

Employer Branding: Through the Lens of Career Growth and Organizational Attractiveness

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Abstract

This study delves into the aspect of employer branding, emphasizing career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness. It evaluated how word-of-mouth and social media influence using the signalling theory paradigm. To strengthen the proposed model, the study conducted an in-depth interview with HR managers in the IT industry. The study applied the SORA (Summary Oral Reflective Analytics) to uncover viewpoints on employee's perceptions and expectations of the organization. It reveals the interdependence of social media and word-of-mouth, highlighting their combined impact on career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness. The managerial implications highlight the need for firms to align their employer branding initiatives with the values and expectations of prospective employees. Organizations can sharpen their competitive edge through appealing narratives about career growth opportunities shared by employees as a signal through social media. This study also recognizes the vital part of this interconnectedness of career growth opportunities perceived and shared by employees in determining an organization's

achievement in the competitive IT landscape.

Keywords: Career growth opportunities, Employer branding, Organizational Attractiveness Signalling theory, Social Identity Theory, Word of mouth, Use of social media,

In today's era of well-advanced technology, a rapidly changing business environment faces corporate challenges in meeting talented executives (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014a). Ambler & Barrow (1996) define an Employer brand as a "package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment." Employer branding is now regarded as a desirable strategic tool. The development of an effective employer brand is anticipated to provide a number of advantages, such as reducing employee turnover and raising employee satisfaction. (Saini, Rai, & Chaudhary, 2014). As a result, many organizations use a variety of tactics to keep their talent pool strong. Among these strategies seems employer branding (EB), which is essential for drawing in, nurturing, and retaining talent (Biswas & Suar, 2016). Employer branding expresses the organizational values to prospective

and current employees by setting it apart from its competitors. In an era of exemplary connection and information accessibility, the importance of employer branding has grown, solidifying it as a pillar of corporate strategy (Harvey, Beaverstock, & Li, 2019). In the past, goods and services have dominated an organization's reputation. However, when people's talent is often regarded as the most valuable asset in today's workplace, the emphasis has switched to how companies are seen (Kowalkowski, Gebauer, & Oliva, 2017). Consequently, this trend is emphasized by the realization that acquiring and maintaining great personnel is a long-term relationship rather than a one-time transaction (Gonzales, 2016). Employer branding is a comprehensive concept that encompasses several crucial factors. These include the formulation of a compelling Employee Value Proposition (EVP) that describes what employees may expect in terms of career growth, workplace culture, and overall experience. It also entails effectively communicating these characteristics across numerous platforms, such as social media, company websites, and word of mouth (Keyzer, Dens, & Pelsmacker, 2019).

However, a great employer brand appeals to individuals looking for more than merely a job; they want a rewarding and enriching career (Alonso, Parsons, & Pirani, 2022). Furthermore, a strong employer brand boosts employee happiness and retention, lowering turnover costs and fostering a workforce that is involved in the organization's long-term success (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018a). The relevance of employer branding in the digital era has been heightened by technical improvements and the prevalence of social media. Social media platforms are great tools for promoting the employer brand, allowing firms to engage with a global audience and exhibit their workplace culture in real-time (M. Ewing, Men, & O'Neil, 2019). The changing landscape of employer branding influences how organizations present themselves in the competitive talent market as more and more companies realize the mutual benefits of a strong employer brand, talent acquisition and employee satisfaction (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018a).

The primary objective of this study is to establish the relationship between organizational attractiveness and career growth opportunities. Moreover, in-depth interviews with IT HR managers were conducted to provide additional facts regarding what was convicted to support this connection. As a result, SORA (Summary Oral Reflective Analytics) is employed as an analytical tool and a conversational approach to learn

more about its organizational strength. The research questions of the study is as follows:

RQ1: What is the influence of employer branding on the perceived career growth opportunities within an organization?

RQ2: What key elements contribute to a conceptual framework linking employer branding with career growth and organizational attractiveness?

RQ3: What strategic recommendations can be proposed for organizations to enhance their employer branding, ensuring a positive impact on both career growth and organizational attractiveness?

The study is organized methodically, commencing with an introduction to provide context. Subsequently, the literature review explores existing theories and research in detail. The methodology section outlines the research design, emphasizing in-depth interviews. Moving forward, the proposed framework is presented, and a discussion section delves into the findings derived from the interviews. The study concludes by summarizing key insights and implications in the conclusions.

