

Influence of Employer Brand Perception on the Retention Intentions of Millennials and Generation Z Employees in the Indian Automobile Industry

Mr. Vikas Chaitram Magar¹, Dr. Vibha Rahul Patil²

¹Ph.D. Scholar, B. P. Arts, S. M. A. Science & K. K. C. Commerce College, Chalisgaon, Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India.

²Assistant Professor, B. P. Arts, S. M. A. Science & K. K. C. Commerce College, Chalisgaon, Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon, Maharashtra, India

Email - magar.vikas@gmail.com¹, choudharyvibha27@gmail.com²

Abstract

This study evaluates how employees' perceptions of an employer brand impact the retention intentions of Millennials and Generation Z employees in the Indian automotive industry. Retention intention involves the employee's forward-looking inclination to stay, as opposed to the employee's exit. The synthesis identifies numerous constructs demonstrating that a robust employer brand strengthens the intent to stay; these include person-organization fit, organizational identification, satisfaction with the job and its experiences, engagement, perception of organizational support and confidence in career growth. It also notes relative emphasis within the same cohort as opposed to absolute separation of generations. For example, Millennials focused on visible career advancement opportunities, stable financial compensation and leadership opportunities, while Generation Z placed relative emphasis on continuous learning, a sense of purpose, a culture of inclusion, supportive management and a safe space to engage in psychological safety and well-being design within automotive work. Rapidly growing automation, electrification, and software-defined vehicles, along with a production ecosystem of more than 30 million direct and indirect jobs, set unique challenges for the industry. The study concludes that the employee value proposition within an employer brand has to be consistently experienced at manufacturing plants, R&D centers, dealerships, and corporate offices to retain employees of all generations within the automotive industry. To test the proposed connections across jobs and generations, cross-generational studies within the automotive sector are recommended.

Keywords: employer branding; employer brand perception; employee retention; intention to stay; Millennials; Generation Z; Indian automobile industry; employee value proposition

1. Introduction

Employer branding used to be limited to advertising vacancies, but has since morphed into a strategic approach to talent management. An employer brand now includes all the economic, functional, and psychological elements that define an organization. It includes employer trust and brand credibility. For employees, an employer brand is not confined to what is stated in a career advertisement. It is reinforced or damaged by a host of other factors such as pay and rewards, management and supervisory behaviors, and corporate learning and development policies as well as practices, as well as safety, recognition, inclusion, work-life balance, and opportunities to perform work that is meaningful (Ahmed et al., 2022). Organizational commitment occurs when employees perceive that the organization provides a future that is both appealing and secure, and when they perceive that leaving the organization means giving up valuable relationships, growth, or identity (Kashyap & Verma, 2018).

This issue is particularly relevant in the Indian automotive sector. It includes original equipment manufacturers, component suppliers, electric vehicle manufacturers, engineering and research organizations, logistics companies, dealerships, and service organizations. The automobile industry, as reported by SIAM, accounted for about USD 240 billion in FY 2024–25, employed about 30 million through the value chain (4.2 million direct and 26.5 million indirect) and accounted for about 15% of India's GST revenue. India also retained its position as one of the world's three biggest markets for passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles and the biggest market for two- and three-wheelers.

At this moment, many aspects of the transportation and automobile industry (and others) are rapidly evolving with the addition of electrification, embedded and connected software, and advanced manufacturing and data-centric services. Competition for the same talent pool exists among transportation and auto companies as it does with companies that specialize in technology, electronics, energy and digital services. An established consumer brand does not reflect the strength of an employer brand. Innovation is appreciated by employees as the opportunity for modern assignments, additional training, greater career flexibility, and appropriate recognition (Kashyap & Verma, 2018). The pace of employee turnover intentions may be a response to discrepancies between an organization's outward reputation and what employees actually experience.

1.1 Generational Context

In this paper, generational frames are used to describe and distinguish cohorts. Millennials have been born in the early 1980s to mid-1990s and Generation Z have been born in the mid-1990s to early 2010s, and the definitions may vary; in 2026, both of these generations will have diverse career positions. Millennials will be at specialist, supervisory and managerial levels, while Generation Z will predominantly be at an education-to-work or early career level. It is important to consider many factors other than generation, such as age, occupation, labor market, and career position (Committee on the Consideration of Generational Issues in Workforce Management and Employment Practices et al., 2020; Parry & Urwin, 2021).

