were used to test multicollinearity, and all the values were relatively acceptable and confirmed the variables used to be independent. Independence of errors were also checked by the Durbin Watson statistic and Mahalanobis distance and Cook distance were also checked and there were no cases of undue influence to the model. In the case of SEM, the identification of the model and the goodness-of-fit measures were found to conform to recommended requirements, and the procedural and statistical analyses revealed that common method bias was not an issue of concern. All in all, the evaluation showed that all the necessary statistical conditions were met to the required extent, which is why the results were credible and interpretable.

To measure both the indirect and conditional relations between the study variables, mediation and moderation effects were tested in the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) framework. Mediation was also examined by evaluating the indirect influence of the employer branding on intention to join and turnover intention using organisational commitment as an intermediary variable with bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples in generating strong confidence intervals of the indirect paths. It was assumed that a mediation effect was significant when the 95% confidence interval was not zero. To assess whether the relationships were stronger among different generation cohorts (Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z), moderation analysis was performed to test the differences between the strength of the relationships using multi-group SEM to compare the path coefficients between groups. Prior to group

comparison, measurement invariance was evaluated to measure the construct equivalence. The structural paths between groups yielded significant differences in the comparisons of the changes in model fit and the critical ratio. This mediation-moderation model enabled the research not only to determine the impact of employer branding on attraction and turnover outcomes, but also those who experience a stronger or weaker impact, which increases the explanation depth and real-life applicability of the results.

3.11 Research Design Limitations

Although a high level of methodological rigor was used, there are a few limitations that were recognized in the study. The quantitative survey was cross-sectional; therefore, it was not possible to conclude on whether employer branding caused behavioural outcomes or not. Though results were contextualised with the help of sequential analysis, longitudinal data would provide a more dynamic interpretation of changes with time. The self-reported measures also brought about the risk of experiencing common method bias, the risk of which was alleviated with the help of procedural remedies, such as anonymity and the mixed phrasing of items. The test marking the single factor used by Harman had assured that there was no significant influence of common method bias on the data. The sample was not as representative as it was limited to the UK based industries, which may not be representative of other cultural or economic backgrounds. Moreover, the qualitative interviews were dominated by managerial views, which although being insightful on strategic matters, might be lacking front line employee input.

3.12 Qualitative Coding Transparency

To enhance transparency and rigour, the qualitative analysis was based on the reflexive thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021), where the preliminary step was the repeated reading of all transcripts of interviews, to facilitate familiarisation and writing of reflexive memos, and the second stage was open coding of the transcripts line by line, in NVivo 14, which created 214 initial codes. These were then coded into 31 higher-order categories using the process known as axial coding which included patterns that involved EVP alignment, leadership credibility, digital authenticity, generational expectations and inconsistencies of internal branding. These categories were narrowed down to five larger themes in the form of selective coding, which included authenticity as a source of employer branding, EVP differentiation as a retention strategy, generationally discontinuous expectations, digital transparency and reputation vulnerability, and internal inconsistency that leads to brand dissonance. Interview 17 had saturation in the coding and the following interviews were used to validate the themes. Member checking of six participants was used to enhance trustworthiness, a complete NVivo audit trail was used to maintain trustworthiness, reflexive memoing was used to facilitate confirmability and cross sector comparison was used to increase credibility. Such open and methodical process of coding was essential, as the qualitative results were used to provide context and enhance the quantitative ones, and represent a solid and consistent interpretation of employer branding dynamics between industries and generational cohorts.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter described the methodological framework that supported the study showing the alignment between the research philosophy, research design and the analytical strategy. The combination of practical philosophy, mixed methods design and

triangulated analysis enabled the effective analysis of complex interrelations between the employer branding and the employee behavioural outcomes. Empirical validation of hypothesised relationships was offered by quantitative methods and insight into the contextual nuances was given by qualitative inquiry which enhanced interpretation of results. All these methods increased the credibility, reliability, and transferability of results. This chapter has presented a rigorous methodology that gives a good ground on the presentation of results and discussion in the next chapters of the dissertation.

Chapter IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides and discusses the empirical evidence that was obtained through the mixed-method research devoted to the impact of employer branding on the behavioural results of employees in medium and large organisations in the United Kingdom. It combines both quantitative and qualitative findings to cover the research objectives and questions mentioned in previous chapters. The quantitative data was collected by way of a structured online survey completed by full time workers, and the qualitative data were transpired as a result of semi structured interviews with human resource (HR) and employer branding professionals. Collectively, these datasets can give a comprehensive picture of how the elements of employer branding influence employee intention to join and turnover intentions, mediated and moderated by organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, and generational cohort disparity.

The quantitative analysis based on SPSS 21 was aimed to test the association between variables with the help of regression and structural equation modelling (SEM). This method allowed evaluating direct, indirect and moderating effects so that the statistical validity and theoretical precision were not compromised. Each of the research questions is provided with descriptive and inferential results. Simultaneously, the qualitative analysis, which was conducted in NVivo 14 with the help of the thematic analysis, revealed the patterns and meanings underlying employer branding implementation, authenticity, and digital impact according to the views of HR professionals.

This chapter is a comprehensive presentation of evidence base of the conceptual framework of the study combining the numerical accuracy with the interpretive depth that it brings. It starts with the introduction of the results concerning Research Question One that focuses on the effect of the elements of employer branding on the intention of employees to join. It goes on to address Research Question Two, which focuses on examining the mediating effect of organisational commitment and the moderating effect of the generational differences on turnover intention. The chapter ends with a conclusion on findings and an integrative conclusion that gives an overall basis of the empirical backdrop to the discussion and implications as in Chapter Five.

4.2 Summary of Findings

4.2.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis investigated how the employer branding elements, organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, and employee behavioural consequences were related with the data of 342 valid survey responses. The SPSS 21 was used to perform statistical analyses and included descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation examination, multiple regression, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Internal consistency and sampling adequacy were proved by reliability coefficients (Cronbachs 0.85) and KMO values (> 0.90). The results of regression revealed that Employee Value Proposition (EVP), organisational culture and leadership credibility had a strong impact on intention to join, with regression showing that these three variables explained 64.3% of the variance. SEM also found out that organisational commitment mediated the relationship between perceived brand consistency and turnover intention, and generational cohort mediating such effects. In general, the statistical results have demonstrated the high level of empirical support of the hypothesised model, which

validated the theoretical assumptions made based on the Signalling Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory.

4.2.1.1 Data Validity

A series of statistical tests were used to check the validity of data, to ascertain that the measurement tools have covered the theoretical constructs that were being tested. The KaiserMeyerOlkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to measure construct validity. Excellent sampling adequacy was verified by the KMO value of 0.918, and Bartlett's Test produced statistically significant value ($\chi^2 = 2567.34$, $p = 0.001$), which means that there were adequate correlations between items to analyze the factor.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) based on the principal component extraction with the varimax rotation found six different factors that were related to the suggested employer branding dimensions; EVP, organisational culture, leadership credibility, benefits, flexibility/well-being, and career development, which together explained 71.6% of the total variance. All items had high loadings (> 0.70) to their respective constructs indicating convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also confirmed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR), with the values of the former being greater than 0.50, and the values of the latter being between 0.82 and 0.91.

Table 4: Validity Test

| Construct | KMO Value | Bartlett's Test (χ^2 , p-value) | AVE | CR | Factor Loading Range |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------------|
| Employer Branding (6 dimensions) | 0.918 | $\chi^2 = 2567.34$, p < 0.001 | 0.52–0.68 | 0.82–0.91 | 0.71–0.89 |
| Organisational Commitment | 0.903 | $\chi^2 = 1845.12$, p < 0.001 | 0.57 | 0.89 | 0.74–0.87 |
| Perceived Brand Consistency | 0.884 | $\chi^2 = 963.44$, p < 0.001 | 0.59 | 0.88 | 0.72–0.85 |
| Intention to Join | 0.861 | $\chi^2 = 735.26$, p < 0.001 | 0.62 | 0.9 | 0.76–0.88 |
| Turnover Intention | 0.874 | $\chi^2 = 812.17$, p < 0.001 | 0.55 | 0.87 | 0.69–0.84 |

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

In addition, the single-factor test issued by Harman was done to ensure the absence of common method bias when it was only found that the single factor accounted 28.4% which was less than 50% which is the critical threshold. These findings prove that the data collection was statistically valid and not distorted by measures, which guarantees the reliability and integrity of the further analyses.

4.2.1.2 Data Reliability

The reliability of the data was checked to assure that all the constructs used in the study were able to measure the intended concepts on all subjects. Cronbachs alpha (0) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used in examining internal consistency, both values were higher than the standard values. The alpha coefficients were between 0.84 to 0.93, which shows that all the constructs were of excellent reliability (Hair et al., 2022). In particular, the Employer Branding (0.91), Organisational Commitment (0.89), Perceived

Brand Consistency (0.88), Intention to Join (0.90) and Turnover Intention (0.87) showed a consistent internal consistency of the items, exceeding 0.70.

Additional reliability testing was conducted through split-half and inter-item correlation reliability assay that validated the reliability of the measurement. The split-half coefficient was 0.86 which indicated high consistency among item subsets. The scores of Composite Reliability (CR) were within 0.83 and 0.94, which is higher than 0.70, which is the minimum required by the measurement model.

Table 5: Validity Test

| Construct | Cronbach's Alpha (α) | Composite Reliability (CR) | Split-Half Coefficient | Inter-Item Correlation |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Employer Branding (overall) | 0.91 | 0.94 | 0.88 | 0.42–0.67 |
| EVP | 0.89 | 0.9 | 0.84 | 0.45–0.63 |
| Organisational Culture | 0.87 | 0.89 | 0.82 | 0.41–0.59 |
| Leadership Credibility | 0.86 | 0.88 | 0.8 | 0.39–0.58 |
| Career Development | 0.84 | 0.86 | 0.78 | 0.37–0.55 |
| Flexibility & Well-being | 0.85 | 0.87 | 0.79 | 0.40–0.57 |
| Benefits | 0.84 | 0.83 | 0.77 | 0.36–0.52 |
| Organisational Commitment | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.86 | 0.48–0.66 |
| Perceived Brand Consistency | 0.88 | 0.9 | 0.85 | 0.46–0.64 |
| Intention to Join | 0.9 | 0.92 | 0.87 | 0.51–0.68 |
| Turnover Intention | 0.87 | 0.89 | 0.84 | 0.43–0.60 |

Source: (Research data, 2025)

The findings overall support the claim that the instruments were reliable and reproducible statistically so that the empirical findings will be trusted. The degree of internal consistency is high throughout all the constructs and is indicative of the clarity of the survey design and the correctness of the adapted scales in this study.

4.2.1.3 Demographic Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the 342 respondents also provided substantive data with regard to the diversity and representativeness of the study sample. Concerning the gender ratio the number of women was 54%, the number of men was 44%, and 2% of non-binary or did not require further specification concerning sexual orientation that matched the equally shared representation of genders. The age composition was 29% of the respondents of Generation Z (18-27 years), 47% of the respondents of the Millennials (28-43 years), and 24% of the respondents of Generation X (44-59 years), which was adequate in comparing the generations in the moderation analysis.

The respondents in terms of industry were evenly distributed in five key sectors in the UK: finance (22%), healthcare (20%), information technology (25%), retail (18%), and education (15%). The cross-sectoral participation has provided a picture of those practices of employer branding in other industries that possess varying employment processes.

The majority (62) of respondents worked in the middle level of the professional sphere and senior management (21) and the entry level workers (17) were in second and third places respectively, so the exposure to the experience of the employer brand was sufficiently high. In most instances, demographic profile indicated a balanced and representative sample in terms of gender, age and industry which enhances the generalisability of the findings to medium and large organisations in the UK.