Literature Review

Signaling Theory

The fundamentals of signalling theory propose a signaller, a signal, and a receiver. Signaller has better insider information that is not publicly available or has not reached the receiver (Spencer, 1973). In order for the receiver to receive information based on the signals from the signallers, essential functions must be used in transmitting signals (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011). However, signaling to the outside market is essential in increasing the competition in the employment market (Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings, 2010). As such, organizations periodically employ high-cost signalling to convey information to the receiver, draw in talent for the employees, and present a professional corporate image to outsiders. For example, employers should be aware of the elements that impact organizational attractiveness. Strategic management and Entrepreneurship increasingly use signaling theory to better understand how information is shared between two parties. Signal cost, or the ability of some firms to absorb the expenses of conveying positive information better than others, is a key challenge in signaling theory. In contrast, some businesses can be motivated to use false signaling because they lack the resources or the desire to invest in such expenditures (Carlini, Grace,

France, & Lo Iacono, 2019a). The signaling theory is frequently used to explain how information or signals about an organization's characteristics are revealed during recruitment activities, which may influence potential candidates attracted to the organization. The many recruitment-related activities and information viewed by applicants are perhaps unclear about the organizational traits, recruiter characteristics, or behavior (Celani & Singh, 2011). Signaling through integrated communication channels in employer branding can aid in bridging information asymmetry and provide employees with a consistent message. Consequently, when communications are inconsistent, employees may perceive them negatively, which could diminish their motivation, commitment, and level of satisfaction. Employee attraction results from employer brand signals influencing employees' feelings about their company (Deepa & Baral, 2022).

Employer Branding

Employer branding was initially introduced in the early 1980s to help companies build a more profound sense of employee loyalty towards the brand they work for, leading to enhanced innovations in the talent acquisition market (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018b). According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), the major factors in employer branding are classified as “economical,

functional, and psychological benefits”; Financial rewards and compensation comprise economic aspects. Perhaps flexible work arrangements, open communication, health and safety issues, and career growth opportunities are the functional aspects (Davidescu, Apostu, Paul, & Casuneanu, 2020). In addition to a feeling of belonging and the meaning of work, psychological factors are intimately related to organizational values and culture. Employer branding has become one of organizations' key tactics to retain and recruit qualified employees, place them in the right roles within the organization to achieve desired goals, and remain viable in competitive business environments (Chawla, 2019). As a result, the employer brand is what an individual thinks of the organization as a workplace and the benefits it offers prospective and potential employees (Dabirian, Berthon, & Kietzmann, 2019). Through the strategy of employer branding, an employer brand is developed and shared with internal and external stakeholders. However, job applicants were attracted to organizations with certain employer features, such as organizational culture, pay, and brand recognition (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019).

The concept of employer branding comes from marketing. It assists firms in focusing on how they may promote themselves in their marketplace as an employer of current employees and a potential employer of recruits (M. T. Ewing, Pitt, Bussy, & Berthon,

2002). Indeed, it encompasses the organization's guiding principles, rules, and regulations to attract, motivate, and retain the firm's present and potential employees. According to these definitions, employer branding entails promoting a distinct understanding of what makes a brand unique and desirable as an employer, both inside and outside the organization (K. Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). From the prior studies, organizations with a strong employer brand will attract more skilled and talented candidates (Carlini, Grace, France, & Lo Iacono, 2019b; Chhabra & Sharma, 2014b; Weske, Ritz, Schott, & Neumann, 2020). Therefore, Employer branding helps an organization hire not only talented employees but also increases its productivity and competitiveness (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016)

Career Growth Opportunities

The advancement of career goals, development of professional abilities, and rewards (bonuses, appreciations) are the aspects of career growth opportunities (i.e., promotion speed and remuneration growth). However, it comprises of employees' attempts to progress in their career goals and upskill their knowledge. Moreover, organizations reward such efforts through promotions and compensation (Kumari & Saini, 2018). Generally, there is a link between the attitude and behaviour of the employees and the organization to which

they belong to and a mutual effort between employees and organizations (Weer & Greenhaus, 2020). Hence, the possibility for career advancement is also increased by a pleasant workplace where employees can learn and advance their knowledge and experience. (Um-e-Rubbab et al., 2022). Moreover, career growth opportunities is also referred to as a "career ladder," and it pertains to employees' perceptions of their opportunities for growth and progress within an organization (Biswakarma, 2016). Employees prefer to work for supportive, compassionate companies that promote work-life balance, professional growth, career advancement opportunities, recognition, the most outstanding possible pay and benefits, and financial security and stability (Srivastava, Tripathi, & Rajlaxmi, 2021). Studies indicate that career development opportunities are widely identified as vital employment resources that create favourable organizational outcomes, such as more substantial organizational commitment and lower turnover intention (Hanaysha, 2016; Kumar, Jauhari, Rastogi, & Sivakumar, 2018; Nawaz & Pangil, 2016).

Organizational Attractiveness

Employer branding is associated with attracting, engaging, and retaining the right talents who professionally match organizational values (Maheshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos, & Konstantopoulou, 2017).

