"Employer Branding as a Catalyst for Effective Talent Acquisition: Insights from Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd."

[A]Dr. Binoy Mathew

Associate Professor, Department of Management Studies (MBA), Centre for Post Graduate Studies, Muddenahalli, Chikkaballapura, Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belagavi, Karnataka State, India.
drbinoymathew@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9365-4374

[B] Mahendra Reddy L

Student , Department of Management Studies (MBA), Centre for Post Graduate Studies, Muddenahalli, Chikkaballapura, Visvesvaraya Technological University, Belagavi,
reddymahendra905@gmail.com,

Abstract

This study examines the role of employer branding in talent acquisition at Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., a social enterprise in Karnataka, India. Employer branding, as a strategic tool, enhances organizational attractiveness by communicating mission-driven values, work culture, and employee experiences. Through qualitative analysis of secondary data including recruitment materials, digital presence, and employee testimonials the research identifies key branding components such as purpose alignment, authentic storytelling, and digital engagement that influence candidate perception. Findings reveal that a strong Employer Value Proposition (EVP) improves recruitment efficiency, reduces hiring cycles, and attracts socially motivated talent. However, challenges like limited national visibility and internal-external brand alignment gaps persist. The study contributes to the underexplored domain of employer branding in Indian social enterprises, offering practical insights for HR strategies in purpose-driven organizations.

Keywords: Employer branding, Talent acquisition, Social enterprise, Employer Value Proposition (EVP), Recruitment strategies, Organizational perception, Human resource management, Purpose-driven careers.

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizations are under constant pressure to not only attract but also retain top-tier talent. This has led to a significant transformation in how companies approach talent acquisition, moving beyond traditional recruitment strategies toward more strategic and holistic practices. Among these, employer branding has emerged as a critical determinant in influencing potential candidates' perception of an organization. As organizations contend with growing competition, labor market dynamism, and increasing employee expectations, a well-articulated and authentic employer brand has become essential in securing a sustainable competitive advantage through human capital (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Theoretical Background

Employer branding refers to the strategic process of creating and promoting a distinct and attractive identity of the organization as an employer (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). It encompasses the values, culture, mission, and work environment of an organization that collectively contribute to how current and prospective employees perceive it. Drawing from the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm, employer branding can be seen as an intangible asset that enhances organizational performance by attracting, engaging, and retaining valuable human resources (Barney, 1991). Additionally, Signaling Theory plays a pivotal role in the employer branding context; it posits that potential employees interpret organizational signals such as communication styles, recruitment advertisements, and brand messaging to infer what it would be like to work for that organization (Spence, 1973).

Research has shown that employer branding has a direct impact on job seekers' intentions and decisions, with strong employer brands leading to higher attraction rates, reduced hiring costs, and better employee engagement (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005). Organizations that effectively manage their employer brand not only gain a favorable reputation in the job market but also succeed in fostering loyalty and alignment with organizational goals among their employees.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing relevance of employer branding in global and Indian contexts, many medium and small-scale enterprises, particularly in the social enterprise sector, continue to underutilize this strategic tool. Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., a socially driven organization working in livelihood enhancement and rural development, offers a valuable case to understand how employer branding strategies are being implemented and their subsequent impact on talent acquisition. The central problem lies in the limited exploration of how employer branding influences recruitment outcomes in such unique organizational settings. While large corporations have ample resources to design sophisticated employer branding campaigns, organizations like Navachethana Livelihoods often rely on intrinsic value propositions, such as purpose-driven work and community impact, to attract talent. Yet, the effectiveness of such non-traditional branding approaches remains under-researched.

Trends, Issues, and Challenges

Globally, the employer branding landscape is undergoing considerable change. With the advent of digital platforms, social media, and employer review websites like Glassdoor, employer brand visibility and transparency have increased manifold. In India, the increasing mobility of the workforce, growing emphasis on work-life balance, and demand for purpose-oriented employment among millennials and Gen Z have reshaped the talent acquisition paradigm (Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013).

