Building Employee Brand Equity to influence Organization Attractiveness and Firm Performance

Neerja Kashive[1] & Vandana Tandon Khanna[2]

[1] VES's Institute of Management Studies and Research, India

[2] K. J Somaiya Institute of Management studies & Research, India

Correspondence: Neerja Kashive, VES's Institute of Management Studies and Research, India. E-mail: nirja.kashive@ves.ac.in

Abstract

This paper explores the various dimension of Internal Branding like training, orientation and briefing and Brand supporting behavior (like brand allegiance, brand endorsement and brand citizen behaviour).It further explores impact of Internal branding (IB), Brand commitment (BC) and Brand supporting behavior BSB) on Organization attractiveness (OA) and Firm Performance (FP). The study shows that Internal Branding (IB), Brand commitment (BC) and brand supporting behavior (BSB) impact Organizational attractiveness. While Internal Branding (IB), Brand commitment (BC) and brand supporting behavior (BSB) do not impact directly firm performance, but organizational attractiveness do have significant impact on perception of firm performance among employees.

Keywords: employee branding, employee branding equity, internal branding (IB), brand commitment (BC) and Brand supporting behavior (BSB), brand citizen behaviour (BCB), brand allegiance (BA), brand endorsement (BE), organization attractiveness (OA).

1. Introduction

Internal branding is considered as reason for organization success by ensuring brand promise to fulfill customer expectation which is communicated to them (Drake et al., 2005). Various authors like Boone, 2000; Buss, 2002) have worked on the internal branding efforts of various companies like Southwest, Sears, BASF, IBM and E & Y. These examples show the power of an informed workforce committed to delivering the brand promise. Few studies have explored the evidence between internal branding and employee brand commitment (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005) while others have seen connection for internal branding and employee brand loyalty (Papasolomou & Vrontis, 2006a,b).

When you belong to organization having strong employer brand it creates strong organization identification and increase the employee self-esteem (Lievens et al., 2007). According to Holland, 1997 Constant delivery of the brand promise create more trust and loyalty ensuring a steady supply of applicants (Holliday, 1997) and maintains high commitment and high performance in employees by ensuring the organization's credibility (Burack et al., 1994). It attracts right kind of talent with right organization fit and provide assurance to the prospective employee the for great work experience as per their expectance (Bhatnagar & Srivatava,2008).This also help in building a psychological contract between employee and employer which leads more brand advocacy. According to Mitchell, 2002, "on- brand behavior" among employees should be emphasized by all in the organization. The employee behavior should be managed to create consistency with desired company brand positioning (Henkel et al., 2007). Thus corporate brand or reputation management has been conceptualized as "living values internally and promoting those same values externally" (Davies et al., 2004).

This study is exploring the internal brand management efforts from employees and empirically exploring the relationship between internal branding and employee's perception about organization attractiveness and firm performance and also the relationship between various brand attitudes like brand commitment, and brand supporting behavior. To achieve the objective a quantities survey was conducted with 550 employees from major IT companies was carried out.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Brand and Employee Brand Equity

The employee brand is defined as "the image presented to an organization's customers and other stakeholders through its employees" (Mangold & Miles, 2007, p. 77).This image can either be positive or negative depending upon the employee understanding about the brand image and are motived to live the brand. King and Grace (2009) formulated employee –based brand equity and postulated that it impacts consumer-based brand equity as well as financial-based brand equity. Two important aspect is provided by employee brand to the employees (Miles & Mangold, 2005). First, employee must know and understand the brand image of the company and secondly they should showcase the brand related behavior to deliver the brand image. The extent to which psychological contracts are upheld in employees' minds impacts their desire to deliver the organization's expected brand image (Mangold & Miles, 2007). The extent to which these message systems send consistent messages determines the strength and nature of the employee brand (Greene et al., 1994; Mitchell, 2002; Robinson, 1996).

2.2 Internal Branding

According to Foster et al. (2010) the main focus of internal branding is on how the employee in the organization adopt the brand concept and live up to the promises that the brand should deliver to its external stakeholders. Thus the aim is to teach and communicate the brand values to employees (Foster et al., 2010; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Punjaisri et al., 2009). Punjaisri et al. (2009) say the internal branding can positively affect how employees identify with the brand. Mosley (2007) suggest that internal branding is about shaping the perceptions that employees have about the brand. It is suggested that there is a clear link between corporate branding and internal branding (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011, Foster et al., 2010). According to Foster et al. (2010) internal branding can, along with employer branding, be seen as developments or extensions of corporate branding. Kotler et al. (2009); Knox and Freeman (2006) and de Chernatony and McDonald (2003) agrees that everyone in an organization needs to "live the brand" to achieve complete success.

According to Punjaisri et al.,(2009) the quality of service and the promises are ultimately dependent on the employees who come into direct contact with consumers. Maxwell & Knox, (2009) argue that employer branding is an effective way of pursuing that employee attitude and behavior are in alliance with the corporate brand. Kimpakorn and Tocquer(2009) further suggest that when the brand values are communicated a good way to employees it is likely that they become committed to the brand and behave in accordance with organization's values. Thus according to Foster et al.(2010) employer branding can help organizations to attract the right employees that possesses values that matches a corporate brand.