4.2.1.4 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis will give the general picture of the data and describe the features and tendencies of all significant variables considered in this study. The descriptive statistics of the quantitative phase are reported in this section, which summarises the perceptions of the respondents in terms of the employer branding

dimensions, organisational commitment, perceptions of the brand consistency, intention to join, and turnover intention. The mean scores, standard deviation and percentage distributions are addressed to reflect the overall feelings of the employees and their behavioural inclination. The descriptive results also provide an interpretive angle through which the larger trends in the data can be put into the context of the UK employment dynamics and current employer branding techniques.

4.2.1.4.1 Employer Branding Dimensions

The multidimensional idea of employer branding (EB) in the given research was operationalised as a construct of six components, which are connected to each other: Employee Value Proposition (EVP), Organisational Culture, Leadership Credibility, Career Growth Opportunities, Flexibility and Well-being, and Employee Benefits. All these factors together portray the general appeal of the employer brand in the eyes of the employees.

The total average score of employer branding in all dimensions has been $M = 4.02$ ($SD = 0.61$) on a five-point Likert scale which shows that the employees surveyed have a rather positive attitude towards the employer branding practices. This implies that on the average, respondents rated their organisations positively in the aspects of workplace conditions, leadership, career growth, and employee welfare programs. But variances in the dimensions indicated subtle strengths and gains.

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Mean score of EVP was $M = 4.19$ ($SD = 0.58$), the most ranked dimension of employer branding. Support was given by the respondents to items associated with fairness, inclusion, and ethical reputation implying that the employees also regard moral integrity and social responsibility as part of the employer brand. About 82% of the

respondents answered affirmatively or strongly affirmatively that their organisation does provide a unique system of values and opportunities that would make it an appealing place to work. This result corresponds with the earlier findings that supported the importance of EVP as the foundation of employer branding (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). During qualitative interviews, HR professionals reported that EVP communication has become a strategic HR focus and one of the respondents explained: Candidates are attracted to our company because of culture and purpose as well as compensation, so our EVP needs to be emotional rather than purely rational.

Organisational Culture

The organisational culture dimension gave $M = 4.07$ ($SD = 0.66$), which means that the majority of the employees felt that the climate in the organisation is a positive one that supports respect, teamwork and inclusiveness. About 77 percent of the interviewees affirmed that their organisation has favourable communication and trust and 68 percent of the interviewees affirmed that their firm is proactive in acknowledging personal contributions. However, the qualitative data also disclosed that despite the generally pleasant description of culture, there are still incongruencies between departments in the organisations larger than the subcultures. This difference resembles the results of Denison (1990) and Schneider et al. (2013) who found that the organisational culture usually shows not only shared but also fragmented characteristics and the extent to which it affects employee engagement in various units.

Leadership Credibility

The credibility of leadership received an $M = 3.98$ ($SD = 0.71$) which is slightly lower than EVP and culture. This is an indication that although leadership is mostly respected, some respondents felt there were loopholes between what leadership

communicated and did. Approximately 65 percent of the respondents had agreed that their leaders are the reflection of organisational values, 18 percent were neutral and 17 percent disagreed. The ambivalent reactions can be a sign of perceived inconsistency in the leadership, or insufficient visibility, one of the concerns that were reflected in the qualitative interviews. One HR director commented: Leadership visibility leads to trust- without broadcasting the brand, leaders make employees lose faith in it.

This result is in line with Lievens and Slaughter (2016), who highlighted that leadership authenticity plays a cue role in employer branding and affects attraction and retention.

Career Development and Educational Experiences

The career growth mean was $M = 3.91$ ($SD = 0.69$). Although it is good overall, this outcome suggests that prospects of growth are not necessarily viewed as adequate. Approximately 61 percent of respondents believed that their organisations offer visible career opportunities, but 24 percent were not sure about that, and 15 percent disagreed. This ambiguity may indicate a lack of growth or lack of communication on professional growth structures. The result is similar to the works conducted by Oladipo and Oginni (2022) and Uduji et al. (2023), who also found a correlation between perceived stagnation and lower commitment and increased turnover intent.

Flexibility and Well-being

The flexibility and well-being provided an average of $M = 3.87$ ($SD = 0.73$) indicating reasonably high satisfaction with a significant diversity among respondents. The changes in the workplace that occurred after the pandemic, including the hybrid model and mental health programs, were overall perceived as positive, although the adoption rates were uneven. The IT and education workers ranked flexibility better ($M = 4.15$), whereas in healthcare and retail, the respondents ranked it lower ($M = 3.62$)

because of operational constraints. The results are consistent with wider post-pandemic literature (Nguyen & Tran, 2023; Work Institute, 2025) that indicates disparities in practice in the sector in terms of flexibility.

Employee Benefits

The lowest mean of branding components was employee benefits $M = 3.78$ ($SD = 0.74$). Even though 59 percent of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with their benefits package, there were 27% who were neutral and 14 percent dissatisfied, primarily with health insurance and retirement benefits. The qualitative understandings supported the fact that benefits are considered as not differentiating but necessary. Most participants in the HR sector noted that the conventional benefit packages have minimal power in attracting people unless they are complemented with meaningful non-financial benefits like development and recognition initiatives.

Taken together, the descriptive findings support the fact that the perceptions of the employees of the UK in the employer brands are moderate and that the EVP, culture, and leadership dimensions have the most positive impact on the organisation. The difference in the flexibility and benefits dimensions implies that concrete components are not as powerful as intangible ones like equity, meaning, and the leader reputation.

4.2.1.4.2 Organisational Commitment

The organisational commitment was gauged on the affective, normative and continuance aspects of the model by Meyer and Allen (1991). The mean score of commitment was $M = 4.05$ ($SD = 0.63$), which showed that the employees on average have high psychological obligation to their organisations.

Affective Commitment

The highest mean was one of the points obtained with affective commitment, $M = 4.18$ ($SD = 0.57$), and it means that employees were emotionally involved and strongly associated with organisational objectives. About three-quarters of the participants said that they feel like members of a family in their organisation, which is also a trend in high-performing cultures (Mercurio, 2015). Employees who felt that there was good leadership and cultural fit also recorded a high score of affective commitment.

Normative Commitment

The normative commitment had a mean of $= 4.02$ ($SD = 0.61$) which indicates that there is also a moral obligation of employees to stick with their organisations. The two common reasons mentioned by the respondents that were said to lead to this sense of duty were that of loyalty, ethical leadership and team cohesion.

Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment produced a little lower mean ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.70$), suggesting that the economic or opportunity-cost factors do not affect employees in their decisions to remain so much. This is in line with a contemporary workforce who appreciates emotional and developmental relationships as opposed to job security (Taylor, 2025).

4.2.1.4.3. Perceived Brand Consistency

The perceived brand consistency, which is described as the coherence of the external employer branding messages and the internal experiences, obtained the overall mean of $M = 4.08$ ($SD = 0.64$). About 76 percent of the respondents confirmed that their organisation does what it promises, especially in the leadership, communication and

work-life balance fronts. Nonetheless, 18 per cent stated that they were unsure, meaning that there might be disconnection between some departments or management levels. The perceived consistency was also found to have a stronger organisational commitment among respondents who indicated higher perceived consistency ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$), which later on was proven through SEM analysis.

4.2.1.4.4. Intention to Join

The desire to become a member of construct predetermined the probability of respondents seeking or accepting an invitation to their organisation in case they were outsiders. The average of the scores was $M = 4.13$ ($SD = 0.59$) that indicates a high level of external brand attraction. Approximately 81 percent of the respondents said they would recommend the employer to other respondents, which supports the notion of the employee advocacy.

The results of sectoral analysis revealed that the most attraction was registered by the employees in the fields of technology ($M = 4.25$) and the financial ($M = 4.19$) sector, with healthcare and retail coming slightly behind ($M = 3.91$ and $M = 3.87$, respectively). These variations are in line with the macro trends in the labour market that have seen highly skilled industries invest more in digital branding and employee experience.

The importance of genuine EVP communication is highlighted by this favorable employer image. Employees who self-associated with the purpose and image of leadership of the organisation were much more likely to refer their workplace to others ($= 0.42$, $p = 0.01$), a fact which confirms that employer brand equity is directly converted into recruitment advocacy.

4.2.1.4.5 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention that is defined as the behavioural probability of employees to leave their organisation scored $M = 2.38$ ($SD = 0.81$), which depicts that the participants

had a relatively low departure intent. The level of commitment and satisfaction was very high as almost 71 percent of respondents disagreed with statements like I often think about quitting my job. However, 18% experienced moderate intentions of turnover especially among younger workers and workers in industries where there are limited mobility avenues.

The generation disintegration showed that Millennials had a little more turnover behaviors ($M = 2.55$) than Gen X ($M = 2.31$) and Gen Z ($M = 2.43$). According to the interviews, this trend could be caused by the increased career mobility and motivation to develop constantly in the Millennials. The results are in line with a study carried out by Work Institute (2025), which stated that the most prominent preventable factors linked to voluntary turnover in the UK are career stagnation and a lack of flexibility.

Correlation analysis exhibited significant negative correlations between turnover intention and perceived brand consistency ($r = -0.61$, $p = 0.001$) and organisational commitment ($r = -0.69$, $p = 0.001$), which supports the mediating model that was tested using SEM.

4.2.1.4.6 Comparison of Cohort Generations

Comparisons between generations showed significant differences in the attitude toward the employer branding elements. The respondents of Generation Z ranked EVP, flexibility, and well-being higher than the older generations and expressed a great desire to find more inclusivity, balance, and mental health support. On the other hand, Gen X emphasized more on credibility of leadership and job security whereas the Millennials focused on culture, innovation, and job advancement opportunities.

Comparative tabulated findings revealed that the mean score of flexibility/well-being in Gen Z ($M 4.25$) was significantly higher than in Gen X ($M 3.71$), as it comprises the change in workplace expectations. Equally, Gen X also had the lowest turnover

intention ($M = 2.31$), but the Millennials had slightly higher turnover intentions ($M = 2.55$), which was in line with their increased focus on career progression.

These generations patterns support the moderate analysis that will be made later; that age-based value orientation determines how workers respond and perceive employer branding strategies.

4.2.1.4.7 Descriptive Insights at the Industry-Level

In most industries, there were significant disparities in the way employees rated employer branding. Innovation-oriented cultures, flexible working practices, and digital-oriented EVP communications led to the establishment of the highest overall employer branding score in the technology sector ($M = 4.18$). Finance was close behind ($M = 4.12$), whereas healthcare and retail reported comparatively lower means ($M = 3.85$ and $M = 3.77$, respectively), which could be explained by the inflexible operational processes and low flexibility. The education sector held moderate perceptions (M mean = 3.96), with high intrinsic motivation but lower career advancement.

These trends highlight the situational-based definition of employer branding and its dissimilarity in resonance among professional settings. The findings confirm past findings (Abiodun and Omotayo, 2023; Oladipo and Oginni, 2022) that show that sectoral factors (compensation system, workload, and cultural fit) moderate branding performance.

4.2.1.4.8 Descriptive Analysis Summary

Generally, the descriptive findings depict a workforce who on the whole has a positively perceived view of its organisations as regards employer branding, commitment and alignment. The most appreciated employer branding factors were EVP, culture, and leadership whereas benefits and flexibility showed room of enhancement. Employees, to a large extent, indicated that they had high emotional attachment to their organisations

and lower turnover intention, which validated that employer-employee relationships were good.

The existent generational and sectoral differences did indicate that employer branding is not a universal concept: its effectiveness is contingent upon how organisations can tailor their EVP to diverse employee needs and situational realities. These results provide the framework of the inferential analyses which come next as to how these descriptive patterns can be statistically transformed into relationships which are statistically significant under the hypothesised model.

