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Relationship between employer branding and employee performance: Mediating and moderating effects of supportive work environment and compensation and benefits

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ABSTRACT

Employer branding is a complex idea that is important in many different industries. It represents a company's ability to attract, engage and retain talent as well as its status as an employer. A strong employer brand transcends industry boundaries to impact the success and sustainability of businesses in today's competitive job market. The authors examined the effect of employer branding on employee performance by mediating and moderating roles of a supportive work environment and compensation and benefits respectively. The authors followed the quantitative methodology with a set of strategies and hypotheses and gathered numerical data. The data were gathered by surveying employees working in information technology sector companies in the city of Bangalore. The data analysis includes descriptive statistics, factor analysis and structural equation modeling analysis using SPSS and IBM AMOS version 28. The Cronbach's alpha values of the reliability statistics ranged from 0.920 to 0.930 indicating the questionnaire's internal consistency and reliability. The model fit indices CMIN/DF 1.389, CFI 0.966, GFI 0.952, TLI 0.961, IFI 0.966, NFI 0.904, SRMR 0.060, RMSEA 0.051 and PClose 0.448 indicate an excellent fit of the model. The constructs of compensation and benefits and a supportive work environment partially mediate employee performance through employer branding. The moderator's supportive work environment strengthens the positive relationship between employee branding and employee performance. Strong employer branding is important for attracting top talent and improving employee performance in various industries but it is especially important in the IT sector.

Contribution/Originality: This empirical study contributes to the literature on employer branding and its association with employee performance particularly in the information technology industry. The findings illustrate the significance of employee branding, a supportive work environment and compensation and benefits.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations in various industries now prioritize finding and retaining top talent in today's fiercely competitive business world. The information technology (IT) sector has one of the worst talent shortages as there is a constant need for highly skilled workers. In this context, information technology companies looking to set themselves apart and create a compelling employer-of-choice identity are finding that employer branding is an

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essential strategic tool. Potential employees will consider culture, values, ethics and an organization's reputation as part of employer branding before joining. The nature of IT employees' work and their abilities, the employer branding effect on their job are important and the relation between employee performance and employer branding has become increasingly relevant in the recent past.

Currently, a company's reputation as an employer is one of the key components of its overall brand value. The process of controlling and influencing how potential employees, job seekers and other key stakeholders view a company as an employer is known as employer branding. It covers all of the necessary actions that the company must take to position itself as a premier employer. Employer branding refers to a company's standing as an employer as well as what current and prospective employees genuinely think of it. An employer brand is a valuable asset that needs continuous maintenance although it is not always obvious. Employer branding has an impact on businesses as well as outside stakeholders. In essence, it positions companies as future workplaces to strive for and collaborate with Davies (2008), Gaddam (2008) and Foster, Punjaisri, and Cheng (2010).

According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) employer branding is the distinct combination of qualities, beliefs, and organizational culture that a company displays to draw in and keep workers. It requires cultivating a genuine and appealing employer brand in addition to recruiting and marketing. Information technology specialists are in high demand. However, they also tend to change jobs frequently if they are not happy with their present employer. Therefore, knowing how employer branding affects employees' performance is not just a research question; it also directly affects the hiring, retention and success of organizations. Dissecting the elements of employer branding in the IT industry is critical. A thorough understanding of the relationship between employer branding and employee performance and how employee performance can be enhanced through employer branding tactics is needed. The aim of this study is to examine the dynamics of employer branding and its association with employee performance in the information technology industry.

In this empirical study, the authors examined the impact of employer branding on employee performance through the mediating and moderating roles of a supportive work environment and compensation and benefits on the relationship between employee branding and employee performance. The data were gathered by surveying employees working in information technology sector companies in the city of Bangalore.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Employer Branding

Kele and Cassell (2023) examined the context of diversity and aesthetics and suggested that the enhancement of social justice and inclusivity fosters an environment that values diversity. The authors suggest awareness of social justice and effective diversity management with inclusive employer brands. There is a significant relationship between employer branding, job satisfaction, commitment and employee retention. Organizational outcomes depend on employer branding and attracting the best talent (Porkodi & Jahan, 2022).

Huseynova, Matošková, and Gregar (2022) reported that employer branding is directly related to employee retention and recruitment efficiency and can improve firm performance. Effective employment branding strategies will help in attracting top talent and increasing performance. There is a positive relationship between employer branding and recruitment efficiency indicating that organizations should concentrate on a branding orientation for better workforce management (Khoshnevis & Gholipour, 2017). The authors also reported a direct relationship between recruitment and employee job satisfaction fostering a need for better human management practices.

Mohanty and Kulkarni (2023) examined employer branding in the context of employee engagement among IT professionals in Bangalore. The elements studied are key brand loyalty, internal branding, commitment, enthusiasm and support from supervisors and the organization. The authors reported a strong relationship between employer branding, employee engagement and discretionary effort with a conducive and supportive work environment as a key factor. Employer branding significantly influences employee attitudes and job embeddedness. The importance

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of branding strategies in enhancing commitment, engagement, workforce retention and overall organizational performance has been reported to offer valuable insights into employee performance (Karpagam & Revathi, 2021).

Chitramani and Deepa (2013) in a study with Indian IT companies reported the importance of employer branding for talent acquisition, employee retention and organizational success. The outcome will provide practical insights for businesses seeking to enhance their employer brand in the context of the IT sector highlighting the role of branding for a better work environment.

Employer branding plays an important role in attracting and retaining talent and robust employer branding can provide optimal results for stakeholders including customers (Dev, 2019). Employer branding impacts work-life balance, employee retention and organizational performance. Managing a healthy work-life balance will attract excellent talent and reduce employee retention (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019). The authors suggested that employer branding is a key self-promotion tool that requires a focus on work-life balance. Khoshnevis and Gholipour (2017) reported an important role for employer brands in employee retention particularly in today's competitive business landscape. Retaining highly skilled employees contributes significantly to organizational productivity. Employer branding may be improved to solve the concerns of talent scarcity, develop a talent pool and improve employee retention.

2.2. Supportive Work Environment

Turnover intentions are significantly impacted by employer branding and organizational commitment (Azmy, Wiadi, & Risza, 2023). Enhancing a supportive work environment, employer branding and psychological contracts can mitigate the issue of turnover intentions. A supportive environment with smooth employee workflows and employee psychological well-being fosters loyalty, commitment and professionalism among employees. Bano and Singh (2023) reported that employer branding significantly impacts employee performance and enhances organizational success. Employee reputation, work culture, compensation, career advancement opportunities, work-life balance and employee recognition are the main facets of good employer branding practices. Varghese and Manoj (2022) reported the impact of employer branding on employee engagement in both private and public sector organizations. The authors reported that engagement is crucial for employee dedication and motivation. However, employer branding promotes an organization's reputation, attracts top talent and boosts employee loyalty and job satisfaction.

