Chapter II

Review of Related Literature
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REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

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REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In research, clarity on the chosen topic and related matter is developed only when the researcher examines information both at the macro and micro levels. The review of literature plays a critical role in throwing light on areas associated with the topic and enables the researcher to have complete comprehension of the research topic. This chapter, which reviews the past studies and relevant literature in employer branding and its impact on employee retention, serves as a strong foundation of the study. Employer branding can be seen as a melting point of HR and marketing. It is a discipline in which, the organisation creates a unique, positive and recognisable position as an attractive workplace among present and future employees. Several studies in the field of employer branding concentrate on the impact of employer branding on recruitment and few studies focus on employee retention using student samples. Since perception of students and employees differ, this study concentrates only on current employees. An attempt has been made to review the works of individual researchers, articles in magazines and journals pertaining to employer branding. For the purpose of building employer branding literature, a range of online database has been searched and articles were reviewed and classified. Both foreign and Indian research studies pertaining to the variables chosen are collected, reviewed and presented in this chapter. This chapter establishes the relationship between employer branding and employee retention especially in the Indian IT industry. This chapter also captures several models developed by various researchers which served as a backbone to this study.

Papers and research on employer branding are presented in categories mentioned below:

- Employer Branding
- Dimensions of Employer Branding
- Employer Branding and Employee Retention
- Employer Branding in IT industry
2.1 EMPLOYER BRANDING

Ambler & Barrow (1996)\(^1\) are credited as the creators of the term “Employer brand” and define it as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company”. The authors used semi-structured interviews with top executives of 27 UK companies and found the relevance between employer branding and employment. By comparing with conventional brand, the authors further explained functional benefit as employee development and job roles, economic benefit as material or financial rewards and psychological benefits as feeling satisfaction and recognition.

According to the Conference Board Report on Employer Branding (Conference Board, 2001)\(^2\), employer branding brings competitive advantage to the organisation, assists employees to internalise organisational values and helps in retention of employees. “The employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm’s value system, policies and behaviours towards the objective of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees”.

According to Martin et al (2011)\(^3\), employer brand is defined as “a generalised recognition for being known among key stakeholders for providing a high quality employment experience, and a distinctive organisational identity which employees value, engage with and feel confident and happy to promote to others”.

“The employer brand is a company’s trademark and is created by internal and external stakeholders through the dynamics between the company’s identity, profile and image as a place to work” (Engelund & Buchhave, 2009, p.27).\(^4\)

“Employer branding represents a firm’s efforts to promote, both within and outside the firm, a clear view of what makes it different and desirable as an employer. It is the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity, and the employer brand as a concept of the firm that differentiates it from its competitors” (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).\(^5\)
Katoen & Macioschek (2007) describe employer branding as “the process of building a unique identity to attract and recruit applicants as well as to motivate and to retain employees with the aim to contribute to company’s overall performance”. According to Jenner & Taylor (2008), the process of intentional development of the employer brand is called employer branding. Employer branding refers to “the efforts of the organisation in communicating to internal and external stakeholders of what makes it both desirable and distinctive employer”.

Employer brand refers to the final outcome of all brand-related activities and employer branding is the process which includes all decisions concerning the “planning, creation, management and controlling of employer brands and the corresponding activities to positively influence the employer preferences of the desired target groups”. It is the process to reach the desired outcome of being an attractive employer (Petkovic, 2009).

These definitions imply that employer branding involves promoting, both within and outside the firm, a clear view of what makes a firm different and desirable as an employer. The employer brand can thus be understood as the identification of a company that embodies the attributes of a good place to work. Employer branding would then be the process behind building the reputation and promoting the employer brand.

Operationally, Employer Branding may be understood as the distinctiveness of the organisation as an employer which is attractive to existing employees and helps in retaining them.

Cooper (2008, p.14) discussed employer branding in terms of “what a company has to offer its employees. Employer branding can be used as a long term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees and related stakeholders with regards to a particular organisation… Employer branding strategies assist in shaping the perceptions of an organisation as an employer of choice…”
**Watson & Reissner (2010)** explain employer branding as “a set of attributes and qualities—often intangible—that makes an organisation distinctive, promises a particular kind of employment experience and appeals to those who will thrive and perform best in its culture”. It is not about an attractive logo, catchy tagline or a cleverly crafted advertisement. It is all about expressing the company’s personality and promise of its culture to both potential and existing employees (Aravanudhan, 2009).

For employer brands to work best, they must be credible, aspirational and sustainable (Martin, 2009).

Employer branding is described as “the process explicitly designed to shape employees’ expectations by establishing and nurturing an emotional connect to the firm” (Cairn, 2009, p.1205). At the heart of employer branding is the need to understand what it is like to work for an organisation, and what drives employees’ desires to keep working for that organisation (Chalotra et al, 2012). Employer branding starts inside the organisation; the way current employees perceive their organisation is the starting point of the concept (Barrow & Mosley, 2006).

**Moroko & Uncles (2009)** suggest that the employer branding process is multidisciplinary in nature, drawing theories from human resources, branding, organisational behaviour and management.

Based on their study of pharmaceutical industry in Egypt, Wahba and Elmanadily (2015) understand employer branding as a strategy which communicates internally and externally, the unique attributes that establishes the identity of the organisation as an employer and what differentiates it from others with the aim of attracting and retaining potential and current employees.

Employer branding can be divided into internal and external employer branding. Internal employer branding targets the existing employees by offering development programmes and building a well-defined corporate culture whereas external employer branding is aimed at prospective employees. (AON HEWITT, 2012). The internal employer branding process includes developing a compelling employment image or proposition, communicating it to employees, assuring them of
its worth and linking the organisation’s every job to the brand essence (Berthon et al, 2005; Martin et al, 2005).

Similarly Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) point out that employer brand serves two different marketing contexts: external and internal. “External marketing of the employer brand is designed primarily to attract the target population, but is also designed to support and enhance the product or corporate brand. The goal of internal marketing of the employer brand is to develop a workforce that is committed to the set of values and organisational goals established by the firm”.

Chhabra & Mishra (2008) identify several contemporary strategies to make employer branding effective in organisations. Alignment of employer branding strategy with vision and mission of organisation, internal promotion of brand messages are some of them.

2.1.1 Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

Employer Brand Proposition or Employer Value Proposition refers to what the organisation would most like to be associated with as an employer; it highlights the attributes that differentiate the organisation from other employers; and clarify the ‘give and get’ of the employment deal (balancing the value that employees are expected to contribute with the value from employment that they can expect in return).

Employer branding enhances the perceptions of employees about the organisation as a good place to work for. It is expanded from branding theory which involves communicating to employees, both future and existing, that the organisation is a desirable place to work for by establishing unique EVPs (Jiang & Iles, 2011). An employer brand communicates what it is like to work in the organisation, what an organisation stands for and its unique value proposition to both potential and existing employees (Caplan, 2004).

Employer Value Proposition should be developed and communicated to attract and retain talent where human resources are a source of value to organisations and shareholders (Cairncross, 2000; Michaels et al, 2001). The
key factor of employer branding is the identification of the character of the organisation such as its values and principles and managing a “company’s image as seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires”. This clarification is referred to as the ‘value proposition’. Once this unique offering is identified, it needs to be extensively communicated to its targets (Edwards, 2010).²⁷

According to Minchington (2010),²⁸ “in its simplest form, your EVP is a set of associations and offerings provided by your organisation in return for the skills, capabilities and experiences and employee brings to your organisation”. The value proposition offered by the employer should include not only remuneration and benefits as stated in its formal employment contract but also the underlying value that the employer can offer. It should reflect on what employees think is most attractive about the organisation (O’Donohue & Wickham, 2008).²⁹ Organisations should strive to create a unique and competitive Employer Value Proposition and key employee satisfaction drivers such as job security, opportunities for growth and development, compensation and pay benefits should be considered for the creation of such EVP (Singh & Sharma, 2013).³⁰

In order to build a successful employer brand, organisations should understand the perception of the stakeholders about the employer, analyse and interpret this knowledge to understand what the organisation stands for and create a value proposition based on this. Hereinafter, the organisation should deliver this brand promise and measure its strength and employee perceptions continuously (Watson & Reissner, 2010).³¹

Robertson & Khatibi (2012),³² in a study of 608 employees from 369 companies of varied size and industry in Colombo, Srilanka, demonstrate the importance of EVP in the employer branding process. The source identities of the EVP are the corporate identity, organisational identity and the product identity and EVP plays a mediating role between the source identities and the employer brand. Results indicate that the strength of the EVP and the employer brand is significantly higher in organisations having a well-developed employer branding strategy.
2.1.2 Employment Experience

At the heart of Employer Branding is the ‘Employment Experience’. An employer brand is the sum of all the characteristics and distinguishable features that prospective candidates and current employees perceive about an organisation’s employment experience. The employment experience serves as the foundation of the employer brand and includes tangible features such as salary, rewards and benefits, but also extends to intangibles such as organisational culture, values, management style and opportunities for employee learning, development and recognition (Newell & Dopson, 1996; Hendry & Jenkins, 1997).

Employment experience is the ‘employment offering’ which consists of a complex range of tangible and intangible features, specifically offered to its current and potential employee. In employer branding, the unique and particular employment experience is the product which helps in creating value and influence. Employees’ shared perceptions of an organisation’s central and distinctive characteristics contribute to the employer brand image and employment experience (Edwards, 2010).

According to a white paper prepared by Kelly Services (2010), employer branding creates meaningful and enduring reasons for employees to remain loyal to their organisation. It is an ongoing process with the employment experience at its centrality, establishing touchpoints that continue throughout the employment cycle.

Employer branding ensures a clear alignment between organisational culture, values and employment experience and communication of organisation identity to potential employees and the perception of organisation image by existing employees (Davey, Burtenshaw, Fitzpatrick & Haar, 2011).

Employer branding is important to organisations for three reasons. Firstly, organisations are increasingly recognising that they cannot take the commitment and loyalty of their employees for granted. Organisations now understand that in order to make their employees remain with their organisation, they need to be more focused in sharpening the way in which the employer brand is managed. Secondly, employer
branding effectively bridges the disciplines of HR, internal communication and marketing. As businesses have understood the importance of people management, they bring HR, internal communication, marketing and brand management in line. Thirdly, employer branding draws on branding disciplines which has a long lasting value in the market place. Brand management is the best approach to drive people’s commitment and loyalty (Mosley, 2009; Khosla & Saxena, 2013).

Employer branding showcases the organisation and highlights the organisation as a “great place to work”, gives the organisation a distinctive competitive edge in the labour market, improves recruitment and retention and promotes management practices that are respected by employees (Kulkarni, 2013). According to Dell & Ainspan (2001) in the Conference Board Survey, Employer Branding helps employees internalise the organisational values, achieves reputation as an employer of choice and helps in retention of employees.

Organisations are becoming cognizant towards employer branding as it helps in attracting, motivating and retaining the best talent in the market. Employer branding is a HR-marketing strategy which communicates the goodwill or reputation of the organisation to employees and other stakeholders. It reflects the employment experience of the organisation and provides its employees the ‘wow’ factor. It is becoming essential for organisations to make their organisation unique and develop it as a ‘great place to work’ in the minds of its employees (Rokade & Singh, 2015).

“The greatest hope offered by an effective employer branding strategy is that many of today’s HR challenges-those around retention, loyalty and engagement-can be solved long before they ever arise” (Mason-Jones, 2005).

Fernon (2008) sums up the power of the employer brand as “its ability to deliver organisational success by attracting and retaining the right people, providing an environment in which employees live the brand, improving organisational performance in key business areas of recruitment, retention, engagement and the bottom line and differentiating employers from each other, creating competitive advantage”.
Employer branding benefits both the employees and the organisation. It provides a clear framework to the employers to simplify and focus priorities, increase productivity and improve recruitment and retention. For the employees, belonging to an organisation having a strong employer brand enhances their self-esteem and strengthens their organisational identification. Constant delivery of the brand promise leads to trust and loyalty resulting in high commitment and performance among employees. Ultimately, organisational effectiveness is increased by promoting the organisation’s credibility with the employees (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008).

The four pillars of an employer brand are (i) Differentiation which refers to the unique factor in an organisation’s relationship with its employees; (ii) Relevance which refers to the people who will care about the point of differentiation; (iii) Esteem which refers to how ‘well-regarded’ an organisation is in the employment marketplace and (iv) Knowledge which refers to how well the brand is understood by people (Durgin, 2007).

According to Griffin & Clarke (2008), factors that are critical to successful employer branding are (i) Definition: to have a successful employer brand, an organisation must first understand about itself, what its aspirations are etc.; (ii) Execution: this refers to developing a plan, securing resources and executing the plan; (iii) Engagement: when employees feel that their organisation is a great place to work, recruit employees and point out the attributes that make an organisation an employer of choice, then, it can be understood that the employer brand is resonating among its current employees; (iv) whether employer branding pays off should be found.

Over the past decade, researchers have developed a number of significant theoretical and empirical models to understand employer branding. Models allow predictive claims to be made under certain conditions and simplify understanding by bringing conceptual coherence. They systematise the domain and provide means for explanation and prediction. The following section of the chapter revisits the conceptual models.
Corporate Leadership Council (1999)\textsuperscript{48} has identified the components of an Employer Brand. At the heart of a strong employer brand is a gripping employment offer or employment value proposition. Beyond the opportunity to work for an organisation with a leading corporate or product brand, these offers are composed of selected levels of compensation and benefits, work environment, work-life balance and company culture.

![Fig. 2.1 Components of Employer Brand](image)


Fig. 2.1 Components of Employer Brand

Over time, the ability of an organisation to deliver on its offers to its employees will form the foundation of its employer brand image. The employer brand is built upon the specific employment offers that the organisation provides to its employees. While the employment offer is the foundation of the employer brand, a true employer brand is established only through the delivery of values in those offers. A captivating value proposition and a strong employer brand are becoming critical in attracting and retaining employees. It is no longer possible for organisations to compensate for high turnover rates through their recruitment efforts. Intensifying the need for a compelling employer brand is the “market power” currently enjoyed by employees. This shift in market power from employer to
employee has affected the relationship shared by them. As organisations are competing to make captivating offers to employees, the need to differentiate their offer and build a distinctive employer brand grows.

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) present a conceptual framework of employer branding. According to them, employer branding generates brand associations and brand loyalty. Employer brand associations forms the employer image which in turn affects the organisation’s attraction to potential employees. Employer brand image is the totality of the perceptions related to the functional benefits such as salary, benefits etc. and symbolic benefits such as prestige, social approval etc. offered to the employees. It influences the attraction of potential employees to the organisation and rests on person-organisation fit and social identity theory. Employer brand, while promoting the symbolic aspects of the organisation, also presents the realistic facet of the organisation. The employer branding message which does not provide a realistic job preview and an incomplete depiction of its organisational culture will allow for employees to leave the organisation.


