

## Literature Review: Analysis of the Relationship between Employer Branding, Employee Engagement, and Employee Retention

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### ABSTRACT

*Employer branding is an essential concept that significantly influences employees' perceptions and experiences within an organization, ultimately affecting employee retention and engagement. This research aims to explore the importance of employer branding by employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, analyzing a diverse range of academic sources from reputable databases, including Scopus, Emerald, and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria focused on open-access journals published in both English and Indonesian, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The findings indicate a strong correlation between effective employer branding and increased employee retention rates. Employees are more likely to remain with organizations that present a positive brand image, showcasing a strong cultural identity and aligning with their values. Furthermore, the study highlights the significance of emotional factors, particularly employee engagement, in influencing retention. Engaged employees tend to be more productive and committed to their work, fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty to the organization. These insights underscore the necessity for companies to invest in employer branding strategies, as a well-defined employer brand not only attracts top talent but also retains valuable employees. By prioritizing employer branding, organizations can enhance workforce stability and overall performance, ultimately leading to a more motivated and dedicated workforce that drives success.*

**Keywords:** Employer Branding, Employee Engagement, Employee retention

### INTRODUCTION

In building a large company, you can't just look at the financial reports which show profits every year. But more importantly, what's the point of increasing profits but having a company that has no personality, identity, and means nothing to its employees. Every company tries to develop its potential so that it can compete with its competitors. Apart from competition between companies, problems often occur where companies cannot find the right people to carry out the job. This can be said to be not easy because companies have to face big challenges in meeting employee needs. A large and sustainable company is a company that is able to build a brand, in other words, its Employer Brand is strong and provides meaning to its employees even after they leave the company. However, there are still many companies that do not have a good Employer Brand. According to (Martin et al., 2005) the concept of Employer Branding was first discussed by the marketing department, where companies used branding efforts to develop products and company brands, but currently branding is becoming increasingly important in human resource management (HR). Because through Employer Branding a company can have characteristics that differentiate it from its competitors (Asuman, Matungolo, Francis Kasekende, 2018).

Employer branding is about creating a work environment where employees feel valued and happy, fostering a sense of belonging and satisfaction that leads to



increased productivity and commitment. A positive work culture, reinforced through an effective employer branding strategy, can boost employee morale and motivation, ultimately contributing to higher levels of engagement. Employee satisfaction, strong employee branding also plays a role in building a positive image of the company in the market. When current employees share positive experiences either through word of mouth or social media this will enhance the company's reputation as a desirable employer, thereby attracting high-quality candidates who align with the organisation's values. Employer branding plays a very important role in talent retention; companies that are able to effectively communicate their values and create a supportive environment will be able to inspire loyalty and commitment among employees. This retention is critical as it reduces turnover costs and maintains organisational knowledge and continuity. Employer branding, companies can build a strong workforce, ensure long-term success and sustainability, and attract and retain top talent that contributes to a thriving organisational culture.

Employer Branding can be done with many strategies such as advancing potential, building a satisfying work culture, creating useful regulations, and so on. Many companies have not optimized their employer branding for their employees. Employer Branding can provide added value that can build attraction in two ways, namely instrumentally and symbolically. Both can increase comfort and influence the company's image externally. Image can be reflected through all aspects within the organization. Starting from the logo, company location, place arrangement, product quality, service quality and image can also be reflected in the behavior and attitudes of the organization's employees towards customers and stakeholders.

Organizations that are able to implement good employer branding are those that succeed in giving a positive impression to individuals. This is because individuals tend to have a more favorable view of organizations that offer competitive employer branding, including various benefits, rewards, career development opportunities, and a comfortable working environment (Pološki Vokić et al., 2023). Individuals' perceptions of an organization play a major role in their decision to find work in that company (Dinnie, 2007). Other research also shows that organizations with strong and positive employer branding will increase levels of employee satisfaction, commitment and retention, due to the existence of an unconscious positive image in the minds of employees (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021). This also contributes to higher levels of employee engagement and increased loyalty (Karlina, 2023).

The concept of Employer Branding provides an interesting perspective on employee retention. The ability to retain employees is important for the success of a company (Asuman, Matungolo, Francis Kasekende, 2018). In its development, previous researchers noted that Employer Branding helps reduce employee turnover (Asuman, Matungolo, Francis Kasekende, 2018). In addition, business success depends on the company's ability to attract and retain employees, so Employer Branding is important for retaining employees (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Companies find that effective employer branding can produce competitive advantages and help employees internalize company values and help retain employees (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016).