According to Wallace and de Chernatony (2009) leadership can play important role for employees to live the brand .Wallace and de Chernatony (2009) promote leadership as a condition for employees to live the brand, while Punjaisri et al. (2008) emphasize the role of internal communication and HR training as important mechanism for internal brand management. Burmann et al. (2001) also suggested internal communication, HR practices and good leadership as important factor which influence employee brand commitment. The internal brand management seeks to internalize the brand so that employees are more prepared to fulfil the explicit and implicit promises inherent in the brand (Berry, 2000; Miles and Mangold, 2004). According to King and Grace (2012) organization socialization, relationship orientation and receptiveness are three important internal branding factor which affect brand commitment. Corace (2007) feels that how you treat your employee i.e respect and dignity will lead to brand citizen behavior. Strong relationship between the organization and its employee are increases employee job motivation (Bell et al.,2004) as the organization employee relationship is considered by employees to be an important, if not the most important, aspect of the working environment (Herington et al., 2009).

2.3 Brand Commitment (BC)

As internal branding plays important role in shaping a common understanding of the brand across the entire organization and many studies have related to employee brand commitment (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Papasolomou and Vrontis(2006) have seen that internal branding decide employee brand loyalty and also their willingness to stay in the organization (Reichheld, 1996). Organization identification (OI) theory has a more cognitive approach while the organization commitment (OC) focusses on the emotional bonding with the employee (Edward, 2005). Thus according to (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002) organization commitment looks at the emotional attachment of employee with the organization. And thus brand identification will give rise to brand commitment (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Cheney and Tompkins, 1987) and employee commitment leads to brand loyalty (Brown & Peterson, 1993; Pritchard et al., 1999; Reichers, 1985).

If the employee feels that their relationship with the organization is positive worthy of maintaining then only the employee will show high level of organization commitment. Thus organization commitment plays a crucial role in determining organization success(Morgan & Hunt,1994) as feeling of belongingness amongst employee helps them to work beyond their job role to achieve success at their job(Castro et al., 2005). Further he suggested that commitment leads to employee taking extra efforts and showcase desired performance. Hence employees, who are satisfied with their work environment tend to, or have a desire to, reciprocate (Wayne et al., 1997; Castro et al., 2005). According to (Deluga, 1994 and Wayne et al., 1997) perception of fairness and level of support provide by the organization leads to behavior of employee beyond what is expected out of them. (Deluga, 1994; Beckett-Camarata et al., 1998). Hence such behavior which are non- prescribed or beyond the expectations and are aligned with the brand values and focused toward positive results or outcomes are called brand citizen behaviour. According to Burmann et al. (2009) internal branding efforts leads to brand commitment (BC) and brand citizen behavior (BCB). Thus brand commitment can be defined as the psychological contract or feeling of belongingness an employee shows towards his or her organization.

2.4 Brand Supporting Behavior (BSB)

The aim of internal branding efforts is to align employee behavior with desired brand identity (Tosti and Stotz 2001).When defining employee loyalty, employee satisfaction, employee engagement or employee turnover which are one-directional in nature lacks the holistic approach Hence Zeithaml et al. (1996) suggested that behavior loyalty can be showcased in many ways such as recommendation, word of mouth and repeat patronage. According to King and Grace (2012) thus employee satisfaction may be linked to past behavior or can provide future productive behavior to very less extend. Therefore brand related behavior can predict future orientation of employees in better way. Henkel et al's (2007, p. 311) conceptualize behavior branding 'as any type of verbal and nonverbal employee behavior that directly or indirectly determines brand experience and brand value'. Further, Bloemer and Odekerken-Schr ö der (2006) identified several behavioral attributes that leads to employees behavior loyalty. These include employee's proactive communication with the outside stakeholders and employee's desire to remain with the organization. In addition to retention and positive word of mouth, Morhart et al. (2009) identify participation and 'in-role', or brand compliant, behavior as being appropriate measures of employee brand behavior.

2.4.1 Brand Endorsement (BE)

Employee external communication or promotion of the brand to others is considered to be another important aspect of brand supporting behavior. Thus brand endorsement can be stated as employee's talks positively about their organization (brand) and are ready to recommend their organization (brand) to others. Shinnar et al. (2004, p. 273) encourages the idea that only those employees who have emotional bond and feeling of belongingness to their organization (brand) can provide positive word of mouth. Thus employee personal recommendation do lead to better organizational results such reducing recruitment costs(Morehart,2001), better employee performance (Kirnan et al., 1989) and richer knowledge of employment (Williams et al., 1993) which subsequently impacts organizational socialization.

2.4.2 Brand Allegiance (BA)

Employee brand allegiance is defined as employee's intention to keep working in his/her present organization (brand). This intention is considered to be a crucial decision, given the significant economic impact caused for losing knowledgeable employees (Ramlall, 2004). This also helps in developing crucial talent where employee possess the right kind of skill and knowledge to which creates competitive advantage needed for improved productivity as suggested by Snell and Dean, 1992). Service brand success solely depends on retaining such productive employee who showcase these brand related behaviors. This will lead to more cost effective service brand. Thus Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) says that an employee intention to continue with the organization tells about their brand loyalty and living up to the brand expectations. This future-orientated thinking has been realized in the theory of reasoned action, which suggests that the best predictor of future behavior is the intention to act (Schiffman et al., 2001).