Fig. 2.2 Employer Branding Framework

Employer branding also influences the organisation culture and organisational identity leading to employer brand loyalty. Organisational culture also feeds back to the employer brand. Employer brand loyalty increases employee productivity. Employer brand loyalty in employer branding literature refers to the commitment of employees towards their employers. Employer brand loyalty has a behavioural dimension that relates to organisation culture and an attitudinal dimension that relates to organisational identity. Organisational commitment here
refers to the attachment that employees feel towards their organisation. Employees who are loyal remain with the organisation even under uncertain circumstances. Organisational culture and commitment are related to high levels of commitment. Organisational culture conciliates the association between employer branding and employer loyalty. Employer branding affects organisational culture and organisational identity in turn affecting employer brand loyalty. Organisational identity is the cognitive image held by the employees and can be understood as the ‘collective attitude’ about who the organisation is as a group. When the organisational identity is positive and incremental in nature, it leads to organisational commitment. Thus, the relationship between employer branding and employer brand loyalty is negotiated by organisational identity. Employer branding also influences the association between employer brand loyalty and employee productivity as creation of employer brand improves the attitude of employees, leading to customer satisfaction and profitability.

The authors, based on HR practitioner literature, define employer branding as a three step process. First, the organisation defines its Employer Value Proposition (EVP) by using information about the organisation’s culture, management style, qualities of current employees, employment image and product or service quality impressions. The EVP offers the central message conveyed by the brand. Second, the organisation markets the EVP to its target audience and thirdly, it undertakes the internal marketing of the employer brand which carries the brand promise made to potential employees and incorporates it as a part of organisational culture.

The Employer Branding Framework model developed by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) focuses on the process of employer branding that leads to credible employee productivity. The present study is the off shoot of their model, together with other relevant and substantial in-depth review of literature done by the researcher, to fill the gaps in the model.

According to Mandhanya & Shah (2010), employer branding is the essence of the employment experiences which increases employee satisfaction,
results in employee retention and enhanced level of productivity. Creating the employer brand is the first step in talent management. Employer branding targets both the prospective employees and current employees. While building the employer brand for prospective employees, initiatives are targeted at building reputation about the organisation as a place of work whereas, while targeting current employees, the organisation has to live up to its standards and incorporate a culture of respect and trust for employees.

The authors summarise the employer branding process as follows:

Step 1: Concept Phase: A 360 degree employer brand audit determines the strength of the current employer brand and establish its level of synergy with the corporate brand and business objectives of the organisation.

Step 2: Design Phase: The design phase is the process to formulate the employer brand strategy. It includes:

(i) Defining the Employer brand: The employer brand is made up of two components namely Employer Brand Employee Platform and Employer Brand Strategic Platform. Employer Brand Employee Platform includes recruitment and induction, compensation and benefits, career development, reward and recognition, communication system and work environment whereas Employer Brand Strategic Platform includes the vision, mission and values of the organisation, corporate social responsibility, leadership, corporate reputation and culture, people management policies and practices, performance management and innovation.

(ii) The corporate brand: The employer branding process and procedures should aim towards corporate branding as betterment could be created not only among employees but also among other stakeholders.

(iii) Market forces: Employer branding process and techniques should be aimed towards building a positive image of the organisation in external and internal environment equally.
Step 3: Integration Phase: This may include career website, company intranet, career fair and brochures, company newsletters, policy and procedures, recruitment advertising and sponsorship.

Step 4: Evaluation Phase: This phase measures the effect of the Employer Brand program. Above all, the success of any employer brand program depends on the efficiency with which the need, situation for designing, implementing and monitoring an employer brand program has been made. Not only a good understanding between the need, process and inputs are required, but the full utility comes when full workforce is benefitted by it.

The authors adopt the Employer Branding framework of Backhaus & Tikoo (20004) to propose their model of employer branding process.

![Fig. 2.3 Employer Branding Process](image)

Source: Mandhanya & Shah, 2010

**Fig. 2.3 Employer Branding Process**

Prospective employees develop an employer brand image from the employer brand associations, which are an outcome of employer branding of the organisation. Employer branding creates two principal assets namely employer brand associations and employer brand loyalty. Employer brand associations shape the employer image which in turn affects the attractiveness of the organisation to potential employees. Brand associations are the thoughts and ideas that are evoked in the minds of the employees by the brand name. Brand associations determine the brand image which is the amalgamation of the perceptions related to the attributes and benefits included in the brand associations. Accordingly, potential employees derive an employer brand image from the brand associations which are an outcome of a firm’s employer branding.

Employer branding impacts the organisational culture and organisational identity that results in employer brand loyalty. This supports organisations in its talent management process. Employer brand loyalty refers to the attachment that the
employee has to its employer (brand). Employer brand loyalty refers to the willingness of the employees to stay with the organisation and also being committed to the organisation. Employer branding is commonly used to affect the organisational culture and organisational identity and in turn affect employer brand loyalty culminating in employee retention.

According to the model developed by Suikkanen (2010), employer branding positively influences employee retention by enhancing and enriching the entire employment experience and by creating value for employees, thus leading to retention. The employment experience can be leveraged in the minds of employees by providing both tangible and intangible benefits such as training, career development and flexible working and communicating the same so that the employer brand promise is fulfilled. If the employees are given realistic job previews and is provided with benefits that are superior to competitors, it would have increase employer brand loyalty paving the way for employee retention.

Source: E.Suikkanen (2010)

Fig. 2.4 Employer branding-employee retention framework
The conceptual framework of employer branding developed by Martin (2007)\(^{52}\) indicates that employer branding starts with the creation of employer brand image or value proposition. Value proposition is the central message to be communicated by the brand about the value offered by the organisation to its employees. This process includes a ‘self-audit’ of ‘corporate identity’, i.e. organisation’s culture, mission, strategies and ‘organisational identity’, i.e. shared knowledge, beliefs and behaviours. The ‘employer brand image’, as an autobiographical account of who an organisation wants to be forms the ‘employer brand reputation’ which is the biographical account of who an organisation is perceived to be through symbolic and instrumental attributes. These brand associations have an effect on ‘employer attractiveness’ to prospective employees and strengthens organisational identification among current employees which positively affects employer brand loyalty leading to better organisational performance.


Fig. 2.5 Process of Employer Branding

Botha, Bussin & De Swardt (2011)\(^{53}\) construct a predictive model of talent attraction and retention using the various employer branding building blocks. The results of their study indicated the need for an integrated approach where all the six
building blocks namely target group needs, EVP differentiation, people strategy, brand consistency, employer brand communication and employer branding metrics are considered important to shape the employer brand.

Target needs indicates the differentiated needs of the employees, understanding of which would enable organisations to offer benefits aligning with these needs to bring about attraction and retention strategies effectively. EVP is the unique set of attributes and benefits that will attract and retain employees and a differentiated EVP adds impetus to the employer brand. People strategy relates to the application of HR principles to employer branding so that organisations can deliver on the employer brand practice. Internalisation of the employer brand would depend on the organisation’s people strategy.


Fig. 2.6 Employer brand predictive model theoretical implications

The employer brand, corporate brand and the product brand should be aligned and consistent in order to deliver the brand promise. Communication
represents the organisation’s efforts to communicate the employer brand through honest and authentic employer brand messages at all employee touchpoints. In order to measure the effectiveness of an employer brand, the employer branding efforts need to be included in the HR scorecard. This would ensure delivery of the brand promise.

Maxwell & Knox (2009)\textsuperscript{54} identify employment, organisational success, construed external image and products or services to be the four attributes that makes an organisation’s brand attractive to its current employees through the lens of Social Identity Theory and assert that these attributes are consistent and predictable across organisations.

Employment related attributes were sub-categorised into work environment, workforce, type of work, style of management, employee rewards and employer-employee relationship. Work environment attributes include pace of work, location and social dynamics whereas attributes of work force refer to diversity of workforce. Type of work indicates variety and challenging work. Employee rewards may be tangible such as salary and benefits and intangible such as training and career development opportunities. Management style refers to the basis for rewards, valuing ideas and suggestions of employees. Employer-employee relationship includes attitude towards each other such as trust and respect.

Source: Maxwell and Knox, 2009

Fig. 2.7 Employer categories and attributes schema
Organisational success as an attribute of an employer brand was subjective and not simple. Employees related to past, present and future success. Constrained external image refers to the attribute that “members believe people outside the organisation use to distinguish it”. Employees focused their attention on specific stakeholders such as people in their own industry or sector and people who were supposed to have some influence on their organisation’s success. Employees perceived the products or services of their organisation to be an integral part of its identity and therefore its employer brand. Attributes of the products or services were understood by their underlying values and these were aligned with the identity of the organisation.

Results of the study indicate that restricting employer branding to employment alone is not appropriate. All the aspects of employer branding should be studied to assess its impact on employee behaviour. Authors also argue that managers need to identify the attributes of their own organisation within these categories to make the employer brand more effective and also to link it with the identity of the organisation.

Moroko & Uncles (2005)\textsuperscript{55} conceptualise the internal and external effects of employer branding. Effects on external interactions to the firm bring about the attraction and retention of best employees who add value to the organisation and deliver the brand promise. This in turn increases customer satisfaction, loyalty, growth and profitability. This profitability and positive external reputation attracts and retains best employees.
Effects on internal interactions to the firm result in consistency of brand message, alignment of brand behaviours and satisfied and loyal employees who are more likely to remain with the firm. As the internal and external boundaries are falling, the interactions between external and internal virtuous circles of the employer brand exist.

Moroko and Uncles (2008)\textsuperscript{56} confirm that employer branding is in contrast from consumer and corporate branding. They conceptualise the employment experience as a product of the organisation’s culture, policies and processes. The authors establish a typology of employer brand success characteristics. Attractiveness and accuracy are identified as the two significant facets of a successful employer brand. While attractiveness is emphasised by awareness, differentiation and relevance, accuracy focuses on the consistency between employer brand and employment experience, corporate culture and values.
The authors identify characteristics of a successful employer brand, some of which are consistent with consumer and corporate brands while others are in addition to the above.

(i) Being known and noticeable: Successful employer brands are characterised as being ‘known’ and ‘noticeable’ by employees of the organisation. Organisation based characteristics have more impact on employees apart from strong brand identification and positive reputation.

(ii) Being seen as relevant and resonant: The employee value proposition is the distinctive offering made by the organisation to its employees. The success of the employer brand is dependent on this proposition being relevant to and resonating with the employees of the organisation.

(iii) Being differentiated from competitors: Being meaningfully differentiated from its competitors decides the success of the organisation’s employer brand.

(iv) Fulfilling a psychological contract: The employer brand is an ongoing promise to the employees and organisations need to deliver consistently in fulfilling the promise to have a successful employer brand.
Unintended appropriation of brand values: Alignment of corporate and consumer brands with the employer brand strengthens the employer brand. The employer brand is further strengthened when the vision of the organisation is aligned with the benefits offered to the employees such as working hours, work life balance, training etc.


**Fig. 2.10 Managerial implications of employer brand success characteristics**

The above figure gives an overview of the strategic issues that organisations with employer brands in each of the cells may face.

Cell 1: Communication breakdown: Firms in this cell have an attractive employer brand but are not considered instantly by its employees due to a number of communication breakdowns. This situation may be improved with a more strategic, integrated approach to communications.

Cell 2: Strategic mismatch: Firms in this cell attract the right employees but are not able to deliver the employee value proposition for existing staff. This situation may be challenging to address as it requires managing the implied brand promise so that it is more realistically represented or working on cultural and engagement issues to enhance the employee experience.
Cell 3: Long-term disconnect: The employer brand is shaky as the employer is neither considered to be attractive to potential employees nor has a robust employment experience to retain its staff. Such firms may have to re-engineer the employment product and communicated to the broader employment market.

Cell 4: Sustained success: The firms in this cell have employer branding success. Once attracted, the candidates join the organisation and their employment experience exceeds their expectations. This is the most desirable position as it results in the organisation being able to attract and retain the best possible candidates who are highly engaged.

Though an organisation may be placed in any of the cells, it cannot be assumed that it will remain in the same position. Given the nature of employment, perceptions of potential and existing staff will change based on their experiences, information received by them and changes in the competitiveness and desirability of the core employment product. Thus, an organisation’s degree of success or otherwise is dynamic and move towards any cell in the typology based on the strategic management of the employer brand by the organisation.

According to Mosley (2007), employer branding is the holistic approach to shape the organisational culture by aligning employment experience with the brand ethos of the organisation resulting in strengthening the organisation’s capacity to deliver consistent and distinctive customer brand experience. The primary role of employer branding is to provide a coherent framework for management to simplify and focus priorities, increase productivity, retention and commitment.

Source: Mosley (2007)

Fig. 2.11 Integrated Service brand model
Employer branding entails defining and managing the organisation’s proposition to its employees with the same clarity and consistency as in defining and managing the customer brand proposition. Employer branding approach is driven by the competitive market for labour required by organisations to succeed. Though employer branding was primarily focusing on developing external reputation, it is now evolved as an integrated approach by ‘aligning external recruitment promises with internal employee experiences’ and also the employer brand with the corporate and customer brand with leadership playing an important role in this integration through appropriate communication and behaviours. The employer brand should elucidate what rational and emotional benefits employees can expect from their organisations and what they are expected to give in return. This would align the employer brand with the corporate and customer brand.

Source: Mosley (2007)

**Fig. 2.12 Employer Brand Experience framework**

In order to effectively manage the employer brand, organisations need to manage employee ‘touchpoints’. The employee touchpoints includes recruitment process, orientation, employee communication, shared services like HR, rewards, performance management and employee development. Similarly, organisation’s core values and competencies govern the experiences of employees through communication and behaviour of its leaders. Employer brand should reinforce the right culture within the organisation. In order to align the organisational culture with
the desired customer brand experience, it is very important that leadership and people processes associate with the brand ethos. These employer brand experiences will result in a distinctive brand attitude, add value to the customer experience and differentiate the organisation from its competitors.

Buttenberg (2013)\textsuperscript{58} proposes a causal model to evaluate and measure the impact of employer branding on employee motivation and organisational performance. The article provides importance of the value of employer branding to existing employer-employee relationship.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{measurement_tools Employer branding.png}
\caption{Measurement tools for employer branding activities}
\end{figure}

Fig. 2.13 Measurement tools for employer branding activities

The employer branding activities create brand awareness among future, potential, current and former employees. It also creates brand awareness among other stakeholders such as media, suppliers, government, investors and competitors.

The employer branding activities are measured by performance measures such as recruitment, retention and productivity. In order to measure employer branding activities in the area of recruitment, performance of recruiting tools and recruitment itself is evaluated. The assessment of direct and indirect employer branding indicators plays a very significant role in the retention of employees. To gauge productivity as a performance measure of employer branding activities, productivity management indicators such as sales figures or error rates, depending upon the industry or function is assessed.
Indicators for measuring the effectiveness of employer branding is also derived. For example, employee satisfaction and motivation relates to retention of employees. The proposed measurement tool proves a causal relation between employer branding and employee satisfaction.