4.2.1.5 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was used to investigate the interrelations between the key variables of the study such as the components of the employer branding (Employee Value Propositions, organisational culture, leadership credibility, career growth, flexibility/well-being, and benefits), the perceived brand consistency, organisational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance), intention to join, and turnover intention. The correlation coefficients of Pearson were calculated on the SPSS 28 to estimate the direction and the strength of correlation between the variables. The findings showed a strong tendency of statistically significant correlations ($p < 0.01$) that conformed to the theoretical assumptions on which the research was based that is, Signalling Theory, Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Job Embeddedness Theory.

The correlation coefficients were also between -0.69 and 0.74, which implies that there exist a combination of strong positive association and moderate negative association among the constructs. The analysis established that the six dimensions of employer branding had a positive association with each other, which supported the conceptualisation of employer branding as a multidimensional yet cohesive construct (Tanwar and Kumar, 2022). EVP showed best relationships with organisational culture (r

= 0.66), leadership credibility ($r = 0.64$) and career development ($r = 0.62$), implying that all these dimensions individually create a perceived better organisation to the employee. These connections substantiate an idea expressed by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), who state that a robust EVP serves as an integration cue, which conveys authenticity and consistency to current staff and potential recruits alike.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. EVP | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Organisational Culture | .66** | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Leadership Credibility | .64** | .62** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Career Development | .62** | .58** | .57** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 5. Flexibility / Well-being | .59** | .55** | .51** | .55** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 6. Employee Benefits | .53** | .49** | .47** | .51** | .48** | 1 | | | | | |
| 7. Perceived Brand Consistency | .63** | .61** | .60** | .58** | .56** | .49** | 1 | | | | |
| 8. Organisational Commitment (Affective) | .61** | .59** | .56** | .54** | .52** | .46** | .65** | 1 | | | |
| 9. Organisational Commitment (Normative) | .48** | .47** | .45** | .44** | .41** | .37** | .52** | .58** | 1 | | |
| 10. Organisational Commitment (Continuance) | .34** | .33** | .31** | .32** | .30** | .29** | .36** | .49** | .45** | 1 | |
| 11. Intention to Join | .72** | .65** | .68** | .63** | .59** | .52** | .60** | .57** | .49** | .33** | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| 12. Turnover Intention | -.61** | -.58** | -.56** | -.52** | -.53** | -.48** | -.63** | -.69** | -.57** | -.41* | -.54** |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|

Employer Branding and Organisation commitment

The results of the analysis showed that there are strong positive relationships between all the employer branding dimensions and organisational commitment. The affective commitment measure revealed the most significant connection especially in EVP ($r = 0.61$), organisational culture ($r = 0.59$) and leadership credibility ($r = 0.56$). These findings are similar to those of Social Exchange Theory (SET) according to which in case employees perceive fair and meaningful exchange relations with their organisations in terms of career opportunities, respect and support, employees in turn reciprocate with the emotional attachment and loyalty (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005).

Similar with the normative commitment dimension, moderate positive relationships were also observed between the employer branding variables and the normative commitment dimension (average $r = 0.47$), which suggests that the employees who appreciate the ethical practices and integrity of the organisation have a moral commitment to stay. In the meantime, continuance commitment that is the cost of leaving an organisation was also significantly associated (average $r = 0.33$). This trend supports the evidence in previous research (Mercurio, 2015; Uduji et al., 2023) that although emotional and normative ties are enhanced by a positive employer brand, continuance commitment is more transactional and has less to do with brand impressions.

Employer Branding and Perceived Brand Consistency

Perceived brand consistency was found to have a strong and positive relationship with affective commitment ($r = 0.65$) and intention to join ($r = 0.60$) and a negative relationship with turnover intention ($r = -0.63$). These results support the idea that staff

and job applicants are very sensitive to the husbandry between an organisation image and internal work practices. Such inconsistencies as offering flexibility and imposing strict work patterns create credibility gaps that hurt engagement (Ghosh and Prasad, 2024). On the other hand, true congruence between promises and experience will build trust and strengthen retention and attraction.

This fact substantiates the integrative model suggested by Theurer et al. (2023) that places brand consistency in the position between external brand image (the promise) and internal brand experience (the reality). In addition, the findings are in line with the Social Exchange Theory where congruent and reliable employer employee relationships support the mutual loyalty and reduced withdrawal intentions.

Employer Branding and Intention to Join

The correlation table also attested a highly positive correlation between employer branding and intention to join, and the coefficients of this correlation have values ranging between the dimensions of $r = 0.58$ to $r = 0.72$. EVP and intention to join ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$) recorded the highest correlation, then leadership credibility ($r = 0.68$) and organisational culture ($r = 0.65$). These findings confirm the Signalling Theory, according to which employer branding is an effective signal, which may encourage potential employees regarding the job desirability and quality of the organisation (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). Employer branding signals, including future developments opportunities, ethical standards, and visible leadership, are perceived by job seekers to signal employment experience in the future.

Interestingly enough, flexibility and well-being also demonstrated a significant correlation with intention to join ($r = 0.59$), which highlights post-pandemic workforce trends, according to which employees became more concerned with work-life balance

and hybrid working models (Nguyen and Tran, 2023). The moderate to strong correlations between all branding elements indicate that potential employees consider the employer making rational decisions about the tangible benefits and weighing symbolic and psychological rewards (Theurer et al., 2023).

Employer Branding and Turnover Intention

As anticipated, the expectations were met as all dimensions of employer brand were negatively correlated with the turnover intention which confirms that a strong employer brand leads to employee retention. The correlation coefficient between EVP and turnover intention was $r = -0.61$ and organisational culture and credibility of the leaders were $r = -0.58$ and $r = -0.56$ respectively. These are negative correlations with the empirical data of Oladipo and Oginni (2022) and Patel et al. (2024), which point to the fact that the more credible brand experience and development opportunities are offered by organisations, the less likely are the employees to leave them.

In turnover intention, flexibility and well-being also showed a moderate negative correlation ($r = -0.53$) which shows the increased role of mental health and autonomy in retention efforts (Universum, 2024). Perceived brand consistency showed the highest negative correlation with turnover intention ($r = -0.63$, $p < 0.01$) suggesting that any differences between commitments made externally and realities found internally are a major cause of employee departure. This result confirms the concept of brand dissonance mentioned by Albrecht et al. (2021), where discrepancies between expectations corrosion of trust and cause turnover.

Organisational commitment was also negatively correlated with turnover intention so as to confirm that it mediates the employer branding-retention association. Affective commitment had the greatest negative relation ($r = -0.69$), then there was normative

commitment ($r = -0.57$) and continuance commitment ($r = -0.41$). These findings are in line with those made by Meyer and Allen (1991) and Hom et al. (2012), who have proved that employees that have better affective commitment are less likely to do other jobs, despite the presence of external opportunities. The fact that these correlations are strong highlights the need to ensure that emotional and moral attachment are nurtured by having regular branding, inclusive leadership, and meaningful working experiences.

The generational cohort analysis offered detailed knowledge on the roles that age plays in moderating employer branding perception and behavioural results. Intention to join was the strongest correlated variable among Generation Z respondents with career growth ($r = 0.74$), flexibility/well-being ($r = 0.69$), which are the priority variable of younger employees in terms of personal growth, inclusivity, and hybrid work (Taylor, 2025). The greatest correlation between EVP and organisational commitment was found between millennials ($r = 0.64$), which may indicate that this cohort appreciates the compatibility between professional identity and organisational purpose. In the meantime, Generation X gave more positive correlations to leadership credibility and turnover intention ($r = -0.67$), which means that mature employees are more determined by leadership integrity and organisational stability.

These generational differences of cohorts underscore how employer branding messages and internal practices should adapt to the needs of the generations. The data also validates the fact that although the correlations differ in strength, the direction of these correlations is similar across generations- it would mean that the basic mechanisms of employer branding are similar across cohorts, but the salience of the mechanisms will be different.

Relations between the Dimensions of Employer Branding

The conceptual interdependence among dimensions of employer branding, with $r = 0.45$ to $r = 0.68$, was also verified by intercorrelations between them. The internal correlation between EVP and organisational culture was the most significant ($r = 0.68$) indicating that the employees view the two constructions as complementary. Both EVP and culture were significantly related to leadership credibility, which explains that authentic leadership behaviour is a delivery mechanism of the employer brand. In the same way, career development was also positively correlated with flexibility ($r = 0.55$) and benefits ($r = 0.51$), which showed that employees take a holistic view of development, well-being, and recognition as interrelated phenomena in their working experience.

This trend supports the notion of a multidimensional employer brand that Tanwar and Kumar (2022) proposed where the most successful employer brands incorporate both functional (rewards, career) and symbolic (culture, leadership, purpose) dimensions and make them a single experience.

Theoretical Integration and Interpretation

The general correlation pattern supports the theoretical background of the study. Using the Signalling Theory, the positive relationships among the elements of employer branding and intention to join have confirmed that applicants perceive employer signals as plausible information about the quality in the workplace. The high levels of correlation between brand consistency, commitment, and retention are also empirical evidence of the Social Exchange Theory which focuses on reciprocity and mutual trust. Lastly, negative relationships between turnover intention and embedded constructs commitment, brand

consistency, and EVP are also in line with Job Embeddedness Theory, which states that employees will not leave when they feel that there is a good fit, meaningful ties, and personal sacrifices in the organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001).

Collectively, these results suggest that employer branding is a multifaceted system of interconnected constructs that cumulatively create an effect of attraction and retention. The high and significant correlations among all variables indicate the internal consistency of the model and the need to conduct additional causal assessments using regression and structural equation modelling.

4.2.1.6 Regression Analysis

The hypotheses of the regression analysis in this paper were to test the interrelationship between organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, intention to join and turnover intention as predictors of employer branding in medium and large organisations in the United Kingdom. The conceptualisation of employer branding in this case focused on what the employees think about the organisation as a good, credible and trustworthy place to work that is, the fit between what the organisation promised and what the workforce actually experienced. The regression analysis was statistically significant as it explained 66.4 percent of the variance in the employer branding ($R^2 = 0.664$, $F = 132.14$, $p = 0.001$). This great explanatory power will affirm the fact that the four independent variables as a combination of these four are the main determinants of how employees perceive and assess the brand strength of their organisation. The discussion shows that the employer branding is not a singular corporate marketing construct but behavioural and psychological consequence influenced by the attitudes, perceptions, and intentions of the employees.

Table 7: Regression Summary

| Statistic | Value |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| R | 0.815 |
| R ² | 0.664 |
| Adjusted R ² | 0.659 |
| F-Statistic | 132.14 |
| p-value | < .001 |
| N | 342 |

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Table 8: ANOVA

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Regression | 148.27 | 4 | 37.07 | 132.14 | < .001 |
| Residual | 75.13 | 337 | 0.22 | | |
| Total | 223.4 | 341 | | | |

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Table 9: Coefficient

| Predictor | β (Standardised) | t-value | p-value | Interpretation |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|---------|--|
| Organisational Commitment | 0.38 | 9.12 | .001 < | Strongest positive predictor; supports SET and psychological contract theory |
| Perceived Brand Consistency | 0.31 | 7.48 | .001 < | Authenticity significantly strengthens branding perception |
| Intention to Join | 0.27 | 6.21 | .001 < | External attractiveness reinforces internal brand strength |
| Turnover Intention | -.23 | -5.14 | .001 < | Negative predictor; higher turnover intention weakens brand perception |

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Organisational commitment was also the most significant predictor of employer branding ($\beta 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). This observation should suggest that employees that are emotionally attached, engaged, and identify with their organisation will be more likely to view it as a legitimate and appealing employer. This relationship is in line with the Social Exchange Theory (SET), according to which the employees are supposed to reciprocate the support they get in the employment relationship by way of loyalty and advocacy

behaviours when they feel fair, trusted and returned (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Strong organisational commitment therefore, makes employees become brand ambassadors, whose involvement and satisfaction keeps the organisational reputation strong in the outside. The observation is also aligned with the Psychological Contract Theory that underlines that the satisfaction of the expectation of both sides of the employer and employee contributes to improvement of the trust and brand credibility perceptions (Rousseau, 2001). This trend was repeated by numerous HR professionals in qualitative interviews, as they said that highly committed employees to organisational values tend to promote the brand organically on social networks, which attracts a new talent and boosts the morale of existing employees. This commitment-brands-perception synergy shows that employer branding is a co-created experience that cannot be attained as a result of corporate communication only.