Throughout every organization across the world, selecting the right talents is a challenging task (Liu, Keeling, & Papamichail, 2016). Empirically, some studies show that potential employees are attracted in the early stages of recruitment by seeing the pay, opportunities, location, and flexible work arrangements (Kashive & Khanna, 2017a). However, organizational attractiveness mostly depends upon jobseekers' beliefs about the organization's attributes, such as organizational image, brand, and reputation (Reis, Braga, & Trullen, 2017). Indeed, studies reveal that job peculiarity and organizational characteristics are prominent factors that govern organizational attractiveness (Kim, Mori, & Rahim, 2018). Mostly, jobseekers perceive a psychological outlook toward the organization, which influences them to be part of it (Guillot-Soulez, Saint-Onge, & Soulez, 2019). In order to successfully recruit and retain highly competent people, it is thought to be imperative to create an attractive organizational environment. Essentially, applicants' inclination to pursue and accept employment offers within an organization measures organizational attractiveness (McNab & Johnston, 2010). Furthermore, an organization engages in person-organization (P-O) fit to promote organizational attractiveness. This is another factor influencing organizational attractiveness (Potgieter & Drive, 2018). However, one of the most efficient techniques

for increasing the number of qualified applicants is to increase the number of applications in the application pool. Additionally, employers can increase attraction to the organization by improving working conditions, and other HRM practices, such as high-performance work systems, may be considered an organizational trait (e.g., improving salaries and benefits, providing flexible schedules, and career advancement opportunities) (Obeidat, 2019).

Word-of-mouth

Word of mouth is defined as "informal communication between the two parties pertaining to assess personal possessions." It happens in the context of the knowledge and predictive insights of the service users (Ring, Tkaczynski, & Dolnicar, 2016). Although the core of the WOM (word-of-mouth) behaviour is rational, based on online or offline or one-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many forms (Karjaluoto, Munnukka, & Kiuru, 2016). Moreover, in an organization, positive word of mouth (WOM) is a dominant point of sale for employer branding (Charbonnier-Voirin, Poujol, & Vignolles, 2017). Prior research indicates that rather than experts' opinions, advertisements, books, movies, and news, word of mouth (WOM) positively influences organizational attractiveness (Jalilvand, Salimipour, Elyasi, & Mohammadi, 2017). However, in this digital era, word of mouth (WOM) is a dynamic tool

that employees use to express their thoughts and experiences to the applicants (Mehrad & Mohammadi, 2017). Such sources provide well-established general information about convenient brands (Kashive & Khanna, 2017b). Indeed, positive and negative word of mouth (WOM) would significantly affect the receiver's perspectives (Li et al., 2018). Thus, increasing the credibility and significance of word-of-mouth advertising by existing employees can help make an organization more attractive. However, word-of-mouth has the capacity to transmit both positive and negative information (Uen, Ahlstrom, Chen, & Liu, 2015). WOM (word-of-mouth) is nine times more effective at achieving a high reaction from the target audience than other channels of information, since it is low cost, trustworthy, delivered quickly, and has a high delivery rate (Ahamad, 2019).

Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979 consists of cognitive and affective perspectives. Cognitive perspective consists of self-image and personal identity, and the affective perspective consists of emotional attachment (Chiang, Xu, Kim, Tang, & Manthiou, 2017). According to this theory, it is "a collection of individuals who see themselves as members of the same social category" (Dutot, 2020). Moreover, this theory provides that an organization

would seem to change the attitude of the individuals through self-identity towards the organization (Ma et al., 2021). According to this theory, people desire a positive sense of self-worth and belonging to a social group, which satisfies this desire (Schmalz, Colistra, & Evans, 2015). As per the theory, the necessary components of the Social Identity Theory are cognitive, evaluative, and affective dimensions. The self-categorization process is a part of the cognitive dimension of social identity, which is defined as an individual's consciousness of membership. This evaluation element stands for collective self-esteem, and the affective component entails a commitment to this identification on an emotional level (Wang, 2017). Social identity can result via social constructivism, in which individuals establish verbal and nonverbal communication involving the social propagation of common ideas and concepts (Fujita, Harrigan, & Soutar, 2018). Social media has given individuals a big platform to share their identities. However, individuals are more compelled to engage with a business that enables them to climb the social advancement ladder (Helal, Ozuem, & Lancaster, 2018). Particularly in the social media setting, having the required social media abilities to interact correctly with similar individuals would increase one's social identity and promote intimacy (Yoganathan, Osburg, & Bartikowski, 2021). According to Social Identity Theory, influencing

an individual's self-concept toward an organization might also change their behaviour (Ma et al., 2021).

Use of Social Media

Social media is defined as a set of internet-based apps that allow user content creation and exchange based on Web 2.0's ideological and technological basis (Piric, Masmontet, & Martinovic, 2018). According to research, using social media for human resources helps businesses establish their employer brands and recruit the best personnel (Kaur, Sharma, Kaur, & Sharma, 2015). However, an essential step in introducing and communicating the brand to website visitors is to have a user-friendly and inviting accessible website that provides open information about the organization's internal environment, culture, vision, goal, values, and hiring processes (Cascio & Graham, 2016). Similarly, the web is the foundation of social networking sites, which offer features like creating public profiles, networking with others who share interests, and communicating with them (Kashive, Khanna, & Bharthi, 2020). Therefore, the influence of social media popularity results in more transparency. It is being used more and more frequently to promote job openings and build a positive employer brand (Kargas & Tsokos, 2020). Generally, social media is increasingly becoming a popular avenue for communicating details about the employer brand,

particularly among millennial (Kucherov & Zhiltsova, 2021).