Though there are several ways to collect sampling data, large scale surveys are arguably most useful for generating broad directions. In Deloitte's 2024 global report, Gen Z highlighted learning and skill development, mentorship opportunities, and overall career growth. Alternatively, career growth opportunities were a stronger motivator for Millennials. For the 2025 report, 89% Gen Z and 92% Millennials identified a sense of purpose as a satisfier and a facilitator of their overall well-being at work. Additionally, 44% Gen Z and 45% Millennials reported having quit a job without purpose. As part of the 2026 report, 22,500 respondents from 44 countries, both Gen Z and Millennials, demonstrated a preference for work with greater stability and emphasis placed on skill and mental health over performance. Although we cannot translate these into measurable automotive standards in India, they do help us formulate useful hypotheses around employment within this sector.

Given this, it is fair to expect that along with many other factors, employer brand perception may drive retention. Brand signals help employees make comparisons and help them determine if they can actually fulfill a company's brand promise. For employees, brand satisfaction also helps increase their engagement and identification, and subsequently helps to retain them (Bharadwaj et al., 2022a). For employers, a loss of brand trust can also foster a breach of contract. This may be especially true for digital connectivity workers, who can compare brands through social media and review sites (Theurer et al., 2018).

2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the relationship between employer brand perception and retention intentions among Millennial and Generation Z employees.
- To identify the employer-brand dimensions most consistently associated with intention to stay, including economic, developmental, social, ethical and work-design value.
- To compare the retention-related expectations of Millennials and Generation Z without treating either cohort as homogeneous.
- To interpret authentic secondary workforce and industry data in the context of India's automobile ecosystem.

3. Scope of the Study

This study describes the large and small business components of the Indian automotive business including Automotive Manufacturers, Auto-Component, Electric-Mobility and Captive Engineering, Dealer Shops, and ancillary support services. Included is the company's perspective of their brand and the employee's intent to stay. Recruitment Attractiveness is addressed as it relates to the formation of brand perceptions. The period of this study is 2018 thru 2026. The data used are secondary published sources from government agencies, the SIAM, and reputable employee surveys. This study does not attempt to quantify an automotive sector retention rate, combines incompatible surveys into one data set, or draws cause from effect analysis drawn from cross-sectional data.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Tanwar and Kumar (2018)

The authors surveyed 380 executives from Indian IT service companies to assess the social, interest, economic, and development value. The dimensions of the employer brand were assessed as negatively related to turnover intention, and social and development value were the most important determinants. This is an important first assessment of retention in the context of India, as it shows that while compensation is part of the mix, it is not the only element; the quality of relationships at work and opportunity for advancement are also important(Kashyap & Verma, 2018).

4.2 Bharadwaj and Yameen (2022)

Analysis of cross-sectional data obtained from 126 Indian IT employees utilized regression and PROCESS. CSR-related employer branding predicted retention and organizational identification, and identification mediated the CSR-retention relationship. The findings show that reputation in ethics and social responsibility is related to employees' decision to stay when they integrate organizational membership into their self-definition(Bharadwaj et al., 2022).

4.3 Rai and Nandy (2021)

The authors performed a survey of 224 executives and a sequential mediation analysis. Employer brand influenced intention to stay through person- organization fit and then organizational identification. This mechanism is applicable to automobile companies since brand communications must facilitate employees' perception of value congruence and meaningful organizational identity(Rai & Nandy, 2021).

4.4 Pandita (2021)

21 inductively analyzed semi-structured interviews with HR leaders, managers, HR consultants and experts from India. Generation Z was described as being more concerned with the community, innovation and the opportunity for career growth and personal development than only the salary. The study is exploratory and directly informs a culturally contextualized Gen Z employee value proposition(Pandita, 2022).

4.5 Jayathilake et al. (2021)

Drawing on social exchange and human needs theory, this paper presents employee development practices such as democratized learning, reverse mentoring and intrapreneurship as retention strategies for Gen Z. This demonstrates employee development as an experienced system of opportunities rather than training provided on an ad hoc basis(Jayathilake et al., 2021).

4.6 Sinčić Ćorić and Špoljarić (2023)

This distinction looks at domestic and international employer brands and registers that companies use employer branding to attract and retain employees of choice. For multinational vehicle companies, consistency of reputation and employment practice at a country level is key to credibility(Špoljarić & Ozretić Došen, 2023).