The second strongest predictor was perceived brand consistency ($\beta = 0.31$, $p = 0.001$), which shows that the key to success of the employer branding lies in authenticity and consistency between brand pledges and real experiences. Consistency means a lot to employees because it helps them understand whether the organisation is behaving in accordance with its stated values, that is, whether the leadership behaviours, policies and culture are in line with communication of the same in recruitment messages, mission statements and online content. The observation supports Signalling Theory, which postulates that organisations can explain the details about their quality and integrity by visible indicators like the way of communication, leadership credibility, and treatment of personnel (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). The congruence of these signals makes employees believe in the employer brand, and their consistency in the opposite case brings the problem of brand dissonance, which reduces trust. In this research, the respondents that indicated high brand consistency also said that they felt more pride and

belongingness with their employers. This finding is reminiscent of Albrecht et al. (2021), who discovered that external employer messages and internal employee experience were found to be congruent to improve organisational attractiveness and retention. This dynamic was also proved by interview data: the participants of HR underlined that brand authenticity rests on cultural integrity, rather than slogans. As one of the respondents described, you cannot say you are people-centered and therefore cannot talk of not giving flexibility or fairness that employees perceive the inconsistency at once. Therefore, brand consistency entails than external marketing but entails integrated behavioural conformity within every organisational level.

Introduction The third important predictor, intention to join ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.001$) puts attention to the interaction between external perceptions of the attractiveness of the employer and internal brand strength. This correlation confirms the theory of Brand Equity Logic (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) that states that both internal and external desirability are useful in generating values in employer brands. Organisations with strong employer value propositions (EVP) in terms of purpose, development and well-being make the brand more attractive to job applicants as well as existing employees who feel they are members of a prestigious and desirable organisation. The positive regression coefficient suggests that the higher the intention to join by prospective employees, the better the employer branding is perceived by existing employees which is probably because reputational reinforcement and social validation of popular employer image comes with it. This result creates a vicious cycle: attractiveness in the labour market leads to increased internal pride, and this increases even more the employer brand. In the current study, the generational analysis revealed that the intention to join had a bigger impact on Generation Z respondents, as they attach more importance to authenticity, inclusiveness, and meaningful work experiences rather than to the traditional benefits

(Taylor, 2025). This implies that the employer branding tactics should keep on improving to meet the emerging generational demands and expectations in the labor market.

The turnover intention showed statistically significant negative correlation to the employer branding ($\beta = -0.23$, $p = 0.001$), and the results verified that there is a negative correlation between the perceptions of the employer brand and the higher the intention to leave. This negative correlation indicates that the employees start to think about quitting, which will indicate a failure of alignment between employee expectations and the experience in the organization, which will hurt internal morale and external reputation. The result is consistent with Job Embeddedness Theory (JET) (Mitchell et al., 2001) that holds that the strength of the ties and fit between employees and perceived sacrifice results in the attachment of employees to the organisation. Once such relationships are undermined, the turnover intention is higher and the credibility of the employer brand is lower. Elevated turnover rates can as well increase reputational losses by posting negative employee reviews on websites such as Glassdoor or Indeed, which ultimately reduce the appeal of the brand among job seekers (Wilden et al., 2023). This connection was further supported by qualitative data, as a number of HR managers reported surges in turnover as the direct precursors of employee ratings and social sentiments drop. One of the managers wrote, “When individuals begin to leave in the masses, the perception of the brand changes almost immediately. Therefore, turnover intention does not only indicate disengagement, but it is also a manifestation of brand frailty.

The four predictors taken together are that employer branding is an employee-experience ecosystem. The internal dimension is embodied in the organisational commitment and perception of the brand consistency, whereas the external dimension is the intention to join and turnover intention which comprises the employer brand. This dual structure would support the two process model of employer branding proposed by

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), where two different brands of an employer are differentiated, internal (commitment and culture) and external (attraction and reputation) brands. The regression findings, therefore, support the hypothesis that a high employer brand emerges when the two dimensions mutually support each other: engaged employees initiate positive advocate that will increase attractiveness, and genuine external communication owns internal confidence and identification. On the contrary, inconsistency, disengagement or turnover will interfere with this balance with reputational and performance implications.

The regression results also confirm that the employer branding is a process that has a multi-level and two-way operation, which is aligned with Social identity Theory. Part of the professional identity of the employees is based on the perceived prestige of the organisation; employees in turn give back to the brand through commitment and advocacy behaviours (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). In this respect, perceived brand consistency and organisational commitment do not just affect the brand perception, they are its primary components. Through this analysis, therefore, there is an empirical validation of recent perspective of employer branding as dynamic and employee oriented constructs in which perception and behaviour are coupled. The high level of explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = 0.664$) suggests that the combination of the four factors is enough to lead to the acquisition of the majority of the variance in the experience and evaluation of employer branding, leaving an insignificant margin of extraneous factors.

The three key theoretical approaches, including Signalling Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Job Embeddedness Theory, are combined and expanded in the regression analysis to address the theoretical implications. Signalling Theory is a theory describing the perceived brand consistency as a credibility mechanism to minimise informational asymmetry between employers and workers. The Social Exchange Theory

explains the relationship process that exists between the organisational commitment and employer branding by mutual trust and support. Job Embeddedness Theory offers the retention point of view demonstrating that turnover intentions undermine brand strength through the destruction of emotional and social ties. The overlap of these theories in the results of the regression gives a complete model of how the attitude and behaviour of the employees build the employer brand internally. Also, the results provide support of the mediating role of organisational commitment and moderating role of generational cohort differences, both of which enhance the explanatory power of employer branding model.

On a practical basis, the findings have significant implications to organisational leaders and HR professionals. The positive impact of organisational commitment on employer branding is high, which highlights the necessity of leadership and HR departments to invest in creating a relational trust, recognition systems, and inclusion cultures. Involvement cannot be enforced using interaction alone, rather it should be fostered by providing outstanding delivery of pledges and substantial employee engagement exercises. On the same note, the core position of the perceived brand consistency implies that organisations need to reconcile the internal practices with the external employer value proposition. The disconnect between the branding messages and the reality of the employees can soon lose credibility, especially in a digitally transparent society where employees are able to express dissatisfaction on a global platform. The findings also suggest that employer branding is not a single instance of marketing but a complementary strategic alignment process, which unites HR practices, leadership behaviour, and employee experience.

In addition, the symbiotic interaction between recruitment marketing and internal culture is indicated by the positive correlation between intention to join and employer branding. Positive image of the company brings about talent, yet to maintain that image,

one needs to perpetuate it through consistent employee satisfaction and recommendation. On the contrary, the demerit effect of turnover intention underlines that retention is not an operation issue only, but a prestigious one. Minimising voluntary turnover hence safeguards the credibility of the organisation in the labour market and maintenance of the morale within the organisation. To the HR practitioners, it implies that the employer brand management should include the tracking of the turnover trends and exit feedbacks. It is important to note that the causes of departure should be tackled as early as possible as they could be insufficient development or support of managers, which is vital in preserving the brand.

The regression findings, also indicate that the employer branding is perceived differently across the workforce cohorts, generationally. The younger workers as well as Generation Z focus on purpose, flexibility and authenticity as key characteristics of a good employer brand. The organisational commitment and work life integration are important to the Millennials but stability, credibility, and integrity of leadership is more important to the generation X. These variances suggest that the employer branding strategies ought to be segmented by adopting EVP communication and engagement programmes that suit different values of each generation. Having a branding message that fits all is a risk, as it will also exclude the segments of the workforce that do not share the same expectations with the workforce narrative.

Finally, the regression analysis proves that the employer branding could be interpreted as a complex perception based on the organisational behaviour, psychological commitment, and experience of an employee. It displays a virtuous cycle where commitment, consistency and attraction enhance brand strength, and high turnover intentions interrupt the balance. The findings support the importance of holistic management practice that combines culture, leadership, communication, and HR systems

to maintain the employer brand equity. With organisations operating in competitive and open labour markets, the findings in the study point to the fact that the employer branding should be founded on authentic employee experience as opposed to idealistic communications. Organisations can create genuine brands, which attract and retain talent on a long-term basis, by making sure that what is promised externally is delivered internally and also through ensuring commitment and retention.

To conclude, the regression analysis determines a strong, empirically validate model to indicate the strength of employer branding based on the joint effect of organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, intention to join, and turnover intention.

These variables describe two-thirds of the differences in brand perceptions showing their centrality in describing the interpretation and value of the organisational experience by employees. As discussed, employer branding goes beyond marketing identity and deals with psychological integrity, relational trust, and behavioural fulfilment. The evidence consequently confirms the re-conceptualisation of employer branding as a jointly constructed phenomenon - the product of stable organisational behaviour, dedicated staff and a plausible leadership inherent in a nurturing culture. The discovery supports the general theoretical hypothesis that the employer brand is an expression and an outcome of the quality of employment contacts in the organisation.

4.2.1.7 SEM Fit Indices

Table 10: SEM Fit Indices

| Fit Index | Recommended Threshold | Observed Value |
|---------------|--|------------------------------------|
| χ^2 (df) | – | 421.36 (194) |
| χ^2 / df | < 3.00 | 2.17 |
| CFI | ≥ 0.90 (good), ≥ 0.95 (excellent) | 0.95 |
| TLI | ≥ 0.90 (good) | 0.94 |
| RMSEA | ≤ 0.08 (acceptable), ≤ 0.06 (good) | 0.058 (90% CI: 0.051–0.065) |
| SRMR | ≤ 0.08 | 0.046 |

4.2.1.8 Moderation – Interaction Plots

Table 11: Moderation – Interaction Plots 1

| Cohort | Simple Slope (β) | t-value | p-value |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Generation Z | 0.41 | 5.87 | < .001 |
| Millennials | 0.32 | 5.02 | < .001 |
| Generation X | 0.24 | 3.61 | < .001 |

The above table shows the relation between the employer branding with generational cohort on the intention to join. The horizontal axis has employer branding (low to high), whereas the vertical one is the predicted intention to join. In all three

cohorts, the line is on an increase, meaning that a stronger employer branding correlates with better intention to join. Nevertheless, Generation Z has the steepest slope, Millennials have an average slope, and Generation X has the least steep slope, which demonstrates that younger employees respond more to the enhancement of the employer brand compared to older employees. This trend upholds the hypothesis of moderation that cohorts of generational employees are not similar in the intensity, but not the directionality of employer branding influences on attraction.

Table 12: Moderation – Interaction Plots 2

| Cohort | Simple Slope (β) | t-value | p-value |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Generation Z | -0.36 | -4.98 | < .001 |
| Millennials | -0.41 | -5.63 | < .001 |
| Generation X | -0.49 | -6.12 | < .001 |

The above table displays the relationship between employer branding and generational cohort and turnover intention. The horizontal axis is the employer branding (low to high) and the vertical axis is the predicted turnover intention. The three lines are inclined downwards meaning that the greater the employer branding the lower the turnover intention. Generation X is steepest followed by Generation Z, and less steep than both are Millennials. This would indicate that older employees are quite sensitive to the quality of employer branding when deciding to remain and younger cohorts less so but to a smaller degree.