Methodology

Research Design

This study was based on the literature on career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness from Google Scholar, EBSCO, and Proquest. The proposed model is based on the future scope from the literature reviews. By conducting the in-depth interview, the suggested model can enhance the social media and word-of-mouth moderating and mediation function between career advancement and organizational attractiveness. The authors used an interview-based approach to determine the parameters and actual relationship through a detailed evaluation of themes and facts (Haddock-Millar, Sanyal, & Müller-Camen, 2016). This study involved six one-to-one interviews with the senior manager, system analyst, senior software engineer, talent and acquisition manager, data analyst, and senior executive. As part of this study, six IT Indian companies were identified and analyzed. The companies were selected on three criteria: (1) organizational size, (2) mission, vision, and values, and (3) organization focus. Firms are chosen from Information Technology (IT) services.

Data Collection

Each interview lasted 30 to 45 minutes and was conducted face-to-face. Anonymity and confidentiality were promised to each client. The interview with the respondents was conducted in English. All interviews were recorded with the respondent’s consent. Following that, a word document with the transcription of the recorded interviews was prepared. This study used secondary sources such as literature, reports, and white papers to further enhance the company's understanding and derive meaningful information from the interviews. The author then analyzed the interviews in light of the parameters of the study questions, and significant findings were obtained as a result. Although the story’s details are accurate, each company is referred to by its proxy name according

to the participant's agreement to maintain confidentiality.

The objective of the collecting semi-structured interview:

1. To understand the relationship between career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness.
2. To identify the response from the semi-structured interview regarding the mediating and moderation role of word of mouth and the use of social media between career growth and organizational attractiveness.
3. To provide in-depth insights into these responses and the future implications of these study.

The detailed interview protocol for this study is presented in table 1.

Table 1
Guidelines of the Interview Process

S.NO	Steps
1	Research focus and scope
2	Identify the individuals
3	Frameof research questions
4	Identify the proper research instruments and protocols, including an in-depth interview.
5	Identifies appropriate participants of verticle and a horizontal slice of human resource management
6	Data collection through the semi-structure interview
7	Data recording and transcript
8	Data analysis
9	Literature comparison
10	Article development

This study covers six one-on-one interviews with managers, system analysts, and delivery managers. Table 2 presents the job role, their experience, and data collection methods.

literature. The duration of each one-on-one interview was 25 to 45 minutes. The interviews that followed were manually recorded and transcribed (Haddock-Millar et al., 2016; Hong et al., 2022).

1. Organizational size,
2. Vision, Mission, and Values, and
3. Organizational focus.

Table 4 represents the summaries of companies included in the study.

Table 2

Overview of Respondents

Job Role	Years of Experience in the Present Organization	Data Collected Methodology
Senior Manger	8 years	Semi-structured interview
System Analyst	7 years	Semi-structured interview
Senior Software Engineer	5 years	Semi-structured interview
Talent & Acquisition Manger	11 years	Semi-structured interview
Data Analyst	4 years	Semi-structured interview
Senior Exectutive	12 years	Semi-structured interview

Table 3

Interview Process

1	Introduce the participants and interviewer.
2	Research method is explained.
3	Explain the research process and its objectives in detail.
4	Discuss research outcomes ethical issues and obtain consent.
5	Describe the interview's format.

The interview started with a thorough overview of the organization, the employees, employee stickiness, factors leading to it, and its demands. The interviews then turned to the particular subjects covered in the

Table 3 represents the interview process used in this study as

As part of this study, six Indian IT companies were identified and analyzed. The companies were selected on three criteria:

Data Analysis

The researcher in this study examined all of the data gathered using a qualitative analytic method called Summary Oral Reflective analytic (SORA). SORA uses an interactive method that seeks to maintain the context and depth of the data. It was first created by nurses and was detailed by Thompson & Barrett (1997). Using this approach, the researcher actively reflects verbally on new ideas, interpretations, and themes that emerge from the data. Compared to other methods of qualitative analysis that primarily focus on reading transcriptions of participant extracts, potentially ignoring context and aiming for unattainable objectivity, SORA places a strong emphasis on actively listening to the participants' voices and considering the contextual factors (Jahnke, Waldrop, Ledford, & Martinez, 2021). This method allows the data to express itself, which makes it easier for the researcher to remain in close contact with the data and aids the primary themes to come to light more clearly. Although, the participants' interviews were audio recorded and then manually transcribed. In accordance with the SORA protocol, researchers collaborated together to update the transcripts while concurrently listening to the recorded interviews.

