

Impact of Employer Branding on Job Satisfaction: A Conceptual Framework

Abstract

Purpose: Over the years, organisations have gained an immense realisation that employees are their biggest source of competitive advantage. Apart from attracting, recruiting, and selecting the best employees, organisations need to find ways to motivate and retain them as well. To do so, they need to cater to the needs of both current and prospective employees. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive review of the concept of employer branding and its relationship with job satisfaction.

Research Method: The study reviewed empirical papers, review studies, and conference papers published in peer reviewed journals that are indexed in various databases related to employer branding and job satisfaction.

Findings: The findings of the study reveal that employer branding involves all the strategies that an organisation undertakes in order to elevate its reputation in the eyes of its current employees by virtue of its unique employee value proposition and also create a positive image in the minds of their prospective employees by highlighting various monetary and non-monetary benefits for getting associated with the brand. Also, organisations in their quest to attract and retain talented workforce have realised the importance of employer branding. The study also reveals that when employers prioritize meeting employee expectations, such as offering career advancement prospects and equitable remuneration, while still satisfying their own commitments, it fosters a sense of fairness and trust that eventually results in job satisfaction.

Implications: The study offers practical implications for organisations and human resource professionals. The organisations should reflect on the expectations of the workforce in order to foster a sense of belonging among the employees and increase job satisfaction. These expectations may be related to work-life balance, career development opportunities, an inclusive work culture, fair compensations, recognition and appreciation for their efforts.

Originality: The study emphasises the crucial role of employer branding and its various dimensions on employee job satisfaction in organisations as well as in higher educational institutions. Further, different empirical studies can use the developed conceptual framework to examine the relationship between employer branding and job satisfaction.

Keywords : Employer branding, Job satisfaction, Employee value proposition, Competitive advantage, reputation

1. Introduction

In the context of organisational conduct, a strong relationship exists between employer branding and job satisfaction. The constant struggle in the labour market for recruiting and maintaining a competent workforce has prompted organisations to devise strategies for not just enticing new workers but also retaining present ones. According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), employer branding involves establishing a complete plan that positions the organisation as a top choice for both potential and current workers. This will not only impact the outcome of recruitment but also the perception of employees towards their organisation, thereby increasing job satisfaction (Sullivan, 2004).

Researchers have found that the corporate social responsibility, healthy work atmosphere, and training and development dimensions of employer branding significantly predict job application intentions (Bharadwaj, 2023). Based on the groundwork of the resource-based view (RBV), it is quite evident that human resources constitute a vital part of an organisation

and are their biggest source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Based on the groundwork of the resource-based view (RBV), it is quite evident that human resources constitute a vital part of an organisation and are their biggest source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). This shows how employer branding enhances the value proposition that an organisation offers to its employees and helps in not only attracting superior talent but retaining the talented workforce as well.

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004), in their study, found that more and more employers are now coming to terms with how important employer branding is since it shows how an organisation comes across as a workplace. It represents how an organisation communicates its unique value proposition to both its current and prospective employees. Employer branding has gained immense recognition, indicating that employer branding has a compelling influence on attracting and retaining talent (Mosley, 2007). Employer branding is successful when it can craft a compelling story that resonates with both current and potential employees. Effective communication of this narrative can boost employee job satisfaction by enhancing their job contentment (Locke, 1976). A strong employer brand will not only attract candidates, but it will also have a significant impact on job satisfaction.

An increased body of literature aims to describe the mechanism via which employer branding influences job satisfaction. Employer branding can influence how employees perceive organisational support, which will in turn imbibe a sense of belongingness and loyalty among employees, hence increasing their job satisfaction levels (Eisenberger et al., 1986). A strong employer brand helps in attracting those individuals whose goals are in alignment with those of the organisation, hence leading to high job satisfaction levels (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The relationship between employer branding and job satisfaction showcases how the expectations of the workforce are increasing.

The main aim of the paper is to provide a comprehensive review of the concept of employer branding and its relationship with job satisfaction. By making use of the findings from different contexts, this study aims to define the conditions under which employer branding will most significantly impact job satisfaction. By understanding all of this, organisations can develop various employer branding strategies that will not only attract the top talent but will also keep the current lot happy and productive. The study seeks to accomplish the following objectives :

- 1) To theoretically explain the concept of employer branding by reviewing the existing literature on employer branding.
- 2) To explore the theoretical groundwork that has been done on job satisfaction.
- 3) To conceptualise the relation between employer branding and job satisfaction by developing a framework that showcases the relationship between the two.
- 4) To recognise gaps in the current literature and propose the direction of future research.
- 5) To deliberate on the practical implications of this study for organisational strategy.