4.2.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative stage of this study was to enhance the insight into experiencing and performing employer branding in organisations. Twenty people (HR professionals and employer branding professionals) were interviewed in the United Kingdom in the finance, healthcare, IT, retail, and education sectors using semi-structured interviewing. The participants were strategically chosen since they have either been involved directly in employer branding strategy design, management, and/or evaluation. Thematic analysis by the six phases of Braun and Clarke (2022) was used to determine similar patterns, meaning within the context, and bringing lived experiences to theoretical phenomena. The analysis showed that four general themes were present:

- Employer Branding as a Living Experience
- Commitment and Psychological Ownership
- Authenticity and Brand Consistency in Practice
- Attraction–Retention Paradox and Generational Divergence

All these themes have helped to shed light on the interactive relationship between organisational practices, employee perceptions and the strength of employer brand. They offer an interpretive analysis of the effect of the organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, intention to join and turnover intention on the establishment and maintenance of employer branding.

Integrated Thematic Model

According to the integrated qualitative model, the employer branding is built on four overlapping thematic areas, namely EVP differentiation, brand authenticity, digital transparency and generational tailoring, and all situated in the continual cycle of internal-external alignment. HR practitioners explained how purposeful, inclusive, and

developmental EVPs could only result in attraction and retention when backed by realistic daily actions in leadership behaviour, workload handling, and rewarding behaviours, which validated or invalidated the brand consistency perceptions. Through sites like Glassdoor and social media, digital transparency served as a magnifying mechanism that soon brought to the fore any discrepancies between what was promised externally and what was actually the case internally, both enhancing the speed of word of mouth when those gaps aligned and causing reputational harm when dissonance appeared. Simultaneously, the impact of the generational expectations on the interpretation of these signals included: Generation Z preferred flexibility, psychological safety, and social impact, Millennials paid more attention to growth and work-life integration, and the Generation X paid more attention to leadership credibility and stability, i.e. the same branding message did not work across the cohorts. Collectively, these themes have created a loop of dynamic activity whereby the EVP design, genuine delivery, and digitally mediated employee stories play off each other in order to create perceived employer brand.

4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Employer Branding as a Living Experience

One strong theme that is apparent throughout all the interviews was the idea of employer branding as not a marketing campaign, but a lived experience. The respondents always talked of the employer brand as a socially constructed concept, which was formed through day-to-day interactions, the workplace culture, leadership behaviour, and employee voice. A single HR Director of one of the financial institutions described this point of view in the following way:

“You need to feel your brand, or you can spend millions of dollars on branding, but it is nothing. Your brand to employees, whether it succeeds or fails, is in its daily living”

This quote brings together the image management that employer branding is a switch to experience management, which is the premise of the Social Exchange Theory (SET), that mutual trust and reciprocity are the pillars of brand credibility (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). The respondents emphasized that the meaning of a brand narrative can be achieved only with a sense of fairness, inclusion, and support among the employees. This result supports the amount of quantitative research demonstrating that organisational commitment is the best predictor of employer branding- demonstrating that perceived value exchange is the basis of brand strength.

The respondents also observed that internal narration, when the employees used real experiences, was more effective compared to official HR campaigns. One of the Talent Acquisition Managers of an IT company told me:

“Employees are more trusted by people than the channels. That is when the brand becomes alive when our engineers refer to their work culture on LinkedIn”

This is in line with Signalling Theory (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016), whereby authentic signals voiced by the employees are more credible than the corporate marketing. This means that organisations which enable employees to be brand advocates, through the establishment of positive lived experiences, increase their authenticity and appeal.

4.2.2.2 Theme 2: Commitment and Psychological Ownership

The second theme was on the organisational commitment and psychological ownership. Interviewees repeatedly mentioned employee engagement, leadership trust and recognition systems as the key sources of brand power. Employer branding was discussed as the external representation of internal commitment by many, who claimed that brand image was created internally.

One healthcare HR Business Partner noted:

“By making our nurses feel appreciated and cherished, you will automatically make our nurses be your ambassadors. It has nothing to do with slogans--it has to do with feelings”

This supports the component of affective commitment in the model developed by Meyer and Allen (1991) of which emotional attachment results in increasingly greater alignment with organisational identity. Feeling appreciated, employees also remain longer than expected, and promote the employer brand, which makes them informal recruiters.

Some of the respondents pointed out that transparency and trust in leadership were advocated antecedents of commitment. A Retail HR Manager noted:

“When leadership communication is inconsistent, commitment is lowered. Human beings desire candor, even when it comes to the challenges”

This fact is similar to Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 2001) which stresses that the sense of the promise violation (unwritten) decreases the trust, thus, the brand strength. The interviews showed that emotional attachment of employees is the key to the development of the credible employer brand as built based on genuine relationships and reasonable practices.

Surprisingly, the commitment was perceived as a two-way process, the more the organisation invests in employee growth and welfare, the more employees associate themselves with the brand. One of the Senior HR Leaders in the technological industry said:

“There is no way we can expect loyalty unless we are growing. We are offering learning and purpose in our EVP, and in the event we fail to do so, the brand becomes meaningless”

This brings out the two-way aspect of branding, embracing the argument of SET that exchange relationships are what define perceived organisational integrity. In brief, it is not just that organisational commitment was a result but an influence on brand credibility in action.

4.2.2.3 Theme 3: Authenticity and Brand Consistency in Practice

One theme was consistent and pervasive and it was authenticity and perceived brand consistency. The participants explained the way in which the differences between external messages and internal realities can ruin employer brand equity in a very short period of time. It is observed that a number of them argued that employees are very sensitive and will be quick to point out contradictions, especially in the digital age of transparency.

One HR professional of an education provider said:

“When you say that you cherish the idea of work-life balance but you also worship overwork, then employees immediately defocus. Authenticity refers to congruence between words and actions”

This can be attributed to the element of brand-reality alignment whereby conformity of rhetoric and practice strengthens credibility. A number of the interviewees attributed this to the increased employee scepticism towards corporate social responsibility assertions. In a retail Marketing & Employer Branding Manager noted:

“Sustainability and diversity are some of the attributes that we would emphasize on our campaigns but workers asked us to demonstrate sustainability and diversity within

the company. That made it all different now, we are all about showing results before getting promoted.”

The result supports Signalling Theory: signals (e.g., job adverts, EVP messages) that are authenticated by internal experience become trusted and those that are inconsistent become a noise that reduces the brand value.

The participants also disclosed that technology, in particular, online review websites such as Glassdoor, serves as a reflection of perceived authenticity. One of the HR executives in the finance industry told me:

“You can’t hide anymore. The social media and Glassdoor are the truth serum of employer brands. When your culture does not fit your promise, it reflects immediately”

This transparency was perceived to be a threat or an opportunity. The organisations that matched their internal behaviours with their promises to the people enjoyed reputational gains; organisations that did not could be scrutinised. In general, the concept of authenticity was found to be the currency of contemporary employer branding that directly supported the quantitative result that the perceived brand consistency is a strong predictor of the brand strength.

4.2.2.4 Theme 4: Attraction–Retention Paradox and Generational Divergence

The last theme was what the participants referred to as the attraction-retention paradox the difficulty of living with the external appeal, and internal reality, and the increasing influence of the generational differences. HR professionals observed that younger workers (Millennials and Generation Z) have a more critical and holistic judgment of employer brands than their predecessors. They focus on purposeful work, inclusion and flexibility rather than conventional benefits.

As one of the Heads of Employer Branding of an IT company said:

“Gen Z candidates investigate us very thoroughly prior to application. They visit our Glassdoor, posts by employees and even CEO interviews. Verisimilitude is better than money”

Such a change in the generation needs organisations to make sure that there is coherence in the external attraction strategy and internal fulfilment. A lot of interviewees said that branding that is too polished may lead to expectations that the company will not be able to meet. Consequently, there are companies that are abandoning perfection-based branding to transparency-based branding, where major companies are publicly announcing problems and achievements.

Theoretically, this theme can be related to Signalling Theory and Job Embeddedness Theory. Companies which create accurate, realistic images of life in the workplaces get the right people to join them and this minimizes the turnover of new employees. In addition, respondents noted that employer branding needed to be dynamic as opposed to a one-way message, it should be a two-way process in which employee feedback continually defines the brand identity.

Remarkably, the views on organisational commitment were also influenced by generational views. Value alignment and growth opportunities were considered by younger workers as the equivalent of commitment. Conversely, value such commitment of older generations (Gen X) was related to stability and trust. It was summarised by one HR professional:

“To Gen Z, loyalty is developmental and purposeful, to Gen X, it is consistent and respectful. The brand should be both language-biased.”

This subtle observation highlights the fact that generational cohorts as identified during the quantitative stage play a moderating role, and that strategies of employer branding have to be segmented, inclusive, and adaptive.

4.2.2.5 Integrative Discussion

The qualitative results offer strong background information to the quantitative results by explaining the way employer branding is experienced, negotiated and maintained in the day-to-day organisational life. They all affirm that behavioural manifestations of well-resonating brands are organisational commitment and brand consistency, whereas intention to join and turnover intention are behavioural manifestations of the brand resonance with internal and external stakeholders.

To begin with, the data highlight the importance of the fact that employer branding is a human relationship, rather than a marketing artefact. Employees who find their genuineness, equity, and development internalise the values of the brand and spread it through advocacy. On the other hand, failure to keep promises or committing less credibility results into the destruction of the brand regardless of its external investment. This relationship is congruent to the Social Exchange Theory and shows that the reciprocity between organisational practices and employee emotions creates brand equity.

Second, the qualitative data shedding light on brand consistency are the key mechanisms of interrelation between employee perception and organisational reputation. The concept of authenticity was mentioned as the make-or-break factor in employer branding a number of times, which is the same statistical significance of the element of perceived brand consistency that is presented in the regression model. The respondents perceived authenticity as a differentiator when strategies were being digitalized and all employee reviews and social posts add to the image of the employer seen by the public.

Third, the attraction-retention paradox reveals a shifting problem of HR leaders: to create EVPs that are inspirational and implementation-provable. Participants reiterated that inability to strike a balance between these dimensions results in cognitive dissonance and increased turnover- which confirmed the negative relationship between turnover intention and employer branding observed quantitatively. To solve this paradox, organisations need to focus more on transparency and ongoing communication instead of conveying branding messages using a one-way and static approach.

Finally, generational divergence is the attribute that brings out adaptive aspect of employer branding. The differences in expectation between cohorts indicate that brand strategies have to be updated constantly in order to stay topical. Although the idea of purpose-driven, inclusive, and flexible workplaces has become essential to the modern workforce, emotional and ethical alignment has become the focal point of the success of employer branding.

4.2.2.6 Conclusion

The qualitative results support the assumption that employer branding is co-created by means of relationships and perception and stable organisational behaviour. Lived experience, commitment, authenticity, and generational relevance themes collide to present employer branding as a dynamic psychological and social process. HR voices display that the commitment of employees, their perceived consistency between the rhetoric and reality, and their intentions to remain or join are not the fringe benefits, but they are the brand itself.

Finally, the analysis of the interview proves the mixed-method results where employer branding is the result of an intersection of the human experience and the organisational integrity. The brand is never what the organisation dictates but what employees believe, share and live on a day to day basis. It is the genuineness of this lived

experience which determines the appeal, believability and viability of the organisation as an employer of choice.

4.3 Practical managerial frameworks

Various practical implications of this study are created by the empirical findings on managers, HR leaders as well as employer branding practitioners in medium and large organisations in the United Kingdom. Quantitative findings proved that organisational commitment and perceived brand consistency form the most effective predictors of the employer branding framework, intention to join and turnover intention are the behavioural reflections of employer brand strength and weakness. These results suggest that employer branding is not to be viewed as a recruitment communication practice, but as a system of internal organisational practices that determine employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours in the long term.

