

The Role of Employer Branding in Attracting Top Talent in the Industry 5.0 Era

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ABSTRACT

The rapid transformation of the business world under Industry 5.0 is pushing companies toward more responsive, value-based human resource management. Employer branding, the strategy organizations use to build a positive image as an ideal workplace, is gaining increasing attention as a way to attract and retain top talent. This paper explores its role in attracting Millennials and Gen Z, strengthening employee loyalty, and building competitive advantage, based on a qualitative-descriptive review of primary literature from the last seven years. The results show that successful employer branding emphasizes the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), integrates digital technology and social media, and prioritizes values such as sustainability and work-life balance, while also identifying strategic challenges and managerial implications for the Industry 5.0 era.

Keywords: Employer Branding; Top Talent; Employee Value Proposition; Employee Loyalty; Industry 5.0

ABSTRAK

Transformasi cepat dunia bisnis pada era Industry 5.0 mendorong perusahaan merumuskan manajemen sumber daya manusia yang lebih responsif dan berbasis nilai. Employer branding, strategi organisasi membangun citra positif sebagai tempat kerja ideal, semakin mendapat perhatian sebagai cara menarik dan mempertahankan talenta terbaik. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi perannya dalam menarik generasi Milenial dan Gen Z, meningkatkan loyalitas karyawan, serta membangun keunggulan kompetitif, melalui kajian kualitatif-deskriptif atas literatur primer tujuh tahun terakhir. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa employer branding yang berhasil menekankan dimensi Employee Value Proposition (EVP), mengintegrasikan teknologi digital dan media sosial, serta mengutamakan nilai seperti keberlanjutan dan keseimbangan kehidupan kerja, sekaligus mengidentifikasi tantangan strategis dan implikasi manajerial di era Industry 5.0.

Kata kunci: Employer Branding; Talenta Terbaik; Employee Value Proposition; Loyalitas Karyawan; Industry 5.0

INTRODUCTION

Several previous studies have demonstrated that employer branding plays an important role in building organizational attractiveness to prospective employees and supporting talent management. Theurer et al. (2018), through a literature review grounded in the concept of brand equity, analyzed 187 articles on employer branding and found that research in this field encompasses organizational knowledge, branding activities and strategies, and various consequences related to organizational attractiveness. Their study developed the concept of the *employer brand value chain*, emphasizing that employer branding should be viewed as a strategic process that connects organizational activities with the perceptions and responses of both prospective and current employees.

Furthermore, Reis et al. (2021) conducted a systematic literature review examining the relationship between employer branding and talent management. Based on research published between 2010 and 2020, the study found that employer branding has increasingly been used as an instrument for talent management, particularly in supporting talent attraction and retention. These findings indicate that employer branding is no longer merely an external communication activity but has developed into an integral component of an organization's talent management strategy. The relationship between employer branding and organizational attractiveness has also been examined in earlier research. The employer brand concept, initially introduced by Ambler and Barrow, has since been expanded through studies focusing on employer attractiveness. Research summarized by Theurer et al. (2018) indicates that perceptions of organizational attributes shape prospective employees' knowledge and evaluation of an organization. Therefore, the stronger and more consistent the value offered by an organization as a workplace, the greater the likelihood that it will be perceived as an attractive employer.

Another study examining employer brand attractiveness emphasizes the importance of understanding employer branding from the perspective of prospective and current employees, distinguishing between organizational attributes, employee benefits, and the values perceived by individuals. This perspective suggests that employer brand attractiveness is determined not solely by what an organization communicates, but also by the extent to which the attributes and benefits offered are perceived as valuable by the individuals the organization targets.

The relationship between employer branding and talent retention has also received considerable attention in previous research. Studies on employer brand equity suggest that employer branding can provide an integrated explanation of both attraction and retention processes. One important finding is that employees' experiences within an organization play a significant role in shaping the relationship between employer branding and employees' decisions to remain with the organization. Thus, effective employer branding needs to consider not only the external perspective of prospective employees but also the internal experiences of employees who are already part of the organization.

This argument is further supported by research on internal employer branding and talent retention. A conceptual framework developed from previous studies indicates that an organization's internally established employer brand is associated with various factors that influence talent retention. These findings reinforce the argument that employer brand promises must be supported by authentic workplace experiences; a discrepancy between the image an organization communicates and the actual conditions employees experience may weaken employee trust, loyalty, and intention to remain with the organization. At a broader level, Chen et al. (2022) conducted a systematic literature review of 79 studies concerning employer branding and talent recruitment. Their findings indicate that research on employer branding and recruitment has developed across various academic disciplines and can be understood through the relationships among antecedents, contextual factors, and outcomes of employer branding. The study further demonstrates that employer branding plays an important role in the recruitment process because it influences how prospective employees evaluate an organization before deciding whether to apply for or join it.