Heilmann, Saarenketo & Liikkanen (2013) identify the benefits and process of employer branding in the power industry of Finland. A better external employer image leading to more efficient recruitment are the most significant benefits of employer branding. Recruitment processes are shorter and flexible and recruitment costs are reduced with an increased quality of applicants. A strong employer band improves employee retention. It increases satisfaction for improved employer image.

External marketing in employer branding establishes the organisation as an employer of choice. The distinctiveness of the brand enables the organisation to obtain distinctive human capital. Recruitment strategies comprise efforts for making the organisation as an attractive work place and for reaching better candidates. Internal marketing in employer branding helps in not only building workforce that is inimitable but also in enhancing employee retention by using the brand to strengthen the concept of quality employment, thus increasing the willingness of the employees to stay with the organisation.


Fig. 2.14 Employer Branding framework in Power industry
According to the authors, the process of employer branding traverses through five steps. Research is the first step in the employer branding practice, wherein the organisation should understand its position in the employment market and define the applicable action plan. Research on current employees and the prospective employees will offer an insight into how the organisation’s employment experience is perceived. The four fundamental factors in research are knowing how the employer is perceived by the target group, learning what is needed and wanted from the employer by the target group, discovering the employer’s position with regard to its competitors and ensuring regular updates of the research.

The second step defines the Employer Value Proposition (EVP). EVP provides employees a reason to work for an employer and reflects the competitive advantage of the organisation. The organisation must differentiate its employment offering from other organisations. This can be achieved by defining what is unique about the organisation’s identity. The effective management of the EVP offers the employer an increase in its talent pool and employee commitment and a potential decrease in wage costs.

The third step is the development of a communication strategy which is based on the research findings and a well-defined EVP. Communication of EVP involves comprehensive communicative campaigns. HR, marketing and communication can use the EVP to emphasise the most attractive factors and consistency in communication is key to successful employer branding.

The fourth step is to express the EVP with the right words and expressions so that it is consistent with the organisational identity and branding efforts. The target groups should recognise the organisation irrespective of the communication channel and organisations should ensure that communication of employer brand covers the varied channel widely. The final step of employer branding process is to implement all of these steps and observe closely what works or what needs adjustment.

Katoen & Macioschek (2007) indicate a triangulation between the HR functions of recruitment and retention and the modern concepts of employer branding and talent relationship management. These concepts are inter-related and
reinforce each other. Employer branding invokes a certain image in the minds of the potential employees. The link between individual’s social identification and the organisational identity is implied. Social Identification happens when a person’s self-concept is in line with the identity of the organisation. A positive outcome of this process from the employer’s perspective is employer attraction which results in the recruitment of potential employees.


Fig. 2.15 Employer Brand Model

Employer branding plays a pivotal role in employees experiencing a high level of satisfaction by the elements of total work experience. The total work experience, which refers to the initiatives and benefits the organisation offers, influences the perceptions of current employees about the employer brand. This total work experience has a direct impact on organisational image and also on the level of employee satisfaction. The authors also link total work experience, employee commitment and employee retention. The authors indicate a relationship between employee commitment which is a mature form of employee satisfaction and performance which is perceived by having new and interesting assignments. This further result in a relationship between performance and employee attraction. Engaged and committed employees tend to be more efficient in terms of organisational performance and employer brand has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction which creates better financial profitability.

The outcome of the internal employer branding is the retention of employees and an increased profitability. Committed employees do not intend to leave their organisation and drawing parallels from the concept of service profit chain where
customer loyalty is linked with revenue growth and profitability, employer branding also leads to loyalty of customers and increased growth and profitability. The employer brand model also shows that employees as brand ambassadors can increase employee satisfaction and this brand advocacy has a direct impact on customer satisfaction. An employee who can highly identify himself with the organisation and feels proud in being associated with the organisation has a larger influence on customer satisfaction.

The model also confirms that retention takes place in situations where employees have growth possibilities and have high knowledge about the organisation to which culture and programs contribute and where there is employee identification with the organisation through pride. The authors argue that a successful and appealing Talent Relationship Management has a positive impact on employer branding and vice versa and that it should be an integral part of the total work experience in an organisation, empirically linking employer branding and Talent Relationship Management.

Schlager, Bodderas, Maas & Cachelin (2011) examine the effect of employer branding dimensions that positively influence employee attitudes such as employee satisfaction and employee identification which in turn have a positive effect on customer experiences in a service centred context. Their Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) shows that a strong employer brand results in employee satisfaction and identification with the company and that satisfied and identified employees positively impact customers’ experience and are therefore instrumental in the creation of a service brand. Employer branding enriches the service profit chain and pays off by leveraging the organisation’s profit. Organisations gain competitive advantage by strengthening their employer brand which results in better management of their employees’ skills and favourable attitudes.
The authors propose a five dimensional model of employer brand to ascertain different satisfaction and organisational identification pattern between the dimensions across genders and conclude that there exists a positive association between employer branding dimensions and the satisfaction and organisational identification of the employees. The authors propose an employer branding model across an insurance company wherein employees’ satisfaction and identification with the company is a consequence of perceived employer brand. The study uses Berthon et al (2005) model of five dimensions namely Development value, Social value, Reputation value, Economic value and Diversity value. Empirical results confirm that perceived employer branding affects employee satisfaction with their job and identification with their company. By delivering superior value for its employees, organisations can increase satisfaction and identification. The research supports that employer branding encompasses distinct dimensions and employer branding-employee attitude relationship needs to be conceptualised on the dimensional level. The research also shows different results across gender.
Taking their previous research on the influence of employer branding dimensions on employee attitudes by focusing on employee satisfaction and employee identification with the organisation further, they feel that though employer branding dimensions include the five values, organisations, in particular, should focus on three dimensions of employer branding namely Developmental value, Social value and Diversity value to have satisfied and identified employees.

2.2 DIMENSIONS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING

2.2.1 Employer branding and demographic factors

Alnicak & Alnicak (2012) identify the attractiveness dimensions of employer branding in a Turkish backdrop and examine the importance level of dimensions of employer branding taking the perceptions of employees according to age, gender and employment status. The dimensions identified were social value, market value, economic value, application value, co-operation value and working environment. Results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceived
importance levels of the dimensions of employer branding with regard to age and gender.

According to the **Employer Branding Survey Report (2011)**, the important employer branding factors across all demographic categories are having a good leadership team, having a good work environment, training and career progression of employees and good compensation and benefits.

**Sripirabaa & Subha (2013)**, in their study on 52 respondents working in IT sector in Chennai, identify the most reliable factor to measure employer branding and analyses the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, working experience and salary on employer branding classification. Results disclose that demographic factors have no significance on employer brand classification.

**Moroko & Uncles (2009)** apply Bock-Uncles taxonomy to group employees using observable factors such as age, seniority, job type, permanence, employee life cycle, tenure, physical location and unobservable factors such as career focus, outlook on life stage, desired career benefits for the purpose of employee retention through employer branding.

**Babcanova & Odlerova (2010)** analyse the study conducted by Employer Brand International on Employer Brand strategy and identify fifteen employer brand attributes based on demographic data such as age, gender, organisation type, position and tenure.

**Sutherland et al (2002)** identify the most important attributes that an employer brand should convey. Career growth opportunities, challenging work environment and compensation were the most preferred employer brand attributes across all demographic categories.

**Pingle & Sharma (2015)** identify six factors of employer brand preferred by current employees, namely, work environment, high pay and opportunities with job security and authority, organisation image, employer who values one’s skills and provides training to enhance them, organisation fit (values and personality) and
work life balance. These factors have significant relationship with demographic factors such as gender, income and type of city. Authors opine that employers need to focus on the above factors instead of relying only on pay packages of employees. In their study in a service industry find that male employees related work environment and opportunities with job satisfaction as high and work life balance were rated low by them. On the other hand, women employees rated work life balance higher than others. This is supported by the fact that there is an increase in the proportion of women employees comfortably working from home and employers also provide women with such opportunities. Likewise, employees earning high income rated opportunities, organisation image and work life balance as the most preferred factors. When employees have reached a position where high salaries do not motivate them (i.e. basic needs are satisfied as per Maslow’s theory), then, opportunities for growth and work life balance could be the tools to motivate and retain them.

2.2.2 Employer Branding Factors

Moroko & Uncles (2009)\textsuperscript{69} suggest that industry and sector level factors which operate along with firm and individual level mechanisms such as culture, identity, employee retention, brand loyalty, employee and organisation fit shape the employer brand.

Lievens et al (2007)\textsuperscript{70} conceptualises employer brand as a package of instrumental and symbolic traits and investigates the relative importance of both the employer brand attributes across different groups such as potential applicants, actual applicants and employees of Belgian army. An important finding is that, across all the three groups, symbolic attributes explain more variance than instrumental attributes. Symbolic attributes better predict employees’ identification with their organisations and employees give importance to what others think about their organisation. Srivastava & Bhatnagar (2010)\textsuperscript{71} in their study on 105 respondents identified eight dimensions of employer branding namely caring organisation, enabling organisation, career growth, credible and fair, flexible and ethical, products
and services brand image, positive employer image, global exposure which are in congruence with Lievens (2007) symbolic and instrumental attributes.

Barrow & Mosley (2005) identify twelve dimensions of employer branding which are external reputation, internal communication, senior leadership, organisation values and corporate social responsibility, internal measurement system, service support, communication, team management, performance appraisal, learning and development, reward and recognition and working environment.

Employees of organisations having an employer brand are benefitted by having well defined policies, attractive salary packages, good work life balance, flexible timings, international career opportunities, job security, recognition for good work and references for next job (Lalwani & Parmar, 2012).

Organisations having an employer brand offers high and attractive salary, have flexible timings, the company is good reference for the next job, better recognition of work, better and bigger teams, offer work life balance, sponsors higher education, provide international career opportunities, have well defined policies and provide job security, provide welfare benefits, offers appropriate training, builds competencies, ensure good learning and skill development of employees and offer better scope for career development, have good reputation, strong culture and have regular internal communication (Parmar, 2014).

Attributes like culture, values, recruitment, compensation, training, leadership and management impact the employer brand (Chhabra & Mishra, 2008). Kucherov & Zavyalova (2010) prove using econometric regression model that organisations having an employer brand would possess attributes such as organisational goals, participation of employees in decision making, training, leadership, performance appraisal, reward system and organisational values. These attributes influence the employer brand of the organisation.

Sarabdeen et al (2011) use content analysis to examine whether employer brand exists in companies in the UAE. Based on a study on three companies in UAE, the authors identify the different dimensions of employer branding and arrive
at a conclusion that employer branding is practiced in the country. The authors also touch upon the underlying theories supporting employer branding such as resource based view, instrumental-symbolic framework and psychological contract. The dimensions identified include communication, leadership, corporate social responsibility, training and learning opportunities, compensation and recognition, communication and diversity of work force. Employer brand needs a healthy work environment, career progression opportunities, work life balance, overseas assignments, training and learning opportunities to be successful in retaining its employees.

Bose (2011) assesses the perceptions of employees of selected call centres in Kolkata about employer branding based on an empirical research and concludes that brand attachment, better compensation, learning and their organisation being a ‘springboard’ for future opportunities were the important factors which made employees stay with their organisations. The author also identifies 15 dimensions of employer branding namely fair treatment, open communication, security and benefits, succession planning, management, culture, processes, talent management practices, advancement of employees among others based on employer branding surveys.

From a sample of 223 employees in Germany, Hillebrandt & Ivens (2012) identify twelve dimensions of employer branding by developing a comprehensive measurement scale. The factors were culture and communication, team spirit, tasks, international career and environment, benefits, reputation, work life balance, training and development, diversity, customers, autonomy and corporate social responsibility. Employer branding is multi-dimensional in nature and can be used to differentiate the employer from its competitors.

Kimpakorn & Dimmit (2007) in their study investigating the attributes of employer branding from the perspective of management and employees in leading luxury hotels in Thailand, identified seven dimensions namely human resource management, internal branding, internal communication, management style, service culture, internal service quality management and internal marketing.
Davies (2008)<sup>81</sup> investigates the role of employer brand in affecting employees’ perceived differentiation, affinity, satisfaction and loyalty as outcomes relevant to the employer brand since the role of branding with existing employees is not clear. A multi-dimensional Corporate Character scale to measure brand personality is used to assess employer brand associations of 854 commercial managers in 17 organisations. Structural Equation Model was used to link the employer brand personalities to the outcomes. Satisfaction was predicted by agreeableness; agreeableness and ruthlessness indicated affinity; perceived differentiation and loyalty were predicted by enterprise and chic. However, no one aspect had leverage on employer brand outcome.

An investigation on the impact of employer branding on employee differentiation, satisfaction, loyalty and affinity among organisations in Pharmaceutical industry of Egypt reveal that employer branding attributes namely enterprise, ruthlessness, chic, agreeableness and competence predicted employee loyalty and satisfaction which positively impacted employee differentiation and affinity. Satisfaction is predicted by agreeableness, enterprising and chic; differentiation is predicted by a combination of enterprising, chic and ruthlessness; loyalty is predicted by enterprising and ruthlessness whereas affinity was predicted by a combination of all dimensions which contradicted the findings of Davies (2008) in terms of competence not affecting employee behaviour. Taking their research further, Wahba & Elmanadily, (2015)<sup>82</sup> conduct an exploratory study to investigate the impact of human resource management practices on employer branding in Pharmaceutical and Telecom industries of Egypt using Davies’ (2008) Corporate Character scale. Results of the study showed that human resource management variables of recruitment, training, reward, performance and career management strongly predicted employer branding. The findings also suggested that human resources management practices have a strong impact on employer branding in the service sector than in production sector. In services sector, the employer brand is more explained by training and rewarding practices, the result may be used to increase organisational performance.
Arachchige & Robertson (2011) identify eight dimensions of employer branding namely corporate environment, job structure, social commitment, social environment, relationships, personal growth, organisational dynamism and enjoyment in a study conducted in Sri Lanka, which would enable organisations to understand how to strategically develop an employer brand. These dimensions are an extension of EmpAt scale developed by Berthon et al (2005). Findings of the study indicate that personal growth and relationship factors are rated as the most important and corporate environment and enjoyment as the least important factors perceived by the respondents.

A study on Employer Branding in Indian corporations by Dawn & Biswas (2010) infers that employers can retain their employees through employer branding. Specifically, employer branding touch points include global exposure, work environment, learning, training and development and work life balance.

Models developed by Corporate Leadership Council (1999) has multiple components namely compensation and benefits, work life balance, culture and environment, work environment and product/company brand strength to be important in an employer brand.

Employer brand is defined by Kucherov & Zavyalova (2012) as “the qualitative features of the employing company, which are attractive to a target audience. They are described by a totally positive image and appropriate set of material (economic) and non-material (psychological, symbolic) advantages distinguishing a company in the labour market. The term ‘target audience’ relates to current employees of a company, prospective employees of companies (applicants), competitors in the labour market and intermediaries in the labour market (recruiting firms, government employment bodies and representatives of the professional HR community). The authors divide the employer brand attributes into four groups. Economic attributes which includes high salary, fair system of rewards and bonuses, job security, work schedule relate to the system of material benefits in an organisation and have an impact of the welfare status of each employee. Psychological attributes influence recognition and identification with the
organisation and includes corporate culture, interpersonal relations, team work and performance assessment. Functional attributes relate to the work place, work content and perspectives of professional and career growth and includes training. Organisational attributes refer to the perceptions about the company relating to reputation, management, style, organisation’s history, international activities and leadership in market segment.