Table 4

Summary of Companies

Buisness Type	Organizational Size	Vision, Mission, and Values	Organizational Focus
Company A	Multinational Information Technology 7development application centers. 402,200 employees	Vision: "We are motivated by the desire to develop products that are invented for life." Mission:"Building solutions for a better life." Values:" Future and result focus,Initiativeand determination, Openness, and trust."	Mobility solutions Industrial Technology Consumer goods Energy and building technology Other business areas
Company B	Multinational Information Technology 145000 employees across 90 countries	Vision:"Educated, skilled, and able women and men are a country's true strength Mission:"Offering innovative and customer-centric information technology services and solutions." Values:" Professionalism, quality focus, the dignity of the individual."	Infrastructure and cloud services Network services Integrated Engineering services Business process services Telecom product engineering Intelligent automation
Company C	Multinational Information Technology Operates in 149 locations across 46 countries 6lakh employees worldwide	Vision: "To be globally significant in each of our chosen businesses." Mission:" To be a responsible value creator for all our stakeholders." Values: Pioneering, Integrity,Excellence. Unity, Responsibility"	Hardware sizing Payment processing Technology education services Software management
Company D	Multinational Information Technology 80,000 employees	Vision: "Changing the way we work, live, play, and learn." Mission:" To shape the future of the internet by creating unprecedented opportunity for our customers, employees, investors, and ecosystem partners." Values:" To connect everything, innovate everywhere, and benefit everyone."	VoIP services Hosted Collaboration Solution (HCS) Network Emergency Response Certifications
Comany E	Multinational Information Technology 51,000 employees	Vision:" Built a way of doing business." Mission:" To engineer an experience that amazes." Values: Global citizenship, Leadership capability. Market leadership, commitment to employees.	Indigo digital press Web Jetadmin printer management Light Scribe optical recording technology

As a result, team members verbally expressed what they were thinking about themes, concepts, and new ideas. During this iterative process, the researchers reviewed the original audio recordings to ensure a thorough comprehension of the context, evaluate possible researcher bias, refine the identified themes, and extract exemplary quotations that precisely encapsulated the data (Thompson & Barrett, 1997)

Result

During interviews with HR managers, when specifically asked about their understanding of the influence of career growth opportunities on organizational attractiveness, they frequently provided their perspectives on what they encountered. Senior Manager and Software Engineers would commonly share their thoughts and insights.

One of the Senior Manager's interviewed mentioned as:

See, as a Senior Manager, I view the influence of career growth opportunities on organizational attractiveness as paramount. Employees at all levels seek a job and a personal and professional development trajectory. Offering clear and structured career paths attracts top talent and retains and motivates existing employees. In a competitive job market, an organization that invests in the continuous development of its staff becomes an appealing

destination. It fosters a culture of learning and advancement, contributing to the company's overall success. Employees are most likely to commit to an organization that values and supports their career growth.

Following an interview, one of the software engineers stated:

Good. See as a software engineer, career growth opportunities significantly impact how I perceive the attractiveness of an organization. In the dynamic technology field, staying relevant and advancing in one's career is crucial. An organization that provides a clear path for skill enhancement, promotions, and diverse projects is more appealing. It not only keeps me engaged and motivated but also reassures me that the company values my professional development. The opportunity to learn new technologies, take on challenging projects, and climb the career ladder within the same organization is a key factor in my decision-making process. It adds a sense of stability and purpose to my work, making the organization more attractive.

Recurring themes emerge based on responses gathered from these interviews with software engineers and senior managers. These themes imply that these HR managers agree about the benefits of career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness. The concepts are divided into three

themes (a). clear career paths, (b) competitive edge, and (c) professional advancements

Clear Career Paths

According to two HR managers who conducted an interview, CGO can have an extensive and effective impact on the OA idea, primarily when focusing on a clear career path. After considering their opinions and consulting them, one of the participants responded.

What is your perspective on the clear career path on organizational attractiveness?

One of the Talent and acquisition Managers interviewed mentioned as:

A clear career path is a fundamental driver of organizational attractiveness. When employees are presented with well-defined trajectories for professional growth, it becomes a compelling factor for both talent attraction and retention. The clarity in career progression fosters a positive work environment, fosters a sense of purpose, and promotes employee satisfaction. This internal satisfaction, in turn, projects a positive image externally. Potential candidates, when joining the organization, are attracted by the prospect of a structured and transparent career journey. In essence, a clear career path contributes significantly to the overall

appeal of the organization, making it stand out in the competitive talent market.

One of the Software Engineer's interviewed mentioned as:

In the realm of organizational attractiveness, a clear career path is a key influencer. The presence of well-defined career trajectories communicates to employees that the organization is committed to their professional development. This commitment becomes a pivotal factor in attracting and retaining top talent. Employees are naturally drawn to opportunities for advancement and growth. As they experience a transparent path to climb the organizational ladder, it creates a positive perception of the workplace. Prospective candidates, when evaluating potential employers, are inclined to choose organizations that offer a clear roadmap for their career progression. Therefore, a clear career path significantly enhances the overall attractiveness of the organization.

An organization that offers higher growth opportunities creates a mutual investment relationship with employers, which influences employees to have higher commitment and attraction toward the organization (Vande Griek, Clauson, & Eby, 2018). However, prior studies have examined that potential candidates are attracted by the organization's

career growth opportunities, which are related to organizational attractiveness (Oh & Myeong, 2021). The previous study has shown that flexible career growth influences organizational attractiveness. Hence, it is the best predictor of job hunting, which is also related to the intention to stay in the organization (Ahamad, Saini, & Jawahar, 2022). However, candidates prefer and be part of an organization that provides career growth opportunities, a flexible working environment, and anticipated organizational support. (Prakash, Yadav, Singh, & Aarti, 2022). Indeed, organizations with positive affirmative action programs are more successful in attracting high-quality applicants. Based on the literature review and this in-depth interview, career growth opportunities in organizational attractiveness can be summarized as the first proposition as follows:

Proposition 1: Career growth opportunities have a significant relationship with organizational attractiveness.