2.4.3 Brand Citizenship Behavior (BCB)

When employees are satisfied with their work environment they show behavior which are beyond the expectation of their job role (Beckett Camarata et al., 1998). These brand consistent behaviors are employee behavior that is often non-prescribed, but aligned with the brand values of the organization (brand) as suggested by Burmann et al. (2009). The importance of such brand supporting is that it is discretionary (Castro et al., 2005), still considered to be crucial for organization outcome like productivity (Deluga, 1994). *Brand consistent behavior*, or brand citizenship behavior as coined by Burmann and Zeplin (2005), is considered to be 'the pivotal

(behavioral) constituent for successful internal brand management' (Burmann et al., 2009, p. 266). Burmann and Zeplin (2005) suggested that there is very little difference between brand- related behaviors as compared to organization-related behavior. And modified the concept of organization citizen behavior (OCB) to brand citizen behavior (BCB) and the only difference between two is that OCB has internal focus while BCB has external focus.

H1: Internal Branding (IB) have positive effect on Brand commitment (BC).

H2: Internal Branding (IB) have positive effect on Brand supporting behavior (BSB).

H3: Brand Commitment (BC) have positive effect on Brand supporting behavior (BSB).

2.5 Organizational Attractiveness

From the concept of 'employer branding' comes a new concept 'employer attractiveness'. Its implication are studied in many areas like vocational behaviour (Soutar & Clarke, 1983), recruitment (Gatewood et al., 1993), managerial psychology (Jurgensen, 1978; Collins &Stevens, 2002), external communication (Bergstrom et al., 2002) and marketing management (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Gilly & Wolfinbarger, 1998; Ambler, 2000; Ewing et al., 2002). Berthon et al. (2005) defined 'employer attractiveness' as the benefit a potential employees sees for working for an organization. Many studies have confirmed that potential employees feeling of attraction during the stage of recruitment affected by his perception about the job or organization characteristics such as pay, opportunities for advancement, location, career programmes, or organizational structure (Cable &Graham, 2000; Highhouse et al., 1999; Honeycutt & Rosen, 1997; Lievens, Decaesteker, Coetsier, & Geirnaert, 2001; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Turban & Keon, 1993). Many researchers feels that the final decision to apply to the organization does depend upon the applicant overall impression about the organization and its attractiveness. (e.g.Belt & Paolillo, 1982; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Rynes, 1991). According to (Van Hoye, 2008) recommendation intention are the intention by the employee to recommend their organization to others for place of work. Word of mouth as source of recruitment can play vital role in building organization attractiveness (Van Hoye, 2012) and can impact post hire outcomes like job satisfaction, performance and chances to quit (Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Zottoli & Wanous, 2000).

3. Hypothesis

H4: Internal Branding (IB) have positive effect on organizational attractiveness (OA).

H5: Brand Commitment (BC) have positive effect on organizational attractiveness (OA).

H6: Brand supporting behavior (BSB) have positive effect on organizational attractiveness (OA).

3.1 Firm Performance

According to Fulmer et al. (2003) whatever time is spend to build employee engagement activities is a worthwhile investment. As positive reputation is difficult to imitate and are unique which leads to increase competitive advantage (Robert & Dowling, 2002).Thus even though additional cost is needed in employee friendly HR practices the benefits are far reaching Fulmer et al. (2003). Hence creating right organization culture with positive employee behavior is not very easy but those organization are continuously working for it will not regret in near future (Romero, 2004). Joyce (2003) used content analysis of website of Fortune's 100 companies and found that they all have employee development programs, diversity initiatives and fun working averment which distinguished then from rest.

According to (Ballou et al., 2003; Fulmer et al., 2003) Fortune's 100 best companies have higher market value and better return that matched firm not on the list. Companies ranked in top one third of the list have higher market value than bottom one third of the list (Ballou et al., 2003). Fulmer et al. (2003) has shown that positive employee relation do lead to better performance (as measured by both accounting and market data: ROA and market-to-book value ratios).Thus being in a list of best employer is a strong marketing or employer branding toll which leads to better attraction and retention in long run(Joyce,2001).

H7: Internal Branding (IB) have positive effect on Firm Performance (FP).

H8: Brand Commitment (BC) have positive effect on Firm Performance (FP).

H9: Brand supporting behavior (BSB) have positive effect on Firm Performance (FP).

H10: Organization Attractiveness have positive effect on Firm Performance (FP).

4. Research Design

The questionnaire was administered on 800 employees of IT companies and 550 have filled it. Thus the

respondent rate was 68.75 %. The companies were chosen on the basis of NASSCOM top 20 IT-BPM employers in India 2014-15.Thus IT companies included mix of companies with very good reputation, with medium reputation and with not so good reputation. Thus the sample provided the mix of companies having different reputation. Demographic details of the respondents with respect to the age, gender, qualification and work experience were collected.