2. Literature review

2.1 *Employer Branding*

Employer branding has emerged as a critical strategy in the modern business environment, driven by the need to attract and retain top talent in an increasingly competitive job market (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employers use employer branding as a key strategy to attract and retain skilled employees while also enhancing employee retention (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). An employer branding strategy that is well designed can help an organisation reduce its cost of recruitment and the time taken to hire prospective employees while also increasing the quality of applicants (Sullivan, 2004).

The evolution of employer branding goes on to show how organisations have started recognising employees as their biggest source of competitive advantage. Ambler and Barrow (1996), describe employer branding as "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified through the employing company." It defines how organisations communicate their promises with their employees, thus impacting their satisfaction level at the workplace (Mosley, 2007). Employer branding is a multifaceted concept that incorporates both material and immaterial components. Salary, perks, and career progression prospects are examples of the concrete aspects of employer branding; work-life balance, corporate culture, and organisational values are examples of the intangible components (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). An organisation's exterior image and the internal reality that its workers experience are aligned when a strategy for employer branding is able to communicate these tangible and intangible elements through a variety of communication channels. Effective employer branding communicates these components through consistent messaging across various channels, ensuring alignment between the employer's external image and the internal reality experienced by employees (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

Employer branding involves creating a compelling image of the company as a desirable place to work, which is essential for both current employees and potential candidates. This process draws on principles from marketing and branding literature to position the organization as an employer of choice, thereby enhancing its reputation and competitive advantage (Bothra, 2024; Vonberg et al., 2024). The significance of employer branding lies in its ability to influence various aspects of talent management, including recruitment, retention, and employee satisfaction. By effectively communicating the company's culture, values, and employee value proposition (EVP), organizations can attract

skilled candidates who align with their corporate ethos (Pahuja et al., 2024; Zaware& Shinde, 2020).

The development of an employer brand typically involves several stages: defining the vision and purpose, analyzing competitors, identifying a unique value proposition, and forming brand attributes (Salo, 2022). This comprehensive approach ensures that the employer brand resonates with the target audience, including current employees, potential hires, and other stakeholders (Vonberg et al., 2024; Zhovtyak et al., 2024). Research has identified key factors that contribute to a strong employer brand, such as career development opportunities, compensation and benefits, corporate social responsibility, training and development, work environment, organizational culture, and work-life balance (Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2022). These elements not only attract talent but also foster employee commitment and satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance (Malodiya, 2024). Moreover, the employer brand is closely linked to the company's overall business and HR strategy, ensuring alignment and coherence in achieving organizational goals (Yousfi et al., 2021). In times of crisis, such as economic downturns or wartime, a strong employer brand can help retain staff and maintain morale, highlighting its role in long-term sustainability (Zhovtyak et al., 2024).

Studies have also investigated the influence of employer branding on academicians attraction and retention in higher educational institutions. In line with the findings of Saurombe et al. (2017), a recent systematic literature review by Ciptagustia et al. (2023) highlights various dimensions of employer branding in higher educational institutions that are pivotal in building corporate branding that appeals to academics. The dimensions include image, organizational culture, reputation, organizational identity, corporate social responsibility, work and surroundings, and strategic vision. Another study conducted by

Lichy & Pon (2015) indicates that providing academicians autonomy in decision-making over their jobs enhances their view of the university brand.

The effectiveness of employer branding can be measured through various methods, including employee surveys and market analysis, to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation to changing trends (Vonberg et al., 2024). Additionally, the rise of digital technologies and social media has transformed how companies communicate their employer brand, making it crucial to engage with potential candidates through credible channels (Marcikic et al., 2019). Research indicates that social media platforms are crucial for reaching Generation Z, who are best engaged through these channels, with corporate influencers playing a pivotal role in shaping their career preferences by providing authentic insights into daily workroutines (Durst & Klopff, 2024). Ultimately, a well-developed employer brand not only attracts and retains top talent but also enhances the company's overall image and market position, contributing to its long-term success and sustainability (John & Jagathy, 2020). Therefore, employer branding is not just a human resource strategy but a vital component of the organization's strategic development, impacting its ability to compete and thrive in the global market.