Competitive Edge

Likewise, HR managers identify the pursuit of a competitive edge as a targeted strategy to elevate organizational attractiveness. When examining their viewpoints more closely and in detailed consultation with the HR manager. One of the Senior Executive interviewed mentioned as:

Yes, achieving a competitive edge is integral to bolstering organizational attractiveness, and word of mouth plays a pivotal role in the dynamic. When we strategically position our organization as a leader in providing not just jobs but career-enhancing experiences, it creates a buzz among our employees. Their positive experiences become stories that resonate within and outside our workplace. This word of mouth becomes a compelling force, attracting top talent and solidifying our reputation as an employer of choice. The competitive edge, therefore, goes beyond tangible benefits; it extends to the intangible power of our employees becoming enthusiastic advocates, contributing significantly to the overall appeal of our organization.

Word of mouth plays a vital role in organizational attractiveness. Generally, word-of-mouth is influenced by employees' experiences in the organization (Hoye & Lievens, 2007). Although word of mouth is an external recruitment source that influences organizational attractiveness and image (Uen, Peng, Chen, & Chien, 2015). The studies show that positive word of mouth is related to organizational attractiveness and strengthened recruitment sources (Hoye & Lievens, 2005). Perhaps word of mouth seems to have an attractive outcome, such as the applicant's intentions and decision to join the organization

(Hoye, Weijters, Lievens, & Stockman, 2016). Moreover, word-of-mouth provides more credible information than recruitment advertising (Hoye, 2012). Furthermore, prior literature has examined the fact that positive word of mouth results in higher organizational attractiveness than negative word of mouth (Lin, 2015).

Proposition 2: Word of mouth has a significant relationship with career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness.

Professional Advancements

In a similar vein, HR managers acknowledge that professional advancement is directed toward enhancing organizational attractiveness. When examining their viewpoints more closely and in detailed consultation with the HR manager. One of the Data Analyst interviewed mentioned as:

Very good question! Professional advancement is a crucial factor in shaping organizational attractiveness. Its impact is notably amplified in the digital age, where social media plays a vital role. As employees progress in their careers within our organization, their success stories become a powerful narrative that we actively share on various social platforms. This presents our commitment to professional development and highlights the tangible results of our investments in talent. Social

media acts as a dynamic channel to broadcast these narratives, creating a positive image of our organization that fosters career growth. This visibility, driven by professional advancement shared on social platforms, contributes significantly to our overall appeal, making us an attractive employer in the eyes of prospective talents.

Social media is a digital platform through which users connect to the organization's webpage. Studies indicate that seeing information on social media can positively influence potential applicants to the organization (Carpentier, Hoye, & Weng, 2019). Today's technological advancement has led to multidimensional communication. Social media is moving quickly, which has become essential to organizational attractiveness (Wadhawan & Sinha, 2018). However, social media is indirectly related to organizational attractiveness, which is likely to influence how the applicants communicate on these platforms (Carpentier, Van Hoye, & Weijters, 2019). Thus, social media is an influential tool in organizational attractiveness, becoming an external platform for employer branding (Eger, Mičák, Gangur, & Řehoř, 2019). Prior studies emphasized that social media can help build an attractive organizational reputation, which assists in getting more applicants for a job (Kashive et al., 2020). Social media ads are an important source of recruitment

and advanced capabilities in sending signals to the applicants (Keppeler & Papenfuß, 2021). So, while examining the relationship between organizational attractiveness and social media, social media may have a significant role, which is formulated as the fourth proposition for the research.

Proposition 3: Social media significantly moderates the organizational attractiveness.