Employer branding positively impacts employee engagement and satisfaction in the service industry (Porkodi & Jahan, 2022). The authors suggested that organizations should concentrate on developing employer branding for efficient recruitment, employee retention and engagement in the context of the IT sector to nurture key talent and boost employee satisfaction. The workplace environment significantly impacts employee performance and job contentment, work engagement and organizational commitment play important roles (Zhenjing, Chupradit, Ku, Nassani, & Haffar, 2022). Creating a conducive environment that fosters positive job attitudes and productivity. Consistency , lucidity, reliability and investments in a brand are important factors for employers to tailor their marketing and human resource efforts based on their work experience and focus on the target market (Ganguly & Qadri, 2021). Muhammad and Shaikh (2021) reported that the most competent personnel pool is attracted to companies with strong employer brands.

This study highlighted the mediating role of talent acquisition and the importance of employer branding in attracting and retaining talent.

2.3. Compensation and Benefits

Ada, Korolchuk, and Yunyk (2023) reported that the workplace environment, financial rewards, work-life balance, career development opportunities and incentives are good employer branding practices. Financial incentives, transparency, professional growth opportunities, adaptable work arrangements and employee happiness

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are key factors shaping employer brands (Mikava & Baramidze, 2022). The study by Priya and Raman (2021) dissects the role of employer branding in managing talent in the context of the IT industry. Employer branding can attract skilled employees, shape organizational culture and provide a competitive edge. Chacko and Zacharias (2020) reported that employer branding significantly impacts employee retention. Fostering a supportive remuneration package, incentives and culture as well as implementing training programs can help meet employee needs and ensure enhanced employee performance.

Mouton and Bussin's (2019) study reported that higher perceptions of employer branding led to employees staying with companies with lower salary expectations. Age and years of experience also influenced this relationship. Employees' perception of their employer's branding increased their willingness to accept lower salaries and benefit packages. Indriyani and Heruwasto's (2017) research on employee engagement in Indonesian startup companies revealed that compensation, such as services, paid time off, allowances, assured income and work-life balance significantly impacts an organization's brand and engagement. Urbancová and Hudáková's (2017) study on employer branding revealed that a strong strategy provides a competitive advantage, improves human resource processes, enhances the public brand perception and establishes a positive image. Effective employer branding also helps maintain employee stability, satisfaction and retention which are facilitated by talent management practices. Pusuluri's (2016) study on compensation and corporate employee benefits in Indian IT firms found that employer branding is crucial for achieving objectives. Personal and demographic variables as well as organizational factors significantly influence employer brand practices. These practices significantly impact attrition and retention affecting employee performance.

2.4. Employee Performance

Barik and Jain (2023) found a strong relationship between employer branding and employee retention in private academic institutions especially during the pandemic. Factors such as corporate social responsibility, organizational culture, brand reputation, career advancement opportunities, workplace environment, work-life equilibrium and managerial authority significantly contribute to retaining talented employees. Dassler, Khapova, Lysova, and Korotov (2022) reported that attractive employers offer meaningful work, growth opportunities, a supportive culture and fair compensation. Organizational success may be attributed to the attraction and retention of top employees through the alignment of HR processes with workforce career advancement, salary and benefits. Ha, Luan, Hang, Tuan, and Trinh (2022) reported a moderate positive impact of employer branding on employee performance. Companies should focus on employer branding initiatives to enhance organizational performance.

Both internal and external employer branding have an impact on creative work practices and employee engagement (John & Raj, 2020). Internal branding focuses on a healthy work environment while external branding enhances a company's image. Employee engagement acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between employer brand and innovative work behavior. Employer branding significantly impacts talent and employee retention with a robust brand attracting effective employees and offering competitive compensation. This results in lower employee turnover, reduced absenteeism and increased profitability (Mittal & Aggarwal, 2020).

Aldousari, Robertson, Yajid, and Ahmed (2017) reported that employer branding is crucial for organizations to attract and retain top talent in the context of an aging workforce and global market competition. Rewards and compensation can effectively attract and retain employees. Buyanjargal and Bor (2017) emphasized that employer branding positively influences organizational identification and commitment. However, employee training, development, autonomy, compensation and social responsibility need to be considered.

Yalım and Mızrak (2017) reported the relationship between employer brand and employee satisfaction in the context of benefits provided by the employer. Corporate culture, compensation, training, career development opportunities, global job prospects, innovation commitment, location, industry sector, product quality, reputation, and brand name are the critical factors considered by the authors. The author reports that a robust employer brand

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prioritizes social development and human resources policies. Gözükara and Hatipoğlu (2016) examined the impact of employer branding on organizational citizenship behaviors. The authors reported that organizational opportunities and the work environment positively correlate with citizenship behaviors.

Employer branding boosts employee loyalty and retention rates and reinforces the overall employment experience by communicating advantages in alignment with the employer's value proposition ultimately improving employee performance (Vijayalakshmi & Uthayasuriyan, 2015).

2.5. Statement of the Problem

Employer branding is important for attracting, retaining and motivating talent in the context of the volatile information technology industry. After a thorough literature search, the researchers identified a gap in the empirical literature regarding its specific impact on performance in relation to employer branding. A robust employer brand can attract talent and develop a culture that fosters a sense of belonging. Employer branding is also important in aligning an organization's values and culture and can lead to enhanced job satisfaction, engagement and motivation. Empirical studies on synergies between employer branding and performance remain scarce. The proposed research attempts to bridge these knowledge gaps and sheds light on the dynamics of employer branding in the context of its relation to employee performance. The research also examines the impact of a supportive work environment and compensation and benefits on mediating and moderating employee performance through employer brands among the IT professionals of Bangalore city.

2.6. Need for the Study

There is a need to understand the impact of employer branding on employee performance in general and in the volatile IT industry in particular. A robust employer brand attracts IT professionals who align with the organization's values and culture boosting job satisfaction and motivation. The underexplored nature and extent of this alignment will be examined with an emphasis on the need for contemporary employer branding strategies to remain competitive and appealing to employees. Employer branding encompasses various dimensions including a supportive work culture, compensation and benefits and professional growth. This empirical study was conducted by the authors since they could only find a limited quantity of literature.

2.7. Scope of the Study

This study investigates the impact of employer branding on employee performance among IT professionals in Bangalore, India. It examines the relationships between employer branding and employee brand perception with work contentment as a mediating variable and performance as the dependent variable. The study is based on primary data collection methods using questionnaires distributed among professionals. The findings aim to contribute to existing knowledge on employer branding and its impact on employee performance, providing valuable insights for IT organizations, human resource practitioners and policymakers.