4.7 Lassleben (2023)

An employer-attractiveness scale plus work-life balance was used in a survey of 308 German business students. Employees value a positive team climate and supportive relationships, and a pleasant working environment, some preferences differed by gender. This finding is a call for caution against a Gen Z talent strategy that is too general(Lassleben & Hofmann, 2023).

4.8 Bharadwaj (2023)

Regression and PROCESS were used to analyze data from 348 employees in Indian industrial regions. CSR employer branding directly influenced employee retention and influenced retention indirectly through organizational identification and person-organization fit. The study contributes to the Indian literature on purpose and proactive responsibility and value alignment(Bharadwaj, 2023).

4.9 Chopra, Sahoo, and Patel (2024)

PLS-SEM was used to analyze data collected from 397 IT professionals in India. Employer branding, which promoted talent retention, was partially mediated by employee engagement. This means that the employee value proposition must provide employees with the energy and quality relationships they need to be involved at work(Chopra et al., 2024).

4.10 Costa et al. (2024)

An analysis of 21 IT manager interviews developed a multi-level retention framework. Besides salary, psychological safety, work-life balance, and positive environments; Innovative projects and flexible working arrangements also ranked highly. The authors of this study provide insights applicable to software and digital roles in today's vehicle organizations that can be readily transferred(Costa et al., 2024).

4.11 Tai, Uen, and Lu et al.(2025)

Using hierarchical linear modeling, data on 219 employees from 51 high-technology startups in Taiwan was analyzed. It found that a healthy workplace, training and development, and compensation and benefits have a positive impact on retention, while agile values positively impacted the relationships in question. This research is useful for EV startups and mobility, but not Indian context(Tai et al., 2025).

4.12 Brown (2025)

38 Gen Z banking employees and 28 older peers were interviewed and focus groups held. Gen Z employees expected a more inclusive and interactive format of communication and valuing their choice of employer and industry. This study shows ongoing internal communication that emphasizes and/or contradicts the employer brand post recruitment(Brown, 2025).

4.13 Nayeri et al., (2026)

This study combined literature review, fuzzy Delphi screening and PLS multigroup analysis. Clear differences existed between Generation Z and older participants, with clear career-path growth and career enrichment explaining the major differences. This supports differentiated execution in a common employer-brand architecture(Dehghan Nayeri et al., 2026).

4.14 Nagre and Dixit (2026)

A structured conceptual synthesis combines SDGs with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in employer branding in the Global South. It posits that piecemeal sustainability and inclusion within employer branding undermines employee trust. Coherence and integration of values based systems enhance trust and belonging in the workplace and make the employer brand more appealing(Nagre & Dixit, 2026).

5. Comparative Review of Selected Studies (2018–2026)

Sr. No.	Author (Year)	Method	Conclusion
1	Kashyap and Verma (2018) (Kashyap & Verma, 2018)	A structured survey of 380 executives in Indian IT organisations tested social, interest, economic, development and application value using multiple regression.	Dimensions of employer branding that were negatively associated with turnover intention were identified. These dimensions included the social and developmental components. The present study establishes an Indian baseline. It shows that beyond pay, retention is impacted by the quality of the work environment and the perceived potential for growth within an organization.
2	Bharadwaj and Yameen (2022) (Bharadwaj et al., 2022)	Cross-sectional data from 126 Indian IT employees were examined using regression and PROCESS analysis.	CSR-focused employer branding anticipated retention and organizational identification. Identification mediated the CSR–retention relationship. This suggests that, for remaining employees, ethical and social