Findings of a study conducted by Corte et al (2011)\textsuperscript{88} suggest that product quality, social responsibility, continuous innovation, value, environmental responsibility and trustworthiness form the basis of employer brand. Well-developed employer branding programs include ongoing training, performance evaluation and rewards system that helps the employees display of brand behaviours (Chalotra, Kumar & Pallavi, 2012).\textsuperscript{89}

Jain & Pal (2012)\textsuperscript{90} identify employment package, culture and environment, integrity and employment experience as the dimensions of employer branding. Bakanauskiene, Bendaraviciene, Krikstolaitis and Lydeka (2011)\textsuperscript{91} build a theoretical and practical framework of employer branding in identifying twelve dimensions of employer attractiveness and four constructs namely achievement, connection, relations and systems. The dimensions identified enrich the organisational intelligence and assists in building an EVP to existing and future employees of the organisation.

Based on the survey in three Indian organisations, Jain (2013)\textsuperscript{92} identifies four dimensions of employer branding namely management of the organisation, perceived organisational prestige, transparency and leadership and organisational fit. Organisational communication and strong leadership play an important role in strengthening an employer brand (Unwin, 2007).\textsuperscript{93} Singh & Jain (2013)\textsuperscript{94} establish the dimensions of employer branding to be management of the organisation, management practice, comparative evaluation, customer perspective as perceived by employees and perception outside the organisation. Authors also determine its relationship with retention and motivation of employees in the service sector through structural equation modelling.
The key components of employer brand include Culture represented by internal communication, reward and recognition, learning and development, measurement systems; Employment related working environment, recruitment and induction, team management and performance appraisal; Purpose shown by external marketing, values, corporate social responsibility and senior leadership (Corporate eye, 2008).

Employer branding comprising of employment conditions, organisational success, brand communications and employer credibility motivates and results in desired perceptions among employees, mediated by interpersonal relationships (Oladipo, Iyamabo & Otubanjo, 2013).

The Australian Benchmark study results using Minchington-Thorne Employer Brand Global Index indicate that corporate social responsibility, work environment and communication play an important role in employee retention. The Index measures corporate social responsibility, work environment, communication, recruitment and induction, performance management, measurement and evaluation, customer relationships, strategic intent, innovation and re-invention, thought leadership, developing people, internal business process, leadership and global perspective as 14 key drivers of employer brand (Minchington, 2010).

Berlenga (2010) tries to understand the effect of employer branding on employee retention by studying organisational reputation, organisational personality, tangible organisational attributes, managerial perception of attractiveness and commitment in making the organisation a desirable place to work. Results of the study indicate that work environment, products and services, compensation and work characteristics were important to respondents.

Bandarouk & Ruel (2012) identify organisational characteristics, people and culture, remuneration and advancement, job characteristics and employer reputation to be the elements of employer branding. Bendaravicience et al (2014) explore employer branding in higher education institutions of Lithunia to identify particular features of employment experience that are most valued, appreciated and significant to the employees. Results indicate working conditions, fairness and trust,
supervisor relationship, work life balance to be important dimensions of employer branding.

According to a Survey Report on Employment and Workplace Relations (2008), job related factors such as good working conditions, good work life balance, opportunity for a variety of work, good pay, opportunities for promotions and career advancement, opportunities to apply skills and knowledge in a practical way and permanency/job security constitute an element of the employer brand.

The results from the empirical investigation conducted by Jonsson, Karlsson & Sundstrom (2012) to examine the organisation’s employer branding attributes that makes it attractive to its employees for employee retention revealed that the attributes of strategic vision, organisational culture, stakeholders’ images, internal branding, functional benefits, symbolic benefits, organisational success, work environment, type of work and services’ attributes were important to employees with some variances. The most attractive attributes of an employer brand to its employees were work environment, type of work and services attributes. The results coincide with findings of Maxwell & Knox (2009). The least important attribute was stakeholders’ image and organisational success. Results indicate that the three most attractive attributes which were closer to employees and their daily work were more essential than attributes relating to the organisation as a whole implying that satisfaction of employees needs and wants are more important than the wants and needs of the entire organisation.

Mokina (2013) has identified 15 employer branding touchpoints namely recruitment, adaptation, relationship with supervisors, relationship with employees, corporate culture, training and development, growth, wages, compensation and benefits, evaluation, retention, loyalty, satisfaction, internal and external communications, employment value proposition to analyse the strength of the employer brand.

Berthon et al (2005) consider the effect of an organisation’s advertising on its own employees in attracting them and identify five dimension of employer attractiveness in employer branding namely Interest value, Social value, Economical
value, Developmental value and Social value. Interest value refers to the work environment, work practices which uses employees’ creativity to produce high-quality products and services. Social value refers to the fun-filled happy work environment and relationship between employees. Economic value refers to compensation, job security and career progression. Development value refers to career-enhancing experience, ‘spring board’ for future employment and recognition. Application value refers to the opportunities of employees to teach what has been learnt. These five factors are an extension of Ambler and Barrow’s functional, psychological and economic benefits.

Roy (2008) identifies eight dimensions of employer branding namely Application value, Interest value, Ethical value, Economic value, Social value, Psychological value, career opportunities and Developmental value in an empirical study conducted on five well known Indian companies who were part of ‘best managed Indian companies’. Organisations which understood and integrate these dimensions into their employer brand can become an ‘employer of choice’, thereby attracting and retaining highly talented employees.

Pingle & Sodhi (2011) identify eleven factors of employer branding that makes an employer attractive to its employees namely economic value, interest/fun value, relationship, learning and development value, application value, global opportunities, recognition, corporate social responsibility, altruistic value, location advantage and existing personal contacts which are a refinement of employer branding factors identified by Ambler & Barrow (1996), Berthon et al (2005), Saraswathi & Thamaraiselvan (2009). In their gap analysis, they find variances in employer brand attributes as perceived by potential employees and current employees. Recognition, relationship with superiors and co-workers and ‘feel good’ factor were critical attributes that an employer brand should possess to retain existing employees. Mismatch in the perception of employer brand image and reality will lead to high turnover of employees.

Biswas & Suar (2013) examine the multiple employees’ values in a manufacturing concern to identify the values which most influences the employer
brand. Accordingly, results indicate that employees feel social, interest, developmental and economic values, in order of priority, to be influencing the employer brand. When organisations portray these values in their employer brand, then employee retention can be maximised.

Results of a study conducted in Thailand Petroleum industry by Piyachat et al (2015)\textsuperscript{108} revealed that development and application value is the most important dimensions of employer branding followed by senior management, employment, organisational reputation and economic value respectively. Thus authors argue that organisations should emphasise more on emotional that economic drivers. Authors feel that organisations, in order to have a strong employer brand should consider adoption of career advancement, personal growth, appropriate training, supportive management, caring support, forefront technology development and product development, variety product development, working with smart colleagues, meaningfulness, feedback, autonomy, variety job, challenging job, above average compensations, health care, good working environment, work life balance and retirement benefits.

Shitika, Tanwar & Shrimali (2013)\textsuperscript{109} use Interpretive Structural Modelling to derive eleven variables which affect employer brand namely public relations, brand portfolio, strategic policy, employment offerings, work environment, communication channel, employee engagement, attrition, employee satisfaction, internal recruitment and company image. These variables are categorised into top level, middle level and bottom level variables and strong integration between these variables would result in strong employer brand.

An employer brand image can be influenced by a crisis situation which results in the formation of a new employer brand image in the minds of employees and had a significant influence on the affective and cognitive image dimensions. The study on employer brand image of the banking sector before and after the global financial crisis by Weinrich, Kirchgeorg & Muller (2011)\textsuperscript{110} reveals that dimensions which were rising in importance were work life balance, corporate social
responsibility, job security, benefits and values while dimensions which lost importance were challenging work tasks and market success.

According to Mallikarjunan (2006),111 an organisation’s employer brand should guarantee job security, provide opportunities for growth, compensation and benefits, recognise and reward performance, respond to employee needs, maintain fair practices and transparency and ensure quality in products and services.

According to a white paper on employer branding by Kelly Services (2010),112 factors impacting a desirable employer brand are attractiveness of the sector, company reputation, quality of products and services, location, work environment, pay, economic conditions, employee benefits, people and culture, work life balance and corporate social responsibility.

In a study relating employer branding and organisational attractiveness through moderating effects of corporate websites and social networking sites, Weekhout (2011)113 identify organisational characteristics, people and culture, remuneration and advancement, job characteristics and employer reputation to be the dimensions of employer branding.

Priyadarshi (2011),114 in a study in the Indian Telecom Sector identifies the dimensions of employer brand image and examines the contribution of organisational attributes in determining job satisfaction, affective commitment and turnover of employees. Dimensions of employer brand image include organisational environment, organisational fame and flexibility, variety in job and work setting. Results indicate the existence of relationship between the said variables and highlights the difference between existing and preferred level of employer attributes.

McLaren (2011)115 evaluates the employer brand practices of five organisations using Rosethorn’s (2009) twelve touchpoints namely Recruitment activities, Candidate care, Selection and assessment (Candidate phase); Introduction and on boarding, culture and leadership, training and development, talent management and career paths, recognition and rewards, internal communication, office space, compensation and benefits (Employee phase); and exit process,
redundancy policies and packages and alumni networks (Alumni phase) to understand the espoused-experienced employer brand gaps in order to manage the employer brand and ensuring positive employer brand outcomes. Achieving congruence in the identified four domains namely employment relationship, values, delivery and infrastructure and opportunities through the tool developed would lead to improved overall employer brand congruence.

Based on the above studies, the researcher has identified **Employment Encounters, Work Environment, Values and Culture, Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development, Reputation of Employer, Compensation and Location, Work Life Balance, Communication, Fair and Consistent Management Practices, Leadership, Creativity, Diversity in Work Place and Corporate Social Responsibility** as the dimensions of Employer Branding to be used in this study. The following part throws light on how the researcher is justified in using these variables as dimensions of employer branding by reviewing the further studies.

### 2.2.2.1 Employment Encounters

**Hanin et al (2013)** examine the effect of lived employment experiences and employment offering in predicting employees’ attitudes. Findings indicate that there is a positive relationship between lived employment experience which is composed of employment encounters such as challenging tasks, task variety, creative tasks, use of competencies, opportunities to take responsibilities, opportunities for personal development and affective commitment of employees. Employees feel proud of their organisations when the employment offering i.e. having favourable employment conditions, is distinctively communicated and are willing to recommend it to others.

Job characteristics such as skill variety required in a job, challenging work, variety of tasks, learning new technical skills, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback which were developed essentially for employees makes them feel comfortable in their roles, feel competent in what they do and increases their attachment to their organisation (**Allen & Meyer, 1990**).
2.2.2.2 Work Environment

Corte et al (2011)\textsuperscript{118} identifies typologies of employer branding and firms by analysing the functional and symbolic dimensions. Functional dimensions refer to the ‘material’ associations and symbolic dimensions refer to the ‘immaterial’ associations communicated by the brand. “Market oriented” firms project an attractive image outside even if it is not successful. “Market and resource oriented” firms have a successful image also effective working environment. “Resource oriented” firms focus only on the inside and not on the outside. “Blind” firms are weak with respect to what it projects about itself both internally and externally. The above typologies identify the firm as a place of work which characterises better work environment.

A productive, flexible and dynamic work environment is important to attract and retain talent as it conveys the image that the organisation is an exciting, fun and challenging place to work with. They can better retain talent when the workspace is friendly, welcoming, supports teamwork and has a sense of ‘family’ apart from camaraderie within the workplace as it makes employees more engaged, participative and satisfied (Heather, 2003).\textsuperscript{119}

Working in an attractive, interesting and innovative environment and recognition of employees, both monetary and non-monetary, plays a crucial part in the retention of IT employees (De Mers, 2002).\textsuperscript{120} According to Pingle & Sharma (2015),\textsuperscript{121} their study of a service industry implied that work environment and opportunities at work along with job security and responsibilities are the most important factors rated by employees. Today’s employees seek a comfortable environment to work in as also ample growth opportunities unlike preference for high packages in the past.

In order to attract and retain employees, organisations need to create an environment in which people enjoy their work, are fulfilled in their role and work towards a common goal (Singh & Sharma, 2013).\textsuperscript{122} Organisations which create a work environment where employees feel secured in their jobs will retain their employees (Sokro, 2012).\textsuperscript{123}
Work content attributes such as job satisfaction, supervision, relations with co-worker, sociable co-workers, supportive supervisor influence employees in their perception about the employer brand of the organisation (Alshathry, 2015)\textsuperscript{124} and were found to be relevant to retention of employees.

2.2.2.3 Values and Culture

The shift from industrial economy to knowledge economy, demand for talent and high rates of turnover are the underlying forces behind the war for talent. A strong employer brand is one of the best tools an organisation has to contend with in the highly competitive market for talent. It establishes what is specific about an organisation and its culture. Employer branding increases the employee life time value by retaining them for a longer period of time to maximise the investments made in them by way of training, development and orienting them to the organisation’s culture (Roy, 2006).\textsuperscript{125}

Alignment of culture, vision and image of an organisation is important for an effective corporate brand. Sreelakshmi et al (2009)\textsuperscript{126} adopt Hatch & Schultz’s (2001)\textsuperscript{127} model to be applied to Employer Branding. Culture represents the organisational values, behaviour and attitude whereas vision represents the top management’s aspirations. The image reflects the outsiders’ impression of the organisation. Vision –culture gap exists due to the differences in organisation’s vision, attitude and behaviour of its employees. Culture – image gap arises due to differences between employees’ attitudes and outsiders’ perceptions. Vision – image gap is the disparity between top management vision and outsiders’ perception. The gaps have to be bridged to have an effective employer brand. The employer brand establishes the identity of the organisation as an employer. It encompasses the organisation’s values, systems, policies and behaviour towards the objective of attracting, motivating and retaining the organisation’s current and future employees. The employer brand is an organisation’s Trust Mark- the USP, the image and personality.

An organisation which has a culture of contribution rather than participation has a better employer brand (Chebolu, 2006).\textsuperscript{128} It should be transparent to ensure
that merit and performance is recognised (Mallikarjunan, 2006). Pingle & Sharma (2015) understand that the culture of an employer as well as the vision and values of the organisation plays an important role in establishing a relationship between employer and employee. It is important that employers identify the proposition that they should offer in order to retain their employees.

Organisation culture is the foundation of the employer brand. Employees would prefer to be associated with the organisation having shared values and beliefs. Employer branding influences the organisational culture and the implementation of successful talent management (Unwin, 2007). Sunder & Thakar (2009) in a study on employer branding in fifteen Indian organisations found that employees’ values should be aligned with the organisation’s values for a better employer-employee relationship.