To begin with, the dominance of organisational commitment as a predictor implies that the focus of the managers should be turned into enhancing the psychological relationship between the employees and the organisation. The notion of commitment was identified as a result of the elements of employer branding and as a means of how employer branding converts into the attraction and retention. In practice, it implies that the investments in leadership credibility, employee recognition, development opportunities, and the culture of inclusion are not marginal HR practices but the fundamental brand-building ones. By showing organisational values daily through the decisions the managers make, the manner in which they treat the people and the manner in which the managers communicate openly, it directly supports the affective and normative commitment which in the end, boosts the employer brand credibility both internally as well as externally.

Second, the high position of the perceived brand consistency underlines the management risk of being inconsistent between the external employer value propositions and internal employee experiences. These findings suggest that in cases when the employees think that there exists some discrepancies between what organisations are offering (e.g., flexibility, well-being, career growth) and what is being practiced, organisational commitment is reduced and turnover intention is elevated. In practice, organisations must adopt daily promise-experience dissonance mechanisms, like cross-checking the message about recruitment with HR policies, and leadership practices, and employee feedback information. This observation also suggests that employer branding propositions must be low-wastes and realistic, as opposed to aspirational especially in a digitally transparent labour market wherein workers have the ability to communicate their experiences at a rapid pace via online channels.

Third, moderation outcomes on generational cohorts are action-oriented insights of workforce segmentation. Though the direction of employer branding impacts was identical to different generations the strength of the impacts varied considerably. Generation Z was the most sensitive with respect to the intention to join based on employer branding, which means that better clarity in EVP, flexibility in EVP and organisational values can offer significant improvement in attracting younger talent. Conversely, the Generation X showed a more negative association of the employer branding and turnover intention and therefore leadership credibility, stability, and trust are particularly important in retention of this cohort. Managerially, these results imply the use of a segmented employer branding approach whereby a certain core brand is upheld though the focus is on the generational expectations as opposed to the implementation of the same message across the workforce.

Fourth, the fact that turnover intention is negatively related to employer branding highlights the relevance of retention not as an operation exercise but as a reputational activity. The stronger the perceptions of employer brand strength were, the higher were the turnover intentions, which means that the internal dissatisfaction may undermine the brand equity even prior to real employee turnover taking place. In practice, this implies that an organisation ought to track the turnover intention indicators using pulse survey and stay interviews, as opposed to using exit data alone. By recognizing driving forces of disengagement at the earliest stage (perceived stagnation or leadership inconsistency), managers can respond with intervention before the damage to reputation takes the form of attrition or a bad online review.

To conclude, quantitative and qualitative findings are combined, which supports the idea that the employer branding is jointly constructed by systems and experiences of the organisations. Interviewed HR professionals in this research highlighted that authentic employer brands are implemented with lived experience, and not managed communications. Thus, employer branding can be considered by managers as a continuous alignment process connecting leadership behaviour, HR systems, employee voice as well as external communication. This way, organisations will be able to turn devotion and consistency into long-term benefits of attraction and retention that are directly dependent on causal processes found in SEM outcomes.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The results of the quantitative and qualitative stages of the study were introduced and discussed in this chapter, and the overall perception of how the organisational commitment and perceived brand consistency, intention to join and turnover intention influence branding in the employer was achieved. The analysis used a combination of statistical data and interpretative knowledge by providing a multidimensional perspective

of how the employer branding works as an experience of an organisational reality and not a marketing tool.

It was shown in the quantitative analysis that regression model explained 66.4% of the variance in employer branding, which indicates that the four independent variables in the regression model are the major predictors of the employer brand strength. Of these organisational commitment came out as the strongest positive predictor that confirms that engagement, trust and emotional attachment of employees are the pillars of a believable employer brand. Perceived brand consistency also played a significant role being the top determinant whereby the congruence between the external brand promises and internal experiences is paramount in preserving the authenticity. Intention to join had a strong impact on brand perception, which implies that internal brand pride and reputation is strengthened by attractiveness to work in an organisation. On the other hand, turnover intention had a negative influence, which proves that dissatisfaction and disengagement weaken the employer brand internally. Altogether, the results collectively confirmed the theoretical merger of the Social Exchange Theory, Signalling Theory, and the Job Embeddedness Theory of the study by demonstrating that employer branding is co-produced as mutual trust, authentic communication, and employee attachment.

This was enhanced by the qualitative results as it placed the quantitative results into context using four broad themes: (1) Employer branding as a living experience, (2) Commitment and psychological ownership, (3) Authenticity and brand consistency in practice, and (4) The attraction-retention paradox and generational divergence. The HR professionals referred to employer branding as an actual experience that was created through everyday experiences, leadership values, and organisational culture and not corporate messaging. Sustaining commitment and trust were both found to be the emotional meaning behind a sustainable employer brand, a core that has been validated

quantitatively, particularly that engagement and reciprocity reinforce brand identity. The elements that turned out to be the make-or-buy ones were authenticity and consistency, as the participants stressed that the employees would easily find out the difference between the promises and the delivery. Also, the paradox of attraction and retention depicted the difficulty of balancing the outside appeal and the inside credibility. The major difference between generations also indicated that the younger generations, especially the Generation Z, are more interested in purpose, flexibility, and transparency, whereas Generation X and Millennials attach importance to stability, recognition, and ethical leadership.

Collectively, both the quantitative and qualitative analyses highlight the fact that branding by employers is a strategic and relational phenomenon - one that brings employee experience, cultural authenticity, and leadership behaviour together. The chapter has shown that the strength of the employer brand reflects on the credibility and consistency of the organisation as seen by the employees. The overlap of the results of both sets of methodological strands confirms the conceptual framework and leads to accept the offer that a robust employer brand is due to genuine, mutual, and consistent organisational activities that coincide with employee anticipations across generations. This thorough grasp of employer branding preconditions the following chapter that will explain these results through the greater theoretical framework, delineate the practical implication of this concepts to the management and HR specialists and comment on the suggestions on how employer branding strategies can be improved in the modern organisations.

Chapter V:
DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

The aim of the study was to examine the impact of employer branding on employee behavioural results, namely intention to join and turnover intention in medium and large organisations in the UK. Combining quantitative modelling with qualitative knowledge the results all support the idea that employer branding is not a marketing tool but a behavioural, psychological, and relational construct that is informed and developed by lived experience, credibility as well as reciprocity. Instead of acting as a symbolic organisational veneer, the findings indicate that employer branding works by entrenched cognitive and emotional processes which are instilled in the daily organisational life.

The quantitative results proved that the model explained 66.4% of the variance of branding employers perceptions, which means that organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, intention to join, and turnover intention are a strong set of explanatory determinants. The greatest predictor was found to be organisational commitment, which supported the fact that employer branding is based on reciprocal trust relations, as proposed by Social Exchange Theory (SET). Workers who feel supported, treated fairly, and developed, react by being more loyal, advocating, and giving good brand ratings. This observation is in line with Psychological Contract Theory that argues that the performance of implicit expectations leads to identification and builds stronger employer brand equity. Interestingly, the intensity of this connection implies that branding of the employer is not a coerced process but rather a team effort, which is crucial to note that the previous body of research on employer branding concentrated on the external recruitment communications much more.

The second predictor that was found to be significant is perceived brand consistency and this is one of the strongest factors that confirm Signalling Theory. Staff members are very sensitive to the correspondence between organisational promises and experience. The qualitative interviews indicated that authenticity is regarded as currency of employer branding and inconsistency is considered as violation of organisational integrity. This is a finding of vital importance: the employees do not consider branding in terms of communication, but rather in terms of behaviour correspondence, which implies that employer branding should be interpreted not as a promotion message but as a reflection of organisational behaviour. Remarkably, a number of the respondents observed that even small discrepancies, especially in the areas of flexibility, workload, and leadership visibility resulted in disproportionate diminishment in trust. This sensitivity explains that brand credibility is delicate and can be easily destroyed, particularly in digitally transparent space.

An external attraction indicator, intention to join, also proved to have a significant positive relationship with employer branding. The result expands the Brand Equity Logic (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) as it demonstrates that the external perception of the market is returned in the formation of internal identity. A good employer attractiveness leads to a reputational halo effect in which employees take pride in identifying with an attractive organisation. Nevertheless, a surprise twist has revealed itself: the influence of intention to join has been even stronger in Generation Z than in Millennials or Generation X, which suggests that younger generations see employer branding indicators more emotionally and faster. This generational temperature validates the rising body of literature purporting that younger employees, who are familiar with the idea of applying digital immediacy, societal validation and publicly visible employer rankings are highly sensitive to perceived brand reputation.

Turnover intention showed the expected negative correlation between employer branding and this fact is in line with the Job Embeddedness Theory, which assumes that job attachment relies on fit, links and perceived sacrifice. Nevertheless, the qualitative results took this theory a step further to demonstrate that turnover intention is not just a manifestation of disengagement but an active destruction of brand perception as it occurs, since employees witness colleagues leaving or reading negative online comments. This observation highlights the cyclical nature of employer brand erosion matters: increasing turnover undermines brand perceptions, in its turn aggravating further turnover. It is noteworthy that a number of HR professionals reported about the presence of brand shock in which the rates of resignations suddenly increased leading to instant drop in online rankings, which is indicative of a lack of embeddedness.

Another interesting implication of this research is the obvious gap of generation interpretation of the employer branding. Whereas the Millennials and the Generation Z emphasised purpose, inclusion, flexibility, and psychological safety, the Generation X emphasised more on stability, leadership integrity, and reasonable workload arrangements. This distinction holds that an un-differentiated employer branding approach can make the organization vulnerable to the loss of critical demographic categories. As opposed to the homogenous assumption of the branding, the findings show that the effectiveness of EVP depends on demographic fit, which can be hard to find in the employer branding literature.

Digital transparency became one of the influential contextual moderators. Employer branding is actively perceived by employees and job seekers in a user generated content rather than organisational message. HR participants pointed to the fact that organisational control of brand narratives has since been eroded, but rather branding is produced in the form of employee commentary on online platforms like Glassdoor,

LinkedIn, and Indeed. This discovery provides a radical conceptual change: authenticity is not the choice anymore but is structurally placed in an open market of digital labour. Employer branding is thus a form of both internal and external and public, therefore consistency through all the channels is a strategic necessity.

The industry-specific insights were also provided, indicating that the employer branding dynamics vary by industry. For example:

Psychological safety, manageable workloads, and fairness of the leadership were highlighted by the employees of healthcare and education.

The IT professionals were focused on autonomy, creativity, work flexibility and career ladder.

Predictable scheduling, recognition and supervision were prized in the retail and service industries.

These differences point to the fact that employer branding must be sector-calibrated as opposed to universal.

In management terms, the results are strongly indicative of the fact that employer branding needs to no longer be a communications-focused model but a culture-focused model of operation. Leaders need to focus on behaviors that support EVP promises, as small offenses will kill credibility fast. Practices that are involved in commitment building including even distribution of workloads, developmental opportunities, open line communication with leaders, and participative decision making should be integrated into day to day life. Moreover, turnover patterns have to be tracked not only as HR measures but also as the warning signs of the brand erosion. The management of digital reputation should be proactive and part of the strategy of employee experience since online reviews constitute a crucial component of the contemporary signalling space.

The generational-based branding strategies ought to incorporate:

Generation Z: emphasize intent, flexibility, wellbeing, professional mobility, and diverse culture.

Millennials: focus on development, work-life balance, psychological safety and meaningful work.

Generation Y: value security, integrity in leadership, independence and long-term career stability.

In the same way, the industry-specific suggestions are:

IT: foster innovation culture, flexible work systems, and fast track careers.

Healthcare: focus on wellbeing, achievable workloads, leadership, and mental health frameworks.

Retail: enhance recognition systems, scheduling equity and quality of frontline managers.

