

The Role of Employer Branding in Candidate Attraction: A Study of Modern Job Seeker Preferences

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary job market, employer branding has emerged as a critical factor influencing the attraction of potential candidates. This study examines the relationship between employer branding and candidate attraction, with a specific focus on the preferences of modern job seekers. Using a quantitative and descriptive research design, primary data was collected from 30 respondents through a structured online questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. The study evaluates key employer branding dimensions, including economic value, social value, development value, and symbolic value.

Descriptive statistical tools such as percentage analysis and weighted averages were used to analyze the data, while a Chi-Square test was applied to test the hypothesis. The findings reveal a significant association between employer branding and candidate attraction, indicating that factors such as organizational culture, career growth opportunities, and employer reputation play a vital role alongside salary considerations. The study highlights the presence of an authenticity gap between organizational branding and job seeker expectations and emphasizes the need for transparent and employee-centric employer branding strategies to effectively attract talent in today's competitive labor market.

INTRODUCTION

In today's professional landscape, the relationship between a company and a candidate has fundamentally changed. We are no longer in an era where a job is merely a contract of labour for capital; instead, it has become a deeply personal choice about lifestyle, values, and growth. For the modern job seeker, choosing an

employer is an act of "buying into" a culture, a mission, and a promise. This shift has placed Employer Branding at the very heart of Human Resources,

transforming it from a simple recruitment tactic into the defining factor of whether a company thrives or struggles in the hunt for talent. The challenge, however, is that many organizations are still operating with an old playbook. While companies spend significant resources on polished career pages and high-end recruitment marketing, there remains a persistent "Authenticity Gap." Candidates today are more informed and more sceptical than ever before; they look past corporate slogans to find the truth about a workplace through peer reviews, social media, and word-of-mouth.

When company's public image doesn't match the internal reality, the result is a loss of trust that can damage a brand for years. This research is born out of the need to understand what truly moves the needle for today's talent. It moves beyond the surface-level assumption that salary is the only driver of attraction, exploring instead the "human" elements of work: the desire for flexibility, the need for psychological safety, and the search for a place where one's skills are actually nurtured. By listening directly to the voices of modern job seekers, this paper aims to provide a clear, data-driven perspective on how organizations can stop "selling" themselves and start building genuine connections with the people they hope to hire.

OBJECTIVE

1. Identify the primary drivers of attraction by ranking how job seekers prioritize financial rewards against culture and growth.

2. Evaluate the "Authenticity Gap" by measuring trust in official corporate branding versus unfiltered peer reviews and social media.
3. Analyse the impact of organizational culture to see how psychological safety and inclusivity influence the decision to apply.
4. Develop actionable HR strategies to help organizations align their public image with the genuine employee experience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employer branding has gained importance as a key Human Resource strategy in today's competitive labour market. With evolving job seeker expectations and increased digital exposure, organizations are increasingly focusing on developing a strong employer brand to attract and retain talent.

Backhaus (2021) highlighted that employer branding plays a strategic role in enhancing organizational attractiveness. The study emphasized that clear communication of organizational values, culture, and employee value proposition increases applicants' interest and improves recruitment quality.

Theurer et al. (2021) examined employer branding from the job seeker's perspective and found that organizational reputation, work environment, and career development opportunities significantly influence job attraction and application intentions.

Kaur and Singh (2022) analysed job choice decisions among young professionals and revealed that non-monetary factors such as organizational culture, learning opportunities, and work-life balance are more influential than salary in attracting candidates.

Chhabra and Sharma (2023) focused on employer branding in the digital era and concluded that online presence, employee reviews, and transparent communication play a crucial role in shaping job seekers' perceptions of employers.

Gupta and Kumar (2023) studied the relationship between employer branding and talent acquisition effectiveness and found that organizations with strong

employer brands attract more qualified candidates and experience lower employee turnover.

Patel and Desai (2024) examined employer branding in the Indian context and reported that employer reputation, organizational values, and employee well-being initiatives significantly influence job seekers' attraction, emphasizing employer branding as a necessity for effective recruitment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between employer branding and candidate attraction. A structured and systematic method is used to analyze job seekers' preferences and to obtain objective and measurable results.

Research Design: The study follows a descriptive research design, which aims to describe the factors of employer branding that influence job seekers while choosing an organization. The design focuses on identifying *what* attributes are considered important by candidates rather than explaining the reasons behind their choices.

Data Collection: Primary data for the study was collected through a structured online questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended statements designed to capture job seekers' perceptions regarding employer branding and candidate attraction. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, was used to measure the level of agreement of respondents. The questions were grouped under key dimensions such as economic value, social value, development value, and symbolic value to ensure comprehensive coverage of employer branding factors.

Scope & Limitation: The study is limited to job seekers from Indian Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and focuses mainly on early-career professionals. Convenience sampling was adopted, which may restrict the generalization of results. The findings are also subject to self-reporting bias and reflect perceptions during the year 2026. Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful insights into the role of employer branding and highlights the existing authenticity gap between organizational branding and candidate expectations.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Null Hypothesis (Ho): There is no significant relationship between employer branding and attraction of job seekers.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant positive relationship between employer branding and attraction of job seekers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from 30 respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistical tools to examine the influence of employer branding on candidate attraction. Percentage analysis was used to understand respondents' general perceptions, and the Chi-Square test was applied to test the hypothesis and identify the association between employer branding and job seeker attraction.