2.2.2.4 Career Progression, Learning, Training & Development

Schulte (2010) examines how learning and development activities are leveraged in organisations having strong reputations of the workplace to discharge the employer brand expectations of the employer and employee. Accordingly, learning and development increases engagement by providing opportunities for growth, it builds the required workplace behaviour and reinforces the identity and values of the organisational culture. Of the fifteen employer branding attributes, learning and development was the most prevalent attribute of an employer brand. Learning and development includes on boarding, on brand training and manager training. Learning and development can have a positive impact on workplace reputation and performance by increasing the firm’s ability to attract and retain employees.

Chawla & Lenka (2015) propose that employer branding is a probable cause of learning organisation. A learning organisation which commits itself to continuous learning by providing supportive learning environment, enquiry and dialogue, empower employees, ensure collaboration, team learning and has systems to capture learning can emerge as a strong employer brand. The study reveals that organisations emanate as strong employer brands by offering certain functional,
economic and psychological benefits. This urges the existing employees to stay with the organisation with a sense of loyalty and commitment.

An organisation’s investment in learning and development improves the employer brand and places the organisation as an employer of choice (Van Dam, 2006). Roper & Davies (2010) highlight the importance of employer branding to organisations involved in business to business markets and conclude that training offered to employees result in higher satisfied and motivated employees with stronger affective brand association who are willing to stay with the organisation.

Heilmann, Saarenketo & Liikkanen (2013) study the employer branding process in Finnish power industry and find that training and development are an essential part of employer branding towards current employees. Further, they opine that employer branding initiatives targeting current employees are visible through intranet and newsletters.

A positive employer brand, performance management strategies which help employees enhance their potential and innovative methods in drafting and delivering HRD initiatives such as ‘technology-delivered instruction’ and ‘social learning tools’ are the three key elements that have great prospects of accelerating employee learning, development and employee retention (Wayne, 2014).

Employer branding brings under its purview, organisational career management by communicating the expectations of the organisation in terms of advancement, variety of work, relationship among employees and the desired behaviours for success. It also provides a link between organisation and employees to share information about opportunities and to pursue the same. It promotes the individual career development within an organisation as, without career advancement, both the individual and the organisation lose out on their competitive advantage (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Research supports positive and moderate relationship between career development and training and employer branding (Conference Board, 2001; Chung, 2010) and Indian organisations strive to enrich the capability of
employees throughout their life cycle by competency mapping, training and counselling (Bhutani, 2010).  

2.2.2.5 Reputation of Employer  

Kapoor (2010) identifies the top three factors that would be considered important about working in an organisation by an existing employee. Perception of friends about being employed in the organisation, family’s knowledge and awareness of the organisation and their perception of the organisation were the important factors. Employees of organisations having a strong employer brand feel a great sense of pride, attachment and trust towards their employers. They would recommend their work place to others and claim that it treats them well (Das & Rao, 2012).  

Image congruency and social influence impact the employees’ attitudes regarding the employer. Image congruency helps employees to identify themselves with the organisation and social influence refers to the expectations about others’ perception of the organisation (Andreassen & Lanseng, 2010).  

Martin et al (2011) propose a causal model showing the relationship between employer branding of an organisation and investment in individual, social and organisational capital which creates wealth through intellectual capital. These capitals mediate the role of employer branding has on the reputational capital of the organisation. The authors argue that employer branding can aid organisations to become authentic, responsive, thus contributing to innovation in organisations and transforming their business model.  

Employees would like to associate themselves with organisations having employer impressiveness and respectability to convey their status, prestige and honourable values (Thornbury & Brooks, 2010). Employees need to have a sense of pride and should feel privileged to work with their organisation (Chebolu, 2006).  

Participation in surveys such as ‘Top 100 companies to work for’, ‘Best Employer’ that gets a lot of media attention influences the perceptions of employees
about their organisation and impacts the employer brand (Van Dam, 2006). Employers need to participate in industry awards, introduce employee based initiatives such as employee of the month, publishing employee testimonials and making employees ambassadors of the brand. This builds the reputation of the employer, resulting in better employer branding (Sarabdeen, 2011). Showcasing the organisation in conferences, participating in campus roadshows, winning awards such as ‘Best Employer’, ‘Great place to work’ etc. are some of the employer branding initiatives followed in organisations (SHRM, 2010).

Love & Singh (2011) outline how employer branding uses marketing approach to build an effective brand with eight common HR best practices such as inspired leadership, strategic plan that promotes “Best Employer HR practices”, employee communication, performance management, training and development, physical workforce, benefits based on ‘best practices’ and corporate citizenship, resulting in high employee retention, by examining the utility of ‘Best Employer’ surveys. Organisations which brand themselves through ‘Best Employer’ studies potentially benefit by way of increased employee retention as compared to other organisations. Best employers have a unique culture which provides a rewarding work experience, a distinctive work environment, promote high performance, and have appropriate reward programs and the support of leadership.

Baek-Kyoo & McLean (2006) integrate theories such as strategic Human Resource Management, Resource Based View, Signalling Theory and Social Identity Theory to develop a model depicting the association of factors related to ‘Best Employer Studies’ (BES). ‘Best Employer Studies’ distinguishes employers of choice for the purpose of employer branding by measuring employees’ perceptions on factors such as culture, leadership, growth opportunities, compensation etc. Organisations use benchmarking such as ‘Best Employer Studies’ to promote their employer brand so as to attract and retain talented employees. Rankings on ‘Best Employer Surveys’ is a measure to track the Return on Investment of employer branding, apart from retention of employees and number of employee referrals (NASSCOM, 2006).
2.2.2.6 Compensation and Benefits

Adler & Ghiselli (2015) conduct a survey on 348 University students in the United States to examine their perception of compensation and benefits offered by their prospective employers. The study emphasises the importance of compensation and benefits as a component of employer branding. Findings suggest that items related to compensation and benefits that were very important were good medical benefits, above average retirement plan, higher starting salary and tuition reimbursement. Results were aligned with some of the attributes identified by Lievens & Highhouse (2003). Demographic factors should also be looked into in relation to various factors which enhance employer branding.

Batra (2012), in his study of 100 employees of different private banks and academic institutions to identify the dimensions and role of employer branding in retaining employees, finds that though salary is an important factor in retaining employees, the employer brand and reputation of the organisation is equally important. The author indicates that with the brand value and ongoing endeavour towards employee job satisfaction and learning environment, retention of employees would not be very difficult. It is also found that location is an influencing factor for retaining employees.

Research indicates a high positive relationship between employer branding and recognition of employees (Chung, 2010). Organisations having an established employer brand use their rewards system to influence the employee experience and ultimately support their employee value proposition. The Total Reward Model developed by Mercer & CIPD includes compensation, benefits, development and career and work lifestyle, alignment of which increases employee satisfaction and retention (CIPD, 2010).

2.2.2.7 Work Life Balance

Grigg & Da Silva (2008) contend that organisations using work life balance strategies as part of their employer branding strategy to attract and retain their employees. Work life balance initiatives are more of a necessity for employers
than being optional, initially concerned with working women, it is now applicable to all classes of employees (Bird, 2006). Effective work life programs facilitates a mutually beneficial relationship between the employer and employee which contribute to better performance, employer branding and retention of employees apart from being an instrument of competitive advantage. Study results on work life policies and provisions among manufacturing, IT and services organisations in Chennai enumerates the Work life initiatives of IT companies namely flexible working hours, ‘work from home’ options, career break, maternity leave, compensatory off, five-day work week, phased return to work, employee assistance programs, planned vacation options, leave facilities, relocation assistance, provision for financial planning, life insurance, scholarships and educational loans for employees’ wards, consideration of request for relocation, camps and activities for the employees’ children, employee engagement and welfare programmes, talent enrichment activities, on-site health and fitness facilities, recreation facilities, sports or activity clubs for employees and community volunteer programs. The study also indicated the factors which promote and hinder work life balance. Factors promoting work life balance include family-friendly practices, employee engagement initiatives, programs for employee health, job attributes, organisational culture and good interpersonal relations. Factors which hinder work life balance were extended work hours, work intensification, personal constraints and lack of interpersonal relations. Organisations should strive to create work life balance in its employees by providing practical interventions rather than money based strategies.

‘Family-friendly practices’ such as support for child care, generous personal leave and flexible work arrangements followed by the organisations ensure a better work life balance for its employees resulting in positive work related attitude. This positive attitude manifests in the increased loyalty of the employees leading to retention. These ‘family-friendly practices’ seem to impact the organisational attractiveness positively (Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010).

Organisations offering non-monetary benefits such as on-site gym, healthcare etc. have a better image amongst its employees. Organisations having family-friendly practices such as flexible scheduling, parental leave have a
favourable impression on its employees leading to better satisfaction, low absenteeism and better retention of employees (Heather, 2003).163

2.2.2.8 Communication

Communication with employees plays an important role in maintaining the employer brand. Communication may be by way of periodic interaction with employees, announcement of rewards and recognition and fair and consistent management practices (Mallikarjunan, 2007).164 Employer branding and employee retention can be achieved through effective technology driven work place communication such as employee/HR portals, on-demand knowledge base, decision support applications, and reward statements and on boarding technologies (Levin, 2008).165

Akelsen(2010)166 is of the view that employer branding can be used to attract and retain employees but in order to do so, the concept of place of work should be aligned from both the employer and employee viewpoint and communication, both internal and external should be consistent. Similarly, Kolle (2011)167 recommends to fully align the internally and externally aimed employer branding efforts, failure to do so would undermine the credibility of the employer brand. Consistency in communication plays an important role in utilising the full potential of employer branding initiatives.

The employer brand is communicated by way of performance appraisals, training and development programs and employee referral programs (Kapoor, 2010).168 Employee referrals, career website and social media are the major effective methods that IT industry uses to communicate with its employees (Prabhakaran & Rani, 2011 ).169

Sharma & Kamalanabhan (2012)170 aim to capture the perceptions of employees on internal ambitious of becoming a leading employer brand. Their study identify the dimensions of communication practices in an Indian Petroleum Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) internal corporate communication and the findings suggest that internal communication, more importantly, the two way symmetrical
process of communication and training leads to high level of employee identification with the organisation, employer brand loyalty and commitment.

Internal communication policies of an organisation should promote frequent, honest, open, two way communications among superiors and subordinates and employees should be allowed to provide valuable inputs regardless of their education or background to increase their satisfaction and motivation thereby fostering their loyalty and identification with the organisations they work for (Steyn, Steyn & van Rooyen, 2011). Organisations also need to listen and engage in a dialogue with its employees to strengthen their employer brand.

On boarding programs generate a positive employment experience and perfectly communicates the employer brand by reinforcing the organisational culture, values, vision and mission. These programs also enable organisations to set expectations on performance and establish norms for working behaviour (Roy, 2008).

Employer brand messages should be consistently communicated to all the employee touchpoints such as orientation, performance, development, reward and recognition. Employer brand should be experienced by employees through everyday behaviours, values, management and leadership competencies (Botha et al, 2011). Banerjee (2007) argues that people practices should be periodically conveyed to its employees through internal publications which would ensure return on investment towards employer branding.

Employer brand communication helps the alignment of employment promises and unique selling points and is the driver of retention. Eshoj (2010) uses case study approach to examine Microsoft’s communication initiatives relating to employer branding. Microsoft uses textual and visual communication to create an attractive employer brand by arousing interest, creating desire, inducing action and displaying accuracy in its messages. These communication strategies from employer branding displayed through their career website is a good example of employer branding communication.
Findings of a study conducted by Hanin et al (2013)\textsuperscript{176} in the banking industry of Belgium indicated that when employment offering depicts favourable employment conditions and these communications are perceived as distinct from that of communication of other organisations, employees are more proud of their employer and are willing to recommend their organisation to others.

### 2.2.2.9 Fair and Consistent Management Practices

In the knowledge economy that organisations are currently functioning in, employer branding can be strengthened only through good HR policies. The policies and practices of management should be attentive to the needs of their employees, respect their self-esteem and be concerned about their employees. Employees expect their organisations to remain fair and just while pursuing their goals (Raju & Chaitanya, 2006).\textsuperscript{177}

Russel (2009)\textsuperscript{178} opines that the employer brand of an organisation needs to be monitored and enhanced. Social media plays an important role in this. Organisations may use RSS feeds, build an interactive site for employees, add live chats, videos etc. to create a feeling of community. Organisations can uncover gaps in their employer brand by using technology so that any negativity which will affect the employer brand can be mitigated. Far sighted organisations need to study the feedback of their employees on blogs, websites etc. and develop strategies to strengthen their employer brand.

App et al (2012)\textsuperscript{179} demonstrate that organisations integrating sustainable HRM such as work life balance, employability etc. into the employer brand attract and retain high-quality employees. Such practices differentiate the organisation from that of its competitors and result in competitive advantage. The authors also build a framework using Employee Life cycle concept to address both potential and existing employees in different life and career stages through sustainable HRM practices integrated into the employer brand.

Employer branding has become very important due to the growing relevance for human energies and intellect. The authors adopt a case study to determine the
importance of employer branding for organisational success. Employer brand is found to be a strategic tool for organisational performance through sound HR policies. In this regard, performance appraisals should be fool proof and sensitive to employees’ needs (Chebolu, 2006).180

2.2.2.10 Leadership

Wallace et al (2011),181 in a study on 750 frontline employees of banks in Ireland, examine the influence of leadership and commitment as antecedents to adoption of organisational brand values by the employees using Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling. Results indicate that leaders are important to values adoption as they encourage employees to believe in their brands’ value and reward behaviours which support brand value adoption. It is also crucial that involvement of senior leadership in employer brand management is a prerequisite.

Strong leadership and relevant, engaging and timely communication are important for a strong employer brand. Internal social networks to communicate across the organisation and to facilitate knowledge sharing also helps in strengthening the employer brand (Minchington, 2010).182

In a study on the SME sector in Poland, Wziatek-Staisko (2013)183 finds that having good leadership leads to good employer branding resulting in the well-being of the organisation. Likewise, Sarabdeen (2011)184 finds that leadership support assumes greater importance in employer branding. According to Campbell (2002),185 a successful employer brand constantly delivers on promises and is sustained and augmented by leaders of the organisation.

Opportunities to work with ‘thought leaders’ plays a crucial role in employer branding leading to attraction and retention of employees. Managers are expected to exhibit credible behaviour so that human energies and intellect towards organisational goals in processed (Chebolu, 2006).186

Leadership competencies such as strategic thinking, effective communication, business and HR knowledge and leading change help in successful
leveraging of the organisation’s employer brand (SHRM, 2010).\textsuperscript{187} The effectiveness of internal communication and the quality of leadership, factors relating to employer branding, play a vital role in employee retention (Kelly Services, 2010).\textsuperscript{188}

2.2.2.11 Creativity

Organisations need to develop a culture of creativity and innovation to retain talent (Heather, 2003).\textsuperscript{189} According to Florida\textsuperscript{190} (2002, cited in Jorgensen, 2005), “creativity has a multi-dimensional quality and is mobilised through new structures and modes of operation underpinned by an acceptance of individuality and the activation of diversity rather than the use of generic labels and approaches. Creativity comes from people working in new ways, motivated and nurtured in a multitude of ways”.