2.8. Research Questions

1. What are the key factors that contribute to employer branding in information technology companies?
2. Is there a causal relationship between employer branding and employee performance?
3. Do supportive work environments and compensation and benefits mediate the impact of employee performance through employer branding among IT sector employees in Bangalore city?
4. To identify the moderating role, if any, of constructing a supportive work environment on employee performance through employer branding

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2.9. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are listed below:

1. To understand the factors of employer branding in information technology companies.
2. To investigate the causal relationship between employer branding and employee performance.
3. To measure the mediating impact of work contentment between employer branding and employee performance.
4. To suggest appropriate strategies for companies to improve employee performance through employer branding.

2.10. Research Gap

This study identifies a gap in the research on the relationship between employer branding and employee performance in the information technology sector. This highlights the need for comprehensive research on the role of employer branding in the industry, its culture, supportive work environments and image. The study also highlights the need to investigate the impact of job attributes, compensation and benefits and a supportive work environment on employee performance in the demanding IT sector.

3. HYPOTHESES

"H_1: Employer branding has a statistically significant influence on the employee performance of information technology sector employees".

"H_2: Compensation and benefits have a statistically significant influence on the employee performance of information technology sector employees".

H_3: A supportive work environment has a statistically significant influence on the employee performance of information technology sector employees.

H_4: Employer branding has a statistically significant influence on the supportive work environment of information technology sector employees.

H_5: Employer branding has a statistically significant influence on information technology employees.

"H_6: Supportive work environment and compensation and benefits mediate employee performance through employer branding in information technology sector employees".

H_7: A supportive work environment has a moderating effect on the performance of information technology employees through employer branding.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

Nguyen and Nguyen (2023) examined the impact of employee attractiveness, employee engagement and employee performance. The authors collected the data from 937 respondents who were employees of 37 enterprises using partial least squares structural equation modeling. The authors reported a statistically significant and positive impact of employee attractiveness and employee branding on employee engagement and employee performance. Muisyo, Su, Julius, and Hossain (2023) studied the effect of green human resources management practices on employer branding in the context of developed and developing countries . The authors reported that green human resource management practices are significantly and positively associated with environmental reputation and employer brand. The present model was adopted from Nguyen and Nguyen's (2023) model. However, it significantly differs from this model.

The conceptual framework explores the dynamics within the context of information technology professionals in Bangalore, India focusing on the interplay between employer branding, a supportive work environment, compensation and benefits and employee performance. The conceptual model is developed and furnished in Figure 1 based on an extensive review of the literature. A supportive work environment reflects how employees perceive and

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interpret the employer's branding efforts to assist employees with a congenial work environment and employee-friendly HR policies in their organizations. Employee performance is the outcome variable in this framework. It gauges the effectiveness, productivity and contributions of employees in their roles. It is influenced directly by employer branding and indirectly by employer image and employee brand perception. The authors' hypothetical model, a theoretical model for mediation (Metselaar, Den Dulk, & Vermeeren, 2023) and a moderation model (Hair & Alamer, 2022) are presented in Figures 2 to 4.

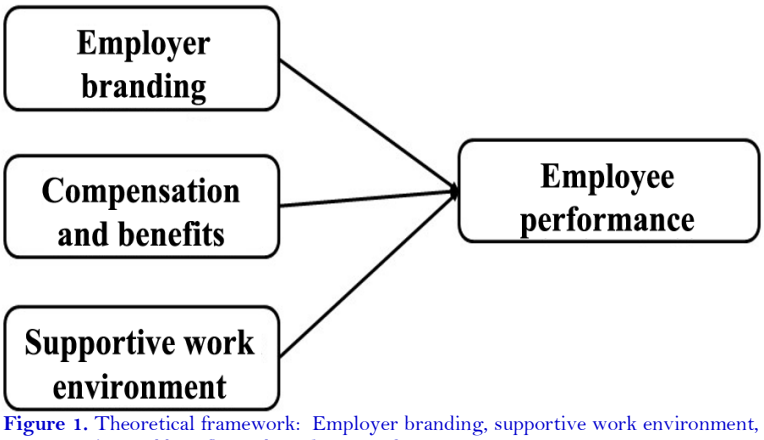

Figure 1. Theoretical framework: Employer branding, supportive work environment, compensation and benefits and employee performance.

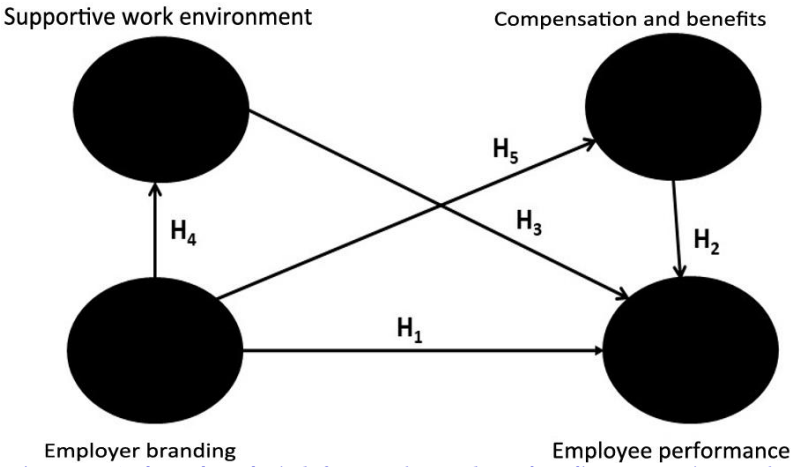

Figure 2. Authors' hypothetical framework: Employer branding, supporting work environment, compensation and benefits and employee performance.

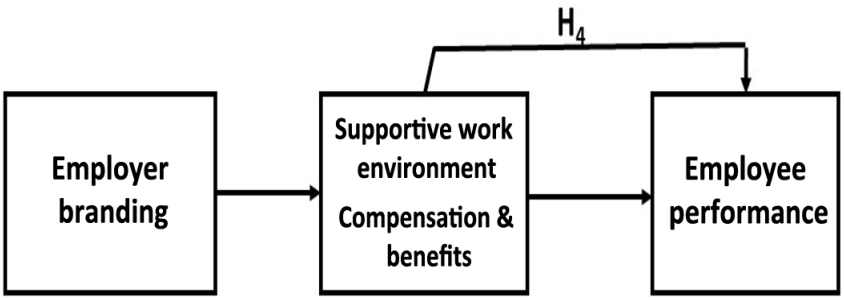

Figure 3. Theoretical mediation model and relations among variables (Author's creation).
Source: Metselaar et al. (2023).