			reputation builds the self-concept of belonging to the organization.
3	Rai and Nandy (2021) (Rai & Nandy, 2021)	The authors surveyed 224 executives and tested sequential mediation.	Employer brand drove intentions to stay through the dimensions of person-organisation fit and organisational identification. This mechanism applies to the automobile industry because brand communication must help employees perceive both value and a meaningful identity of the organization.
4	Pandita (2021) (Pandita, 2022)	Twenty-one semi-structured interviews with Indian HR leaders, managers, consultants and experts were analysed inductively.	Studies indicate that Generation Z is interested in independence, diversity, and innovation as well as opportunities to progress their careers and get community support beyond just salary. This study is exploratory, but it creates a culturally informed Gen Z employee value proposition.
5	Jayathilake et al. (2021) (Jayathilake et al., 2021)	Drawing on social exchange and human-needs perspectives, this conceptual paper proposes democratised learning, reverse mentoring and intrapreneurship as development practices that can strengthen Gen Z retention.	It highlights development as an experienced system rather than an occasional training benefit.
6	Sinčić Ćorić and Špoljarić (2023) (Špoljarić & Ozretić Došen, 2023)	The review distinguishes domestic and international employer brands and observes that organisations use employer branding both to attract and to retain desirable employees.	For multinational automobile firms, consistency across global reputation and local employment practice becomes central to credibility
7	Lassleben (2023) (Lassleben & Hofmann, 2023)	A survey of 308 German business students used the employer-attractiveness scale plus work-life balance.	Participants appreciated having an optimistic team atmosphere, supportive relationships, and an enjoyable overall work environment. Many preferences had noticeable gender-based gaps. The finding is a strong argument against using a single Gen Z strategy.
8	Bharadwaj (2023) (Bharadwaj, 2023)	Survey data from 348 employees in Indian industrial hubs were analysed with regression and PROCESS.	CSR employer branding methods that related to retention were mostly associated with employee identification with the organisation and person-organisation fit. The research adds to the Indian context the evidence of purpose, credible responsibility and value alignment.
9	Chopra, Sahoo, and Patel (2024) (Chopra et al., 2024)	PLS-SEM was applied to perceptions of 397 Indian IT professionals.	Employer branding helps retain talent. Employee engagement partially mediates this. This means that an Employee Value Proposition should provide workers with the energy and motivation to engage with their work, and the drive to establish positive working relationships.

10	Costa et al. (2024) (Costa et al., 2024)	Interviews with 21 IT managers informed a multi-level retention framework.	Beyond salary, psychological safety, work-life balance, positive environment, and flexibility, innovative projects and flexibility were major draws. These insights offer transformability to modern vehicle organizations for software and digital positions.
11	Tai, Uen, and Lu (2025) (Tai et al., 2025)	Hierarchical linear modelling used data from 219 employees in 51 Taiwanese high-technology startups.	Healthy atmosphere, training and development, and compensation and benefits predict retention. Agile values bolster some relationships. While this evidence is more related to EV and mobility startups, there are differences in the institutional context relative to India.
12	Brown (2025) (Brown, 2025)	Interviews and focus groups included 38 Gen Z banking employees and 28 older colleagues.	Gen Z is likely to seek inclusive, interactive communication and validation of their employer and industry choice. The study shows how internal communication, sustained over time, builds/detracts from employer branding, post recruitment.
13	Nayeri et al., (2026) (Dehghan Nayeri et al., 2026)	The study combined literature review, fuzzy Delphi screening and PLS multigroup analysis.	Generation Z shows some distinguishing characteristics compared to older generations in terms of career path progression and the continued development of their careers. This supports thinking about diverse effective execution within a constant employer brand structure.
14	Nagre and Dixit (2026) (Nagre & Dixit, 2026)	A structured conceptual synthesis integrates selected Sustainable Development Goals with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in employer branding for the Global South.	It claims that incorporating a coherent system of values-based trust and belonging strengthens trust, belonging and attractiveness and that disjointed sustainability and inclusion claims diminish credibility.

6. Research Gap

First, direct evidence of how perception of an employer brand connect to retention intentions in the Indian automotive industry is limited. The Indian empirical studies reviewed here, mostly use IT, power, or mixed services sectors. Their mechanisms could apply to the automotive employment sector; however, these mechanisms need to be tested specifically in that sector across the automotive industry's plants, research and development centers, corporate offices, dealerships and new-mobility offerings.

Second, most of the evidence is of the cross-sectional nature, and relies on self-reported intentions as opposed to turnover that was confirmed. As is the case with those designs, such frameworks help to identify associations yet cannot show the order of importance or if self-reported intentions become actual turnover. Longitudinal research relating employer brand perceptions, HR records, and observed retention is needed.

Third, a generational comparison is usually confounded with other variables such as age, tenure, career stage, and occupation. Employees from Generation Z are usually early career employees, and Millennials are often in more senior, managerial, and specialist roles. A valid comparison should control for job family, level, location, employment contract, gender and organizational tenure before attributing differences to generation.

Fourth, most research treats employer branding as a broad aggregate. The work in the automotive sector is diverse. Operators may value predictable shifts, supervisor fairness, and safe working conditions; R&D engineers may value advanced work and the opportunity to receive patents; software employees may value the opportunity to use their skills;

employees working in dealerships may value customer pressure and local opportunities. The automotive sector needs specific employer value propositions for each job family.