Employee retention is an important aspect in the employer branding concept. Employer branding is one of the three important points of employee retention (Cascio, 2014). Previous researchers stated that employer branding contributes to reducing employee turnover (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005; Knox & Freeman, 2006). Bussin & Mouton (2019) stated that employees with high employer branding scores are less likely to actively look for new jobs and consider leaving the organization

if approached by another company. Employer branding was popularized by Ambler & Barrow (1996), and is defined as a series of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by a job from a company (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). So it can be said that employer branding is a series of processes to build a unique employee identity and a concept of organizational values that differentiates the company from.

In previous studies it was found that Employer Branding is one of the factors that influences employee retention (Ciptagustia et al., 2023) (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018) (Ekhsan et al., 2021) (Yameen et al., 2021) (Asuman, Matungolo, Francis Kasekende, 2018; Hadiyat, 2021) Employer branding is defined as a package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by work and identified with the organization where they work. This identity functions to create a positive image that the company is a desirable place to work for both current and prospective employees, as well as being a distinctive value that differentiates the employer from its competitors. (Citta et al., 2020) The primary role of employer branding is to provide a coherent framework for management to simplify and focus priorities, increase productivity and enhance employee recruitment, retention and commitment processes.

In the midst of today's highly competitive business competition, it is no longer only characterized by capturing the market (market share) and profits (profit share), but also includes competition in capturing the best employee candidates and retaining them who will later become important assets for the company. Especially in the current era, namely the era where the millennial generation is starting to make its presence felt in the work environment. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) released in 2016, of the total workforce in Indonesia which reached more than 160 million people, 40% of them were millennials, around 62.5 million people to be precise. Seeing that the millennial population will soon replace the position of generation X workers, it is very important to know their involvement in professional careers in companies. The millennial generation according to (Martin & Tulgan, 2002) is the generation born from 1978 to 2000 who in the world of work have the character of wanting to change jobs because this generation was born and grew up in an era of technological development which made it easier to find information, more creative and innovative. This generation is very concerned about the advantages or benefits that are more than just the salary that they will get from a company, such as facilities, work comfort, training and personal development.

One of the tools to help every company achieve competitive advantage compared to competitors is through employee engagement (Baumruk, 2004). Employee engagement is considered a positive motivational condition related to work that is characterized by enthusiasm, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). Dale Carnegie Indonesia, the largest performance-based training institution in the world, initiated a study entitled Employee Engagement Among Millennials in 2016 which was conducted with around 1,200 employees (millennials and non-millennials) in 6 big cities, namely Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, Makassar, Balikpapan, and Medan. The result turns out that only 25% of the millennial workforce is fully engaged with the company where they work. Joshua Siregar, Director, National Marketing, Dale Carnegie Indonesia, stated that 9% of millennial employees refuse to be involved/disengaged with the company. Even greater, namely 66% of the millennial workforce is only partially engaged, from partially-engaged there is a possibility of moving to disengaged if the company does not quickly take anticipatory steps (Dale Carnegie Indonesia, 2016). Looking at these phenomena and facts, it can be understood that millennial generation employees cannot be tied to a company for long. They continue to look for

other companies that can provide better services and benefits than the previous company. Creating good working relationships between companies and employees is now a major concern. Employment relationships

are related to agreements made regarding what the company offers and how employees can contribute to achieving company goals.

One way that companies can build working relationships that can make employees bond with the company is by implementing the employer brand concept. (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011) revealed that the employer brand is recognized as a powerful tool to make employees attached to the company. Companies that use employer branding with an external or internal approach have a tendency to create employee value propositions that can provide a reference for employee engagement and recruitment communication strategies (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011). Employer brand is a concept for forming a company's identity as an employer which includes company values, systems, policies and culture in order to attract, motivate and retain current and potential employees (Melin, 2005).

Employer branding strategies provide significant long-term benefits to companies as they influence an organisation's ability to attract, retain and engage top talent. By building a positive employer image and communicating its values, culture and commitment to employee well-being, a company can attract quality employees who align with its vision. Effective employer branding also encourages long-term commitment, loyalty and engagement from employees, which reduces turnover rates and recruitment and training costs. Loyal and engaged employees tend to be more productive and contribute more to the company's success. In the long run, this strategy not only ensures the flow of quality talent, but also creates a strong and loyal work culture, where employees grow with the company and become ambassadors that strengthen the organisation's reputation, supporting business sustainability and competitive advantage.