However, despite these promising developments, several challenges persist. First, there is a lack of integration between employer branding and the overall human resource management strategy in many organizations. Secondly, measuring the return on investment (ROI) of employer branding efforts remains a complex task. For mission-driven organizations like Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., the challenge is even more pronounced due to limited budgets, lesser market visibility, and niche operational domains. Another pressing concern is the alignment between projected employer brand promises and actual employee experiences. Discrepancies between the two can lead to disillusionment, increased attrition, and reputational harm.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for both academic and practical reasons. Academically, it bridges a critical gap in the literature by exploring employer branding in the context of mid-sized Indian social enterprises an area relatively underexplored. Most extant research focuses on large corporations in developed markets, leaving the dynamics in social enterprises largely unexamined. By focusing on Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., this research contributes context-specific insights that may not only enrich the theoretical discourse on employer branding but also suggest how values-based branding strategies can be harnessed effectively in resource-constrained settings.

Practically, the findings of this study can offer strategic direction to similar organizations seeking to enhance their recruitment capabilities. By identifying best practices, key success factors, and potential pitfalls in employer branding implementation, the study equips HR practitioners and decision-makers with actionable knowledge. Moreover, understanding what employer branding elements resonate most with potential employees can help these organizations refine their messaging and talent engagement tactics.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this research is confined to the employer branding strategies and talent acquisition practices of Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., a Karnataka-based social enterprise focused on livelihood enhancement. The study draws insights from organizational documents, branding materials, HR policies, and interviews with HR personnel and new hires. The geographic focus is limited to southern India, specifically Karnataka, where the organization primarily operates.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study is qualitative and exploratory in nature, which limits the generalizability of findings to other sectors or geographic regions. Secondly, employee perceptions may be influenced by

various external factors not directly related to employer branding, such as job market conditions or peer recommendations, which are difficult to control. Finally, the rapidly changing nature of digital platforms means that employer brand perceptions can shift quickly, and this study captures only a snapshot of a dynamic process.

Review of Literature

1. Employer Branding

Employer branding has emerged as a crucial strategy in shaping organizational identity in the talent market. According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), employer branding is defined as "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company." It influences both prospective applicants' interest and current employees' loyalty, making it a strategic tool in human capital management. Organizations that successfully manage their employer brand tend to experience increased employee engagement and lower turnover, reinforcing their competitive advantage in the labor market.

Cable and Turban (2001) further elaborate that job seekers are more inclined to apply to organizations that have a favorable employer brand reputation, as it signals trustworthiness and prestige. Additionally, in the era of digital recruitment, employer branding has shifted from static brand messaging to dynamic brand experiences shared via social media and employee review platforms, making it more transparent and influential (Collins & Stevens, 2002).

2. Talent Acquisition

Talent acquisition is more than just filling vacancies; it is about finding the right people whose values and aspirations align with organizational goals. According to Breaugh (2008), effective talent acquisition focuses on employer–employee fit, long-term value, and cultural alignment. In this context, the employer brand becomes a powerful tool for communicating expectations, workplace values, and growth opportunities.

Research by Lievens and Highhouse (2003) shows that brand familiarity and perceived employer attractiveness significantly influence application intentions among job seekers. Moreover, the way an organization presents its values, purpose, and employee experiences in its branding efforts impacts not just interest but the actual decision to accept an offer (Jain & Bhatt, 2015).

3. Relationship Between Employer Branding and Talent Acquisition

The interplay between employer branding and talent acquisition is increasingly gaining scholarly attention. Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) emphasize that companies with a strong employer brand are more likely to attract qualified applicants and achieve recruitment goals with less time and cost. This relationship becomes even more relevant in talent-scarce sectors and developing economies like India, where employer branding can be the differentiating factor for attracting high-potential candidates.