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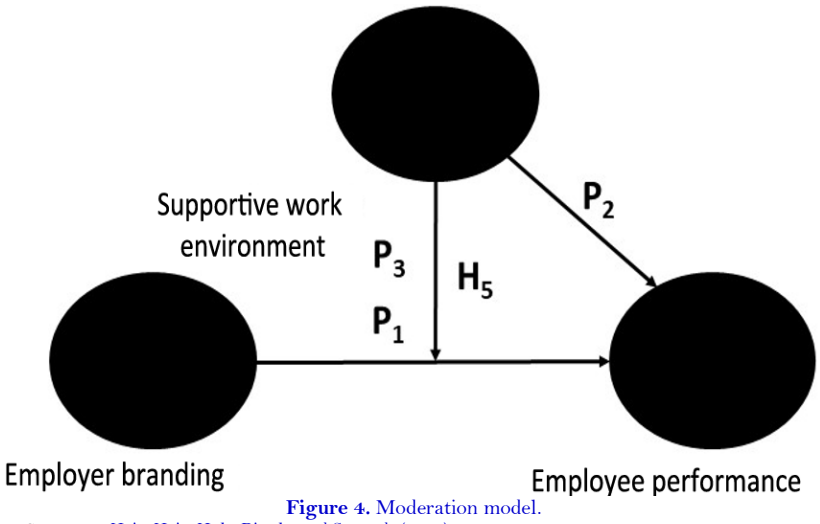

Figure 4. Moderation model.
Source: Hair, Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2022).

4. METHODOLOGY

The study sample included 303 subjects including 157 men and 146 women. The characteristics of the study sample are presented in Table 1. In the IT sector, Bangalore's population is unknown and the required sample size per (Cochran, 1977) formula is 385. However, this study considered 303 complete responses for SEM analysis. The sample required for SEM analysis is 50+5x where x is the number of statements. The study has 28 statements and the required sample size according to this formulation is 190 (James et al., 2009). The number of 303 valid responses is far greater than the required sample size of 195.

Table 1. Demography and descriptive statistics of the sample.

Item	N	Percent
Gender		
Male	157	51
Female	146	49
Age group (Years)		
20-29	91	31
30-49	82	27
40-49	80	25.5
>49	50	16.5
Marital status and marriage	181	59.6
Unmarried	122	40.4
Education		
SSC	40	13.23
Graduate	128	42.00
Post-graduate	120	39.70
Others	25	8.27
Children		
Yes	111	36.68
No	192	63.32
Experience (Years)		
1-5	65	21.19
6-10	56	18.54
11-20	101	31.56
>20 Years	81	26.83

Source: Primary data processed.

4.1. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling often referred to as judgmental sampling is a deliberate approach used to ensure that respondents are chosen in a way that perfectly matches the criteria and objectives. Purposeful sampling was used to

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select IT experts with particular qualities or experiences that are thought to be essential for this empirical study and to yield insightful results. The sampling plan is aimed at IT workers working in different kinds of IT organizations in and around Bangalore or with varying degrees of expertise ranging from junior to senior roles.

4.2. Instruments

This study assessed four reflective constructs: employer branding (8 items), supportive work environment (7 items), compensation and benefits (5 items) and employer performance (8 items). The four reflective constructs were measured using 28 items. The data were collected through a questionnaire following the models of Gupta, Kumar Sahoo, and Ranjan Sahoo (2018) and Nanjundeswaraswamy, Bharath, and Nagesh (2022). The survey was published on Google Form and the link was distributed to participants by email, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. The sample includes employees with different levels of positions, backgrounds and experiences in the IT industry. It comprised positions in data analysis, project management, software development and other IT-related fields. A single element chosen from the greater population is the sample unit. The sample unit is composed of IT specialists working for major Bangalore-based IT companies. The sample unit's IT professionals are a representative sample of the general population. The data gathered from this group will be examined to make inferences about the connections between employee performance and company branding. The Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics used to evaluate the instrument's reliability were as follows: employer branding (0.92), supportive work environment (0.93), compensation and benefits (0.96) and employee performance (0.90). However, one item was deleted because its factor loading was <0.5, the recommended value.

4.3. Data Analysis

The author's theoretical theory was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Both the inner and outer models were evaluated. There are four reflecting constructs and 28 indicators in the current study. Researchers have produced absolute path coefficients in several social science and psychology investigations using both normal and non-normal data and small and large sample sizes using IBM-AMOS (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013).

5. RESULTS

This section reports the results of the SEM analysis and presents the structural model and model-fit statistics, mediation and moderation analyses . The study has four reflective constructs and their reliability and validity are assessed to confirm their suitability for further investigation to assess reflective measurement (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). The factor analysis degenerated four components and their respective factor loadings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Items and factor loadings for study variables.

Employer branding		Factor loading
EBRN1	Recruitment of talented and skilled professionals.	0.74
EBRN2	Stable and engaged workforce.	0.82
EBRN3	Delivering better service to seize customer trust.	0.78
EBRN4	Commitment to diversity and inclusion.	0.74
EBRN5	Employee advocacy to enhance reputation.	0.75
EBRN6	Culture and values align with ethics.	0.73
EBRN7	Policy to retain existing employees.	0.77
EBRN8	Exit interview and grievance handling.	0.75
Supportive work environment		
SWET1	Sense of loyalty to employees.	0.81
SWET2	Employees are rewarded for achieving targets.	0.91
SWET3	Promotes a psychologically safe workplace.	0.85
SWET4	My ideas and interests are taken seriously.	0.78
SWET5	My job roles give enough satisfaction.	0.70

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Employer branding		Factor loading
SWET6	Opportunities to explore new areas and take risks.	0.84
Compensation and benefits		
CBNF1	I am satisfied with my salary.	0.80
CBNF2	All amenities and allowances are provided to employees.	0.90
CBNF3	All sorts of leaves are adequately provided.	0.90
CBNF4	I am satisfied with my performance incentives and bonus.	0.85
CBNF5	High levels of welfare measures are provided.	0.93
Employee performance		
EMPP1	Higher commitment and motivation at work.	0.81
EMPP2	Enhanced productivity at work.	0.82
EMPP3	Lower intention to quit the job.	0.82
EMPP4	Alignment with company values.	0.89
EMPP5	Stress-free and better mental well-being at work.	0.88
EMPP6	Innovation and creativity in work discharge.	0.87
EMPP7	Higher level of professional development.	0.72

Source: Primary data processed.