4.1 Questionnaire

Internal branding**(IB)** was measured by Punjaisri et al,(2009) having training with 4 items, orientation with 4 items, briefing with 2 items and brand identification with 5 items. Brand Commitment **(BC)** was measured by 5 items from King and grace (2012) scale. Brand Supporting Behavior **(BSB**) was be measured by King et al. (2012), 12 item scales having brand endorsement, brand allegiance and brand citizen behavior. Organizational attractiveness **(OA)** was measured by 3 items from Highhouse, Lievens and Sinar (2003). Respondent were ask to rate the items on the scale of five ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Firm Performance **(FP)** was measured by scale adopted from Chun (2001b).

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Frequencies distribution for Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Male	309	56.2	56.2	56.2
Valid	Female	241	43.8	43.8	100.0
	Total	550	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 gives gender distribution among the respondents surveyed. There are 56.2 % male and 43.8 % female.

Table 2. Frequencies distribution for Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	20-25 Years	225	40.9	40.9	40.9
	26-30	194	35.3	35.3	76.2
	31-35	67	12.2	12.2	88.4
Valid	36-40	51	9.3	9.3	97.6
	Above 40	13	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	550	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the distribution of age in the given respondents. Demographic details of the respondents shows that 40.9% are in age group of 20-25, 35.3 % are in age group of 26-30, 12.2 % in 31-35, 9.3 % in 36-40 and 2.4 %in above 40 years.

Table 3. Frequencies distribution for Designation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Senior	83	15.1	15.1	15.1
	Middle	278	50.5	50.5	65.6
Valid	Junior	189	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	550	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 shows the distribution of designation in the given respondents. 15.1 % are in senior level, 50.5 % are in middle level and 34.4 % are in junior level with respect to their designation.

Table 4. Frequencies distribution for total years of experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nil	5	.9	.9	.9
	< 1 Year	44	8.0	8.0	8.9
	1-5	280	50.9	50.9	59.8
	5-10	151	27.5	27.5	87.3
	Above 10	70	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	550	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the distribution of total years of experience. 0.9 % have no prior experience. 8.0% have less than 1 year, 50.9 % have between 1 to 5 years, 27.5% have between 5 to 10 years and 12.7 % have above 10 years in the given company.

Table 5. Frequencies distribution for Years of experience in the given company

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	< 1 Year	43	7.8	7.8	7.8
	1-3	327	59.5	59.5	67.3
	4-6	77	14.0	14.0	81.3
	7-9	62	11.3	11.3	92.5
	10 & above	41	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	550	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 shows the distribution of number of years of experience in the given company 7.8% have spent less than a year 59.5% between 1-3 years, 14.0% between 4-6 years, 11.3% between 7-9 years, 7.5% have spent above 10 years in the present organization they are working for.

5.2 Mean and Standard Deviation

Table 6. Mean and Std deviation

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training (T)	550	1.00	5.00	3.7223	.65809
Orientation (O)	550	1.00	5.00	3.6477	.70396
Briefing (Brief)	550	1.00	5.00	3.6536	.78437
Brand Commitment (BC)	550	1.00	5.00	3.8804	.78214
Brand Endorsement (BE)	550	1.00	5.00	3.8823	.67574
Brand Citizen Behaviour (BCB)	550	1.00	5.00	3.7552	.61507
Brand Allegiance (BA)	550	1.00	5.00	3.5427	.74106
Organizational Attractiveness (OA)	550	1.00	5.00	3.7388	.95954
Firm Performance (FP)	550	1.00	5.00	3.7242	.85554
Brand support Behaviour (BSB)	550	1.00	5.00	3.7267	.55757
Internal Branding (IB)	550	1.00	5.00	3.6745	.62330

Table 6 shows mean values. Internal Branding (IB) the cumulative mean value is 3.67 with training having the highest mean value of 3.72. Brand Commitment (BC) has mean value of 3.88 while Brand support Behaviour (BSB) have cumulative mean value of 3.72. Brand Endorsement (BE) having value of 3.88 and Brand Citizen Behaviour (BCB) having value of 3.75. While Organizational Attractiveness (OA) and Firm Performance (FP) have mean values of 3.73 and 3.72 respectively.

5.3 Reliability

From Table 7 it seen that the reliability values are good for all the variables namely IB, BC, BSB, OAin and FP and around 0.80.