More recent research has also begun to connect employer branding with the characteristics and expectations of younger generations of workers. Studies on employer brand attractiveness among Generation Z indicate that prospective employees weigh various organizational attributes, both instrumental and symbolic, when evaluating whether an organization aligns with their needs and expectations. Instrumental attributes include tangible benefits, compensation, and working conditions, whereas symbolic attributes relate to organizational identity and the characteristics perceived by prospective employees. These findings suggest that employer branding strategies targeting younger generations should consider not only financial rewards but also organizational values, identity, flexibility, meaningful work, and employee experience. In the context of Industry 5.0, these developments have become increasingly relevant because technological transformation is no longer focused solely on automation but also places humans at the center of work systems. Recent studies on human resource management in the context of Industry 5.0 indicate that HRM needs to become more human-centered, resilient, sustainable, and adaptable. Consequently, talent management strategies in the Industry 5.0 era need to integrate technological capabilities with human needs, employee experience, competency development, and organizational values.

Based on these previous studies, it can be concluded that most existing research has established the importance of employer branding in talent attraction, recruitment, and retention. However, an opportunity remains to extend this research by integrating employer brand marketing, employee experience, the characteristics of younger generations of workers, and the changing paradigm of work within the Industry 5.0 context. Previous studies have generally examined employer branding in relation to organizational attractiveness and talent management, while its connection to the increasingly human-centered, personalized, innovative, and sustainable workplace demands of the Industry 5.0 era requires further investigation. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining how employer brand marketing can function as a

strategic approach to attracting top talent amid changing employee expectations and the transformation of the modern workplace in the Industry 5.0 era.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Employer Branding Concept

Employer branding is a strategic approach to shaping and managing a company's perception as an attractive work environment for prospective and existing employees. Its goal is to generate a distinctive value proposition that differentiates an organization from its competitors in attracting a workforce (Zhao et al., 2020). In practice, employer branding encompasses a series of communications and actions that reflect an organization's culture, identity, and commitment to human resource development. This identity is then translated into a consistent work experience that aligns with the needs and preferences of the target talent segment.

2.2. Top Talent and Their Preferences for Employers

Top talent generally refers to individuals with strong abilities, leadership potential, and the capacity to adapt to complex changes and challenges (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). In today's labor market, this type of talent holds different expectations than previous generations. They tend to value companies that provide job flexibility, opportunities for continuous learning, and an inclusive, creative work culture. Companies therefore need to adapt their branding approaches to these expectations, particularly when attracting digital professionals and Generation Z.

2.3. Industry 5.0 and Its Implications for Human Resources

Industry 5.0 marks a shift from an emphasis on technological efficiency toward a more human-centric approach, focusing on collaboration between humans and machines to create greater value (Breque et al., 2021). For human resource management, this creates an urgent need to design work systems that not only maximize technology but also respect human values. The concept of employer branding must adapt to this new paradigm, in which meaningful work experiences, attention to well-being, and a commitment to sustainability are key factors in attracting and retaining top talent.

2.4. Signaling Theory as a Supporting Framework

Signaling theory offers a solid theoretical framework for understanding the function of employer branding. The theory suggests that, under conditions of information asymmetry, employers need to send favorable signals to prospective employees to reduce uncertainty and create favorable perceptions. In this sense, employer branding functions as an organizational signal that reflects an organization's values, reputation, and commitment to its employees. When these signals are well received, the likelihood of attracting top talent increases. Employer branding is therefore not merely superficial, but plays a crucial role in building the initial relationship between an organization and prospective employees.

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative approach through a literature review method. This method was chosen to generate an in-depth understanding of the concept of employer branding and its contribution to attracting top talent, particularly amid the changing work environment brought about by Industry 5.0. The literature review allowed the researcher to identify, categorize, and analyze relevant theories, models, and prior research findings in order to build a structured conceptual synthesis (Snyder, 2019).

3.2. Data Sources and Search Strategy

The sources of information in this study come from recognized scientific journal publications, particularly those indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, as well as accredited national journals. The literature search was conducted across several academic databases, including ScienceDirect, Scopus, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar. Each article that met the criteria was analyzed using a thematic approach to identify key themes related to employer branding, talent perceptions of the organization, and its strategic impact in the context of the Industry 5.0 era. The results of this analysis were used to construct a conceptual synthesis explaining the relationship between employer branding and top talent preferences, and to derive practical implications for organizations designing value-based human resource management strategies.