2.1.1 Job satisfaction

Employment satisfaction is one of the most commonly researched concept in organisational psychology, and it is described as a sense of fulfilment gained from one's employment (Locke, 1976). It captures how an individual views his job, how he evaluates his work environment, compensation, and his relationship with his colleagues. (Spector, 1997). Researchers have identified various factors that influence job satisfaction. Some of them are the intrinsic aspects of work in terms of autonomy, variety of tasks, and significance, while others are the extrinsic factors like pay, job security, working conditions, and various social

dimensions as well, like support from the supervisor, relationships with coworkers, and organisational culture (Judge et al., 2001; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). The expectations of the employees, their aspirations, and their values play a very important role in shaping job satisfaction (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Understanding job satisfaction requires a comprehensive approach that considers the complex nature of satisfaction, the role of personality traits, the impact of psychosocial and physical work factors, and the importance of job level and specific occupational contexts. Job satisfaction has a considerable impact on several aspects of an organisation, such as quality, productivity, effectiveness, healthcare expenses, employee well-being, and quality of life (Karaferis et al., 2022). Researchers have found a close relationship between job and life satisfaction and the big 5 personality traits, particularly facets like dominance in extraversion, low self-esteem in neuroticism, and responsibility in conscientiousness, highlighting the importance of both general and unique personality facets in understanding these relationships (Seltzer et al., 2017).

The Facet Satisfaction Scale (FSS) improves on previous job satisfaction tests by accurately measuring the emotional parts of job satisfaction facets, showing strong construct validity and internal consistency (Bowling et al., 2018). Different facets of job satisfaction, such as satisfaction with supervision and work, show varying relationships with task and contextual performance, emphasizing the need to match predictors and criteria in terms of specificity (Edwards et al., 2018). Dispositional traits such as positive and negative affectivity also contribute to facet satisfaction, with positive affectivity generally improving satisfaction across various job facets (Bowling et al., 2008).

Additionally, the five-factor model of personality, particularly neuroticism and extraversion, along with job strain and occupational self-efficacy, significantly influences job

satisfaction, with job strain and self-efficacy mediating these effects (Maggiori et al., 2016). Psychosocial work factors, such as social support from superiors and colleagues and influence at work, are strongly associated with job satisfaction, while physical work demands and workplace health promotion offers have a more subtle impact (Andersen et al., 2017).

Rice et al. (1991) found that the importance of job facets as moderators is evident, with facet importance significantly moderating satisfaction for most job facets but not overall job satisfaction, suggesting the need to recognize when facet importance plays a role. Another study by Robie et al. (1998) found a positive relation between job level and job satisfaction, with higher job levels generally leading to greater satisfaction across various operationalizations of job level and job facets. Kerber & Campbell (1987) found that the relevance of specific job facets can vary by occupation, as seen in the differences between computer sales and service personnel, where facets like work-related information and problem resolution are more critical in sales compared to company and working conditions in service roles. In another study, Faragher et al. (2005) found that individual workers' physical and mental health are positively correlated with their job satisfaction. In similar studies, Harter et al. (2002) and Tett & Meyer (1993) found that at the organisational level, job satisfaction leads to higher productivity, a reduction in turnover rate, and a lower rate of absenteeism.

2.1.2 Relationship between employer branding and job satisfaction

Employer branding to a large extent is found to have an effect on the job satisfaction level of employees by influencing the perception that employees have towards their organisation. An employer brand that is strong has the characteristics of having a positive organisational culture, compensation at par with the competitors, tremendous opportunities for growth. Corporate social responsibility initiatives and these characteristics help an organisation to

attract highly talented employees, create a workforce that is motivated enough and work towards the productivity of the organisation (Gurgu & Kuleto, 2023).

Employer branding creates a more engaging and loyal workforce (Prasad, 2016). The reason being that when employees feel that the organisation they are working for is reputable and supportive, it can create a feeling of accomplishment, belongingness, and overall satisfaction amongst the employees (Schlager et al., 2011). The psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1995) also expands on this relationship by bringing into focus the expectations and obligations between employees and employers. A well-designed employer branding strategy can assist in meeting these expectations, thereby fostering fairness and trust, both of which are crucial factors in determining job satisfaction.