2.2.2.12 Diversity

Recent studies indicate that organisations having employees belonging to diverse backgrounds (cultural, racial and by gender) enhances employer branding. Specifically, organisations having employees from diverse backgrounds bring different ideas to the table, thus, preventing ‘group think’ and promoting innovation. Deloitte studies indicate that gender diversity creates diversity in thought. A diverse workforce ensures that some employees will be analytical while others will be creative. Diverse approaches to the same problem generate new insights and enhance efficiency. Diverse organisations are more dynamic. Employees from diverse backgrounds function better in teams than those members are homogenous as per research conducted by MIT Sloan School of management and Rutgers University. Team work and collaboration are critically important to workplace dynamism and employee satisfaction. Finally, organisations encouraging diversity in their workforce are more attractive to new employees. Diversity includes gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, socio-economic background, religion and physical disability (Araujo, 2015).\textsuperscript{191}

Matuska & Salek-Iminska (2014)\textsuperscript{192} explain the relations between diversity management and employer branding, clarify links between diversity management
and human resource management and specify benefits from diversity management for the organisation. Diversity may be understood in terms of gender, age, nationality, personal characteristics, education, language, physical appearance, marital status, lifestyle, beliefs and background characteristics such as geographical origin, tenure within organisation, economic status and family background. Diversity management shapes both employees’ identification with the organisation as well as corporate social responsibility, outside the organisation. It impacts employees’ motivation and engagement in work and also acts an important public relations tool shaping the brand outside of the organisation. This suggests the existence of the feedback between employer branding and diversity management seen as the projection of the organisational culture and its corporate values.

Diversity of workforce brings new ideas, innovation and thinking styles to an organisation, thus facilitating the building of an employer brand. Being gender equal is widely seen as positive and as an achievement that many organisations and businesses want to highlight (Sarabdeen, 2011).

Lundkvist (2011) describes the collaboration effort aimed to develop innovative methods to achieve increased gender awareness resulting in attraction and retention of best employees. The organisation became more aware of the importance and feasibility of gender diversity as an important part of an employer brand.

2.2.2.13 Corporate Social Responsibility

Aggerholm et al (2011) reconceptualises employer branding as an amalgamated part of corporate social responsibility strategy offering a new way of dealing with employer branding in supporting sustainable organisational development and long term employer-employee relationships. Accordingly, employer branding in sustainable organisation is “strategic branding processes which creates, negotiates and enacts sustainable relationships between an organisation and its potential and existing employees under the influence of the varying corporate contexts with the purpose of co-creating sustainable values for the individual, the organisation and society as a whole”.

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Indian organisations have been focusing on corporate social responsibility to build their brands as well as differentiate themselves among competitors. CSR practices have increased the ability of the organisations to attract and retain their employees (Agarwal, 2008).\textsuperscript{196}

According to a 2008 SHRM\textsuperscript{197} report, CSR initiatives are viewed as an important talent management strategy in Indian organisations and are used as an instrument for highlighting its employer brand. In a similar report (SHRM, 2007),\textsuperscript{198} data from India demonstrates that CSR outcomes have a strong impact on the organisation’s public image and brand recognition, increased employee loyalty and position of the organisation as an employer of choice as well as increased attraction and retention of employees. Datta (2008)\textsuperscript{199} also feels that corporate social investments of organisations strengthen the employer brand.

Perpetran et al (2013)\textsuperscript{200} prove that there is a repercussion effect of CSR values on employer branding using a triangular approach of evaluating social admiration, social affinity and social ethical values among 218 employees of four industrial units located in India. CSR values, when combined with EVP develop an organisational culture that serves to carry out strategy, retains talent and ascertains drivers of talent retention.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a fundamental part of talent management and branding activities of an organisation. Some organisations consider brand attraction to be the end result of their CSR activities (Stahl et al, 2012).\textsuperscript{201}

Raubenheimer (2008)\textsuperscript{202} analyses the importance of employee focused CSR with reference to New Zealand banking industry due to the direct relationship between CSR and employer branding as it projects an organisation’s image, reputation and trustworthiness to retain its employees. CSR activities are mainly focused on environmental issues and employees have received very little attention as CSR stakeholders. Training and career development, diversity, supportive work environment, health and safety, remuneration and benefits, employee engagement and satisfaction, employment relations and employment policies were the criteria identified as common employee focused CSR policies.
Backhaus et al (2002) support the findings of Greening & Turban (2000) that Corporate Social Performance is an important factor which attracts employees to an organisation bringing to the forefront five dimensions namely environment, community relations, diversity, product issues and employee relations further substantiated by Signalling Theory and Social Identity Theory from data collected from 297 undergraduate business students.

Corporate Social Responsibility, as a part of employer branding should be fully incorporated into the business so that employees feel it is a part of their work. Organisations need to find appropriate CSR issues which will resonate with their employees and to communicate in an appropriate tone. CSR activities, when managed competently, improve retention of employees (Pinkess, 2008).

CSR initiatives of an organisation, as part of employer branding strategy, results in retention of highly-qualified employees through positive reputation and legitimacy leading to stronger organisational identification and employer brand loyalty (Kharishma, 2013). Findings of Al-Khatib (2012) show that there is not only a strong correlation between corporate social responsibility and employer branding but also a very positive one which is also related to the findings of Mirvis & Hatch (2010).

A study conducted by the Reputation Institute in the US found that corporate social responsibility plays a significant role in employer branding. A further study also conveys that employees prefer to work for a socially responsible company. Research done by Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2008) proved that promoting corporate social responsibility initiatives my support the organisation in developing its employer brand and that it results in positive outcomes such as more enthusiastic, productive and efficient workforce in the organisation. Employee volunteer programs and community involvement are company values expressed by employees and found with employer value proposition and employer branding efforts (Strandberg, 2009).

Corporate Social Responsibility activities influence the organisation’s employees as employees constantly assess the extent to which their employer is
committed in its responsibility to the community and how it meets employees’ needs for belongingness in the community. Corporate Social Responsibility includes practices for the welfare of employees, their families and society. Organisations may contribute to the community in different ways ranging from allowing employees to participate in small charities to introducing organisational practices for social welfare and sustainability. Employees may also be encouraged to become involved in such activities during work time (Devi et al, 2009).

2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYER BRANDING AND EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Based on the review of literature, Employee Identification with the Organisation, Employee Satisfaction and Employer Brand Loyalty have been identified as the mediating variables between employer branding and employee retention.

2.3.1 Employer Branding and Organisational Identification

Ashforth & Mael (1989) describe identification as “the individual’s perception of being part of a group”. Dutton et al (1994; pg 242) define organisational identification as “a cognitive linking between the definition of the organisation and the definition of the self”. “Organisational identification is the cognitive process through which members align their individual and social identities with the organisation’s identity. It is the degree to which a member defines himself by the same attributes that he believes define the organisation. These attributes are influenced by organisation’s history, traditions, symbols, practices and philosophy that is widely held and deeply shared. Organisational identification gives a psychological attachment by aligning the members’ attitudes and interests with the attitudes and interests that benefit the organisation. It is coherent with loyalty of employees. When the firm as an employer is viewed positively by its employees, being the members of that firm will enhance the self-esteem of members resulting in strong organisational identification”.

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When employees identify with their organisation, being one of its employees is an important part of their identity. Employees think of themselves in terms of membership in the organisation and they see themselves bound up with its successes and failures.

The essence of employer branding is to ensure that employees identify with the organisation, and its brand and mission, to produce desired outcomes for the organisation (Hetrick & Martin, 2006).

Employer branding philosophy relies heavily on the psychological aspect of identification, commitment and engagement and these are crucial in the employee phase of the employment lifecycle. Identification is important because it is the process by which people define themselves, communicate that image to others and use it to decide about their employment and life. Employees identify to provide a basis for thinking about themselves positively (Ashforth, Harrison & Corley, 2008).

Van Dick (2004) opines that employees’ identification with the organisation refers to the pride and respect that is felt by an employee for being a part of the organisation. However, Lievens (2007) conceptualises employer brand as a package of instrumental and symbolic traits and links employer brand with the concept of organisational identification.

One of the main objectives of employer branding initiatives is to motivate existing employees to identify with the organisation. Organisational identification involves the “perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organisation”. Employees identify better with an organisation which is supportive of its employees, encourages open communication and demonstrates fairness. Organisations having a good reputation and a positive employer brand attract more identification from employees. Employees are less likely to quit such organisations (Edwards, 2010). Nevertheless, Martin (2009) feels that the concept of employer branding is yet to be subjected to critical examination with respect to existing employees’ levels of identification with their organisation.
Research indicates that employees are more inclined to stay with the organisation when there is strong organisational identification (Scott et al, 1999). Organisational identification is a useful predictor of variables relevant for organisations such as perceived organisational prestige, turnover intention and performance (Riketta, 2005).

Employer branding is a complex concept as it consists of perceptions to a large extent. In a study conducted in the banking industry in Sweden, Hoffer, Nilsson & Astrom (2012) find that though employer branding did not help in recruitment, it enabled employees to identify themselves with their organisation. They also suggest that employer branding results in employee satisfaction which in turn increases organisational performance.

### 2.3.2 Employer Branding and Employee Satisfaction

According to Morse (1997), satisfaction refers to “the level of fulfilment of one’s needs, wants and desires. Satisfaction depends basically upon what an individual wants from the world, and what he gets”.

Employee Satisfaction is “a measure of how happy workers are with their job and working environment” (Bhatti & Qureshi, 2007). It is the term used to express whether employees are happy, contended and fulfilling their desires and needs at work (Heathfield). Employee satisfaction refers to the positive or negative evaluative judgement that an employee makes about the job or job situation (Brief & Weiss, 2002).

Employee satisfaction is the mixture of affective reactions to the differential acuities of what employees want and receive (Cranny, Smith and Stone, 1992). It may also be described as to how pleased an employee is with his or her position of employment (Moyes, Shaol & Newsome, 2008). Employee satisfaction is also identified as the purpose for creating an employer brand (Singh & Sharma, 2013). A more satisfactory definition is given by Sageer, Rafat & Agarwal (2012) “Employee satisfaction is a comprehensive term that comprises job satisfaction in a wide variety of ways.”
satisfaction of employees and their overall satisfaction with companies’ policies, company environment etc”.

Mehta & Sharma (2012) analyse the respondents in management institutes to understand the impact of employer branding on employee retention empirically. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between employee satisfaction and employee retention. They also prove that there is a significant relationship between employer branding and employee retention.

The literature of employee retention reveals that satisfied employees have higher intentions of remaining with their organisations (Sinha, 2012). The employer branding in an organisation disseminates a message that the organisation is a ‘highly satisfying’ place of work (Mallikarjunan, 2006).

Bergstrom & Anderson (2001) measure the effectiveness and impact of the employer brand on employee satisfaction in the energy sector and find that employer branding increases employee satisfaction and ultimately helps in attracting and retaining talented employees.

Keramatpour, Omidvari & Sadoughi (2013) establish the relationship between employer branding satisfaction and the variables physical factors such as agronomy, physical area and daily activity and psychological factors such as job satisfaction, motivation, welfare benefits etc. Further, the authors also examine satisfaction of employer branding according to the respondents’ demographic profile such as age, gender, marital status, seniority and educational qualification. Results indicate that there is no significant difference in the demographic variables and satisfaction of employer branding.

Rewards, notifications and career planning were the attributes related to higher employee satisfaction through which employer branding can be enhanced (Aleksi, 2011).

Davies et al (2004) have developed a corporate character scale which measures the reputation of an organisation from the perspective of both employees and customers. The identified dimensions of agreeableness, competence, enterprise,
ruthlessness, chic, informality and machismo were correlated with customer and employee satisfaction.

Khanolkar (2013) used the multi-dimensional corporate character scale to judge the perceptions about employer brand and its influence on employee satisfaction and commitment among 245 generation Y employees of various organisations across industries in India. The author finds significant relationship between the employer brand and employee satisfaction and commitment through correlation and multiple regression analysis. Results indicate that employee satisfaction was predicted by two factors of employer branding namely agreeableness and chic. Agreeableness refers to the organisation being supportive and trustworthy whereas chic refers to the organisation being stylish and prestigious. Generation Y employees like to be associated with organisations having modern and adventurous outlook that are also supportive and trustworthy apart from being stylish and prestigious.

Employee satisfaction influence employee productivity, absenteeism and retention (Allen & Wilburn, 2002) and the success of the organisation is directly linked to the satisfaction of its employees and their retention (Freeman, 2005).

Boeding (2013), in a case study, divides employees of Pathé’ into unattached employees and ambassadors. Ambassadors are employees who are highly satisfied and show their loyalty by their willingness to recommend their organisation to others. Unattached employees, on the other hand, are highly satisfied but low on loyalty. Employer branding contributes in the creation of such ambassadors.

A strong employer brand increases employee satisfaction, improves employee retention and makes employees feel proud of working for the organisation (Heilmann, Saarenketo & Liikkanen, 2013).

Staffing research carried out by SHRM (2008) on 3,000 HR professionals in the United States illustrates the competitive advantage of employer branding in staffing management through better retention. Primary results of employer branding
indicate an increase in employee satisfaction (52%) and lower turnover (48%). The goals for employer brand as articulated by highly successful firms are internalisation of organisational values by its employees, achieving a reputation of being an employer of choice and recruiting and retaining employees. The survey also finds that organisational culture is a discerning variable in retaining talent. The survey states top three factors that influence retention as corporate core values and a team based culture followed by HR policies and practices. The survey also indicates the top three important actions that organisations take to better retain employers through employer branding as designing recognition and reward programs (50%), celebrating goals achieved (46%) and internal communication (37%).

2.3.3 Employer Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty can be defined as “the customer’s unconditional commitment and a strong relationship with the brand, which is not likely to be affected under normal circumstances” (Khan & Mahmood, 2012). Loyalty cannot exist before forming a relationship between an individual and a brand, which implies actual use of or experiencing the brand.

According to Martensen & Holdt (2006), a loyal employee is characterised by traits such as less likely to look for work elsewhere and stays with the company, is proud to be an employee of the company and recommends it to others for employment, does his/her best and makes an extra effort when required, develops strong relationship with the company, interested in improving his/her performance, has an attitude and behaviour that matches the organisational values, vision and goals. Employee loyalty is influenced by leadership, human relations and values, personal development and competencies, job contents, customer orientation, creativity and innovation.

Khuong & Tien (2013) analyse the factors influencing employee loyalty in the banking industry and indicate that higher levels of employee satisfaction, supervisor support, teamwork, working environment and training were positively associated with higher levels of employee loyalty. Minchington (2010) terms employer brand loyalty as a person’s commitment to remain employed with an
organisation as a result of positive associations with an organisation and loyalty is expressed by positive behaviours such as word of mouth advocacy.