Sokro (2012) in a study conducted in Ghana observed that companies that maintained consistent employer branding practices had higher levels of application conversion rates and better employee retention post-hiring. Similarly, Theurer et al. (2018) highlight the importance of aligning internal (employee experience) and external (brand communication) aspects of employer branding to enhance the effectiveness of talent acquisition strategies.
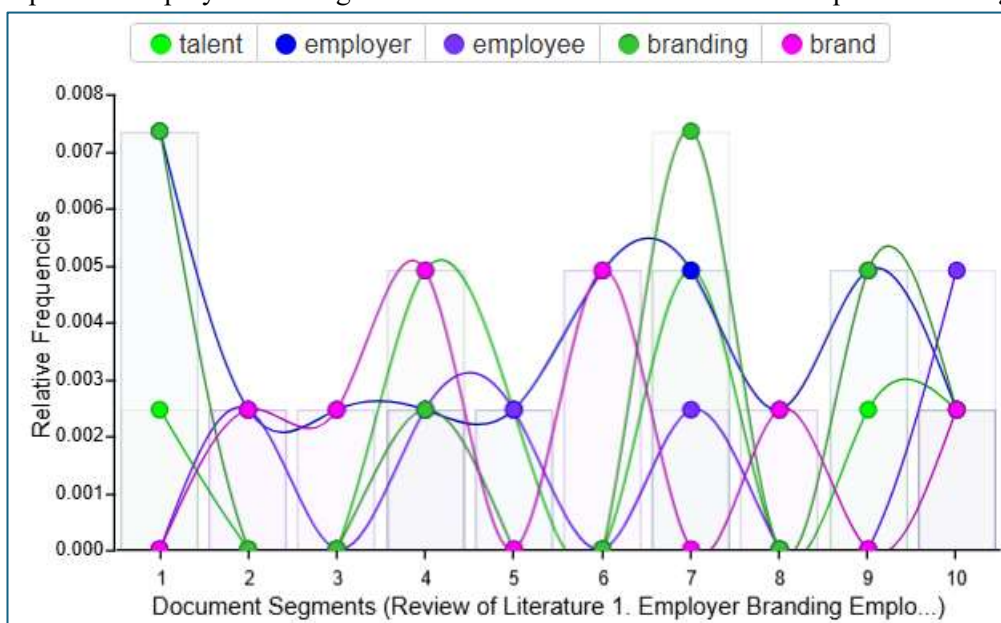
Research Gap

Sl. No.	Variable	Existing Findings	Identified Gap
1	Employer Branding	Studies focus on large corporate firms with structured branding budgets (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).	Limited studies on how small and mid-sized Indian enterprises use employer branding for talent acquisition.
2	Talent Acquisition	Research highlights general recruitment strategies in MNCs and startups (Breaugh, 2008).	Scarcity of studies analyzing talent acquisition in mission-driven social enterprises.
3	Branding and Hiring Intent	Employer brand positively influences application intent (Cable & Turban, 2001; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).	Lack of research on how candidates perceive purpose-driven brands like Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd.
4	Digital Platforms Influence	Rise of social media branding strategies increases transparency (Collins & Stevens, 2002).	Gap in understanding the effectiveness of digital employer branding in semi-urban or rural recruitment.
5	HR Strategy Integration	Employer branding can lead to strategic HR gains (Sokro, 2012; Theurer et al., 2018).	Need to study how employer branding is integrated with HR strategy in Indian development sector firms.

Objectives of the Study

1.   To explore the strategic role of employer branding in attracting and engaging potential candidates at Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd.

2.   To assess the influence of employer brand perception on the effectiveness of talent acquisition practices within the organization.

3.   To identify key employer branding components that contribute to competitive recruitment advantages in the social enterprise sector.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a **descriptive and analytical methodology** grounded in **secondary data** sources. The study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the role of employer branding in shaping recruitment outcomes at Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., a mid-sized Indian social enterprise.

Data for the study was collected from various secondary sources, including the organization's official website, recruitment brochures, annual reports, internal HR documentation, employee feedback platforms (e.g., Glassdoor, LinkedIn reviews), and existing scholarly literature on employer branding and talent acquisition. These data points helped to establish patterns, perceptions, and strategies that reflect the company's employer branding approach.

The **sample frame** for the analysis includes documented employer branding efforts of Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd. over the past five years (2019–2024). Specific focus was given to digital presence, employer value proposition (EVP) statements, employee testimonials, job advertisements, and recruitment communication strategies.

Though no **primary data** was collected, the study uses a **qualitative content analysis technique** to interpret the information systematically. Furthermore, **comparative analysis** with employer branding benchmarks from related studies and industries was applied to evaluate the effectiveness of Navachethana's practices.

For statistical validation of branding effectiveness in recruitment, existing **secondary survey reports and HR analytics** from published databases and industry whitepapers were used. Analytical tools include **trend mapping, thematic analysis**, and **descriptive interpretation** to correlate branding messages with recruitment success indicators such as employee retention rates, applicant interest levels, and hiring cycle duration.