Numerous empirical studies highlighting the linkage between company branding and work satisfaction have focused attention on the variables' mediation relationships. Employer branding, for example, impacts an employee's perceived organisational prestige and identification, which eventually enhances job satisfaction (Carmeli & Freund, 2002). Job satisfaction was also found to mediate the relationship between employer branding and employee retention, with employees that have a high level of satisfaction having an inclination to stay with the organisation for a long time (Slavković & Mirić, 2024). Also, an employer brand that is able to effectively communicate their career development opportunities, work-life balance, and organisational culture can have a direct effect on job satisfaction by being able to fulfil the intrinsic and extrinsic needs of employees (Turban & Greening, 1997).

Research shows that employees who are part of organisations that have a strong employer brand have a high level of job satisfaction. An organisation that has a positive work culture and that has the characteristics of open communication and the well-being of

employees creates a sense of belongingness in the minds of employees, which eventually leads to job satisfaction (Maak & Pless, 2008). Employees that look at their organisations as respectable ones have a feeling of pride and accomplishment that stems from them being a part of this organisation (Posthuma et al., 2013). An organisation with a strong employer value proposition (EVP) that is able to communicate to its current and prospective employees their unique benefits and opportunities enhances the job satisfaction of their employees. Employees who feel that their skills are valued in their organisation have a more positive work experience (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016b). Research has demonstrated a link between employer branding and positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction (Grigore et al., 2023). Some factors can cause mediation between employer branding and job satisfaction due to several other factors, with organisational identification being one of the factors. Employees who can strongly identify with their organisation experience a sense of higher job satisfaction (Maak & Peas, 2008). Another mediating variable could be psychological contract fulfilment. A psychological contract is an unwritten agreement that shows what employees and employers expect from each other (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). An organisation that knows how to fulfil its promise to its employees can contribute greatly to job satisfaction (Sandeepanie et al., 2023). Existing literature suggests that there definitely exists a substantial positive linkage between job satisfaction and employer branding. However, further research is undoubtedly needed to comprehend the mechanism through which employer branding affects job satisfaction.

Researchers have found that digital communications via social media channels influence employees perception. Care needs to be taken to not only create a positive online presence but strategically enhance the employer brand so as to develop a strong emotional connection between employees and the organisation (Fernandes et al., 2023).

In spite of the increase in research on these variables, the gap still remains in understanding which specific elements of employer branding have the most impact on job satisfaction. More studies are required that would compare the relationship across different cultural and industrial contexts.

3. Theoretical overview

A framework that emphasises the impact of various dimensions of employer branding on job satisfaction can be used to conceptualise the relationship between employer branding and job satisfaction. Key dimensions, including diversity and inclusion, corporate social responsibility (CSR), work-life balance, organisational culture and ethics, and training and development, are essential. A strong employer brand not only improves job satisfaction by fostering a supportive work environment and fulfilling employees' professional aspirations, but also considers employee perception of organisational support, identification with the organisation, and psychological contract fulfilment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Carmeli & Freund, 2002; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). The systematic comprehension and illustration of the complex relationships between job satisfaction and employer branding are facilitated by the development of the framework shown in Figure 1.

3.1 Conceptual model of the study

On the basis of the above theoretical underpinning and reviewed literature, a conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 was developed. It included various dimensions of employer branding that have a direct as well as indirect influence on job satisfaction. The dimensions of employer branding are treated as independent variables; employee perception of organisational support, employee identification, and psychological contract fulfilment are treated as mediating variables, while job satisfaction is treated as a dependent variable.