## **METHODS**

The research design used is the *literature review method*. Literature study is research carried out by researchers by collecting a number of articles or journals related to research problems and objectives. This technique is carried out with the aim of revealing various theories that are relevant to the problems being faced/researched as reference material in discussing research results (Snyder, 2019). The data analysis used is by using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is one way to get results by conducting data analysis which aims to identify patterns or determine themes through data that has been collected by research. The stages of data analysis include (1) Compare, finding similarities between several pieces of literature; (2) Contrast, finding differences between several pieces of literature and drawing conclusions and (3) Criticize, giving your own opinion based on the sources you read (Snyder, 2019). *Literature review* research is a synthesis of primary research studies that present a particular topic with a specific and clear clinical problem formulation, explicit and reproducible search procedures, linking the critical survey process in research selection, and communicating results and implications.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Employer Branding**

Human resource management applies the principle of branding through the concept of employer branding, which according to Dinnie (2007) is a package of

economic and psychological functions provided by the company in accordance with the job offered. Employer branding focuses not only on attracting talent, but also on the long-term

development of employees, with the main goal of building a positive image of the company. The company develops employees through training and skills development, so that they feel more connected, concerned, and contribute to the company's progress. When employees feel valued and empowered, their loyalty to the company increases, which not only strengthens the company's image but also reduces employee turnover. Strong employer branding creates a work environment that supports productivity, innovation and growth, and makes employees effective ambassadors for the organisation.

The term employer brand was first introduced to the general public in 1990 by Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler in the Journal of Brand Management. According to (Ambler & Barrow, 1996), an employer brand is a package of functional, economic and psychological benefits offered by a job and is identified with the company that offers the job to its employees. The main role of an employer brand is to present a clear framework to company management to simplify and focus on certain priorities, increase productivity and develop employee recruitment, retention and commitment (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Meanwhile, according to (Melin, 2005) employer brand is the concept of forming a company's identity as an employer which includes the values, systems, policies and culture of the company in order to attract, motivate and retain current and potential employees. (Melin, 2005) explains that the strength of an employer brand is initially an attractive job offer from a company. The more famous and prominent a company is, the higher and better the benefits, compensation, work environment, work-life balance and corporate culture that the company offers (Melin, 2005). The goal of an employer brand is to hire the right employees and remove inappropriate employees from the company. When companies start to take active steps in employer branding, retaining all employees is not the goal of the employer brand, but retaining the right employees with high productivity is the main goal of implementing the employer brand. Apart from that, the aim of implementing the employer brand concept is to attract, hire, engage and retain the best-right talent and increase company profitability through work effectiveness and employee productivity by employing the right and ideal quality employees (Collins, 2001; Amelia, 2017).

The importance of building employer branding can provide benefits to a company.

- 1) Can build a positive company reputation. Employer branding is created to promote the company to job seekers or prospective employees.
- 2) Can attract the attention of prospective new employees. Company branding has a significant impact on recruitment activities.
- 3) Can attract potential employees. Apart from attracting the attention of as many prospective employees as possible, the main aim of the branding strategy is to attract potential employees.
- 4) Company reputation is more important than salary. Salary value is very important for prospective employees. Salary can be said to be one of the elements most considered when a prospective employee applies to a company. But apparently, there are surveys that show that as many as 50% of employee candidates will not work for a company with a bad reputation even though the salary is higher. The survey can be a sign that branding strategies will greatly influence prospective employee references.
- 5) Can reduce advertising costs. Building an employee branding strategy is very important to reduce advertising or promotion costs about the company to prospective employees. Companies with a stronger brand than competitors will reduce at least 43% of recruitment costs. This proves that employer

branding is not only about attracting employees but can also be financially profitable for the company. 6) Can maintain employee loyalty (Citta et al., 2020) .

Several researchers have identified many elements that are important for a positive assessment of an employer, especially a good company image/reputation and well-known products/services, internal and external communications of the company (Pološki Vokić et al., 2023) , employer attractiveness, image employers, pre-existing Location-preferences (Hein et al., 2023) (Grigore et al., 2023) , dimensions of organizational commitment such as affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021) , employee retention and employee engagement (Ciptagustia et al., 2023) , Organizational Culture, Employee Engagement, and Person-Organization Fit (Karlina, 2023) , Training and development (Bharadwaj, 2023) , intention to apply (Junça Silva & Dias, 2022) .