Table 7. Summary of reliability test for employee branding

Sr .No	Variable Name	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Guttman Split-Half Coefficient
1	IB	10	0.864	0.816	0.810
2	BC	05	0.870	0.886	0.844
3	BSB	14	0.874	0.805	0.805
4	OA	03	0.898	0.894	0.803
5	FP	03	0.831	0.797	0.681

5.4 SEM

Figure 1 shows the path diagram for Employee brand equity
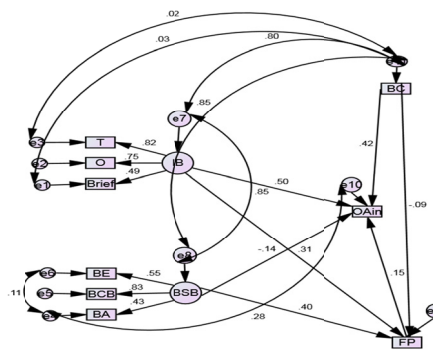
Figure 1. Path Diagram Employee brand equity

Table 8. Standardized regression weights

			Estimate
FP	<---	BSB	.397
FP	<---	IB	.313
FP	<---	BC	-.091
Brief	<---	IB	.486
O	<---	IB	.754
T	<---	IB	.819
BA	<---	BSB	.431
BCB	<---	BSB	.830
BE	<---	BSB	.546
OA	<---	IB	.500
OA	<---	BSB	-.143
OA	<---	BC	.422
OA	<---	FP	.153

Table 9. Maximum likelihood estimates

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
FP	<---	BSB	.756	.316	2.394	.017	
FP	<---	IB	.828	.321	2.582	.010	
FP	<---	BC	-.070	.080	-.874	.382	
Brief	<---	IB	1.000				
O	<---	IB	2.034	.192	10.620	***	

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
T	<---	IB	1.898	.174	10.925	***	
BA	<---	BSB	1.000				
BCB	<---	BSB	1.940	.201	9.672	***	
BE	<---	BSB	1.272	.144	8.804	***	
OA	<---	IB	1.266	.252	5.025	***	
OA	<---	BSB	-.261	.221	-1.180	.238	
OA	<---	BC	.310	.058	5.356	***	
OA	<---	FP	.146	.033	4.455	***	

Table 10. Covariances (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
e7	<-->	e8	1.520	.223	6.813	***	
e7	<-->	e11	3.534	.402	8.796	***	
e8	<-->	e11	5.264	.624	8.441	***	
e3	<-->	e11	.145	.265	.546	.585	
e1	<-->	e11	.203	.232	.876	.381	
e4	<-->	e10	1.433	.243	5.888	***	
e4	<-->	e6	1.081	.452	2.392	.017	

Table 8 gives the standardized regression weights of the model. From Table 9 it is seen that Orientation (O) and Training (T) have significant values for Internal branding (IB).Similarly Brand endorsement (BE) and Brand citizen behavior (BCB) contributes significantly for Brand Supporting Behavior (BSB).

From table 10 it seen that internal branding(IB) have correlation with brand supporting behavior(BSB) and brand commitment (BC) as e7 covariance is significant with e8 and e11. Brand commitment (BC) have correlation with brand supporting behavior (BSB) as e8 and e11 covariance is significant. Thus   H1, H2 and H3 are supported.

From table 9 it is seen that Internal Branding and Brand Commitment have significant effect on Organization attractiveness. Thus H4 and H5 are supported. Brand supporting behavior(BSB) do have significant impact on Organization attractiveness and H6 is not supported but brand allegiance(BA) is correlated to Organization attractiveness as e4 covariance is significant with e10 as seen in table 8.

Internal Branding (IB), Brand Commitment (BC) and Brand Supporting Behavior (BSB) all do not have significant effect on Firm Performance (FP). Thus H7, H8 and H9 are not supported. Organization Attractiveness (OA) do have significant effect on Firm Performance (FP).Thus H10 is supported.

Table 11: SEM Goodness of Fit Indices

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	29	19.473	16	.245	1.217
Saturated model	45	.000	0		
Independence model	9	2348.664	36	.000	65.241

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.163	.992	.978	.353
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	4.466	.361	.201	.288

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.992	.981	.999	.997	.998
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.020	.000	.046	.973
Independence model	.342	.330	.354	.000

Table 11 shows the model fit summary where CMIN/DF value 1.217 which should be less than 3.RMR is 0.163 and GFI value is 0.992 which is greater than or equal to 0.95 according to Hoyle (1995). The AGFI is 0.978 which should be greater than or equal to 0.08 as suggested by Chau and Hu (2001). NFI value is 0.992 which should be greater than 0.90 as per Hair et al. (1998).TLI value is 0.997 and CFI value is 0.998 as both should be greater than 0.90 according to Bagozzi and Yi (1988). RMSEA value is 0.02 which is less than 0.05 as suggested by MacCallum et al. (1996).

6. Managerial implication

As this study was conducted in the Asian context particularly in India, this study was extended beyond the western school of thoughts, validating this particular concept in different culture context. For many service firms, which are not only limited to IT industry, this study reaffirms the literature (Aurand et al., 2005; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Machtiger, 2004) that companies should work on their internal communication and training programs to create awareness and strengthen the brand values. Thus this study empirically suggest that internal branding helps management in enhancing employee's perception about organization attractiveness. Hence management have to take initiative to communicate to their employee about their brand values by imbibing these in their daily routine. This will help them to deliver on the brand promise.

Internal Branding (IB) and Brand Commitment (BC) have shown positive effect on organizational attractiveness (OA). Correct internal branding efforts will lead to greater brand commitment and these will lead to higher perception about attractiveness about the organization employees are working for. Brand supporting behavior (BSB) did not have effect on organization attractiveness.