3.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were included if they discussed corporate branding, talent attraction, or human resource management in the context of the Fourth or Fifth Industrial Revolution, and if they used an empirical or conceptual approach appropriate to the research focus. An article was considered relevant when it provided substantial discussion or findings related to employer branding, employer brand marketing, employer attractiveness, the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), talent attraction, talent retention, employee experience, or organizational reputation as an employer. Studies with only a limited or indirect connection to employer branding were excluded unless they offered important theoretical insights supporting the research focus. To maintain source quality, articles that were not peer-reviewed or that were of a general, non-scholarly nature were excluded from the analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Transformation of Talent Values in the Industry 5.0 Era

In the Industry 5.0 era, the values that define top talent have shifted from purely technical skills toward a combination of digital and higher-order human competencies. Companies now seek individuals who are not only technologically proficient but also able to apply creativity, empathy, and emotional intelligence when collaborating with automation and artificial intelligence systems (Mishra et al., 2022). This type of talent drives change because such individuals can create innovative solutions with a human-centered approach amid complex digital contexts. Talent's expectations of employers have also undergone a fundamental shift:

they seek a workplace that offers not only financial security but also a platform for professional development that supports continuous learning and meaningful contributions to sustainability and social responsibility (Clark et al., 2023). These values reflect talent's growing attention to an organization's broader mission and impact, a factor that is crucial for attracting Millennials and Gen Z, who increasingly seek jobs with purpose and clear values (Park & Lee, 2021).

This shift in values has also prompted a reconsideration of the attributes that define top talent. Talent assessments now focus not only on educational background or certifications, but also on innovation, teamwork, and the ability to adapt to changing roles within a changing work environment (Singh & Rhoads, 2022). Companies that recognize this shift need to revamp their employer branding strategies to emphasize these values, while simultaneously building an employer identity that aligns with the aspirations of today's talent.

These findings are consistent with the study's proposition that effective employer brand marketing contributes positively to an organization's ability to attract top talent in the Industry 5.0 era. The literature reviewed provides conceptual support for this relationship by showing that employer branding influences how prospective employees perceive an organization and evaluate its attractiveness as a potential workplace. In particular, employer branding that communicates relevant organizational values, career development opportunities, meaningful work, flexibility, innovation, and a supportive work environment is more likely to align with the expectations of contemporary talent.

The findings further indicate that the relationship between employer branding and talent attraction is strengthened when the employee value proposition is authentic and consistent with employees' actual experience. This supports the underlying premise that employer branding is not merely an external communication mechanism, but a strategic approach that connects organizational identity, employee expectations, and workplace experience. The discussion also shows that the changing characteristics of top talent in the Industry 5.0 era reinforce the importance of human-centered employer branding, particularly in addressing the expectations of Millennials and Generation Z. Because this study relies on a descriptive qualitative literature review rather than primary quantitative data, these propositions are not statistically tested; instead, they provide a conceptual basis for future empirical research to test this relationship quantitatively across different industries, organizational contexts, and employee groups.

4.2. Employer Branding as an Organizational Differentiation Strategy

Employer branding is increasingly used as a strategic tool for building a unique organizational identity amid fierce competition to attract top talent. In the Industry 5.0 era, differentiation depends not only on products or services but also on how an organization positions itself as an ideal place for talented individuals (Barrow & Mosley, 2021). A successful employer branding strategy can foster a strong perception of organizational culture, values, and employee experience that distinguishes a company from its competitors in the labor market. One crucial aspect of employer branding is alignment between an organization's external image and its

internal reality: companies that build an authentic reputation through employee stories, community involvement, and a genuine commitment to diversity are more likely to attract job seekers who value clarity and trust (Theurer et al., 2018).

Employer branding is therefore not solely the responsibility of the Human Resources division; it also involves communications, marketing, and top-level leadership as part of a coherent organizational narrative. A well-built employer brand can provide a sustainable competitive advantage by reducing recruitment costs, increasing employee loyalty, and accelerating the process of attracting key talent in the digital and innovation sectors (Rana & Sharma, 2019). This is especially important in the Industry 5.0 era, when the distinction between organizational identity and employee experience is increasingly blurred and expectations for an inclusive, transformative work environment continue to rise. Employer branding thus serves not only as a communication tool but as an overall strategy that clearly conveys an organization's identity. Companies that communicate genuine values, workplace flexibility, and a commitment to employee development stand a greater chance of succeeding in the competition to attract and retain top talent.