Employer brand loyalty increases employee retention as it forges greater commitment (Priyadarshi, 2011). Research implies that brand identity, brand association and brand loyalty have a great influence on employee retention (Chung, 2010). Satisfied, loyal employees are likely to remain with the firm (Hesket et al, 1997). Positive word of mouth among employees assists in team building, engendering greater loyalty to the firm and team, thus improving staff retention (Herman, 1991).

Successful employer branding is evidenced by attraction and retention of employees, by way of loyalty and affinity expressed by employees and the favourable perception towards the organisation (Sarabdeen, 2011). Sokro (2012) contends that employer branding builds employer loyalty through retention practices. The employer brand is based on how employees perceive their organisations as a ‘place to work’.

Memon & Kolachi (2012) study the impact of employer branding on brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance in service industry. Results of the analysis indicate that employer branding affects brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty and brand performance and suggest that this approach will help organisations retain its employees. Authors also advocate a fit between HR practices such as training, orientation, briefings, group meetings and marketing metrics related to branding through the development of a 4E model.

A strong employer brand would build brand equity with the positive outcome of increased employee loyalty (Suikkanen, 2010). If organisations can succeed in living up to its promise, it can create engaged and loyal employees (Moroko & Uneles, 2008; Gaddam, 2008).

In employer branding, brand loyalty is the commitment of employees to their employers. The emotional attachment of an employee is impelled by the value
derived by them from their work experience, satisfaction from their tasks, the value they feel from their relationship with the other employees and their belief in the quality, purpose and values of their organisation. Such employees will ensure success of their organisation. (Barrow & Mosley, 2005).258

“An employee’s commitment leads to personal identification with the organisation, psychological attachment, concern for the future welfare of the organisation and loyalty” (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999).259

2.3.4 Employer Branding and Employee Retention

Schuler & Jackson (2006, p.216)260 define retention as “everything an employer does to encourage qualified and productive employees to continue working for the organisation”. Frank, Finnegan & Taylor (2004)261 define employee retention as “the effort by an employer to keep desirable workers, in order to meet business objectives”. Johnson (2000)262 terms retention as “the ability to hold onto those employees you want to keep, for longer than your competitors”.

According to Hebenstreit (2008, p.4),263 “employee retention is a significant concern and expense for every organisation, with the expense of recruiting and retaining a new worker costing anywhere from half to 200% of the departing employees’ annual salary”. Moseley, Jeffers & Paterson (2008, p.53)264 state that “employee retention is important to organisations, as, increased turnover creates instability and puts additional workload and stress on remaining staff, increasing job dissatisfaction and therefore potentiating the turnover cycle”. Retention is increasingly important to organisations as a result of dearth of skilled employees, changes in the attitudes of employees, availability of new employment opportunities, high recruitment cost and having talented employees as a discerning factor (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2009, p.17).265

Operationally, employee retention refers to how many existing employees stay with the organisation over a period of time.

According to the Conference Board Report on Employer Branding (2001),266 organisations found that employer branding leads to competitive
advantage, help employees internalise organisational values and assists in employee retention. “Employer branding has been introduced as a method of enhancing retention by making the promise of employment (brand promise), so distinctive and superior to that of the competitors that the employee would not consider switching” (Taylor, 2002).

Firms having an employer brand are able to retain their employees, especially their skilled ones (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Employers having a strong and positive employer brand can retain their employees (Ritson, 2002; Unwin, 2007; Mallikarjunan, 2007; Durgin, 2007; Borgohain, 2010; Heilmann, Saarenketo & Liikkanen, 2013; Jain & Kaur, 2014; Gupta, Patti & Marvah, 2014). Employer branding is an employee retention initiative that organisations adopt to check attrition (Banerjee, 2007).

Research results of a survey conducted on 100 university students in Islamabad showed that there exists a positive relationship between employer branding, talent management practices and organisational attractiveness (Yaqab & Khan, 2011). According to Mosley (2009), 48% of the companies in the employer brand benchmark survey affirm that the main reason for adopting employer branding was employee retention.

Researchers agree that an employer brand, apart from attracting new employees, should also be able to keep the competent and best employees within the organisation (Kimpakorn & Toquer, 2009; Gaddam, 2008). Organisations are now beginning to recognise that good brand relationships with their employees are more important than good relationships with their customers. To have an effective employer branding resulting in employee retention, the outcomes of employer branding should be measured so that the return on investment is crystal clear. Creating employer branding is a long term process and there are several steps and each step must be measured for effectiveness (Jain, 2013).

Employer branding is the creation, maintenance and management of an agreeable, trustworthy and progressive image of an organisation which addresses the
needs of the employees and retains them despite better offers by competitors (Mallikarjunan, 2006).

Organisations having a strong employer brand have higher retention rates and also have highly motivated employees who are willing to stay with the organisation. Jain (2013) examines the causal relationship between employer brands and Corporate social responsibility, motivation and intention to stay through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Employer branding explains corporate social responsibility and motivation. Further, intention to stay is also explained by motivation. Motivation is categorised as a mediator variable. When employer branding is strong in an organisation, retention of employees is high in such organisations.

Employer brands are at least as much about retention as they are about engagement. Employer branding reduces attrition (Das & Rao, 2012) and increases employee satisfaction (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2008). Employer branding is a key process which needs to be focused by organisations to retain its employees (Brewster, Sparrow & Harris, 2005).

The most important benefits of having an employer brand, according to separate studies conducted by Hewitt Associates, The Conference Board and The Economist are enhanced attraction, retention and engagement (Mosley, 2009). The Conference Board Report (2001) also indicates that effective employer branding leads to gaining competitive advantage, helps employees to internalise the organisational culture and values, thereby, resulting in increased employee retention.

According to Sehgal & Malati (2013), in order to develop a strong employer brand, it is necessary to demonstrate what is specific about an organisation and its culture. Organisations in the service industry are facing the challenge of retaining their best employees. In order to retain the talented workforce, they need to adopt practices like effective leadership, teamwork, training and development, challenging work environment, rewards and recognition, work life balance and flexible work schedule.
Organisations which adopt employer branding practices such as relationship among workers, support of top management, total quality management, knowledge sharing practices, fostering risk taking and experimentation, location, learning and development, friendly organisational culture, corporate social responsibility, global opportunities and economic value encourage the existing employees to stay with the organisation (Chawla & Lenka, 2015).

More than 75% of the respondents of The Economist Global Employment Brand Survey 2003 from around the world feel that higher employee retention is one of the benefits of having an employer brand. Survey by TJinsite (2012) brings to light that employer branding is not so prevalent in Indian industries, though, organisations believe that employer branding can increase employee retention. Shifting trends in the corporate world makes it difficult for organisations to retain their employees. The economic uncertainties reinforce the importance of having an effective employer brand in retention of employees and sustaining competitive advantage in an organisation (SHRM, 2009). The Global Employer Brand study (2006) conducted by Bernard Hodes Global Network indicates that the most frequent employer branding expectations was increased retention rate at 65%.

According to Jorgensen (2005), best employers should develop attributes such as people, compensation, procedures, work, opportunities and quality and balance to sustain in the competitive environment. Flexible career and customised working arrangement, higher levels of investment in learning, adoption of collaboration and participation and attention to the service quality of organisational life are employer branding strategies that aim to attract and retain employees.

Findings from Employer Branding survey (2008) conducted by Durham University Business School and Nigel Wright Recruitment suggests that there is a significant relationship between employer branding and increased sense of self-esteem of employees at work and better performance behaviours. Social factors such as relationship at work, enjoyable work etc. were rated highly in an employer brand. Outcome of the research indicates that there is a positive relationship between
employer branding, perceived organisational prestige and organisational identification. Employer branding has a positive relationship with employee growth need strength and it leads to employees working harder.

White paper on Employer branding\textsuperscript{297} by Target Training International Ltd (2010) identifies several dimensions of employer branding which helps in employee retention namely compensation and benefits, values and culture, leadership communication, professional development and work life balance initiatives. Organisations having a strong employer brand provide superior employment experience to its employees resulting in employee satisfaction and retention. In a study of Swedish companies, employer branding contributes to retention of employees by providing incentives to approach the whole spectrum of employees-potential, current and former, in order to build a strong employer brand, overall reputation of the organisation, organisation’s competitive advantage, by maintaining the corporate culture and making the workplace appealing (Erkander & Sjunneson, 2012).\textsuperscript{298}

Organisations use employer branding to differentiate themselves and make themselves desirable to its employees. They need to align the HR function, learning and development and its communication function to retain its employees. Employer branding provides a framework to the organisation to simplify and focus priorities, increase productivity and retain employees (Harris & Short, 2014).\textsuperscript{299}

Employer brand is the key to employee retention. In order to have a strong employer brand, organisations should focus on culture, commitment and communication. Culture refers to the actual work atmosphere including work ethics, career progression etc. A fit between the employee and the organisation is desirable. Organisations should be consistent in delivering a culture that was promised during recruitment. In order to have a strong employer brand, organisations should seek to understand their employees’ motivation and skills and help them achieve success. Communication in an organisation should be constant, consistent and creative, this would help in strengthening the employer brand (MKSH & people consulting services, 2011).\textsuperscript{300}
Twenty eight factors identified by Kontogiorghes & Kalamyra (2009)\(^{301}\) showed a high degree of relationship with employee retention. Amongst them, quality driven culture, high degree of organisational flexibility, effective communication and employees’ involvement in decision making were factors which exhibited a higher association with talent retention. These factors were also common to employer branding leading to the conclusion that employer branding is a strategic tool for talent retention. Based on the above study, creativity and leadership were introduced into the present study as attributes of employer branding.

Batra (2012)\(^{302}\) in his study of 100 employees of different private banks and academic institutions identifies the dimension and role of employer branding in retaining employees. The study reveals that though salary is an important factor in retaining employees, the employer brand and reputation of the organisation is equally important. It is also found that location is an influencing factor for retaining employees. The author indicates that with the brand value and ongoing endeavour towards employee job satisfaction and learning environment, retention of employees would not be very difficult.

Employer branding gives a powerful competitive edge to organisations in the knowledge economy and is used to formulate strategies for employee retention (Raju & Chaitanya, 2006).\(^{303}\)

Sokro (2012),\(^{304}\) in a descriptive survey among leading banks in Ghana, suggests that organisations use employer branding to attract and retain their employees. Good working conditions, career development opportunities, values of the organisation, rewards and opportunities were given as reasons by employees to pursue work in their organisations. However, opportunities for growth, job security and organisational image were the motivations cited by employees for remaining with their organisations.

The Resource Based View of the organisation has shifted the focus from tangible assets to intangible ones. Employees’ intellectual contribution is the core of a sustainable and successful organisation and organisations as such engage in practices to retain their employees. Employer branding is one such innovative
practice which requires differentiation, relevance and noticeability resulting in motivation and retention of high calibre human assets. In a sample of 95 Egyptian employees, results of study showed a positive relationship between employer branding and employee retention (Al Badawy et al, 2015).

Jiang & Iles (2011) conclude that Employee based brand equity is the antecedent of employer branding based on their study of the relationship between organisational attractiveness and employer brand equity in the Chinese private sector. They proposed a five dimensional model of employee based brand equity having economic value, social value, development value, interest value and brand trust to be important to employees for them to stay with the organisation. In a recent study conducted by Alshathry (2015), studies the impact of Employer Brand equity on employee retention, results of which indicate that reputation of employer, corporate social responsibility, job content and work content lead to employer brand associations and experiences. These in turn result in employer brand loyalty which results in employee retention.

Xiang et al (2012) conducted a study to assess the impact of employer branding on corporate financial performance in companies in China. Dimensions of employer branding included in the study were culture, brand, leaders and management style, salary and welfare and career development. Results prove empirically that employer branding improves financial performance of companies as it results in retention of employees leading to better financial performance. They identify key points to internal and external marketing of the employer brand which would enable organisations to attract and retain its employees. External employer branding efforts should concentrate on building a unique employer image and communicate the employer brand. Internal employer branding should pay attention to cultivating an excellent culture, improve employees’ sense of belongingness, continuously enhance loyalty and finally build an efficient communication system with a good work environment.

Development opportunities and future career opportunities, all components of EVP are important for employee retention (Corporate Leadership Council,
An employees’ intention to remain with their organisation is the result of the positive associations with the organisation’s employer brand. Leadership and HR practices creates such positive associations along with attributes such as innovation, recognition, compensation and benefits, communication, culture, corporate social responsibility, mission and vision. Further, work environment sustains a successful employer brand (Prabhakaran & Rani, 2011).

Myrden & Kelloway (2012) in their study to determine the relationship between employer brand image and potential employees’ attraction to a firm finds that development of an effective employer brand is crucial for its recruitment in a competitive environment. They suggest that while functional attributes of employment are similar in nature, symbolic attributes attracts talent and that both these attributes should be communicated to employees through employer branding.

Employer branding ensures that best employees are retained in the organisation so that the activities of the organisation are carried on smoothly (Uma, Shruthi & Gaikwad, 2013). Namdeo & Ghai (2012) find that employer branding is a strategy used by organisations to attract, engage and retain its greatest competitive advantage-its employees. The authors analyse the employer branding practices of several Indian companies and opine that these organisations are becoming “intentionally strategic” in utilising the employer brand to attract and retain their talent.

Kapoor (2010) identifies current employee research, developing strategies for employee retention and retention initiatives to be the top three factors to enhance the employer brand of an organisation.

Researchers from Durham University Business School in association with Nigel Wright Recruitment (2008) conducted an online Employer Branding Survey on 1,008 managers and professionals. Implications of the findings of the study reveal that employer branding acts as a strong retention device.

Research by Verma (2010) uses correlation test to prove that there is a significant relationship between employer branding and employee retention.
Selvalakshmi & Sohail (2013) adopt case study method to study the effect of employer branding and employee retention in India where talent is in shortage.

The perception of employer brand plays a critical role in employee retention, according to the Impact model created using multiple classification analysis derived from 30,000 respondents of the 2010 Hungarian Best Employer Survey (Aon Hewitt, 2012).

An organisation’s employer brand is highly ranked among several high level retention strategies. An employer brand represents the core values of an organisation. It is image of the organisation as a great place to work, in the minds of its current employees and key stakeholders. It is the development of such an organisational culture which fosters a sense of belonging to the company and encourages the employees to share organisation’s goals for success. The goal of employer branding is to create loyal employees. Research shows that employees of industrial brands feel a much greater sense of pride, attachment and trust towards their employer. They are also significantly more likely to recommend their organisation to others and claim it treats employees well. Through right branding, organisations can reinforce their positioning among its employees. It helps to build trust and reliability. A good employer brand makes it easy to attract good talent and curb attrition (Joe, 2011).

Miles and Mangold (2005), in their study suggest that Employer Branding constitutes part of the relationship between employer and employee in providing competitive advantage with positive impact on employee’s behaviour in an organisation such as employee retention. In a similar study, Aravamudhan (2009) finds that Employer branding has great potential to provide an organisation with competitive advantage which will help in attracting and retaining its employees.