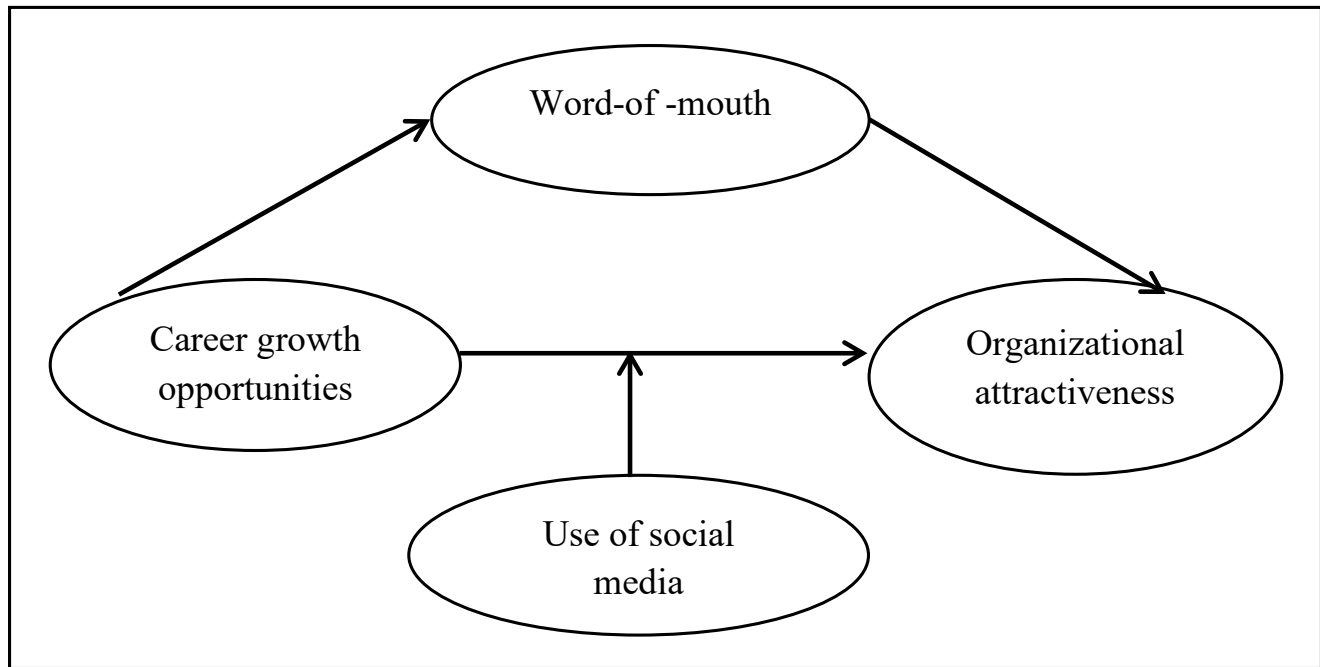
Proposed Framework

This article proposes a conceptual framework that relates career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness with the mediating roles of word-of-mouth and the moderating role of social media. It provides insights to academicians and researchers in developing a future research agenda in employer branding. The mediating and moderating roles of word-of-mouth and social media may not be limited to the relationship between career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness. However, they can be extended to explain various employer branding outcomes. Figure 1. Proposed Framework

Discussion

RQ1: What is the influence of employer branding on the perceived career growth opportunities within an organization?

Figure 1

Proposed Framework

Specifically, job seekers want professional advancement chances that promote job opportunities in the organization (K. B. Backhaus, Stone, & Heiner, 2002). As envisioned, workplace attributes and work experiences determine organizational attractiveness (Saini & Jawahar, 2019). Perhaps organizations are always using strategies to attract applicants; however, employees also assess the organizations by seeing their concerns and anticipating organizational support (Mir, Amin, Omar, & Khan, 2022). Career advancement is one of the key factors that individuals consider when assessing employment prospects, making an organization much more attractive overall. However, skilled and talented employees are more likely

to be attracted to organizations that provide clear pathways for career progression (Wong, Wan, & Gao, 2017; Zy, Mathafena, & Ras, 2009). Although a company promotes professional growth and offers advancement opportunities, employees become more willing to stick around (Davidescu et al., 2020). Consequently, employers who place a high priority on career advancement and development have a favourable reputation. This reputation can improve the company's image and increase its attractiveness to potential workers. Investments in mentoring programs, training courses, and ongoing education convey an organization's dedication to staff development (Dabirian, Kietzmann, & Paschen, 2018).

Absolutely. Our employer brand communicates a clear message about our commitment to employee development. It is not just about the job but the journey within our organization. For instance, when potential candidates see our branding efforts emphasizing a culture of growth, it immediately sets the expectation that we value and invest in the professional development of our team workers.

It provides insight into the influence of career growth opportunities on organizational attractiveness.

RQ2: What key elements contribute to a conceptual framework linking employer branding with career growth and organizational attractiveness?

Each person's view of professional progression inside an organization can be significantly influenced by word-of-mouth or informal communication between employees and their networks (Oraedu, Izogo, Nnabuko, & Ogba, 2020). Probably, when current or former workers share positive experiences regarding their professional development, advancement chances, and general career growth inside the organization, a powerful tale is built (Colbert, Bono, & Purvanova, 2016). This might persuade prospective employees that the company cares about its employees' development and success, making it a desirable place for those looking to succeed in their careers (Durocher, Bujaki, & Brouard, 2016). Positive word-of-mouth promotes a positive employer brand by presenting the organization as an appealing place to work. As a result, the organization draws in top talent and becomes more competitive in the labor market (Monteiro et al., 2020). Social media advertising goes beyond official campaigns to offer an authentic view of the workplace culture, prospects for professional advancement, and corporate culture. Social media is essential in helping individuals to shape and advance their careers.

Professionals can highlight their abilities, successes, and interests on LinkedIn, Twitter, and industry-specific forums. It facilitates the design of a polished online persona for individuals. Anyone can improve their exposure in their sector and personal brand by creating a well-curated profile that includes endorsements, suggestions, and a thorough summary (Kreiss & McGregor, 2018). Global networking can be facilitated by social media; expanding their professional network is possible for professionals through connecting with mentors, peer and leaders in the sector (Cullen-lester, Maupin, & Carter, 2017; Trust, Carpenter, & Krutka, 2018). However, these key elements are more significant with the fact of HR managers response on it.