Finally, most public reports in the automotive industry give some market assessment and employment statistics, but few give comparable employer level retention statistics. This leads to a significant gap in the understanding of macro-level trends and the micro-level employee experience. This paper addresses that gap using careful synthesis; however, this cannot substitute for primary research.

7. Research Methodology

Descriptive and analytical secondary research forms the basis of the study. An evidence search was done for English language literature published between 2018 and Augustus 2026 using various combinations of employer branding, employer attractiveness, employee value proposition, retention, intention to stay, turnover intention, Millennials, Generation Z, India, and automobile/automotive. Papers which focused on employer brand dimensions, mediating mechanisms, generational employment expectations, or retention were selected. Peer reviewed articles only were used. Fifteen articles were finally selected and reviewed in detail. The context of the sector was obtained from SIAM, Government of India/Economic Survey and IBEF. Cross-generational priorities in the workforce were obtained from Deloitte's Global Gen Z and Millennial surveys. In cases where bibliographic and/or methodological information was available, publisher pages and DOI records were used to authenticate the information.

The analysis was done using thematic synthesis. Evidence was coded to include value and development of the employee, career growth and value, social and leadership value, design of work and wellbeing, purpose and CSR, and DEIB. Outcomes were coded to include intention to stay, turnover intention, employee retention, satisfaction, engagement, person-organization fit, and organizational identification. Numerical data were reported along with the original units and population. Incompatible datasets were not combined. Findings were discussed using Social exchange, Social identity, Person-organization fit and Psychological contract. Quality safeguards included source triangulation, separation of sector statistics from workforce attitudes, and explicit labelling of global or non-automobile evidence. No primary respondents, significance tests or automobile specific retention percentages were invented.

8. Data Analysis

8.1 Scale and Strategic Importance of the Employment Context

Indicator	Authentic secondary value	Source	Retention interpretation
Automotive industry contribution, FY 2024–25	~USD 240 billion (about Rs. 20 lakh crore)	SIAM (2025)	Large scale intensifies competition for technical, production and customer-facing talent.
Employment across automotive value chain	~30 million jobs	SIAM (2025); Economic Survey 2025–26	Retention must be considered across direct and indirect ecosystems, not OEM payrolls alone.
Direct employment	4.2 million	SIAM (2025)	Core employers have a substantial base for internal career systems and skill academies.
Indirect employment	26.5 million	SIAM (2025)	Employer-brand experience varies sharply among suppliers, dealers and service partners.
GST contribution	Rs. 3.37 lakh crore; ~15% of total GST revenue	SIAM (2025)	The industry's institutional importance increases scrutiny of work quality and responsible employment.
Vehicle exports, FY25	More than 5.3 million units	Economic Survey 2025–26	Global market integration increases demand for quality, digital and cross-cultural capabilities.

India share of global passenger-vehicle sales, 2024	5.2%	SIAM Annual Report 2024–25	Market growth creates opportunities, but growth alone does not ensure employee loyalty.
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The sector indicators point to opportunity and strategic relevance, not retention causality. There is likely a mobile 30-million-job ecosystem which means there will be movement between OEMs, suppliers, dealerships and allied technology sectors. Because of this, employer branding needs to convey a unique employment proposition which the organization must indeed deliver consistently. Since the majority of the employment is indirect, the promises the organization makes to the end consumer can diminish due to employment practices in dealerships or contractor networks if the employment practices are poor (Theurer et al., 2018). An employer-brand strategy which is responsible ought to have a minimum experience standard across the major partners.

8.2 Generational Workforce Signals

Workforce indicator	Generation Z	Millennials	Source	Interpretation
Purpose important for job satisfaction/well-being	89%	92%	Deloitte 2025 global survey	Purpose is broadly shared; it is not exclusively a Gen Z concern.
Left a role that lacked purpose	44%	45%	Deloitte 2025 global survey	Unfulfilled purpose can become a real mobility trigger for both cohorts.
Feel stressed all or most of the time	40%	35%	Deloitte 2024 global survey	Workload, manager support and well-being are retention-relevant brand evidence.
Employer training on GenAI capabilities/value	51%	45%	Deloitte 2024 global survey	Visible future-skilling can signal employability and organisational preparedness.
Primary retention emphasis identified in 2024 report	Learning, new skills and mentoring	Career-growth prospects	Deloitte 2024	Shared need for growth, expressed through different career-stage priorities.
2026 directional priority	Stability, skills and well-being	Stability, skills and well-being	Deloitte 2026; 22,500+ respondents, 44 countries	Retention propositions should balance security, development and sustainable workload.