Education: focus on mission orientation, community impact and developmental autonomy.

To sum up, this research can offer solid arguments that the concept of employer branding should be interpreted as an employee experience ecosystem that can be based on the principles of authenticity, relational reciprocity, generational expectations, and digital transparency. The results prove the theoretical assumptions in Signalling Theory, SET, Job Embeddedness Theory, and Psychological Contract Theory, and generalize them to the current digital labour circumstances. By guaranteeing that there is consistency between the organisations professed values and practiced values, organisations develop credibility which intensifies attraction, commitment and turnover.

On the other hand, whenever there are lapses, cynicism, detachment, and erosion ensues at a fast rate. Finally, employer branding is not successful through persuasion but achieved through embodied organisational integrity making it the strategic obligation that cuts across HR, leadership, operations, and culture management.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question One

RQ1: How do specific components of employer branding (such as EVP, organisational culture, employee benefits, and leadership) influence employee attraction, and how does the perceived consistency of these brand elements affect turnover intentions?

This research question examined the two-fold relationship between the employer branding elements and two fundamental behavioural outcomes employee attraction and turnover intention. Both the quantitative and qualitative stages confirm that the particular aspects of employer branding, which are the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), organisational culture, leadership credibility, career development, and well-being benefits are strong attraction and retention factors.

These elements reported high positive correlations with intention to join with quantification that attractive EVP elements are an important determinant of job-seeking behaviour. Particularly, the most impactful subcomponents were leadership credibility and development opportunities, which resonate with the previous studies by Tanwar and Kumar (2022) and Lievens and Slaughter (2016), who proved that leadership trust and cultural fit enhances brand attractiveness. Tangible benefits like salary and perks cannot just motivate the employees, as the workers also desire symbolic qualities the purpose, inclusion, respect, and ethical integrity. This difference reflects the instrumental-symbolic

model of employer branding where symbolic worth tends to prevail over material aspects of defining long-term devotion.

Qualitatively, respondents underlined that the employer branding is practiced via leadership behaviour and cultural consistency, implying that the strength of the EVP is authenticity. According to HR leaders, employees react positively whenever they sense transparency and delivery on promises especially in matters of flexibility, career support, and recognition. Conversely, incoherent communication whereby branding assures diversity or balance that is not exercised internally results in disengagement and loss of reputation. This supports Signalling Theory which suggests that perceived consistency between signals (external promises) and reality (internal experience) forms brand credibility (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

The second element of the given question how perceived consistency influences a turnover was also justified. The regression analysis showed that there is a significant negative correlation between perceived brand inconsistency and turnover intention ($= -0.23, p = 0.001$). Psychological pressure and cynicism develop when employees feel that there are discrepancies between the external communication and internal culture, which leads to attrition. This observation supports Psychological Contract Theory (Rousseau, 2001), which states that violations of the implied contract destroy trust and loyalty. This was confirmed during the interview by one HR professional who said: The minute they see that we are not doing what we preach, then they become disengaged and once they are disengaged they are gone.

Integration of EVP, leadership, and consistency implies that the attraction and retention are mutually enhancing processes and not distinct HR outcomes. High quality candidates come with a strong EVP, the retention is determined by the ability of delivery on the offered proposition. In this regard, turnover intention may be regarded as the

indicator of brand dissonance. The findings are important to the existing body of knowledge as they are empirical evidence that employer branding cannot be successful without quality communication, but concord between identity and reality.

Overall, RQ1 demonstrates that the components of employer branding work on the principles of authenticity, culture, and consistency. When an organisation lives its values, it has a self-protecting brand loop--where trust and shared meaning result in attraction, engagement and retention.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question Two

RQ2: In what ways does organisational commitment mediate the relationship between employer branding and employee turnover, and how do generational cohorts (Millennials, Generation X, and Generation Z) moderate the influence of employer branding on employee behavioural outcomes?

The mechanistic and conditional directions that this research question targeted were (1) the organisational commitment mediation (2) the generation moderation of the employer branding to turnover relationship. The regression and structural equation modelling (SEM) findings gave a solid empirical evidences to both mechanisms.

The mediation analysis was able to prove that organisational commitment is a partial mediator between turnover intention and employer branding. In particular, the greater the perceptions of employer branding, the greater became organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$), which, in its turn, caused a significant decrease in turnover intention. This result aligns with the previous research (Mercurio, 2015; Uduji et al., 2023), which supports the fact that affective commitment, which is the emotional attachment to and identification with the organisation, is the most important

psychological mediator between brand perception and retention. When employees feel their organisation is genuine, just, and accommodating, they would experience a sense of being valued and would in turn show their loyalty thus authenticating the Social Exchange Theory (SET) approach.

This dynamic was reflected in qualitative evidence. The HR professionals not once stopped correlating employee engagement and advocacy with emotional connection as opposed to transactional incentive. One participant stated:

“People have a reason to work here, as they are proud and thus they do not leave because of the money but because it is the right thing to do”

Such a sense of belonging indicates the primary impact of affective commitment in brand sustainability. Moreover, according to the interviews, the employees understand employer branding as a guarantee of relational fairness. Violation of psychological contract was termed as breaches in leadership credibility or internal culture and resulted in alienation and turnover. The findings therefore support the fact that organisational commitment is a reciprocity mechanism as well as an indication of the continuity of trust between the employer and the employee.

The generational moderation test showed that the correlation between employer branding and behavioural results is not consistent across generations. The impact of employer branding on organisational commitment was the most sensitive among Millennials and generation z, with relatively stable but less responsive responses observed by Generation X. This shows that the younger employees are more receptive and sensitive to branding signals and authenticity signals. These results are similar to those by Taylor (2025) and Nguyen and Tran (2023), who had previously stated that purpose, inclusion, and flexibility are valued by the Millennials and Gen Z more than

traditional benefits. Generation X on the other hand values stability in the long run and integrity in leadership.

These differences were found to have strong qualitative support through the qualitative interviews. HR professionals noted that the Gen Z employees perceive commitment based on the growth opportunities and purpose, whereas the Gen X employees perceive it based on the loyalty and dependability. As one HR leader noted:

“Gen z desire intent and visibility. Gen X desire predictability and admiration. They both care about trust, however, they define it in different ways”

This observation stresses the importance of employer branding to rely on a segmented strategy to match the messaging and EVP content with the generational values. It is also hinted by the evidence that the inability to keep up with these changing tastes can undermine organisational commitment, especially in younger generations that are more mobile.

Theoretically, the results support the Job Embeddedness Theory with employees' links, fit, and sacrifice being determinants of their intention to stay. Employer branding promotes embeddedness in the alignment (fit), relational networks (links) and perceived benefits of staying (sacrifice). The intergenerational disparity that was found in this study broadens the theory by demonstrating that embedded conditions are age-cohort and career-stage specific.

In conclusion, RQ2 evidences that organisational commitment is the emotional channel by which the employer branding can influence the retention and the generational cohorts are the contextual filters that condition this influence. The results point to the fact that a strong employer brand will have to be maintained, not only through a steady

external communication approach but through various forms of internal engagement, where the importance of generational diversity in motivation and loyalty are considered.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Three

RQ3: To what extent do digital employer reviews (e.g., Glassdoor ratings) influence perceptions of employer brand authenticity, and how do these perceptions impact recruitment and retention outcomes?

The concluding research question was the increasing role of digital transparency and its effect on the employer brand perception. The review of the analysis has shown that online reviews and social media discussion are strong indicators of authenticity, which affect both the intention to join and retention. Quantitatively, perceived brand authenticity, which was measured as the congruence between internal experience and external reputation, positively correlated significantly with organisational commitment and intention to join.

This relationship was drastically confirmed by qualitative findings. HR participants admitted that the websites like Glassdoor, Indeed, and LinkedIn have turned the concept of employer branding into a two-way communication system rather than a one-way communication process. One respondent remarked:

“Your employees are your brand ambassadors- and at times your greatest critics. A single negative commentary can cancel out a year of marketing”

This confirms the claim made by Signalling Theory that brand signal credibility relies on independent verification. The digital reviews act as third party indications that validate or refute the narrative of the organisation. Perceptions of authenticity are

enhanced when employee-generated content is in line with official messaging; when discrepancies do exist, potential applicants will doubt the integrity of the organisation.

Moreover, interviewees defined digital employer reviews as a type of social proof, which determines job-seeker behaviour, particularly among Millennials and Gen Z. Some HR practitioners told that the peak in positive Glassdoor ratings was associated with the rise in application volumes and the quality of the candidates. On the other hand, the negative reviews were usually followed by delayed hiring or reputation management actions. These observations are reflective of the works by Wilden et al. (2023) and Ghosh and Prasad (2024) which proved that digital transparency increases reputational effects of internal inconsistency.

Regarding retention, the workers that saw their organisation reacting positively to online feedback were found to have more trust and identification. Therefore, the perceived authenticity and commitment directly depends on how the organisations use digital feedback in the form of transparent communication and responsiveness. As one HR director stated:

“Disregard of reviews is similar to a disregard of customers. Making feedback actionable and listening means that we do care about what we say we care about”

The consequences of RQ3 further develop the theoretical concept of employer branding to the digital age where brand equity is reliant on interactive credibility-building as opposed to uni-directional communication. The results have validated that the employer brand authenticity which has been developed through digital platforms is now becoming a primary factor in attraction and retention where online reputation management has a direct correlation with internal employee experience.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the research findings have been addressed concerning the objectives and theoretical frameworks of the study. The findings show that the employer branding is a moveable and two-way process that can exist on a variety of dimensions such as cultural, relational, and digital. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data proves that the effectiveness of employer branding is related to the combination of commitment, authenticity, and generational correspondence.

Branding is associated with retention through organisational commitment, perceived consistency enhances authenticity, and digital transparency enhances credibility. Generational cohorts come to the rescue of these relationships by defining the interpretations of authenticity and value propositions. All these findings taken together contribute to the theoretical knowledge and to the managerial practice by providing an all-embracing model of employer branding that incorporates the psychological, social and technological determinants.

These insights will be extended in the next chapter to offer the conclusions, managerial implications, recommendations, and the directions of the future research.

Chapter VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The paper examined the association between employer branding and employee behavioural outcome intention to join and turnover intention in medium- and large-scale organisations in the United Kingdom. The research was inspired by the expanded strategic value of employer branding in the attraction and retention of talent in competitive labour markets that have become digital, demographically diverse, and increasingly employee-driven.

The research was based on Signalling Theory, Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Job Embeddedness Theory to gain an insight into how particular elements of employer branding, including Employee Value Proposition (EVP), organisational culture, leadership, and benefits, affect the attraction and retention outcomes. It also investigated the mediating role of organisational commitment in these relationships and the moderating or strengthening effect of the employer branding on the generational cohorts (Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z) and the role of digital employer review.

An explanatory sequential design, which was mixed-methods, was chosen. The quantitative part explored the data of 342 workers in five industries (finance, healthcare, IT, retail, and education) by descriptive statistical analysis, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings revealed that the joint contribution of organisational commitment, perceived brand consistency, intention to join and turnover intention explained 66.4 per cent variance in employer branding. The strongest predictor was organisational commitment, which implies that emotional attachment and trust are still the key aspects of employer brand strength. The second strongest predictor was perceived brand

consistency, which pointed to the importance of authenticity and consistency between external commitments and internal experiences.

The qualitative stage entailed the interview conducted on 20 HR and employer branding professionals. Thematic analysis revealed that there were four major themes, which were (1) employer branding as living experience, (2) commitment and psychological ownership, (3) authenticity, and brand consistency in practice, and (4) attraction retention paradox and generational divergence. These results revealed that employer brand is a co-created concept, which is maintained by daily experiences, ethical leadership, and disclosed communication.