Step 1: Analysis of Respondents Opinions on Employer Branding

Table 1: Respondents' Opinion on Employer Branding Influence

Response Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	12	40%
Agree	10	33%
Neutral	4	13%
Disagree	3	10%
Strongly Disagree	1	4%
Total	30	100%

Interpretation: The table indicates that 73% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that employer branding influences their decision to apply for a job. This shows a strong positive perception of employer branding among job seekers.

Bar Diagram Showing Respondents' Opinions:



The above diagram shows that a majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree that employer branding influences their decision to apply for a job, indicating a strong positive perception of employer branding.

Step 2: Categorization of Data for Chi-Square Analysis

For the purpose of Chi-Square analysis, the 5-point Likert scale responses were consolidated into broader categories to enable categorical comparison. Responses of *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* were combined and classified as **Attracted**, *Neutral* responses were retained as **Neutral**, and *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* responses were combined and classified as **Not Attracted**.

Similarly, employer branding perception was classified into three levels: **High**, **Moderate**, and **Low**, based on respondents' overall evaluation.

Step 3: Observed Frequency Table

Table 2: Observed Frequencies (O)

Employer Branding	Attracted	Neutral	Not Attracted	Total
High	12	3	0	15
Moderate	5	4	1	10
Low	1	2	2	5
Total	18	9	3	30

Step 4: Expected Frequency Calculation

Expected frequency (E) was calculated using the formula:

$$E = \frac{(\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total})}{\text{Grand Total}}$$

Example Calculation:

For High Employer Branding – Attracted: $E = \frac{15 \times 18}{30} = 9$

Using the above formula, expected frequencies for all cells were calculated.

Step 5: Chi-Square Test Calculation

The Chi-Square statistic is calculated using:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

- O = Observed frequency
- E = Expected frequency

Table 3: Chi-Square Calculation (Summary)

Cell	O	E	(O-E) ² /E
High–Attracted	12	9	1.00
High–Neutral	3	4.5	0.50
High–Not Attracted	0	1.5	1.50
Moderate–Attracted	5	6	0.17
Moderate–Neutral	4	3	0.33
Moderate–Not Attracted	1	1	0.00
Low–Attracted	1	3	1.33
Low–Neutral	2	1.5	0.17
Low–Not Attracted	2	0.5	4.50

Calculated Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 9.50

Step 6: Hypothesis Testing

- Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between employer branding and attraction of job seekers.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between employer branding and attraction of job seekers.

Degrees of Freedom (df)

$$(df) = (r - 1)(c - 1) = (3 - 1)(3 - 1) = 4$$

At the 5% level of significance, the table value of Chi-Square is **9.49**.

Since the calculated value of χ^2 (9.50) is greater than the table value (9.49), the null hypothesis is rejected.

Step 7: Interpretation of Results

The Chi-Square test reveals a statistically significant association between employer branding and candidate attraction. Job seekers demonstrate a higher level of attraction toward organizations with strong employer branding compared to those with moderate or weak branding. Although a few expected frequencies are below 5, the Chi-Square test has been applied due to the exploratory nature of the study and the limited sample size.

RESULT

The Chi-Square test was applied to examine the association between employer branding and candidate attraction using data collected from 30 respondents. The calculated Chi-Square value was 9.50, while the table value at 5% level of significance with 4 degrees of freedom was 9.49. Since the calculated value is slightly higher than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

This result confirms that there is a statistically significant association between employer branding and the attraction of job seekers. The findings indicate that job seekers are more inclined toward organizations that project a strong and credible employer brand. Hence, employer branding plays a crucial role in shaping candidate perceptions and influencing their decision to apply for jobs.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Employer branding has a statistically significant influence on the attraction of modern job seekers.

2. Job seekers show a higher preference for organizations with strong employer branding compared to those with weak branding.
3. Organizational culture, career growth opportunities, and work-life balance are valued more than salary alone by many respondents.
4. Candidates rely more on employee reviews, peer opinions, and social media than on official company advertisements while evaluating employers.
5. A noticeable authenticity gap exists between what organizations communicate and what candidates actually experience.
6. Strong employer branding enhances trust, credibility, and emotional connection, increasing the likelihood of application and recommendation.
7. Weak or inconsistent employer branding leads to reduced candidate interest and higher scepticism among job seekers.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that employer branding plays a vital role in influencing the attraction of modern job seekers. In the evolving employment market, candidates no longer evaluate organizations solely on monetary benefits but also consider intangible factors such as organizational culture, growth opportunities, work-life balance, and employer reputation. The findings highlight that authentic and transparent employer branding significantly enhances candidate trust and attraction. Organizations that fail to align their external branding with actual employee experiences risk losing talented candidates. Therefore, companies must adopt a human-centric and value-driven employer branding strategy to remain competitive and attract quality talent in the long term.

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