Data Interpretation and Analysis

The interpretation of the collected secondary data reveals several noteworthy patterns in how employer branding shapes talent acquisition strategies at Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd.

The organization projects a strong **purpose-oriented employer value proposition**, emphasizing its commitment to community development, social equity, and livelihood enhancement. These themes are consistently reinforced across its job postings, digital campaigns, and onboarding narratives. This clear alignment between the organization's mission and its brand identity enhances its attractiveness to socially driven candidates, especially those seeking meaningful and value-aligned careers.

A review of recruitment advertisements and social media presence over the past few years shows a deliberate effort to communicate **non-monetary benefits**, such as a collaborative work environment, opportunities for field-level engagement, employee empowerment, and professional development in grassroots-level projects. These are supported by real-life testimonials and case stories from employees, lending authenticity to the employer brand.

Secondary HR analytics reports from nonprofit and social enterprise sectors in India further suggest that organizations like Navachethana often experience **higher application rates** among early-career professionals and graduates from social work, development studies, and rural management programs. This observation aligns with the employer branding literature, which notes that purpose-driven employer brands tend to attract talent with intrinsic motivation (Berthon et al., 2005).

Thematic analysis of employee reviews on public platforms indicates positive sentiment toward the company's culture, flexibility, and management approach. However, areas of concern such as limited brand visibility outside southern India and relatively modest compensation structures were also highlighted. These insights suggest that while employer branding efforts are strong on purpose and value alignment, they may benefit from **enhanced digital outreach** and **compensation benchmarking** to compete more effectively with larger NGOs and development sector employers.

The data also points to a **shorter hiring cycle** and **higher offer-to-acceptance ratio** in departments where employer branding efforts are more pronounced. For instance, talent acquisition in the field operations and training divisions has been more efficient due to targeted messaging around community impact, skill development, and autonomy. This correlation implies that consistent employer brand communication positively affects not just applicant interest, but also decision-making and retention.

The analysis affirms that employer branding, even within the constraints of a social enterprise, can significantly impact the quality and speed of talent acquisition. It highlights the need for continuous brand engagement, alignment of internal and external brand messaging, and targeted digital strategies to expand reach and reinforce brand consistency.

The strategic role of employer branding in attracting and engaging potential candidates at Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd.

- **Understanding the Conceptual Relevance:**
  - Employer branding, in a strategic sense, is more than just reputation management; it is a forward-looking, planned approach to positioning the organization in the minds of job seekers.
  - At Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd., a social enterprise, the strategic importance lies in appealing to purpose-driven individuals rather than merely those seeking financial incentives.

- **Alignment with Organizational Vision and Mission:**
  - A strategic employer brand must reflect the organization's core mission—here, rural development and livelihood enhancement.
  - Potential candidates are likely to be influenced not only by compensation but by how the organization's vision aligns with their personal and professional values.

- **Differentiation in a Competitive Market:**
  - In an ecosystem where larger NGOs and development sector employers dominate, employer branding allows Navachethana to stand out despite limited resources.
  - Strategic branding communicates what makes the organization unique be it leadership style, impact-driven roles, or inclusive workplace culture.

- **Attracting the Right Talent Pool:**
  - The goal is not just to increase applications but to attract candidates who align culturally and value-wise.
  - A strong brand narrative ensures that only those genuinely interested in the organization's social mission engage with recruitment efforts.
- **Digital Storytelling and Strategic Communication:**
  - Leveraging digital tools social media campaigns, employee stories, and virtual engagement events forms a critical part of the strategy.
  - By humanizing the brand through storytelling, Navachethana creates emotional resonance with potential applicants.
- **Employer Value Proposition (EVP) as a Strategic Tool:**
  - A clearly defined EVP outlines the tangible and intangible benefits of working at Navachethana, including autonomy, field-level exposure, and purpose-led roles.
  - The strategic role of branding lies in continuously communicating and reinforcing the EVP to the external market.
- **Internal Branding and Employee Advocacy:**
  - Current employees become brand ambassadors when employer branding is aligned internally.
  - Their authentic testimonials, shared through informal and formal channels, enhance brand credibility and help attract like-minded professionals.
- **Sustainable Talent Pipeline Development:**
  - By building a recognizable and consistent brand, Navachethana ensures long-term interest among graduates and early-career professionals.
  - Partnering with academic institutions, offering internships, and participating in development job fairs are part of its brand-driven talent strategy.