Further to this the managers need to understand that external reputation with respect to becoming employer of choice or ranking themselves among best employer studies can also help in sustaining superior financial performance over a period of time and create competitive edge over the competitors. In this study also Internal Branding (IB) and Brand Commitment (BC) and Brand supporting behavior (BSB) do not have significant effect on Firm Performance (FP). But organization attractive have significant impact on perception of firm performance amongst current employees. To manage organization attractiveness employer have to work on internal branding efforts and build in bran commitment.

7. Limitation

This should be acknowledge that this study is focusing on the IT industry, which is one among many in the service sector. It may be possible that some service industry nay have specific features which may differ, thereby limiting the generalizability of this study to other service industries.

Thus we would suggest for replication of the relationship tested in this particular study in different service industry as well as in different culture contexts that would help further for generalizability of theory. Moreover a longitudinal study would also help in understanding the changing attitudes of employees in delivering the brand promise over period of years they spend in the organization.

8. Future Research

As discussed before the finding of this study suggest that many more areas for further research Human resource management literature have studied many individual aspect related to employee behavior , what is lacking is how these individual factor effect internal marketing communication. Also just as emotional bonds are created between consumer and brands, so to how strong bonds can be created between employee and the organization

brands. Hence the study of various area like person-job fit, person-organization fit, attitudes and values, motivation, emotional intelligence, psychological contract and behavior response to employer brand is important to further enrich the internal brand management literature and understand best practices in the service industry.

9. Conclusion

Finally the implication of this research to practitioner is that the internal brand efforts should include both marketing for inside communication and human resource for brand training, briefing and orientation. Employer can use internal branding management to enhance employee brand attitudes and distinctness to enhance pride toward the brand which will increase brand commitment. Employer need to understand the importance of training programs which have to be conducted on regular basis to enhance employee's brand related behaviors. Management should use communication, briefing, orientation, group meetings, notice boards and corporate magazines to communicate brand messages to their employees.

The importance of brand management in realizing financial benefits for the organization cannot be overlooked. With increased interest in financial performance, particularly in service industry, both practitioners and academics have realized the important role of employee behavior. Brand loyal employees, as demonstrated by brand commitment and showing brand citizen behavior has been shown in literature to be the result of the right internal brand management practices (e.g. internal communication and training).

Thus creating and managing the employee brand is quite difficult task and both employers and interested researchers need to clearly work on it and assign responsibility of it. Then the question arises who should be given responsibly of it, marketing or human resources? Some evidence reflect how brand can be promoted internally (e.g. Hickerman et al., 2005) and how advertisement and sponsorship may influence external promotion, but no consensus on the coordination of customer and employer branding. Various researcher have given different solutions to it like expanding the role of marketing or greater responsibility of HR professional in developing employee branding (e.g. Martin and Beaumont, 2003). While few advocate for a new role of reputation manager who would coordinate all activities of internal and external branding to all the stakeholders (e.g. Davieset al., 2002). But surely there are many advantages in managing the employee brand and there exit a great danger if no function accept the responsibility of managing the employee brand.

References

Ambler, T., & Barrow, S. (1996). The employer brand. *Journal of Brand Management, 4*(3), 185-206. https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.1996.42

Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004). Conceptualizing and Researching Employer Branding. *Career Development International, 9*(4&5), 505-510. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430410550754

Ballou, B., Godwin, N. H., & Shortridge, R. T. (2003). Firm value and employee attitudes on workplace quality. *Accounting Horizons, 17*(4), 329-341. https://doi.org/10.2308/acch.2003.17.4.329

Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management, 17*(1), 99-120. https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108

Beckett-Camarata, E. J., Camarata, M. R., & Barker, R. T. (1998). Integrating internal and external customer relationships through relationship management: A strategic response to a changing global environment. *Journal of Business Research, 41*(1), 71-81. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(97)00013-1

Bergstrom, A., Blumenthal, D., & Crothers, S. (2002). Why Internal Branding Matters: The Case of Saab. *Corporate Reputation Review, 5*(2/3), 133-142. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540170

Bergstrom, A., Blumenthal, D., & Crothers, S. (2002). Why internal branding matters: the case of Saab. *Journal of Communication Management, 5*(2/3), 133-142. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540170

Berry, L. L. (2000). Cultivating service brand equity. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 28*(1), 128-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070300281012

Berthon, Ewing, M. J., & Hah, L. L. (2005). Captivating Company: Dimensions of Attractiveness in Employer Branding. *International Journal of Advertising, 24*(2), 151-172.

Bhatnagar & Srivastava. (2010). Employer brand for talent acquisition: an exploration towards its measurement. The Journal of Business Perspective, *14*(1&2). https://doi.org/10.1177/0972262910014000103

Bloemer, J., & Odekerken-Schröder, G. (2006). The role of employee relationship proneness in creating employee loyalty. *International Journal of Bank Marketing, 24*(4), 252-264. https://doi.org/10.1108/02652320610671342

Boone, M. (2000). The importance of internal branding. *Sales & Marketing Management, 152*(9), 36-38.