5.1. Measurement Model

CFA was performed using AMOS to test the measurement model. Factor loadings were assessed for each item as part of the CFA (see Figure 5). The model-fit measures were used to assess the model's overall goodness of fit ("CMIN/df, GFI, CFI, TLI, SRMR and RMSEA) and all the values were within their respective recommended and common acceptance levels (Bentler, 1990; Hu & Bentler, 1998; Ullman, 2001). The three-factor model (job satisfaction, performance and motivation) fit the data well (see Table 4), "CMIN/DF 1.389, CFI 0.966, GFI 0.952, TLI 0.961, IFI 0.966, NFI 0.904, SRMR 0.060, RMSEA 0.051 and P Close 0.448". The factor loading values (Kline, 2015) are excellent, acceptable and positive and all are greater than 0.5 with average factor loadings >0.7 for all three constructs. The model also has an excellent fit as presented in Table 4 (Byrne, 2013). The measurement model is presented in Figure 5.

The construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for each construct in the study exceeded the recommended value of >0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The composite reliabilities ranged from 0.917 to 0.952 above the recommended and benchmark values of 0.70 (Hair Jr, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Therefore, construct reliability was established (see Table 3).

The convergent validity of the scale items was estimated using the average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1988). The AVE values were above the threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1988). Hence, the scales used in this empirical study have convergent values (see Table 3).

Discriminant validity illustrates how a specific construct varies from other constructs and explains how closely correlated the measures should be (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Discriminant validity in the study was assessed using the Fornell and Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio. According to the Fornell and Larcker criterion, discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE for a construct is greater than its relationship with the other constructs in the study. However, the Fornell and Larcker criterion has recently been criticized and a new method for assessing discriminant validity, the HTMT ratio has been used. In the present study, discriminant validity was not entirely established using the Fornell and Larcker criterion. However, when assessed using the HTMT ratio, all ratios were less than the required limit of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). Therefore, discriminant validity was established (see Tables 4 and 5).

5.2. Structural Model

A structural equation model generated through AMOS was used to test the relationships. A good fitting model is accepted if the CMIN/df is <5, the GFI (Hair Jr et al., 2010), the Tucker and Lewis (1973) and the confirmatory fit index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990) are >0.90 (Hair Jr et al., 2010). In addition, an adequate-fitting model was accepted if the AOS computed value of the standardized root mean square residual (RMR) was <0.05 and the root mean square

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error approximation (RMSEA) ranged between 0.05 and 0.08 (Hair Jr et al., 2010). The indices indicated in Table 6 fall within the acceptable range (see Figure 6).

Table 3. Reliability and convergent validity for study constructs.

Constructs	Split-half (Odd - even) correlation	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Employer branding	0.74	0.92	0.945	0.713
Compensation and benefits	0.77	0.95	0.930	0.689
Supportive work environment	0.77	0.93	0.917	0.579
Employee performance	0.71	0.95	0.942	0.767

Source: Primary data processed.

The squared multiple correlations were 0.25 for employee performance which indicates that 25% of the variance in performance is accounted for by employer branding, a supportive work environment, compensation and beliefs.

Table 4. Model fit statistics.

Items	Estimate	Range	References	Interpretation
CMIN	400.046			
DF	288.000			
CMIN/DF	1.389	<5	Ullman (2001)	Excellent
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.966	">0.95"	Bentler and Bonett (1980)	Excellent
Incremental fit index (IFI)	0.966	">0.90"	Bollen and Lennox (1991)	Excellent
Tucker Lewis index (TLI)"	0.961	">0.90"	Tucker and Lewis (1973)	Excellent
Normed fit index	0.903	">0.90"	Bentler and Bonett (1980)	Excellent
Standard root means square residual (SRMR)	0.060	"<0.08"	MacCallum, Wegener, Uchino, and Fabrigar (1993)	Excellent
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.051	"<0.06"	MacCallum et al. (1993)	Excellent
P close	0.448	">0.05"	James et al. (2009)	Excellent

Source: Primary data processed.

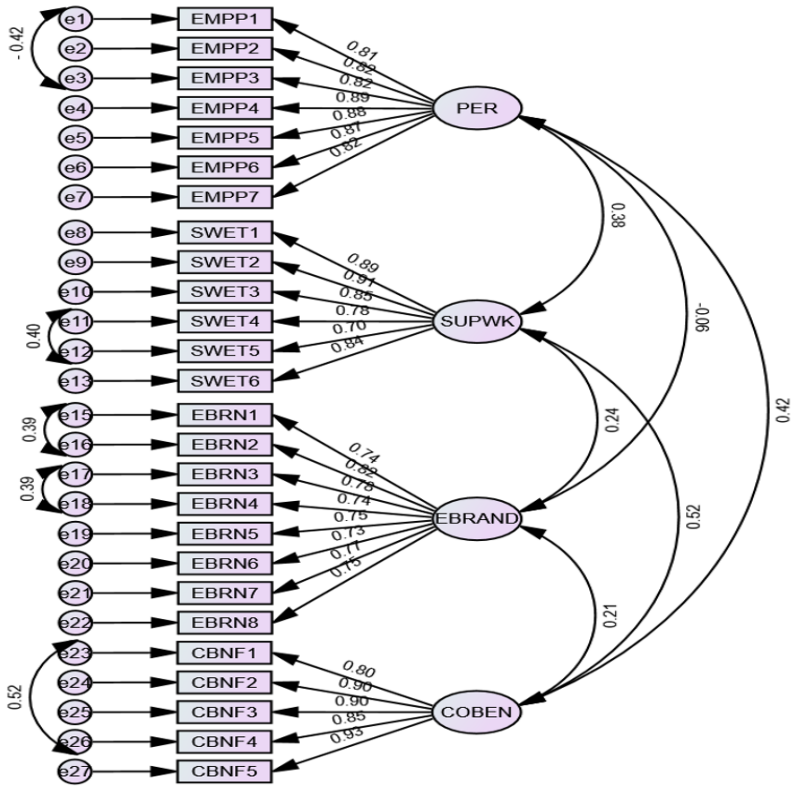

Figure 5. The structural model and relationships among the constructs.

Note: PER: Employee performance; SUPWK: Supportive work environment; EBRAND: Employer branding, COBEN: Compensation and benefits.