Social media is a powerful channel for employer branding. We use platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter to present our workplace culture, values, and commitment to employee development. Through regular updates, employee spotlights, and engaging content, we create a narrative highlighting our organization as an attractive workplace. This is not only aids in talent acquisition but also reinforces our positive employer brand among our existing workforce.

Consequently, the key elements of career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness, such as word of

mouth and social media, play a vital role in organizational attractiveness.

RQ3: What strategic recommendations can be proposed for organizations to enhance their employer branding, ensuring a positive impact on both career growth and organizational attractiveness?

Organizations can execute a multidimensional approach to improve employer branding and guarantee a favourable effect on career advancement and organizational attractiveness. First and foremost, a distinct and appealing Employee Value Proposition (EVP) that highlights the unique advantages and opportunities that the organization provides needs to be defined (Deepa & Baral, 2020). However, the corporate website, social media accounts, and recruitment materials would all convey this message uniformly. Additionally, organizations can use success stories and employee testimonials to provide fundamental insights into opportunities for professional advancement within their organization (Kossek, Su, & Wu, 2017). Second, social media is essential to creating and preserving employer brands. Organizations may demonstrate their workplace culture, values, and dedication to employee development by actively participating on social media sites like LinkedIn and Twitter (M. Ewing, Men, &

Neil, 2019). Furthermore, it is imperative for firms to prioritize professional development initiatives, providing chances for training, mentorship, and ongoing education to demonstrate their dedication to advancing their workforce (Price & Reichert, 2017). Third, it is crucial to practice open communication and transparency. Indeed, building trust and promoting a favorable employer brand are two benefits of sharing company goals, changes, and accomplishments (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018a). Fourthly, an organization can adjust and change to meet the demands of its workforce by using ongoing feedback systems and employee surveys to pinpoint areas that need improvement (Mabkhot, Al-Ahmari, Salah, & Alkhalefah, 2018). Consequently, by implementing these strategic guidelines, firms may build a strong employer brand that draws in top talent, keeps qualified employees on staff, and promotes a continuous improvement and development culture.

Theoretical Contributions

Firstly, the psychological contract refers to individuals' and organizations' integrated assumptions and mindsets regarding their shared work responsibilities. Organizational psychological contracts are shaped and strengthened by social media use, career advancement, and word-of-mouth. Secondly, social identity theory (SIT) holds that individuals define

social groups to which they belong and that these groups form the basis of their sense of self-worth and self-concept. In the workplace, social identity is influenced by word-of-mouth, career advancement, and social media use; thirdly, according to signalling theory, individuals use signals to communicate information about themselves, and in the professional sphere, job advancement is a powerful signal. Indeed, employees who have experienced advancement and skill development enlighten peers and prospective employers about their valuable qualities. Perhaps the novel combination of these variables adds a new dimension to the existing literature. The proposed study model will serve as a road map for analyzing the drivers of employer branding because it has been customized to the most recent bits of information.

Managerial Implications

Globally, developing countries are aggressively working to achieve Agenda 2030's employer branding goals. In this circumstance, this paper may have various practical applications for HR managers. This proposed framework will aid HR managers in formulating new strategies to attract talented executives. Firstly, programs that empower employees to share their positive experiences should be encouraged and supported. Secondly, the proposed model creates a strong social media strategy that actively

engages employees and external stakeholders, providing regular updates on career advancement, personnel accomplishments, and organizational efforts. Thirdly, it is important to optimize internal communication approaches to ensure employees are aware of opportunities for advancement and the organization's commitment to professional development, which fosters trust and strengthens the internal employer brand. Fourthly, employee recognition programs that recognize career achievements should be implemented or improved.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the conceptual framework offered emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between career progression, word of mouth, and social media. Employer branding fundamentally serves as the compass, outlining an organization's purpose and fundamental principles. One important factor is career advancement, which influences and is shaped by the corporate brand. Word-of-mouth acts as a spark, enhancing the brand via true tales that employees reveal. Consequently, social media acts as a dynamic amplifier, exposing the employer brand visually to a global audience. Finally, in order for an organization to succeed, it is critical to understand how social media, career development, and word-of-mouth are all related. Developing a strong, appealing corporate identity through social

media and reputation-building is just as important to employer branding initiatives as supporting individual career success. In the end, this synergy positions the company as an employer of choice in the competitive talent landscape by fostering an environment at work where individual and organizational success flourish. Future research can expand the model's concept by examining the interactions between the identified variables. This research area will benefit to both academia and industry through further empirical investigation of the proposed models with the addition of control variables. However, to obtain meaningful insights into the connection between career growth opportunities and organizational attractiveness, the proposition brought forth by the existing theoretical model above may be empirically investigated. Similarly, HR directors, line managers, and employees can yield insights on employer branding. Besides the outcome variable, organizational attractiveness could be further extended to explore the study for further exploration of employee stickiness and person-of-organization fit.

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