Other research was conducted by (Kanchana Vinoth, 2015) regarding factors influencing employer brand, perspective of employees in the IT industry. The results of this research explain that companies with strong employer brands have a natural advantage over their competitors. Employees are attracted to companies for a number of reasons. There are obvious attractions such as financial rewards, job security and opportunities for career development, but employers who offer a good work/life balance, strong company culture, quality training and development packages and flexible working conditions can be equally attractive. From several previous studies, it can be understood that employer brands influence employee engagement as stated by (Amelia, 2017) that employer brands are an HR concept or strategy to increase employee engagement (Amelia, 2017). Apart from that, (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011) also stated that the employer brand is recognized as a powerful tool for making employees engaged in the company (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011).

#### b. Employer Branding – Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is explained as employees' feelings of emotional commitment to the company and the actions taken to ensure the company's success, and if employees already have a sense of attachment or engagement then they will show a sense of care, dedication and high enthusiasm and focus on achieving company goals. When employees feel involved in the company, they will work as hard as possible to complete their work and will even do the work voluntarily because they are always there for the company and are fully committed to the company.

In the articles (Wowor et al., 2022) (Gupta et al., 2021) (Špoljarić & Tkalac Verčič, 2022) there is a significant positive relationship between Employer Brand and employee engagement. The stronger the employer branding, the greater the employee engagement will be; The weaker the employer branding, the more employee engagement will be reduced. Many strategies are used by businesses to gain a competitive advantage and achieve operational excellence. Employee engagement is very important in the service industry, because the success of a company depends on the quality of service provided by employees who act as brand ambassadors (Porkodi & Jahan, 2022) . Therefore, strategic decisions are necessary for employers to recruit, retain, and engage employees (Porkodi & Jahan, 2022) (Karlina, 2023).

Research on employer brands on employee engagement has been conducted by several researchers, including (Kunerth & Mosley 2011), entitled Applying employer brand Management to Employee Engagement, this research was conducted on 104 companies that are actively developing employer brands, the research results show

There is a tendency for companies that use employer branding with an

external or internal approach, especially beverage companies in Europe, namely Coca-Cola Hellenic, to have created an employee value proposition that can provide a reference for employee engagement and recruitment communication strategies. Understanding and implementing employer branding strategies gives organizations the tools to not only utilize quality employees, but also facilitate them in engaging and retaining them. Employer branding strategies ensure an increased sense of ownership and alignment of employee goals. Values congruence in the form of individual organizational congruence also ensures that employees believe that they are valued throughout the organization and can go the “extra mile” to achieve organizational goals. By building a strong identity as an attractive employer, organizations can increase their attractiveness to prospective employees and strengthen existing loyalty (Chawla, 2020). In research (Kristianto & Handoyo, 2020)

Based on the results of hypothesis testing carried out in this research, it can be said that there is an influence, both direct and indirect, from employer branding on employee retention through employee engagement. Furthermore, the indirect influence between employer branding on employee retention through employee engagement is 31.7% and the direct influence is 68.3% so that if the influence of the mediation or indirect model is compared, it decreases or is smaller than the direct influence, it can be said that there is a partial mediation. (Sagita M et al. 2018) stated that there is a significant and positive relationship between employer branding and employee engagement, and there is a significant and negative relationship between employer branding and employee engagement and turnover intention. So it can be said that employer branding with employee engagement will increase employee retention because of both. This variable reduces turnover intention. If we look at the descriptive results of this research, it is found that the employer branding perceived by professional millennials who work in e-commerce is in the high category, in line with the descriptive results of employee retention, where the majority are in the high category, and also in line with the categorization score of employee engagement, where the majority are in the high category. high categorization.

Based on research (Kristianto & Handoyo, 2020) on e-commerce companies, research results prove that the e-commerce industry wants to retain employees (employee retention), especially young employees or the millennial generation, by paying attention to employer branding and employee engagement. Employees who are in the millennial generation age range have characteristics that are quite different from previous generations because they grew up in the era of globalization, global warming, and the development of social media so that the millennial generation has high expectations of results, likes new opportunities, likes meaningful social interactions, want a balance between work and personal life, adapt quickly, and have an open mind (Aruna & Anitha, 2015).