Corte et al (2011) establish the importance of employer branding in attracting and retaining talent in order to create value for the organisation and in achieving sustainable competitive advantage in the knowledge based Italian aerospace sector. The authors indicate that the employer brand is reflected in the
organisation by the increase in the retention of high performing employees, coherence between internal and external communication and alignment of strategies.

In order to retain talent, organisations need to follow six principles namely alignment with strategy, internal consistency, cultural embeddedness, management involvement, a balance of global and local needs and employer branding through differentiation (Stahl et al, 2012).\(^{323}\)

To identify the features of Human Resource Development (HRD) practices and talent management in companies with employer brand, Kucherov & Zavyalova (2012)\(^ {324}\) studied 113 Russian companies across various sectors and examine three economic indicators namely turnover rate, HR costs and training budget. Findings indicate a lower turnover rate in organisations having an employer brand. Investments in training and development activities, building knowledge and competencies of employees to make them more qualified increases their loyalty, thus contributing to retention of employees.

Lelono & Martdianty (2013)\(^ {325}\) investigate the impact of the employer brand on voluntary turnover intentions of 100 employees in a life insurance company in Indonesia, with organisational commitment and job satisfaction as mediator variables using Mediate Macro for SPSS. The results indicate that the employer brand has an influence on voluntary turnover intentions and that positive perception of the employer brand leads to lower turnover intentions; though job satisfaction is not a qualified mediator, this relationship is partially mediated by organisational commitment. Higher the attraction of the employer brand, employees are better encouraged to identify themselves with the organisation and stay in the organisation.

Florea (2011)\(^ {326}\) makes a case study of six organisations in Romania to prove that employer branding is used to attract and retain talented employees. The author has built a model to analyse the influence of employer branding on attracting and retaining employees and is based five activities including publicity for organisation, organisation’s involvement in sponsorship activities and knowing the organisation.
Employer branding is an effective talent strategy. By strengthening their employer brand, organisations can significantly improve employee retention by assessing and shaping an authentic message of what the organisation stands for, communicate the message through the right channels and continually measure and evaluate the effectiveness of employer branding initiatives against organisation’s ‘talent goals’ (Born & Kang, 2015).

In order to retain their employees, organisations need to consider several initiatives such as mentoring, knowledge transfer, career advancement, performance management system, succession planning and differentiation through employer branding. Thus, employer branding is an important factor to be considered by organisations for retaining its employees. Employer branding increased the overall employee satisfaction which results in employee retention (Chhabra & Mishra, 2008).

An organisation’s employer brand is concerned with the engagement of its employees to its mission and vision, to the effectiveness of HR programs and internal communication programs, and to the overall effectiveness of employee relations. The essence of an employer brand is the strong connection and belief to the organisation’s values leading to greater employee pride, loyalty and retention. High employee retention is an indicator of good employer brand of an organisation. Retention is necessarily associated with the employee’s perception of the organisation. Organisations having an environment that encourages consistent and open dialog, where its employees understand its mission, where challenges are communicated and where employees feel connected with the organisation will have high employee retention. Organisations also need to concentrate more on engaging and training its employees, compensate adequately and be flexible in order to make the employer brand a success. The reward of having a successful employer brand is employee retention and morale apart from financial performance (Mitchell, 2008).

In a study conducted by Kulkarni (2013), it is revealed that there is a relationship between employer branding and talent management. Adequate
compensation, training and development programs, recognition of work, work environment and organisational culture were important employer branding factors which led to talent management. The results of the study also indicated that reduction in turnover was perceived to be the most important benefit of employer branding by the respondents.

**Singh & Jain (2013)**\(^{331}\) attest using structural equation modelling that there is a high and positive correlation between employer branding and motivation and that such motivated employees exhibited stronger intention to stay in the organisation.

**Uthayasuriyan & Vijayalakshmi (2015)**\(^{332}\) opine that the rising interest in employer branding is due to the economic and demographic changes happening locally and globally. The employer brand influences every employment experience touchpoints by promoting a beneficial employment package by way of pay and benefits, working environment, career management, balanced work life, mental and social satisfaction etc. Employer branding enhances employee retention through a distinctive and superior promise of employment so that an employee would remain with the organisation.

**Chung (2010),**\(^{333}\) in a study of employees in Malaysia, identifies the perceptions of employees towards employer branding and employee retention, relationship and impact of employer branding and employee retention, examine the relationship between employer branding attributes such as training and career development, recognition and culture on employee retention. Results substantiate the existence of a high and positive relationship between employer branding and employee retention. Results of multiple regression analysis revealed that culture is the main contributor to impact talent retention and that employer branding has an impact on talent retention. In identifying the perceptions of employees towards employer branding and employee retention, author finds that brand identification, brand culture and brand loyalty were important and had influence as much as 67.5% on talent retention.
A strong employer brand built on organisational mission and values will assure loyalty, support and satisfaction from employees and indirectly contribute to profitability of the organisation through employee retention (Gaddam, 2008).\(^{334}\)

Employee Retention is the most important positive effect of Employer Branding. According to the Employer Branding Survey (2012),\(^{335}\) 75% of the respondents feel that employer branding makes it easy for organisations to retain their quality employees and 46% of the respondents ‘tend to agree’ that Employer Branding has contributed to a reduction in the annual employee turnover. Further, 92% of the respondents feel that employer branding contributes to organisations experiencing a high degree of employee loyalty and 59% of the respondents agree that employer branding has created brand advocates for the organisation who are willing to recommend their employer as a brand. 52% of the respondents agree that employer branding has contributed to an increase in length of employee tenure.

Similar results are obtained through The Conference Board Survey on “Engaging employees through your brand” (2001)\(^{336}\) wherein, 72% of the respondents felt that employer branding is useful for employee retention and CIPD survey (2007)\(^{337}\) also reveals that more than 60% of the respondents of that study felt that employer branding improves employee satisfaction and reduces attrition among other benefits.

Employer branding has wider implications in the areas of loyalty of employees, motivation and retention of employees so that the organisation’s brand promise is delivered (Davey, Burtenshaw, Fitzpatrick & Haar, 2011).\(^{338}\) Similarly, in a case study conducted in the Romanian IT sector, Racolta-Paina & Mone (2010)\(^{339}\) find that employee retention, loyalty and employee satisfaction were the perceived benefits of the existence of an employer brand.

Due to the ever shrinking talent pool, organisations, in order to retain its employees should build loyalty through employer branding. Employer branding is the essence of the employment experience which increases employee satisfaction resulting in their retention (Shah, 2011).\(^{340}\)
Paul & Raj (2014)\(^{341}\) theoretically examine the impact of organisational culture on retention and how employer branding is positively associated with employee retention. According to them, employer branding communicates the organisational culture to retain its employees. A strong employer brand will result in increased employee loyalty. By augmenting the employment experience, organisations can develop value for employees resulting in enhanced loyalty leading to higher employee retention.

Uma & Metilda (2012),\(^{342}\) through their conceptual review, examined the implications of employer branding as resulting in lowering of recruitment cost and acquisition of right talent. Employee based initiatives that complement employee expectation results in employees’ feeling of identification and ownership with the organisation, resulting in employee retention.

Increased talent retention, higher level of loyalty among employees, higher levels of trust in the company, increase in employee engagement, decrease in employees fluctuation, good relations with current and former employees and lower rate of absence from work are identified as the benefits of employer branding. Some of the metrics to measure the return on investment (ROI) of employer branding practices include improved employee retention, employee satisfaction, morale and good work performance (Aon Hewitt Associates, 2012).\(^{343}\)

Oster & Jonze (2013)\(^{344}\) investigate that employer branding can be used internally to increase loyalty and retention of current employees and suggests that for an employer brand to be successful and trustworthy, internal values and external image should be aligned.

Ahmad and Daud (2015)\(^{345}\) develop a relationship model that takes in the effect of employer branding towards turnover intention among employees in Malaysia’s SME-ICT industry using Partial Least Square. The model provides an understanding of employees’ turnover intention and how the organisation could be supported and managed to ensure loyalty of its employees. Analysis reveals that development value in employer branding significantly influenced turnover intention. Development value refers to the appreciation employees receive from their
supervisors and career enhancement experiences which serve as a spring board for future employment. In addition, employees would also prefer to stay with those employers who provide career development programmes. The framework developed would provide a better understanding on how to develop a successful human resource management from a managerial perspective.

2.4 EMPLOYER BRANDING AND INDIAN IT INDUSTRY

The necessity of establishing an employer brand is more pronounced in IT industry where employees prefer to work with employers who have winning images (Mallikarjunan, 2006).346

Datta (2008)347 presents in a case study, the employer branding practices of an Indian IT company. Constant communication, feedback seeking culture, transparency and consistency in actions influence the employer brand. The employer branding practices include providing career progression by encouraging employees to mould their careers in line with their aspirations and areas of interest, a culture of excellence, appreciation for a job well done, structured induction programme to new employees for inculcating organisational values, learning opportunities, rewards and recognition, feedback, flexible work hours and working from home, corporate social responsibility, diversity in work place, communication, effective leadership, succession planning and work culture that fosters employee satisfaction.

Sreelakshmi, Krishna & Rao (2009)348 highlight the survey results conducted by Hewitt Associates and Accor Services (2006)349 on employer branding in IT/ITES organisations in India. Results indicate that employees feel compensation, career progression and nature of work are the top three important aspects of employer branding. The employer brand of an organisation is reflected in the actions and behaviours of its leaders and is affected by policies, procedures and practices of an organisation. Thus, inspirational leadership, reputation for excellence, ticket to future success and culture of an organisation are important factors influencing employer branding.
Bhaskar (2011)\textsuperscript{350} attempts an empirical study to evaluate the employer branding practices in Indian IT companies to measure the impact of employer branding on employees’ willingness to stay and perceptions of trust. Results of the study indicate that challenging tasks, good reference for future career, international career opportunities, financial benefits and work life balance were the most important employer branding factors which made employees to remain with their present organisations.

Priya (2012)\textsuperscript{351} highlights the employer branding practices in IT companies and touches upon EVP, organisational culture, consistency in communication, diversity and leadership to build a strong employer brand.

Employer brand is the image of the organisation as a ‘great place to work’ in the minds of the current employees. In order to develop a strong employer brand, it is necessary to demonstrate what is specific about an organisation and its culture. Fifteen parameters such as work life balance, reference for future career, flexible working hours, quality of work, organisational culture, international opportunities, compensation, career development, job security, learning, management practices, financial position, ethical orientation, innovative products/services and corporate social responsibility will always be considered by an employee. However, differences and likeness in attitudes within certain groups exists, analysis of which would make employer brand strategy work more efficiently in IT companies in India. The IT sector comprising of knowledge workers has to constantly reinvent itself and its strategies. Employer branding practices help them differentiate from one another and enhance their chances of having talented workforce (Malati et al 2012).\textsuperscript{352} Taking their research further, the employer branding practices of top three IT companies in India were compared and analysed to understand their similarities and dissimilarities. Findings indicate that the companies differ significantly with respect to certain employer branding dimensions such as work life balance, reference to future career, flexible working hours, compensation parity, career advancement, management practices, financial strength, ethical orientation and innovative products/services. They do not differ significantly on factors such as quality of work, organisational culture, overseas opportunities, employment security,
learning outcomes and corporate social responsibility. Results of the analysis also show that there is a significant difference between overall branding of three companies and conclude that organisations practising employer branding tend to fare better in comparison to others.

Chitramani & Deepa (2013) discuss the employer branding strategies of three major IT companies in India. The strategies include fair and transparent corporate governance, initiatives for community betterment and environment, HR practices, Employees Stock Option Plan, Training and career development, CSR activities, shared beliefs and leadership values, compensation etc. Though these strategies were not planned, such pro-employee activities of these companies inadvertently became the foundation of employer branding practices in the Indian IT industry.

Singh (2009) offers a contemporary perspective of employer branding through case studies of several IT companies in India. The author analyses the role of employer branding during times of recession and concludes that employees stay with their organisation even during such times due to practices such as work life balance, flexible working hours, internal communication, leadership, training and job satisfaction. Implementation of these employer branding best practices of an organisation enables organisations to overcome their business challenges.

Prabhakaran & Sweta (2011) establish the factors of employer brand in the Indian IT industry in an empirical study selecting employees from organisation who are top ranked in ‘Best Employer’ surveys. Culture, compensation and benefits, communication and corporate social responsibility, mission and vision, work environment, employer image, innovation, rewards and recognition, employee loyalty, satisfaction and recognition were the variables of an employer brand identified in the study. Results also indicate the creation of two principal assets of employer branding namely, brand associations and brand loyalty. Employer brand associations shape the employer image. According to Social Identity Theory, employees identify with their organisation based on this image. Employer branding also affects organisational culture and identification with the organisation, which in
turn contribute to employer brand loyalty. These findings are supported by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004).\textsuperscript{356}

**Figurska & Matuska (2013)**\textsuperscript{357} identify an increase in employee retention rate, employee satisfaction and higher levels of employee loyalty and trust as some of the benefits of employer branding. The authors highlight the results of the 2013 study conducted by Employer Brand International which indicates that employer branding activities have a great impact on talent management. The authors also highlight the results of 2013 Randstad Employer Branding Survey wherein significant differences in importance of dimensions of employer branding across demographic factors. Women were more concerned with work life balance, location and pleasant working atmosphere whereas men gave importance to international career opportunities, training, future prospects and quality products and services. Also, in this global study, Indian respondents preferred employers who offered international career opportunities.

### 2.5 SUMMARY OF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The chapter on review of literature underlines the importance of employee retention in IT industry and shows that employer branding is strongly and positively associated with employee retention. Employer branding plays an important role in employee retention. Only when employees are retained, organisational goals can be achieved. For employees to be retained, they should develop identification with their organisation and have satisfaction with their organisation. This matures into employer brand loyalty where employees do not consider switching to another organisation, thereby retaining them. Employers need to consider all the dimensions of employer branding in order to retain them.

The chapter identifies several dimensions of Employer Branding and the dimensions finally chosen for the research study are Employment Experience, Work Environment, Values and Culture, Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development, Reputation of employer, Compensation and location, Work-life balance, Communication, Fair and Consistent management practices, Leadership, Creativity, Diversity in work place and Corporate Social Responsibility. The
variables Employee Identification with the Organisation, Employee Satisfaction and Employer Brand Loyalty mediate the relationship between Employer Branding and Employee Retention. A study on several models on Employer Branding and the review of literature enabled this research scholar to frame an Employer Branding – Employee Retention model, which is presented in Chapter VI. This chapter meets the objective of deriving the employer brand dimensions.

Although several research papers and studies associate employer branding and employee retention, very few empirical studies exist and those few studies have considered a student sample, thus presenting a research gap, as familiarity of the respondents with the organisations is essential in employer branding studies (Bhatnagar & Srivastava, 2008). The studies also do not consider the variables Employee Identification with Organisation, Employee Satisfaction and Employer Brand Loyalty as mediating variables. This study bridges the research gap in studying the impact of employer branding on employee retention having Employee Identification with Organisation, Employee Satisfaction and Employer Brand Loyalty as intervening variables using an employee-based sample in Indian IT companies.
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