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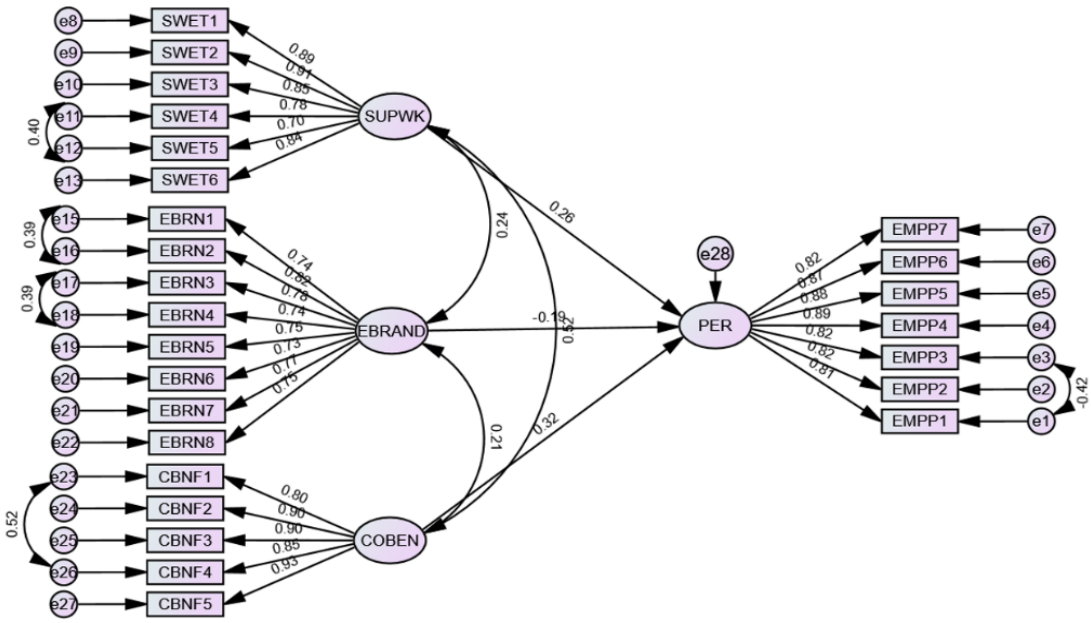

Figure 6. Structural model with relationships.

Note: SUPK: Supportive work environment, EBRAND: Employer branding, COBEN: Compensation and benefits, PER: Employee performance.

5.3. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity measures the extent to which a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs. The most common metrics used to establish discriminant validity include the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio.

Table 5. Discriminant validity.

Construct	Employee performance	Supportive work environment	Employer branding	Compensation and benefits
Employee performance	0.844			
Supportive work environment	0.385***	0.830		
Employer branding	-0.062	0.242**	0.761	
Compensation and benefits	0.421***	0.524***	0.210*	0.876
HTMT				
Construct	Employee performance	Supportive work environment	Employer branding	Compensation and benefits
Employee performance				
Supportive work environment	0.358			
Employer branding	0.057	0.223		
Compensation and benefits	0.404	0.504	0.197	
Thresholds are 0.850 for strict and 0.900 for liberal discriminant validity.				

Note: *(p<0.05), **, *** (p<0.001).
Source: Primary data was processed.

5.4. Common Method Bias (CMB)

An inflation or depletion of the genuine relationship between the study's observable variables is known as common method bias or CMB because respondents typically respond to questions that include both independent and dependent variables at the same time. Artificial inflation of covariance is possible. This study evaluated common method bias using the common method latent factor and Harman's single-factor test.

Harman's single factor test: Confirmatory factor analysis was used to evaluate the model fit after the researchers loaded all the indications onto a single factor. After verification, the model fit was not appropriate, ruling out common approach bias.

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Latent Common Method Factor: A latent construct with a direct relationship to each of the construct's model indicators was employed by the writers. A latent construct known as the common method was sketched. Subsequently, the model contained a direct relationship between each indicator in the model and the latent construct of the unobserved common technique. All the relationships from the method factor are constrained to be identical after a path from the common method construct to each indicator in the model is drawn to determine whether there is a common influence among all the items and indicators. The latent common method variable which has a direct relationship with each of the variables was used to run the model and the chi-square value (506.217) of this CFA model was recorded. The observed chi-square value is 1.493 and there are 288 degrees of freedom. The basic model's chi-square without a latent factor is 396.400 with 287 degrees of freedom. The chi-square difference of 3.646 suggests the presence of common method bias. Since the CMB is so low and has little bearing on the study's findings, it is not a significant problem in this work (see Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6. CMIN (The latent common method).

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	89	400.046	288	0.000	1.389
Saturated model	377	0.000	0		
Independence model	52	3608.064	325	0.000	11.102

Table 7. CMIN (The latent common method).

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF"
Default model	89	396.400	287	0.028	1.483
Saturated model	377	0.000	0		
Independence model	52	3600.120	325	0.000	12.1203

5.5. Testing of Hypotheses

From Table 8, it can be observed that the regression weights for employer branding and employee performance are statistically significant (ß= -0.191 $p<0.05$) and if employer branding decreases by one unit, employee performance decreases by 0.191 units indicating a negative relationship between employer branding and employee performance . Hence, H_1: Employer branding has a statistically significant influence on the employee performance of information technology sector employees. Similarly, the estimates for compensation and benefits and employee performance are (0.244, $p<0.01$) indicating a positive relationship among the variables. Therefore,

H_2: Compensation and benefits have a statistically significant influence on the employee performance of information technology sector employees.

A supportive work environment is positively associated with employee performance (ß=0.257, $p<0.01$), supporting H3: A supportive work environment has a statistically significant influence on the employee performance of information technology sector employees. Employer branding has a positive relationship with a supportive work environment as indicated by the SEM estimates (ß=0.281; $p<0.05$) supporting **H_4:** Employer branding has a statistically significant effect on the brand perception of the information technology sector employing, and employer branding also positively influences compensation and benefits (ß=0.308, $p<0.05$) supporting **H_5:** Employer branding has a statistically significant influence on the compensation and benefits of information technology employers .

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Table 8. Estimates of structural equation modeling (Hypothesis testing).

Hypothesis	ß	t	P	Decision
H_1: EMPBR→PER	-0.191	-2.343	p<0.05	Supported
H_2: COBEN→PER	0.244	4.135	p<0.001	Supported
H_3: SUPWK→PER	0.257	0.3528	p<0.001	Supported
H_4: EMPBR→SUPWK	0.281	2.852	p<0.05	Supported
H_5: EMPBR→COBEN	0.308	2.517	p<0.05	Supported

Note: EMPBR: Employer branding, SUPWK: Supportive work environment, COBEN: Compensation and benefits, PER: Employee performance.
Source: Primary data processed.