#### c. Employer branding – Employee Retention

Employee retention (retaining employees) plays an important role in this process, because employee knowledge and skills are the core of a company's ability to be competitive so that employee retention is very important for the function and competitiveness of the company. Organizations become more effective if they maintain high employee retention (Kyndt et al., 2009). Apart from that, Hee & Ling (2011) stated that companies must have a strategy to increase employee retention. If a company ignores employee retention, it can have an impact on reducing the company's performance, productivity and effectiveness (Mathis & Jackson, 2012). Therefore, employee retention needs to be paid attention to by organizations.

Research (Hee, 2019) says that companies must design strategies to increase employee retention. If companies neglect employee retention, this can lead to a decline in company performance, productivity and effectiveness. Therefore, it is important for organizations to pay attention to employee retention. Retaining employees has a significant role in this process, because the knowledge and skills possessed by employees are essential to the company's ability to remain competitive. Therefore, employee retention is crucial for a company's functioning and competitiveness (Kyndt et al., 2009). Employee retention is the key to employer branding in an employee retention strategy, employer branding is the main focus for success, employer branding can increase employee loyalty and strengthen the company's image as an attractive place to work (Cascio, 2014). Previous researchers stated that employer branding contributes to reducing employee turnover (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), (Berthon et al., 2005). According to (Bussin & Mouton, 2019), employees who have a positive perception of employer branding are less likely to actively look for a new job and consider leaving the organization if contacted by another company.

In previous studies it was also found that Employer Branding is one of the factors that influences employee retention (Bharadwaj, 2023) (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018) (Yameen et al., 2021). Training and development as an important dimension of employer branding includes providing online training courses, conferences, seminars and workshops, and career advancement opportunities to employees, among others. It has been suggested that employees feel happy when their organization spends money on their training and development because they get the opportunity to interact with experts from various fields (Bharadwaj, 2023) based on research results of employee branding dimensions namely training and development has a positive relationship with employee retention (Bharadwaj, 2023). The dimension of Employer Branding, namely Development Value, has the highest relationship with employee retention (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018). Development value is an important value for employees because it can increase employee retention.

In research (Kristianto & Handoyo, 2020), this research found that Employer Branding has a significant and positive influence on Employee Retention among millennial professionals in the Indonesian e-commerce industry. It can be concluded that if there is an increase in employer branding there will also be an increase in employee retention. In general, the Millennial Generation has different characteristics from previous generations. The Millennial generation tends to challenge new opportunities and management decisions, balance work and personal life, and they want to be involved in decision making, meaningful social interactions, so the millennial generation tends to behave like investors rather than assets (Aruna & Anitha, 2015). Based on this, special handling needs to be done by companies to retain the millennial generation to remain in the company, namely by adjusting HR strategies. The need for this adjustment is because the millennial generation has different motivation factors. In research conducted by (Ozcelik, 2015) the millennial generation is interested in companies that provide flexible working hours, a good working environment, diverse jobs, career advancement, and continuous learning so that they can improve internal branding which is part of the employer branding strategy. Then, other research from (Biswas & Suar, 2016) states that increasing employer branding can increase employee retention.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Many people say that the progress or decline of a company depends on the leader,



however, no matter how good a leader is, the company will not run smoothly without the help of employees. Human Resources (HR) is a company's main asset, and having the best HR is the key to success. When a company treats employees as valuable assets that need to be taken care of, this will have a positive impact on employee progress and morale. Employees who work sincerely, have high passion, and a sense of belonging to the company will have a very positive impact on the organisation. This is why employer branding is so important for companies, especially in attracting top talent. When employer branding is well implemented, the company will become the main destination for new graduates and experienced workers, so there is no need to struggle to find the best talent. The company also has a strong bargaining power as a workplace targeted by job seekers. Successful employer branding makes employees feel at home, comfortable, and safe, both for the present and the future, so that companies do not have to deal with employee turnover problems. Employer branding should be of particular concern to companies in the midst of fierce competition for talent, and it is not just the responsibility of the HR division, but all employees, from superiors to subordinates. In an era of increasing global skills shortages, companies with strong employer branding have a natural advantage over competitors. Employees are attracted to a range of factors, from financial rewards, job security, to work/life balance, strong company culture, quality training, and flexible working conditions, all of which are equally attractive to job seekers.

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