4.3. The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) Dimension in Attracting Top Talent

The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is a fundamental part of a company's branding strategy, describing what an organization offers employees in return for their contribution and commitment. The EVP encompasses more than a salary package; it encompasses the entire work experience, reflecting an organization's values, culture, and development opportunities (Botha et al., 2021). In the competition for top talent, the EVP is a crucial foundation for building a positive organizational image, both internally and externally. Key aspects of an EVP include competitive compensation, a clear career path, work-life balance, a supportive work environment, and a sense of pride in the organization's purpose (Abuelhassan & Elsayed, 2020). Today's employees, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, are more likely to weigh sustainability, workplace flexibility, and an organization's social impact when deciding whether to join it (Singh & Sharma, 2022).

An EVP therefore needs to align with the expectations of today's prospective employees, who seek meaning and purpose in their careers. A carefully designed and clearly communicated EVP has been shown to increase employee engagement, reduce turnover, and strengthen a company's reputation as a desirable employer (Yamamoto & Yoshioka, 2021). This is especially important in the Industry 5.0 era, where organizational attractiveness depends not only on business performance but also on the clarity of its identity and the value it offers employees. The EVP thus serves as a strategic bridge connecting organizational needs with the increasingly demanding and dynamic expectations of top talent.

4.4. The Impact of Employer Branding on Millennial and Gen Z Preferences

The changing demographic structure of the global workforce carries significant implications for organizational strategies to attract and retain employees. Millennials and Gen Z now dominate the labor market and hold preference characteristics that differ markedly from those of

previous generations (Alonso-Almeida & Llach, 2019). Both groups are more attracted to organizations with a clear mission, values that align with their own, and a flexible, inclusive way of working. In this context, employer branding is a crucial tool for conveying an organization's identity and uniqueness in a manner relevant to younger generations' preferences. Research by Dabirian, Paschen, and Kietzmann (2019) shows that transparent, digitally driven employer branding significantly influences younger workers' career decisions; social media platforms and career websites are key channels for building positive perceptions of a company. Millennials and Gen Z are highly sensitive to a company's reputation on issues such as diversity, social responsibility, and a work environment that supports personal development.

Employer branding strategies must therefore be designed around the values this group considers important. Employer branding that emphasizes work-life balance, continuous learning opportunities, and the chance to contribute meaningfully to society is more successful in attracting young talent (Van Hoya, Bas, & Cromheecke, 2021). This generation is more likely to choose companies that offer not only jobs but also meaningful professional experiences and identities. Employer branding thus becomes a differentiation tool that increases organizational visibility while fostering loyalty from the pre-recruitment phase onward. In an increasingly competitive HR landscape, a company's ability to build an attractive, authentic image through employer branding will determine its success in attracting and retaining Millennial and Gen Z talent, a key step toward building a future workforce that is both competent and aligned with the company's vision and mission.

4.5. The Role of Employer Branding in Strengthening Employee Retention and Loyalty

Amid increasing competition in recruitment, retaining existing employees is an equally critical challenge for organizations. Strong employer branding affects not only external attractiveness to potential talent but also plays a strategic role in building loyalty and increasing the retention of existing employees (Khoreva et al., 2021). Positive perceptions of an organization's brand as a workplace foster deep emotional attachment, significantly reducing turnover intentions. Employee loyalty often depends on how well a company delivers on the promises made through employer branding, including its stated values, career development opportunities, and work environment. A mismatch between brand expectations and workplace realities can lead to cognitive dissonance, ultimately lowering job satisfaction and morale (Theurer et al., 2018), whereas alignment between perceptions and actual experience strengthens emotional commitment and builds lasting relationships between individuals and the organization.

Research by Tanwar and Lopes (2019) shows that a consistent, relevant EVP not only strengthens organizational identity but also increases employee engagement with the work environment. Elements such as a collaborative work environment, clear career paths, and recognition of individual contributions are essential foundations for fostering loyalty. Internal employer branding implemented through open communication, employee involvement in decision-making, and continuous development has also been shown to significantly increase employee engagement. From a strategic HRM perspective, high retention not only reduces

recruitment and training costs but also creates organizational stability that supports long-term productivity (Malhotra & Sharma, 2023). Employer branding should therefore be understood as a strategic investment rather than simply a marketing tool; through a holistic approach that integrates an organization's external and internal image, employer branding can create an inclusive, meaningful work environment that strengthens loyalty and sustains employee retention over time.