Burmann, C., & Zeplin, S. (2005). Building brand commitment: A behavioural approach to internal brand building. *Journal of Brand Management*, *12*(4), 279-300.

Burmann, C., Zeplin, S., & Riley, N. (2009). Key determinants of internal brand management success. *Journal of Brand Management, 16*(4), 264-284. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540223

Buss, D. (2002). In good company. *Brandweek, 20*, 28-30. https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2008.6

Cable, D. M., & Graham, M. (2000). The determinants of organizational reputation: A job search perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21*, 929-947. https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-1379(200012)21:8<929::AID-JOB63>3.0.CO;2-O

Cable, D. M., & Turban, D. B. (2001). Establishing the dimensions, sources and value of job seekers' employer knowledge during recruitment. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in personnel and human resources management* (pp. 115-163). New York: Elsevier Science. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0742-7301(01)20002-4

Castro, C. B., Armario, E. M., & Sanchez del Rio, M. E. (2005). Consequences of market orientation for customers and employees. *European Journal of Marketing, 39*(5/6), 646-675. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560510590755

Collins, C. J., & Stevens, C. K. (2002). The relationship between early recruitment related activities and the application decisions of new labor-market entrants: a brand equity approach to recruitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 87*(6), 1121-1133. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1121

Corace, C. J. (2007). Engagement. Enrolling the quiet majority. *Organizational Development Journal, 25*(2), 171-175.

Davies, G. J., Chun, R., Da Silva, R., & Roper, R. (2004). A corporate character scale to assess employee and customer views of organisation reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review, 7*(2), 125-46. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540216

De Chenatony, L., & McDonald, M. (2003). *Creating Powerful Brands in Consumer, Service and Industrial Markets* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Deluga, R. J. (1994). Supervisor trust building, leader member exchange and organizational citizenship behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 67*(4), 315-327. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1994.tb00570.x

Drake, S. M., Gulman, M. J., & Roberts, S. M. (2005). *Light their Fire*. Dearborn, Chicago, IL.

Eberl, M., & Schwaiger, M. (2005). Corporate reputation: Disentangling the effects on financial performance. *European Journal of Marketing, 39*(7/8), 838. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560510601798

Edwards, M. R. (2010). An integrative review of employer branding and OB theory. *Personnel Review, 39*(1), 5-23. https://doi.org/10.1108/00483481011012809

Ewing, M.T., Pitt, L. F., De Bussy, N. M., & Berthon, P. (2002). Employment branding in the knowledge economy. *International Journal of Advertising, 21*(1), 3-22.

Fombrun, C., & Shanley, M. (1990). What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(2), 233-258. https://doi.org/10.2307/256324

Foster, C., Punjaisri, K., & Cheng, R. (2010). Exploring the relationship between corporate, internal and employer branding. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, *19*(6), 401-409. https://doi.org/10.1108/10610421011085712

Fulmer, I. S., Gerhart, B., & Scott, K. S. (2003). Are the100 best better? An empirical investigation of the relationship between being a great place to work and firm performance. *Personnel Psychology, 56*, 965-93. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2003.tb00246.x

Gatewood, R. D., Gowan, M. A., & Lautenschlager, G. J. (1993) corporate image, recruitment, image and initial job choice decisions. *Academy of Management Journal, 36*(2), 414-427. https://doi.org/10.2307/256530

Gilly, M. C., & Wolfinbarger, M. (1998). Advertising's internal audience. *Journal of Marketing, 62*(1), 69-88. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251804

Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2009). Of bricks and brands: From corporate to enterprise branding. *Organizational Dynamics, 38*(2), 117-130. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2009.02.008

Henkel, S., Tomczak, T., Heitmann, M., & Herrmann, A. (2007). Managing brand consistent employee behavior : Relevance and managerial control of behavioural branding. *Journal of Product and Brand Management, 16*(5), 310-320. https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420710779609

Herington, C., Johnson, L. W., & Scott, D. (2009). Firm-employee strength-a conceptual model. *Journal of Business Research*, *62*(11), 1062-107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.06.019

Highhouse, S., Zickar, M. J., Thorsteinson, T. J., Stierwalt, S. L., & Slaughter, J. E. (1999). Assessing company employment image: An example in the fast food industry. *Personnel Psychology, 52*, 151-172. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1999.tb01819.x

Joyce, K. E. (2003). Lessons for employers from Fortune's "100 Best". *Business Horizons, 46*(2), 77-84. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0007-6813(03)00013-2

Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Thoresen, C. J., & Patton, G. K. (2001). The Job satisfaction-job performance relationship :A qualitative and quantities review. *Psychological Bulletin, 127*, 376-407. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.3.376

Jurgensen, C. E. (1978). Job preferences (what makes a job good or bad?). *Journal of Applied Psychology, 63*(3), 267-276. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.63.3.267

Kimpakorn, N., & Tocquer, G. (2009). Employees' Commitment to Brands in the Service Sector: Luxury Hotel Chains in Thailand. *Brand Management, 16*(8), 532-544. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550140