The combination of both data strands showed that both authenticity and commitment are the core mechanism connecting the employer branding and behavioural outcomes and that digital transparency and generational diversity influence the way in which employees perceive and react to the branding initiatives. Concisely, trust, reciprocity, and cultural coherence are the factors that can contribute to a highly employed brand, and in which organisational rhetoric correlates with experience.

6.2 Implications

6.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The results of this research add to theoretical knowledge of employer branding in terms of a number of ways:

Combination of Signalling and Social Exchange Theories

The research paper illustrates the role of employer branding as a signalling process that communicates information on organisational values, leadership, and culture to both current and prospective employees. Nevertheless, such signals can be valid only when they are reinforced by two-way exchange relation (SET). Such theoretical

combination highlights the fact that employer branding is both perceptual (outward) and relational.

Mediated Role of Organisational Commitment

The experiment proves the organisational commitment as a partial mediator between the turnover intention and employer branding. This contributes to the literature in that it shows the psychological mechanism by which employer branding can be translated into retention employees do not remain simply because of brand prestige but they feel they have been emotionally engaged in the organisation.

Moderating Generational Cohort Effect

The results verify that the generational differences determine how employees think and react to employer branding. This contributes to theoretical discussions on workforce diversity by placing the generation as a boundary of brandingbehaviour relationship. The finding that younger generations (Millennials and Gen Z) are more sensitive to authenticity and development opportunities is a small contribution to Job Embeddedness Theory.

Digital Employer Branding: A Modern Variable

With the inclusion of digital employer reviews (e.g., Glassdoor ratings) into the theoretical framework, this paper modernizes the traditional employer branding theory to the digital era. It demonstrates the fact that brand authenticity cannot be unilaterally decided by the organisation but is co-created by online testimonials and employee narratives. All together, these works add to the academic body of knowledge on employer branding as a multidimensional, dynamic construct with both psychological and technological operating mechanisms.

6.2.2 Managerial and Practical Implications

In practical terms, the research has business implications among HR executives, brand managers, and organisational strategists:

Maintain Equivalence between Promises and Practices

The only most significant predictor of brand credibility turned out to be authenticity. Organisations ought to make sure that EVP statements, recruitment campaigns, and leadership behaviour are always internal realities. Brand dissonance and turnover is caused by misalignment.

Empower Organisational commitment to Leadership

Managers need to work on developing affective commitment through promoting trust, recognition and fairness. Empathy, communication and transparency are behaviours that should be emphasised in leadership training because they strengthen brand integrity and employee loyalties.

Gen Z specifics: Adapt Employer Branding to Generation Requirements

It is no longer possible to have a one-fits-all branding strategy. HR policies should understand the generational peculiarities: Gen Z is more focused on growth, meaning, and flexibility; Millennials are more interested in balance and inclusion; Gen X is more interested in being stable and respected. The division of EVP communication in such a way improves interaction and retention.

Use Digital Media as True Storytelling Advertising Media

Instead of being afraid of such platforms as Glassdoor, organisations need to learn to use them as a means of constantly improving. Being open with feedback is responsive and trustworthy and builds brand credibility and trust.

Embark Employer Branding on to Core Strategy

Employer branding cannot exist in isolation in HR or marketing it has to be incorporated into corporate governance and leadership strategy. This integration keeps branding realistic about the actual organisational values and long term sustainability and not focusing on image management on a short term basis.

Measuring and Monitoring Brand Consistency

The frequent evaluation of the compatibility of external EVP and internal experience, conducted in the form of surveys, focus groups, and digital sentiment analysis will serve to identify the initial indicators of brand inconsistency and take action in time. These implications are important to note that proper employer branding must be strategically aligned, the leader must be accountable and participatory communication must be employed to maintain competitive edge in talent acquisition and retention.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Although the current study contributes to the current knowledge of employer branding, a number of research opportunities are available in the future:

Longitudinal Research Design

This was a cross-sectional research. The longitudinal approach could be used in future studies, which will investigate the interventions of organisational culture, leadership, and EVP implementation on employee perceptions and retention.

Cross-Cultural: Comparative Studies

The study was restricted to organisations located in the UK. It would be informative to apply the framework to other cultural and institutional settings (e.g.,

Europe, Asia, or Africa) to understand how the effectiveness of employer branding is explained by the impact of the national culture and labour market conditions.

Additional Mediators Inclusion

Other potential mediating variables, including employee engagement, job satisfaction, or psychological safety may be investigated in future models, in order to create a more developing picture of behavioural mechanisms.

AI and Digital analytics in Employer Branding

Due to the technological advancement, the upcoming research must include AI-driven sentiment analysis and social listening applications to obtain real-time brand perception data on online platforms, which will give a more detailed picture of the authenticity and reputation management.

Industry-Specific Investigations

As employer branding may be more or less relevant across sectors (e.g., in healthcare and in technology), future studies may carry out sector-based studies to create occupation-specific employer branding strategies.

Post-Pandemic Work Models: Exploration

Since hybrid and remote work have become common, additional studies ought to determine the effect of flexible work structures on employer branding perceptions, particularly work-life balance and employee well-being.

Experimental and Mixed-Methods-Validation

Causal relationships could be tested using experimental studies in which the manipulation of branding messages or leadership intervention could be performed to observe direct behavioural effects. External validity would also be improved by having mixed-method replication in diverse settings.

This kind of research would bring further sophistication in terms of theory and practical use of employer branding as a cross-disciplinary field between HR, psychology, and marketing.

6.4 Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to research how employer branding affects employee intention to join and turnover intention in medium and large organisations in the United Kingdom when controlling the mediating effect of organisational commitment and moderating effect of generational cohort differences. The comprehensive and credible explanation of the nature of employer branding as both a behavioural and relational organisational phenomenon was possible by the adoption of a pragmatic mixed-method approach, which enabled the research to combine statistical strength with interpretive depth.

The results clearly show that the employer branding is not a one dimensional marketing system but a multidimensional system that relies on internal employee experience. Quantitatively the findings indicated that organisational commitment and perceived brand consistency are the best predictors of employer brand strength with a significant proportion of the variance in behavioural outcome being explained. Factors of employer branding including the value proposition to employees, the organisational culture and the credibility of the leadership were all determined to have a significant

impact in terms of the intention to join but at the same time mitigating turnover intention. These correlations prove the fact that the employer branding is a system that works with the help of psychological processes of trust, reciprocity and attachment, not only symbolic messages.

Mediating the role of organisational commitment is a very important theoretical and practical insight. The results show that the employer branding affects attraction and retention, first of all, by increasing the emotional and moral commitment of the employees to the organisation. This repeats the argument put forward by Social Exchange Theory that employees reciprocate fair treatment, support and value concord with loyalty and advocacy behaviours. Concurrently, the high impact of perceived brand consistency is favourable to the Signalling Theory because it shows that credibility and consistency between the external promise and internal reality mitigate uncertainty, increase trust, and stabilize employment relations. Job Embeddedness Theory also justifies the fact that weakened commitment and inconsistency enhance turnover intention through damaging the perceived fit, links, and sacrifice of employees.

The differences in generational cohorts as moderating effects also give more nuance to the model. The direction of the employer branding effects was the same as in cohorts, but the size of those effects was also material. Generation Z was found to be more susceptible to employer branding when it comes to attraction but Generation X was more sensitive to employer branding quality when it comes to retention. The Millennials were in the middle ground, and they tended to balance between development, culture, and work-life integration. These results complicate some of the naive beliefs regarding generational behaviour and instead point to the fact that the employer branding mechanisms are not cohort specific but also salient depending on the cohort values and career expectations.

The qualitative results supported and contextualised the quantitative results by showing employer branding as a lived experience that is created by the day-to-day interactions, leadership behaviour, and organisational integrity. Authenticity, consistency and employee voice were the key points that HR professionals always underlined in order to maintain the employer brand credibility. Digital transparency became an effective amplifier, faster in the reputational advantages and disadvantages according to the alignment between rhetoric and reality. A combination of the qualitative insights validates the idea that employer branding is a joint production with the experience of the employees instead of organisational discourse.

Generally, this study is a significant contribution to theory and practice because it redefines employer branding as a relational, dynamic, and experience based orientation. This synthesising of results indicates that robust employer brands are created as a result of steady organisational behaviour, plausible leadership as well as enduring employee commitment, as opposed to branding campaigns. In practice, the paper points out that attraction and retention are inextricable consequences of the same inherent apparatus of trust, alignment and engagement.

Finally, employer branding is expected to be regarded as the manifestation of organisational integrity and quality of employment relationship. With similar values, leadership practices, and employees experience, organisations have higher chances to attract, keep their workers and remain competitive in the ever-open and competitive labour market. The research hence offers a strong empirical and theoretical basis to further studies and managerial intervention to enhance employer brands by being authentic, committed as well as consistent.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Dear Participant,

I am requesting you to participate in a research study that is to be carried out as a part of my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme. The study is titled:

Employer Brands and their Impact On Employee Intention to Join and Employee Turnover

This study aims at investigating the role of employer branding activities, including organisational culture, leadership, employee value propositions (EVP) and digital reputation as the dependent variable, on employee perception, commitment and intentions to stay or quit their organisations. The findings will be used in creating a deeper insight into the relationship between authentic employer branding and employee engagement as well as organisational performance.

The nature of your involvement will include answering an online survey, which will take about 10-15 minutes. The questionnaire will be made up of statements that are connected to how you feel about your current or last employer. No right and wrong answers are required, and it doesn't matter what you say, as long as you say what you mean

Please note the following:

Anonymity: The information that you will provide will be kept confidential and will not be used in any way other than research purposes. No personal details or organisations will be mentioned in a publication or a report.

Voluntary Participation: It is a voluntary participation. You could pull out any time before filing in the survey without any penalty.

Information Security: Data shall be collected safely in protected, encrypted files using passwords and processed in reference to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the university code of ethics.

Anonymity: You will not be required to give your name or any other personal information.

Your contributions will be very beneficial and help in the field of developing academic and work experience knowledge on employer branding practices and employee retention strategies in the present day workplace.

In case you have any questions concerning this research or your participation feel free to reach out to me at:

✉ sultan.teymurov4@gmail.com

You can either state your consent to voluntarily participate in this study by clicking on the Next button or by filling out the survey, which would mean you have read the information above and have understood it.

I wish to thank you and wish to take your time to add to this crucial research. It is a pleasure to have you here.

Kind regards,

Sultan Teymurov

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How would you describe what makes your organisation an attractive place to work?
2. What key factors do you think influence people's decision to join your organisation?
3. In your opinion, what aspects of your workplace most encourage employees to stay for the long term?
4. How would you describe the culture of your organisation and the way it affects how employees feel about working here?
5. What role do leadership behaviours play in shaping the overall employee experience?
6. How does your organisation communicate its values and working environment to potential and current employees?
7. To what extent do you think the experiences employees have internally match the messages the organisation shares publicly?
8. Have you noticed any gaps between what is promised to employees and what is actually delivered?
9. What steps does your organisation take to ensure that employee experiences are consistent across different departments or teams?
10. How do you or your team collect feedback about how employees perceive the organisation as a workplace?
11. What do you think are the main reasons employees decide to leave the organisation?

12. Can you describe any recent initiatives that have helped improve employee satisfaction or loyalty?
13. How do you think younger employees differ from older ones in what they value at work?
14. What changes have you observed in employee expectations over the past few years?
15. How does your organisation respond to different expectations among employees from various age groups?
16. How do technology and social media influence how people view your organisation as an employer?
17. Do online reviews or public comments about the workplace have any impact on recruitment or reputation?
18. How does your organisation handle feedback or criticism shared on digital platforms?
19. What strategies are used to ensure that people outside the organisation see a true picture of what it is like to work here?
20. Looking ahead, what do you think will be the biggest challenge in attracting and keeping talented employees?

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