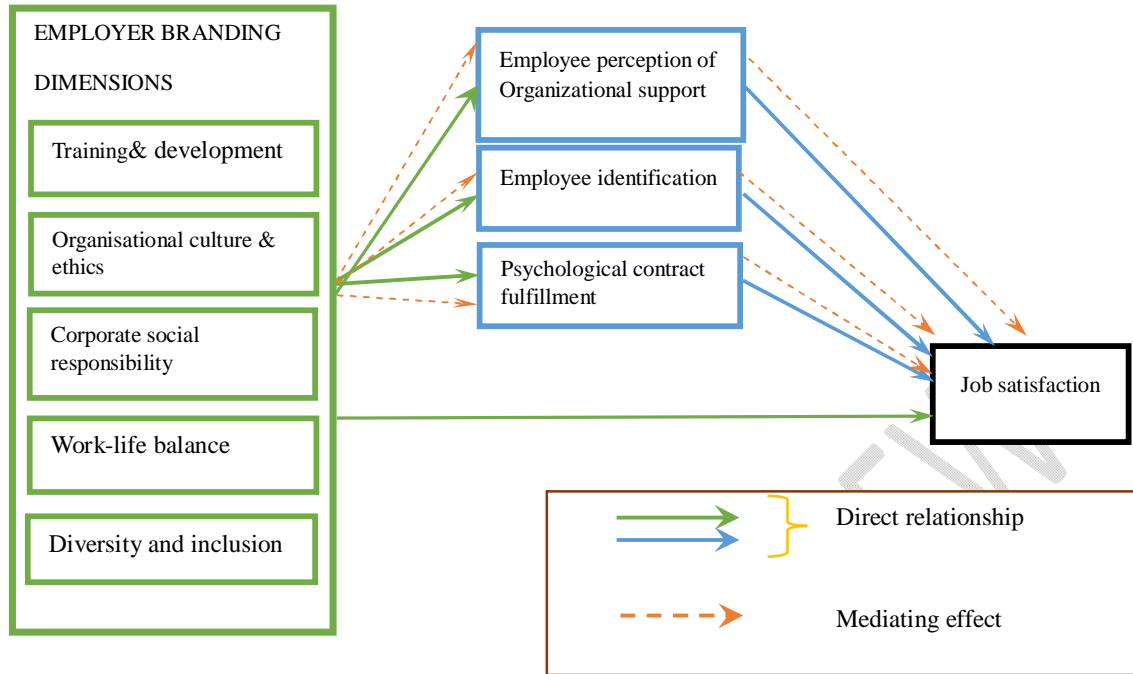


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

4. Research Methodology

The paper is based on data collected through secondary literature sources related to employer branding and job satisfaction. Several bibliographic databases, including Science Direct, Google Scholar, and Web of Science, were searched in order to complete this study. Pre-defined keywords including "Employer brand," "Employer branding," "Job satisfaction," and "employer branding and job satisfaction" were used. The foundational articles, reports, book chapters, conference papers, and other publications on employer branding and work satisfaction that may have been pertinent were chosen. Unpublished papers and theses were not included. An additional selection was created after rigorous discussion and selection. Peer-reviewed journal publications in several languages were considered where non-English publications were translated into English using Google translator. Studies that contained fundamentally lacking information or contained duplicate entries were excluded.

5. Results and Discussion

From the literature survey, it was found that various studies have been conducted on the relationship between employer branding and job satisfaction, and results have shown a positive relationship between these variables. The studies by most of the researchers ascertained that employer branding has a positive impact on job satisfaction, with employer branding not only creating a positive impression in the minds of the employees but also reducing the turnover rate of employees. Six main dimensions of employer branding were also identified in a study: training and development, reputation, organisational culture and ethics, corporate social responsibility, work-life balance and diversity, which were found to have a positive impact on job satisfaction, with gender moderating the relationship between these dimensions of employer branding and job satisfaction. A strong employer brand also benefits the organisation in terms of creating a loyal workforce that feels a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction by being associated with organisation. This all comes down to the fact that employees who have a positive impression of the employer perceive their organisation as respectable and feel a sense of pride in being associated with it. Organisations that are able to communicate their unique benefits and opportunities to their current as well as prospective employees are able to enhance the job satisfaction level of their employees.

All these findings suggest that organisations should focus on crafting an employer branding strategy that will help them to not only enhance the job satisfaction level of employees but also help in the retention of employees. Employer branding strategies, when tailored as per the preferences of employees can help address the specific needs of employees. Employees should view employer branding as a long-term investment that will not only help in retaining them but also motivate them.

To sum it all up, the current study highlights the important role that employer branding plays in enhancing the job satisfaction level of employees. Employers who invest in employer

branding strategies can see the long-term benefits in terms of enhanced employee satisfaction, a reduction in turnover rates and an improvement in organisational performance.