5.6. Multiple Mediation Analysis

The authors examined the mediating role of a supportive work environment and compensatory benefits on employee performance through employer branding. The results reveal partial mediation as the direct and indirect effects of supportive work environments on employee performance are similar (ß=0.215 (direct effect), t=2.927; p<0.05; & 0.069; t=3.478, p<0.05 (indirect effect; employer branding →employee performance) and 0.074 (indirect effect employer branding → compensative and benefits→ employee performance , t=6.488, p<0.001). The direct and indirect mediation effects are statistically significant and partial mediation of supportive work environment and compensation benefits on employee performance through employer branding . The results support H6: A supportive work environment and compensation and benefits mediate employee performance through employer branding in the information technology sectors.

The results of the mediation analysis are presented in Table 9 and Figure 7.

Table 9. Summary of mediation analysis.

Relationship	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence interval		P value	Conclusion
			Lower bound	Lower bound		
Employer branding →Supportive work environment → Employee performance	0.215 (p<0.05)	0.069 (a1b1)	0.019	0.170	0.013	Partial mediation (Competitive)
Employer branding → Compensative and benefits → Employee performance		0.075 (a2b2)	0.021	0.175	0.029	Partial mediation (Competitive)

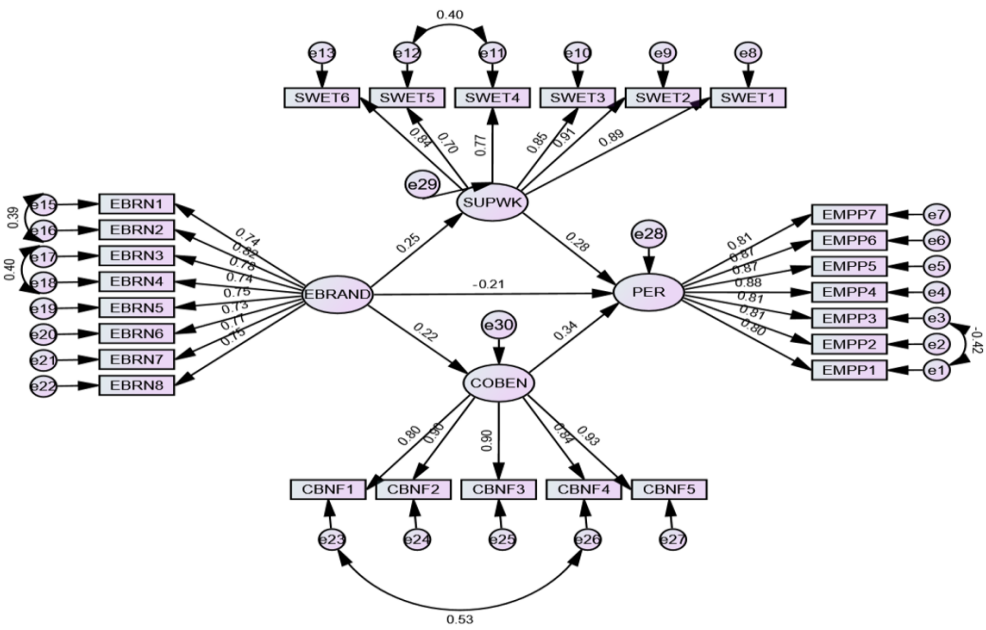

Figure 7. Mediation analysis.

Note: EBRN: Employer branding, COBEN: Compensation and benefits: PER: Employee performance and SUPWK: Supportive work environment.

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5.7. Moderation Analysis

A moderation analysis of the composite variables was carried out to better understand the role of a supportive work environment in the relationship between employer branding and employee performance. The product term was formed with independent and moderating variables and mean centering of these variables was performed to mitigate the problems of high collinearity. A statistically significant and positive moderating and interaction impact of supportive work environment on the relationship between employer branding and employer performance (ß=0.222; t=2.723, p<0.05) supports H7: Employer image moderates the performance of information technology employer branding (see Table 10).

Table 10. Summary of moderation analysis.

Relationship	Beta	"CR	P value
Employer branding →Employee performance	0.192	2.480	P<0.005
Supportive work environment →Employee performance	0.225	3.807	P<0.001
intSWETMCxintEBRNMC → Employee performance interaction between employer branding and supportive work environment	0.222	2.723	0.020

A simple slope analysis was carried out to better understand the moderating relationship between employee branding and employee performance through employer image. The moderation results reveal that a high level of employer and image employer branding strengthens the association between employer branding and performance (see Figure 8).

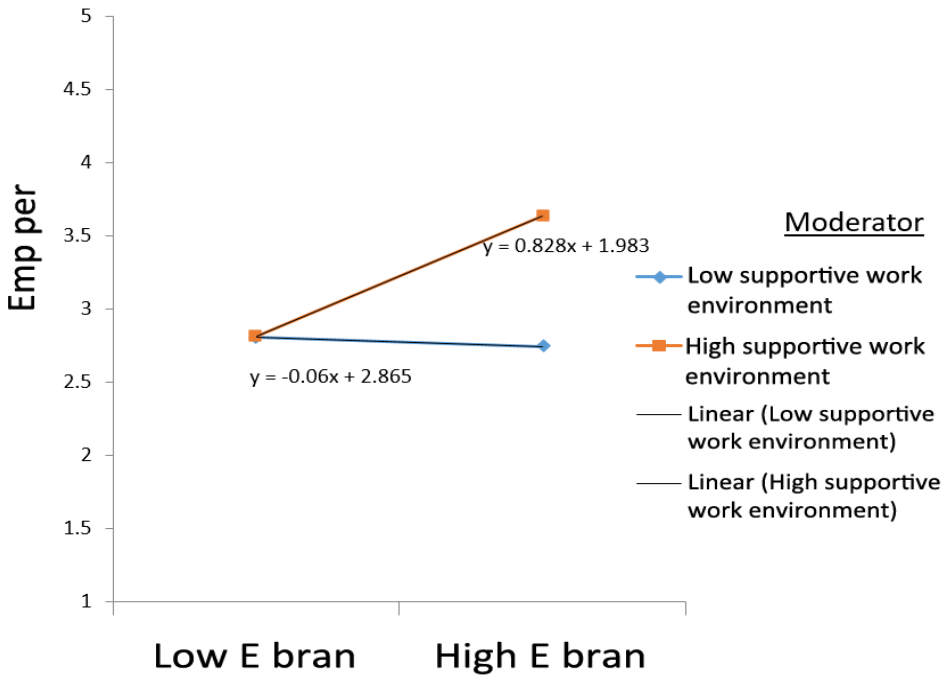

Figure 8. Moderation analysis.

A supportive work environment strengthens the positive relationship between employer branding and employee performance.