They are most useful in identifying local convenience store expectations. The near balance of the purpose figures and purpose-related exits challenges simplistic generational stereotypes. The best vulnerable point is that both cohorts value a credible future, but how they envision that future depends on their career stage: Gen Z is more interested in developing skills through mentoring and supportive entry-level jobs; Millennials tend to want more evident job progression and greater economic security in the future and are more likely to choose more stable jobs.

8.3 Thematic Evidence Matrix

Theme	Supporting evidence	Synthesis	Automobile implication
Development and career growth	Kashyap and Verma; Rai & Nandy; Pandita; Jayathilake et al (Jayathilake et al., 2021; Kashyap & Verma, 2018; Pandita, 2022; Rai & Nandy, 2021)	Consistent positive retention relevance	EV transition makes skill currency and technical careers central brand promises.
Social climate and supervisor support	Kashyap and Verma; Lassleben (Kashyap & Verma, 2018; Lassleben & Hofmann, 2023)	Strong for both cohorts; often more visible to early-career staff	Daily leader behaviour is the most frequent proof of the internal employer brand.
Person–organisation fit and identification	Rai & Nandy; Bharadwaj & Yameen; Bharadwaj (Bharadwaj et al., 2022a; Bharadwaj, 2023; Rai & Nandy, 2021)	Repeated mediation evidence	Values and brand reputation matter when employees can identify with credible action.
Engagement and job satisfaction	Bharadwaj et al.; (Bharadwaj et al., 2022a)	Mechanisms linking brand to retention	Retention programmes should monitor engagement and satisfaction as leading indicators.
Purpose, CSR and DEIB	Bharadwaj; Nagre & Dixit (Bharadwaj et al., 2022a; Nagre & Dixit, 2026)	Increasing salience, especially in brand credibility	EV, safety, environmental and inclusion claims must be backed by measurable practice.
Flexibility and well-being	Costa et al.(Costa et al., 2024)	Important, but feasibility varies by role	Plant and dealership roles need schedule autonomy and predictability rather than office-only remote work.
Innovation and meaningful assignments	Pandita; Costa et al. (Costa et al., 2024; Pandita, 2022)	Attractive to digital and technical talent	Give employees real exposure to EV, software, automation and problem-solving projects.

8.4 Proposed Analytical Model

The following sequence is suggested by the secondary sources: Perception of value by prospective employees drives fit and fulfillment. Fit and fulfillment increase engagement and satisfaction as well as identification with the organization and intention to stay. Brand credibility is believed to play a moderating role in this first step because employees disregard messages that are at odds with their lived reality. Within broad groups, Career Stage and Job Family impact the importance of Brand dimensions. For example, for Generation Z, dimensions like structured learning, mentoring, inclusion, and accessible Managers are likely to be of greater importance as compared to dimensions for Millennials for whom dimensions such as progression, leadership, pay, and work-life integration are likely to be of greater importance. These have yet to be studied in the context of the Indian automotive industry (Rai & Nandy, 2021).

9. Discussion

Advertised employer brands may abound, but employees judge retention based on direct experience with the organization. If promotion systems remain opaque, if plant supervisors remain unsupportive, if learning remains inaccessible, and if well-being claims remain at odds with excessive workloads, external prestige will be insufficient to sustain intention to stay. In such circumstances, employer branding is a shared responsibility of HR, line management, corporate communication, and operations (Hoppe, 2018).

The research also supports the assumption that retention is mediated. The firm's claim of being innovative or responsible is not sufficient to retain employees. Employees will remain if innovative responsibilities are provided, and if the

organization's support and responsibility creates identification and engagement and if satisfaction is fulfilled (Bharadwaj et al., 2022). This explains the repeated empirical importance of person–organisation fit, identification, satisfaction and engagement in Indian studies. It also provides practical leading indicators: employer-brand pulse measures should be interpreted alongside internal mobility, learning access, manager quality, recognition and workload data (Chopra et al., 2024).