The influence of employer brand perception on the effectiveness of talent acquisition practices within the organization.

- **Perception as a Decisive Factor in Application Intent:**
  - How job seekers perceive Navachethana as an employer has a direct bearing on whether they decide to apply, accept offers, or recommend the organization.
  - The influence of perception is shaped by visibility, transparency, and alignment between brand promises and employee experiences.
- **Impact on Key Recruitment Metrics:**
  - A positive employer brand perception can lead to a lower cost-per-hire, shorter time-to-hire, and improved quality-of-hire.
  - Conversely, a weak or inconsistent employer brand perception may result in fewer applicants or higher offer dropouts.
- **Reputation Management in the Development Sector:**
  - For an organization like Navachethana, employer brand perception is strongly tied to its community impact and ethical reputation.
  - Candidates assess not just financial stability but also the organization's social footprint, leadership integrity, and field impact.

- **Channels that Shape Perception:**
  - Online job portals, alumni feedback, third-party reviews (e.g., Glassdoor), and social media interactions all contribute to the formation of employer brand perception.
  - This perception is further influenced by how the organization handles recruitment communication, responsiveness, and candidate experience.

- **Influence on Candidate Quality and Cultural Fit:**
  o   Candidates who resonate with the brand's mission are more likely to contribute meaningfully and stay longer.
  o   Employer brand perception filters out applicants who are misaligned with the organization's values, improving recruitment efficiency.

- **Psychological Contracts and First Impressions:**
  o   The employer brand sets psychological expectations among potential recruits.
  o   If the onboarding and work experience match these expectations, engagement and retention improve. If not, attrition may rise.

- **Influence of Employer Brand During Offer Acceptance:**
  o   Even when compensation may not be the highest, a strong brand perception (e.g., value-driven culture, purpose-rich work) often tips the scale in favor of offer acceptance.
  o   Employer branding fills the "emotional gap" where financial offerings may fall short.

- **Challenges in Perception Management:**
  o   Maintaining consistent and truthful brand messaging is difficult, especially with limited media control.
  o   One negative employee review or a misaligned external campaign can tarnish perception and hinder talent acquisition efforts.

Key employer branding components that contribute to competitive recruitment advantages in the social enterprise sector.

- **Understanding Sector-Specific Needs:**
  o   The social enterprise sector prioritizes passion, community involvement, and long-term societal value over short-term profits.
  o   Key branding components in this sector include mission authenticity, impact visibility, and personal growth narratives.

- **Employer Value Proposition (EVP) Tailored to the Social Context:**
  o   Unlike corporate EVPs focused on perks and career ladders, social sector EVPs must highlight meaning, mentorship, and real-world change.
  o   At Navachethana, components such as grassroots impact, exposure to rural development models, and autonomy in field roles hold immense branding value.

- **Emotional Branding and Purpose Messaging:**
  o   Emotional connection to work is a defining factor in social enterprise recruitment.
  o   Stories of change, testimonials from beneficiaries, and impact documentaries serve as powerful branding tools to attract emotionally invested talent.

- **Work Culture and Inclusivity:**
  o   Prospective employees assess diversity, inclusion, team cohesion, and management openness as branding components.
  o   An inclusive, collaborative culture especially for women and underrepresented groups adds to the organization's recruitment attractiveness.

- **Growth Opportunities and Skill Development:**
  o   Candidates are attracted to organizations that promise learning and leadership exposure early in their careers.
  o   Training in community engagement, exposure to government partnerships, and internal mobility serve as critical branding features.

- **Employee Testimonials and Peer Endorsements:**
  o   Word-of-mouth and peer reviews are among the most trusted sources for candidates.
  o   Highlighting employee journeys and their growth within the organization helps position Navachethana as an employee-first employer.