4.6. Integration of Technology and Social Media in Employer Branding

Digital transformation has changed how organizations build and convey their identity as an ideal workplace. Technology, particularly social media, plays a crucial role as a primary employer branding channel for reaching, influencing, and engaging prospective employees at scale and interactively (Vrontis et al., 2021). Platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become key channels for showcasing organizational culture, company values, and employee experiences in real time. The growing use of social media in employer branding creates opportunities for authentic, open storytelling, which Millennials and Gen Z value highly; they are more likely to choose organizations that present a realistic, inclusive work experience through visual content and employee testimonials (Höflinger et al., 2020). This digital narrative strengthens the public's perception of an organization's EVP. Beyond social media, technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and digital recruitment platforms also play a significant role in optimizing employer branding: analytics allow companies to capture public sentiment toward their employer brand and tailor communication strategies more precisely (Alaimo & Kallinikos, 2021), while chatbots and AI-based recruitment systems provide a faster, more personalized, and more responsive candidate experience that enhances positive impressions of the organization.

This combination of technologies also supports sustainable, adaptive employer branding. Amid rapid business change, organizations can directly monitor the effectiveness of their branding campaigns and adjust their approach based on available data (Bissola & Imperatori, 2019), ensuring that employer branding messages not only reach the right audience but also reflect the organization's latest developments and values. Successful employer branding in the Industry 5.0 era is therefore inseparable from the intelligent use of technology and social media. The integration of digital storytelling, audience participation, and data-driven decision-making makes technology a fundamental foundation for building a relevant, engaging, and competitive employer brand in the global job market.

4.7. Strategic Challenges and Managerial Implications

Implementing corporate image as part of a talent management strategy in the Industry 5.0 era presents several challenges. One of the most significant is the discrepancy between the image an organization communicates to the public and the reality of its work culture; this mismatch can undermine prospective employees' trust and increase turnover, especially when actual work experiences do not align with public messaging. This requires managers to align corporate image with actual, sustainable organizational practices. At the same time, the

evolving preferences of younger generations, who have grown up immersed in digital technology, are driving new shifts in corporate image strategy, as this generation increasingly evaluates companies based on social principles, diversity, work flexibility, and active digital participation.

Companies therefore need to focus not only on projecting an attractive image but also on responding meaningfully to social issues and expectations around work-life balance; failing to address these values can harm organizational reputation and competitiveness in the job market. Managers also face the challenge of fairly evaluating the effectiveness of employer branding. While indicators such as application volume, retention rates, and employee engagement can be operationalized, the long-term impact on loyalty and productivity remains difficult to assess comprehensively (Baum & Kabst, 2019). Organizations therefore need a strategic, data-driven evaluation system capable of assessing the alignment between brand perceptions and organizational actions. Other managerial implications include the need for coordination among departments, particularly Human Resources, communications, and information technology, since employer branding strategies are likely to be inefficient and inconsistent without strong cross-departmental collaboration.

Leadership training is also essential so that middle managers can become credible representatives of the organization's values, both internally and externally (Karatepe et al., 2023). Inclusive, communicative leadership is crucial for maintaining continuity between the brand promise and employees' actual experience. In this way, the challenges of developing an employer brand are not solely technical or marketing-related, but involve complex strategic and cultural dimensions. To address these challenges, managers need to build a collaborative, values-driven approach and leverage technology and data analytics as a foundation for future-oriented strategic decision-making.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of employer brand marketing in attracting top talent amid the changing work environment of the Industry 5.0 era. The literature reviewed shows that employer branding is a significant strategic mechanism for strengthening organizational attractiveness and supporting the attraction and retention of top talent, and that an effective employer brand is determined not solely by external communication but by the consistency between an organization's stated values and promises and the actual experiences it provides to employees. The review further shows that the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), organizational culture, career development opportunities, work-life balance, technological support, and employee experience are important elements in shaping employer attractiveness, particularly for Millennials and Generation Z, who increasingly weigh organizational values, meaningful work, flexibility, personal development, and workplace experience when evaluating potential employers. In relation to the research objective, the study confirms that employer brand marketing should be positioned as a strategic Human Resource Management practice rather than merely an external promotional activity, since its effectiveness depends on an

organization's ability to translate its employer brand promises into authentic, sustainable workplace experiences; a mismatch between employer brand communication and actual employee experience may reduce organizational credibility and weaken attraction, engagement, and retention.

Overall, employer brand marketing can strengthen organizational competitiveness by creating a distinctive, credible employment proposition in the Industry 5.0 era, integrating organizational values, the EVP, employee experience, digital communication, and human-centered HR practices to attract top talent. However, because this study relies on a literature review approach, its findings are based on a synthesis of existing research rather than primary empirical data. Future studies should therefore empirically test the relationships between employer branding dimensions, talent attraction, employee engagement, employee loyalty, and organizational performance across different industries and cultural contexts, and may further examine how artificial intelligence, digitalization, personalization, and human-machine collaboration are reshaping employer branding and employee expectations in the Industry 5.0 workplace.

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