6. Practical Implications

The review of the studies revealed that a strong employer brand not only attracts top talent but also enhances job satisfaction, contributing to overall organizational success. Thus, organisations need to find ways and invest in various channels, like different social media platforms, to strategically communicate the employer brand. This entails acknowledging the significance of digital media in order to promote a favourable perception of the brand in the minds of not just the current employees but potential employees as well. The employer brand should clearly depict what the organisation stands for and the various benefits employees would get by associating with the organisation. This transparency will help in attracting and retaining only those employees who resonate with the brand of the organisation (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Moore, 2007). Also, the employer brand should be able to meet the expectations of the workforce to foster a sense of belongingness among the employees and increase their job satisfaction levels (Cable & Turban, 2003). Therefore, an organisation should work on creating a positive employee experience, which would increase the satisfaction level of employees. Hence, creating a positive job experience should be the main agenda of employer branding strategies.

Additionally, the study revealed that the use of social media has transformed how companies communicate their employer brand. So, organisations should use social media channels to leverage their employer brand and pay attention to employer review sites and their own website in order to efficiently promote their employer brand and draw in a younger, hardworking, and talented pool. This is because a large portion of the workforce relies on digital channels for job-related information (Sullivan, 2004). Additionally, organisations

should address the feedback they receive from employees to understand the perception they hold regarding their organisation. This will assist them in identifying their strengths and areas that require improvement in order to improve employee job satisfaction.

Finally, to ensure that employer branding strategies reach a larger audience, they must tailor their tactics to meet the needs of various workforce demographics (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

7. Conclusion

A lot of insights into how employer branding plays a strategic role in shaping organisational productivity have been revealed while investigating the connection between employer branding and job satisfaction. Using a detailed review of scholarly dissertations, this paper has highlighted how strong employer brands greatly contribute to job satisfaction levels. Making use of the groundwork of contemporary research, this paper showcases that employer branding surpasses not only the attraction of a talented workforce but also serves as a crucial element in creating a committed and satisfied workforce (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Employer branding has unquestionably become a crucial tactic in today's cutthroat job market for engaging both existing and talented prospective employees. This study investigated an association between job happiness and corporate branding and discovered that a strong employer brand can surely influence workers' well-being. The literature study emphasises that workers are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs when they are part of a respectable company with a strong EVP (Meak & Pless, 2008; Posthuma et al., 2013; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016b). The literature review further demonstrates that well-articulated company brands provide existing workers with a sense of belonging and pride (Cable & Turban, 2003). This

paper showcases certain research gaps that need further exploration across different cultural contexts and industries.

In conclusion, this research makes a contribution by emphasising the strategic value of employer branding and maintaining its significance in promoting work happiness. This paper recognises the importance of creating strong employer branding strategies that will not only increase the attractiveness of an organisation but also create a workplace environment that has a high level of job satisfaction, hence leading to organisational success.

8. Limitations and directions for future research

Certain limitations of the study need to be kept in mind while considering it. Firstly, this paper draws its findings from existing studies on the variables, most of which are conducted in Western contexts (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Ambler & Barrow, 1996). This may restrict the study's application to non-Western contexts, potentially leading to research bias due to cultural differences between Western and non-Western contexts, which could impact job satisfaction and employer branding. Therefore, future research should explore these concepts in diverse cultural settings to understand contextual differences. Secondly, most of the studies considered in the review are cross-sectional in nature (Cable & Turban, 2003). A deeper understanding of the development of the link between work satisfaction and employer branding, as well as how the relationship evolves over time, would be possible with a cross-sectional study at different intervals of time.

Furthermore, employer branding and its influence on job satisfaction have been studied mostly in the context of large corporations while overlooking small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and various other sectors (Sullivan, 2004). So, future studies should examine how SMEs can leverage employer branding to enhance job satisfaction. Also, the

role of digital media and its impact on employer branding has not been studied much in past studies. Given the significant influence of social media and various employer review sites in shaping perceptions, particularly among the younger generation, it presents a limitation as it does not comprehensively encompass the full spectrum of employer branding strategies (Mosley, 2007). Therefore, future research should explore how digital or social media influencers shape employees' perceptions and job satisfaction.

The research to be conducted in the future should aim to work on **the above-mentioned limitations** by taking into consideration different geographical contexts, **conducting cross-sectional studies at different points in time** or a longitudinal study to investigate the evolution of employer branding, and expanding the research to various other industries and sectors while also examining the developing role of digital media in enhancing employer branding. Further investigation is necessary to examine potential mediators and moderators, such as employee expectations and career goals, that may modify the association between corporate branding and work happiness. Examining these mediators can assist in determining the conditions under which employer branding will have the greatest effect on work satisfaction.

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