King, C., & Grace, D. (2005). Exploring the role of employees in the delivery of the brand: A case study approach. *Qualitative Market Research, 8*(3), 277-95. https://doi.org/10.1108/13522750510603343

King, C., & Grace, D. (2012). Examining the antecedents of positive employee brand-related attitudes and behaviours. *European Journal of Marketing, 46*(3/4), 469-488. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090561211202567

Kirnan, J. P., Farley, J. A., & Geisinger, K. F. (1989). The relationship between recruiting source, applicant quality and hire performance: An analysis by sex, ethnicity and age. *Personnel Psychology, 42*(2), 293-308. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1989.tb00659.x

Knox, S., & Freeman, C. (2006). Measuring and managing employer brand image in the service industry. *Journal of Marketing Management, 22*(7/8), 695-716. https://doi.org/10.1362/026725706778612103

Kotler, P. (1991). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs.

Lievens, E., Hoye Greet, V., & Anseep, E. (2007). Organizational Identity and Employer Image: Towards a Unifying Framework. *British Joumal of MüTuigemiint, 18*(1), 45-59. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2007.00525.x

Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003). The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer. *Personnel Psychology, 56*, 75-101. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2003.tb00144.x

Maxwell, R., & Knox, S. (2009). Motivating employees to ''live the brand'': A comparative case study of employer brand attractiveness within the firm. *Journal of Marketing Management, 25*(9/10), 893-907. https://doi.org/10.1362/026725709X479282

Miles, S. J., & Mangold, G. (2004). A conceptualization of the employee branding process. *Journal of Relationship Marketing, 3*(2/3), 65-87. https://doi.org/10.1300/J366v03n02_05

Mitchell, C. (2002). Selling the brand inside. *Harvard Business Review, 80*(1), 99-105.

Morehart , K. K. (2001). How to create an employee referral program that really works. *HR Focus, 78*(1), 3.

Morhart, F. M., Herzog, W., & Tomczak, T. (2009). Brand-specific leadership: Turning employees into brand champions. *Journal of Marketing, 73*(September), 122-142. https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.73.5.122

Mosley, R. W. (2007). Customer experience, organisational culture and the employer brand. *Brand Management, 15*(2), 123-134. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550124

Papasolomou, I., & Vrontis, D. (2006b). Using internal marketing to ignite the corporate brand: the case of the UK retail bank industry. *Journal of Brand Management, 14*(1/2), 177. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550059

Punjaisri, K., & Wilson, A. (2007). The role of internal branding in the delivery of employee brand promise. *Journal of Brand Management, 15*(1), 57-70. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550110

Punjaisri, K., Evanschitzky, H., & Wilson, A. (2009). Internal branding: An enabler of employees' brand supporting behaviours. *Journal of Service Management, 20*(2), 209-226. https://doi.org/10.1108/09564230910952780

Ramlall, S. (2004). A review of employee motivation theories and their implications for employee retention within organizations. *Journal of American Academy of Business, 5*(1/2), 52-63.

Robert, P. W., & Dowling, G. R. (2002). Corporate reputation and sustained superior financial performance. *Strategic Management Journal, 23*, 1077-1093. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.274

Romero, E. J. (2004). Are the great places to work also great performers? *Academy of Management Executive, 18*(2), 150-152. https://doi.org/10.5465/AME.2004.13835923

Rynes, S. L. (1991). Recruitment, job choice, and post-hire consequences. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (2nd ed.. Vol. 2, pp. 399-444). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Schiffman, L., Bednall, D., Cowley, E., O'Cass, A., Watson, J., & Kanuk, L. (2001). *Consumer Behaviour*. Prentice Hall, Frenchs Forest.

Shinnar, R. S., Young, C. A., & Meana, M. (2004). The motivations for and outcomes of employee referrals. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 19*(2), 271. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-004-0552-8

Snell , S. A., & Dean Jr, J. W. (1992). Integrated manufacturing and human resource management: A human capital perspective. *Academy of Management Journal, 35*(3), 467-504. https://doi.org/10.2307/256484

Soutar, G. N., & Clarke, A. (1983). Examining business students' career preferences: A perceptual space approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 23*(1), 11-21. https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(83)90055-6

Tosti, D. T., & Stotz, R. D. (2001). Brand: Building your brand from the inside out. *Marketing Management, 10*(2), 28-33.

Van Hoye, G. (2008). Nursing recruitment: Relationship between perceived employer image and nursing employees" recommendations. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 63*, 366-375. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2008.04710.x

Van Hoye, G., & Lievens, F. (2005). Recruitment-related information sources and organizational attractiveness: Can something be done negative publicity? *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 13*, 179-187. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2389.2005.00313.x

Wallace, E., & De Chernatony, L. (2009). Service employee performance: its components and antecedents. *Journal of Relationship Marketing, 8*(2), 82-102. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332660902876612

Williams , C. R., Labig, C. E. J., & Stone, T. H. (1993). Recruitment sources and post-hire outcomes for job applicants and new hires: A test of two hypo theses. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(2), 163-173. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.78.2.163

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L., & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioural consequences of service quality. *Journal of Mark eting, 60*(2), 31-46. https://doi.org/10.2307/1251929