Generational differentiation should be cautiously utilized. The research does not support individual approach hiring systems for Millennials and Generation Z; it supports a unified approach to talent value proposition with flexible paths (Jayathilake et al., 2021). The core unified should include equitable pay, safety, respect, meaningful work, growth, and trustworthy leadership. The Gen Z pathway can be coupled with a focus on onboarding and mentorship, rapid learning opportunities, and an inclusive voice; the Millennial pathway can be coupled with a focus on expert and leadership, cross-functional, and family-centered paths, as well as responsible and sustainable practice. It is critical that employees be offered individualized flexible paths and be given the autonomy to choose the path, as opposed to being placed on a predetermined path (Parry & Urwin, 2021).

10. Findings

1. Perception of an Employer Brand influences retention. Both Indian and International studies have acknowledged retention or the lack of an intention to leave as being related to a perception of an employer's value.
2. Across various studies, the developmental value has been the most consistent factor. General employer-brand research and generational evidence show similar focus on learning, career paths, mentoring, and opportunities for more enriched work.
3. Social and managerial experiences turn promises into realities. Brand evidence typically includes supportive colleagues, mentor-ship, recognition, and psychological safety.
4. Branding influences sticking around. Employees are more inclined to stick around and remain based on a congruence of fit and identification.
5. Both cohorts (Gen Z & Millennials) are concerned about brand purpose. Claims of CSR, sustainability, and DEIB are only likely to strengthen retention if they are truly reflected in the company's practices.
6. While there are differences between the generations, they are relative. Gen Z shows greater early-career emphasis on learning, mentoring, and inclusion, while Millennials show greater emphasis on progress and stability, albeit with considerable overlap.
7. Automotive job families & roles require custom delivery. A corporate message aimed at..., etc., without role-relevant proof is insufficient.
8. There is not enough public data to determine an automotive retention rate. To develop a true understanding of existing retention, new primary research would be required to determine causation and cohort-specific research.

11. Conclusion

The study shows that the Millennial and Generation Z employees in the Indian automobile industry develop positive retention perceptions when they have a positive employer brand perception. The relationship is, however, instrument-dependent. The most compelling arguments concentrate on training, quality interpersonal relationships at work, rewards, opportunities to do significant and ethical work, inclusion, well-being and a trustworthy opportunity to develop a rewarding career. These factors are primarily retained through the person–organization fit, engagement, satisfaction, and identification with the organization. The retention of experienced production employees assumes greater importance in the context of the sector's developing economy and the new requirements for electronic, software, digital, and sustainability-related capabilities.

Millennials and Generation Z employees should not be treated as distinct segments. Both value a fair and just economy with growth and purpose. The differences should be appreciated as variations in the focus or emphasis which are largely defined by the career stage and the nature of the job. A credible employer brand in the auto industry will therefore promise a stable foundation and a range of flexible options. Credibility will be defined by the consistency employees experience in the recruitment process, induction, supervision, and learning, performance, internal movement and exiting

processes. There is secondary evidence in support of this, but a sustained, multiemployer automobile study in India is required to support causative arguments and draw broad population conclusions.

12. Recommendations

- **Write a role-specific employee value proposition.** Identify unique proof points for shop-floor, R&D, software, sales, service, and corporate functions under one common purpose.
- **Publish clear career progression frameworks.** Show the skill competencies, promotion criteria, technical and management career paths, opportunities for mobility, and anticipated time periods.
- **Make managers responsible for brand protection.** Assess managers on their ability to develop skills, conduct fair and inclusive activities, provide feedback, promote safety, and retain employees; do not only assess them on the achievement of their operational goals.
- **Develop a two-cohort growth portfolio.** Combine apprenticeships and fast skill badges with advanced expert and leadership tracks and cross-functional mobility into one cohort.
- **Offer flexible work by context.** For factory workers, offer reliable rotating shifts, adequate leave, and the flexibility to swap shifts; for knowledge workers, offer outcome-based work with periodic time in the office.
- **Show progress on our purpose.** Report results pertaining to employee safety, transition to electric vehicles, sustainability, and inclusion in the community.
- **Analyze the difference between expectations and experiences.** Assess brand perception, reasons employees leave us, and factors that drive 'regrettable attrition' using a standardized approach.
- **Conduct sector specific longitudinal research.** Survey employees in various automotive job families, and compare first-time perceptions and actual retention after 12 to 24 months, while controlling for tenure and career stage.

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