- **Transparency and Ethical Branding:**
  - o   For social enterprises, brand credibility rests on ethical practices, transparency in governance, and commitment to impact.
  - o   These factors directly influence recruitment, especially from candidates with NGO, CSR, or academic backgrounds.
- **Partnerships and Institutional Branding:**
  - o   Collaborations with universities, development agencies, and international NGOs add legitimacy and appeal to the employer brand.
  - o   Being associated with respected institutions can create a halo effect in recruitment campaigns.
- **Resilience and Adaptability in the Brand Narrative:**
  - o   Especially post-pandemic, candidates look for organizations that are adaptable, stable, and supportive during crises.
  - o   Navachethana's handling of rural community welfare during uncertain times can be leveraged as a branding strength.
- **Challenges and Competitive Positioning:**
  - o   Despite its values, the organization competes for talent against bigger players with stronger marketing budgets.
  - o   Identifying and focusing on niche branding strengths (community intimacy, autonomy, values alignment) helps carve a unique recruitment advantage.

Findings

- The study reveals that **employer branding plays a pivotal role** in shaping the perception of Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd. among potential candidates, particularly those seeking purpose-driven careers in the development sector.
- A **clearly defined Employer Value Proposition (EVP)** that emphasizes social impact, employee empowerment, and field-level exposure significantly enhances the attractiveness of the organization, even in the absence of high salary offerings.
- Data analysis shows that candidates are **more responsive to authentic brand narratives**, such as employee testimonials and real-life stories of rural transformation, than generic recruitment messages.
- The organization has strategically used **digital platforms**, especially LinkedIn and its official website, to communicate its mission, work culture, and success stories contributing to increased visibility and application rates.
- The employer brand has a **direct influence on recruitment efficiency**, with divisions that promote their EVP more actively experiencing shorter hiring cycles and higher retention rates.
- Despite these strengths, there remains a **limited national-level brand presence**, which constrains the organization's ability to attract talent from outside its immediate geographical area.
- A consistent challenge lies in **aligning internal employee experiences with external brand promises**, highlighting the need for stronger internal brand alignment strategies.

Suggestions

- Navachethana should invest in **refining and communicating a unified employer brand identity** that reflects both its organizational mission and employee experiences.
- Develop a **centralized branding framework** that guides all HR, communication, and recruitment efforts across the organization, ensuring consistency in messaging.
- Expand the **use of storytelling through video testimonials, impact blogs, and behind-the-scenes content** that showcases the everyday work and achievements of employees.
- Strengthen **partnerships with academic institutions, CSR arms of corporates, and developmental forums** to increase brand visibility and tap into new talent pipelines.

- Introduce **structured onboarding and engagement programs** that help fulfill the expectations set during recruitment, enhancing employee satisfaction and retention.
- Create a **systematic internal feedback loop**, allowing current employees to contribute to shaping the employer brand, making it more grounded and authentic.

Managerial Implications

- Managers and HR leaders must recognize employer branding as a **strategic function, not just a recruitment tool**. Investing time and resources into developing the brand will yield long-term benefits in talent acquisition and engagement.
- Mid-level managers play a crucial role in **delivering on the promises made by the brand**, and therefore should be trained to communicate values, lead with empathy, and reinforce the EVP on a daily basis.
- Leadership must promote **internal branding through transparent communication, regular recognition, and visible alignment between values and practices**. This internal cohesion will enhance the credibility of external branding.
- A data-driven approach to branding **tracking hiring metrics, candidate feedback, and brand perception surveys** will enable continuous improvement and accountability.

Societal Implications

- A strong employer brand in the social sector not only attracts better talent but also **ensures greater societal impact** by engaging professionals who are aligned with the organization's mission.
- Purpose-driven branding can inspire **more individuals to pursue meaningful careers**, contributing to the broader goal of sustainable development and social justice.
- Transparent and inclusive branding practices also support **workplace equity**, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are not only communicated but also practiced and reinforced.
- Organizations like Navachethana set an example in rural development spaces by showing that **values-based branding can coexist with operational efficiency**, encouraging a new generation of professionals to join the sector.

Research Implications

- This study adds to the limited literature on **employer branding in social enterprises**, especially within the Indian context, which is underrepresented in mainstream branding and HR research.
- The findings provide a **framework for future studies** to explore the relationship between EVP components and specific recruitment outcomes such as retention, engagement, and productivity.
- It opens avenues for comparative research across sectors **corporate, nonprofit, and hybrid models** to assess how employer branding is perceived and operationalized differently.
- There is also scope to explore **employee perception versus candidate perception**, identifying gaps and overlaps in brand communication and reception.