6. DISCUSSION

The idea of employer branding is centered on how people view a company as a place to work taking into account its culture, values, rules and general reputation. IT professionals frequently have specialized knowledge and abilities. The effect that employer branding has on their work is especially important. In information technology,

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the connection between employee performance and employer branding is becoming increasingly relevant. The concept of employer branding is complex and has recently become increasingly popular. It entails cultivating and maintaining an organization's standing as a top employer. A company's reputation as an employer is referred to as the employer brand and what potential employers and coworkers genuinely think of it. An employer brand is a valuable asset that needs ongoing maintenance even though it might not be physically present. Employer branding affects companies as well as external stakeholders and it essentially identifies organizations as future workplaces to aspire for and work with. According to Davies (2008), Gaddam (2008) and Foster et al. (2010) the literature on moderation and mediation effects on employee performance through employee branding is scarce.

Researchers have examined and reported several factors related to employer branding, employer culture, a supportive work environment, employer image, compensation and benefits and job attributes. Employer branding and brand perception affect employee performance. The process of positioning a business or organization as the preferred employer for the intended target audience is known as employer branding. A company must improve its brand image and perception regarding its employment status to attract the talent it wants. Employee performance is a major factor in a company's success (Jindal & Agarwal, 2020). Ahmed, Khan, Ahmed, and Iqbal (2019) studied the mediating role of brand-centered HRM as a mediator through organizational citizenship behavior and employee performance and reported that conceptual theories about employer branding from the standpoint of employee citizenship behavior can help us better understand employee citizenship behavior. Azhar, Rehman, Majeed, and Bano (2024) investigated the relationship between employer branding aspects and organizational performance and the sequential mediating roles of employee retention, employer brand loyalty and organizational commitment. All direct and mediating hypotheses were accepted as a result of the study's findings except for the mediating path of ethics and CSR. The results also showed that the moderating effect of interdepartmental communication on employee performance and retention was negligible. Our mediation results are similar to those of the study carried out by Azhar et al. (2024). In another study, Tumasjan, Kunze, Bruch, and Welpe (2020) examined the dual mediating role of recruitment efficiency and an organization's positive climate in the context of employee performance. The study concluded that employer branding orientation is positively correlated with firm performance through a positive affective climate but not with success in recruiting. Arasanmi and Krishna (2019) investigated the connection between employee retention in a New Zealand government agency and the employer branding attribute of organizational support. The study concluded that employee retention is impacted by perceived organizational support (POS) and that as a predictor of employee retention, POS has a major impact on workers' organizational commitment (OC). Organizational commitment mediated the relationship between organizational support and employee retention. Our results are similar to those of the studies described above.

Mouton and Bussin (2019) investigated the impact of employee branding on staff retention and remuneration expectations using correlation and analysis of variance techniques. The study reported a direct relationship between employee retention and lower remuneration. John and Raj (2020) examined the relationship between employee value proposition (EVP) and the intention to stay. The author critically analyzed how social identity and psychological contracts affect this relationship in the context of IT sector employees. The results indicate that when organizations provide an EVP that includes development value, social value and economic value, employees are more likely to stay there longer. The results further revealed that psychological contracts positively enhance the effect of EVP on employees' intentions to stay. Employee intentions are positively affected by EVP. Davies, Mete, and Whelan (2018) used structural equation modeling analysis to examine the role of employee characteristics such as gender, age and experience on employer brand image and job satisfaction. The results indicated that the base model is valid and that satisfaction mediates the impact of employer brand image on engagement to some extent. The influence of the employer's brand image and satisfaction on engagement is moderated by age, gender, experience and whether the role involves customer contact. Our results are in line with this study and confirm the moderating role of employer image on employee performance through employer branding.

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7. CONCLUSION

The authors carried out this empirical research to fill knowledge gaps on employer branding in the context of employer performance in general and mediating and moderating the effect of brand perception and employer image, respectively by surveying information technology industry employees in and around Bangalore. Purposive sampling was used and the questionnaire was distributed to employees who met the study objectives and tested the hypotheses. The number of valid responses (303) is far greater than the sample size of 190 recommended by James et al. (2009). The authors examined employer branding, its effect on performance and the mediating role of brand perception on employee performance through employer branding. A moderating analysis was carried out using the composite independent variables of employer branding and employer image on the dependent variable of employee performance to understand the moderating effect of employer image. Brand perception partially mediates employee performance through employer branding. The moderation analysis results indicate that employer image strengthens the relationship between employer branding and employee performance.

The data were gathered using a structured questionnaire, a modified version of the questions published by Gupta et al. (2018) and Nanjundeswaraswamy et al. (2022). The data were normally distributed, the questionnaire was reliable and the model-fit statistics were excellent. The results provide insights into employer branding and employee performance studies and complement the knowledge in this area. The author suggested researching several other employer branding factors such as a supportive work environment, compensation and benefits, work content, job attributes and employer culture. From the findings of these studies, one can generalize the outcomes of the present study.

7.1. Limitations

This empirical study and related research were limited to the IT companies in and around Bangalore confined by time and resource conditions. One cannot conduct research with larger sample pools or datasets, so the sample results cannot be generalized. However, the results may provide insight for further studies in similar industries. This study focused on examining the effect of employer branding on employee performance among information technology professionals. As a result, its findings may not necessarily apply to other industries. The study included a sample size of 302 employees. The study employed a purposive sampling technique which means that the constraints associated with this sampling method apply to this study. Although appropriate scaling techniques were applied to quantify the information, some qualitative aspects have also been studied but are not reported. Thus, scaling limitations are applicable. The study used questionnaires as a survey instrument for data collection which carries the risk of personal bias and researcher constraints. The reliability and consistency of the data depend largely on the information provided by the respondents.

7.2. Implications

The results of this study indicate that employee branding, compensation benefits and a supportive work environment are statistically significant and influence employee performance. This implies that if managers concentrate on a supportive work environment, compensation and benefits with good employer branding strategies will enhance employee performance in the information technology industry. Managers in the IT sector should create a supportive work environment culture to make the working environment happy, friendly and joyful. This, in turn, creates friendly and congenial relationships among employees and between colleagues. This can also be extended to the highest levels. There is a need for managers to plan adequate compensation and benefits according to their job and level of employment. The sharing of knowledge among employees is critical for enhancing employee and organizational performance. Training may help enhance employee performance. Third, managers should create a supportive work environment so that employees can increase the internal sharing of their knowledge and transfer that knowledge to their colleagues. Finally, the salary, i.e., compensation benefits is a

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critical aspect of employee satisfaction and performance. Managers should address these issues by building a compensation system that is not only competitive but also fair. The compensation system can be built following the 3P (position, performance and personnel skill) to pay the salary scientifically and fairly. This will harmonize the work environment and enhance employee branding and performance. Managers should be logical when evaluating employee performance rather than following whims and fancies. Managers should address talent retention issues through employer branding.

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Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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