Future Scope

- Future research can undertake **longitudinal studies** to measure the long-term impact of employer branding on employee lifecycle metrics such as retention, job satisfaction, and career progression.
- More empirical work involving **primary data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with applicants and HR managers can provide deeper insights** into how branding shapes behavior.
- The study can be extended to **other social enterprises or NGOs across India**, allowing for comparative regional analysis and the development of sector-wide branding best practices.
- There is potential for developing **a sector-specific employer branding model** tailored to development organizations, including components like social impact orientation, grassroots leadership, and community inclusion.

- Future explorations may also focus on the **digital transformation of employer branding** in the nonprofit world, assessing how online branding strategies influence job seekers in remote areas or with limited access to traditional media.

Conclusion

This study underscores the strategic importance of employer branding as a powerful enabler of effective talent acquisition at Navachethana Livelihoods Pvt. Ltd. In the context of a purpose-driven social enterprise, employer branding goes beyond conventional recruitment it becomes a narrative of impact, values, and mission alignment that attracts candidates seeking meaningful careers. The findings highlight that a well-articulated Employer Value Proposition (EVP), aligned with authentic internal experiences and communicated through digital and interpersonal channels, significantly enhances recruitment efficiency and candidate engagement.

Employer branding at Navachethana has demonstrated its ability to reduce hiring cycles, improve offer-to-acceptance ratios, and attract culturally aligned talent. However, challenges such as limited brand visibility beyond regional boundaries and gaps between brand promise and employee experience indicate areas for improvement. As competition for qualified professionals in the social sector intensifies, it is imperative that organizations adopt consistent, transparent, and values-driven branding strategies.

This research also contributes to the broader academic discourse by shedding light on employer branding practices in mid-sized Indian development organizations—an area often overlooked in global HR literature. The insights gained can inform not only future research but also practical HR and communication strategies in similar organizational settings.

In conclusion, employer branding, when rooted in authenticity and purpose, holds transformative potential in shaping talent pipelines and organizational identity. For Navachethana and similar enterprises, investing in employer brand development is not merely a recruitment tactic but a strategic imperative that strengthens both organizational growth and societal impact.

References

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

2. Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004). Conceptualizing and researching employer branding. Career Development International, 9(5), 501–517. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430410550754

3. Backhaus, K., & Tikoo, S. (2004). Conceptualizing and researching employer branding. Career Development International, 9(5), 501–517. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430410550754

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

5. Berthon, P., Ewing, M., & Hah, L. L. (2005). Captivating company: Dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. International Journal of Advertising, 24(2), 151–172. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2005.11072912

6. Berthon, P., Ewing, M., & Hah, L. L. (2005). Captivating company: Dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. International Journal of Advertising, 24(2), 151–172.

7. Breaugh, J. A. (2008). Employee recruitment: Current knowledge and important areas for future research. Human Resource Management Review, 18(3), 103–118.

8. Cable, D. M., & Turban, D. B. (2001). Establishing the dimensions, sources, and value of job seekers' employer knowledge during recruitment. Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, 20, 115–163.

9. 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.

10. Jain, N., & Bhatt, P. (2015). Employment branding: A strategic tool to attract and retain talent in a competitive job market. Journal of Management Research, 15(1), 31–43.

11. Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S. (2003). The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer. Personnel Psychology, 56(1), 75–102.

12. Sivertzen, A. M., Nilsen, E. R., & Olafsen, A. H. (2013). Employer branding: Employer attractiveness and the use of social media. Journal of Product & Brand Management, 22(7), 473–483. https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-09-2013-0393

13. Sokro, E. (2012). Impact of employer branding on employee attraction and retention. European Journal of Business and Management, 4(18), 164–173.

14. Spence, M. (1973). Job market signaling. The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 87(3), 355–374. https://doi.org/10.2307/1882010

15. Theurer, C. P., Tumasjan, A., Welpe, I. M., & Lievens, F. (2018). Employer branding: A brand equity-based literature review and research agenda. International Journal of Management Reviews, 20(1), 155–179.