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EMPLOYER BRANDING PRACTICES IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE BRAND LOYALTY IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN PAKISTAN: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

MUHAMMAD AWAIS ILYAS

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
APRIL 2019
EMPLOYER BRANDING PRACTICES IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE BRAND LOYALTY IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN PAKISTAN: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

By
MUHAMMAD AWAISS ILYAS

Thesis Submitted to
School of Business Management
Universiti Utara Malaysia,
In Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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(We, the undersigned, certify that)

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ABSTRACT

Services sector is facing the tremendous challenge in developing a strong employee brand loyalty. Brand loyal employees have intention to stay with organization and committed to deliver high level of services which leads towards consumer satisfaction. Among all the best practices, the most relevant practice known as employer branding which seems relevant in maintaining long term relationship between employee and employer. Although the emergent popularity of the impact of employer branding on employee’s behaviour, little is known on how employer branding practices affects existing employee’s loyalty behaviour towards their organization’s brand. Previous literature on employer branding practices was restricted to potential employees; there is dearth of studies which explore the influence of employer branding practices on existing employee’s behaviour. Therefore, the current study attempts to link the relationship between employer branding practices (namely training and development, employer brand reputation, work life balance, organization culture, diversity, corporate social responsibility and compensations and benefits) and employee brand loyalty behaviour. The present study also attempts to examine the mediation role of employee engagement on the initial relationship. Based on psychological contract theory, the offerings (economic, psychological and functional) by the employer brand, influenced the employee’s attitude (engagement) and behaviour (loyalty). The proportionate stratified sampling technique was applied. A total of 492 questionnaires were distributed in eighteen private higher educational institutions located in the Punjab province of Pakistan. The 286 questionnaires were useable for further analysis using the PLS-SEM. The results revealed that employer brand reputation, work life balance, organization culture and compensations and benefits have direct significant positive effect and diversity has indirect significant positive effect on employee brand loyalty. The employee engagement mediates the relationships of employer brand reputation, organizational culture and diversity and employee brand loyalty. Finally, this study suggests various recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Employee brand loyalty, Employer branding, Employee engagement and Higher education

Kata kunci: Kesetiaan jenama pekerja, penjenamaan majikan, penglibatan pekerja dan pendidikan tinggi.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim.

‘In the Name of ALLAH (SWT), Most Gracious, Most Merciful’

All the praise and gratitude belong to ALLAH (SWT) and peace and Salam be upon His Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

All praise and sincere thanks to ALLAH (SWT), for granting me the strength, wisdom, encourage and knowledge to complete this PhD prestigious journey.

To those eyes who aim to see me as Doctor, his all efforts and sacrifices make me possible to complete my PhD, my late father Muhammad Ilyas Akhter. I wish you are with me at that moment. May Allah (SWT) reward him with Jannatul Firdaus.

First of all, I am extremely grateful to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hasnizam Bin Shaari, Deputy Dean, School of Business Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia, for his valuable guidance, scholarly inputs and consistent encouragement I received throughout the research work. This feat was possible only because of the unconditional support provided by him. A person with an amicable and positive disposition, he has always made himself available to clarify my doubts despite his busy schedules and I consider it as a great opportunity to do my doctoral programme under his guidance and to learn from his research expertise. Thank you for all your help and support. I acknowledge Dr. Ahmad Said Ibrahim Alshuaibi, my co-supervisor, for his kind guidance, willingness, encouragement and constructive critics throughout the preparation of this proposal. Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis reviewer committee: Prof. Dr. Sany Sanuri Mohd Mokhtar and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Filzah Md Isa for their insightful comments, suggestions and encouragement which widen my research from various perspectives. I would like to express my gratitude to all my siblings for supporting me with their hearts. Last but not least, many thanks to friends and colleagues of University Utara Malaysia for their kind support and concern.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVE</td>
<td>Average Variance Extracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Compensation and Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFA</td>
<td>Confirmatory Factor Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Composite Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIV</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBL</td>
<td>Employee Brand Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBR</td>
<td>Employer Brand Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Employee Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEC</td>
<td>Higher Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIs</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OC</td>
<td>Organizational Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLS</td>
<td>Partial Least Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM</td>
<td>Structural Equation Modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TD</td>
<td>Training and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIF</td>
<td>Variance Inflation Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLB</td>
<td>Work Life Balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDICES

Appendix 1  Survey Support Letter
Appendix 2  Introduction of Survey
Appendix 3  Questionnaire
CHAPTER 1
RESEARCH OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The chapter comprises background of study, problem statement, objectives and research questions, theoretical and practical significance, scope of the study, definition of key terms, and structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of Study

In today’s highly competitive era, it is a great challenge to build and maintain a strong brand in any service industry. The service sector finds it very difficult to develop a strong brand due to the intangible and complex nature of its operations and offerings (Biswas & Suar, 2016; Castaldi & Giarratana, 2018; Helm & Özergin, 2015; Sarker, Mohd-Any & Kamarulzaman, 2019; Wirtz & Lovelock, 2018). Moreover, service brand performance depends largely on employees who are the backbone of any brand delivery system, it is the employees’ service delivery process that consumers evaluate to ascertain the quality and performance of the service of any organization (Jevons, 2006). Hence employees who are loyal to their organization’s brand play a significant and strategic role in brand performance. Brand loyal employees act as a differentiator for the competitors, difficult to replicate (Punjaisri, Wilson, & Evanschitzky, 2009). The medium of delivering the brand promise to customer in product marketing is the tangible product itself, but in service marketing, it is the employees who are the deliverers of the brand promise to customers (Lee, Kim & Kim, 2014; Schultz, 2002). Schultz’s (2002) findings reveal that when employees are the “deliverers” of the brand promise, the brand behaviour
The contents of the thesis is for internal user only
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Appendix 1

Introduction

Dear Respondent,

I am Muhammad Awais Ilyas, PhD Scholar from College of Business, University Utara Malaysia. I am currently conducting a study on employee’s perception on the practices of employer branding and its effect on employee’s brand loyalty. I would like to extend my appreciations to you for your kind consideration in participating in this survey. You are only need 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire, there is NO RIGHT AND WRONG ANSWER, so feel free to answer based on your own experiences. For helping you in completing this questionnaire, please read the instruction carefully and refer to the NOTE attached in this booklet regarding the meaning of the term used in this study. This questionnaire will collect data regarding the effect of employer branding practices from employer side named Training and development, work life balance, employer brand reputation, compensation and benefits, corporate social responsibility, organizational culture and diversity influence on your engaged behaviour in job that later contributes to development of loyalty towards organization’s brand.

For your information, data gained from this study is STRICTLY FOR AN ACADEMIC PURPOSES and will remain STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. If you have any enquiries, do not hesitate to contact me at:

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Email: ahmad_alshuaibi@uum.edu.my
Appendix 2

Note:
Specific term and word in this study refers to the following:

- **Employer Brand** - refers to “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified within the employing company”.
- **Training and Development** - refers to employees with necessary skills needed for the current as well as future job positions provided by employment.
- **Employer Brand Reputation** - refers to employee’s perceived reputation about their employer brand in external environment.

For each statement, please, fill in the number that indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;1&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;2&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;3&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;4&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;5&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;6&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;7&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TD1</td>
<td>My employer brand provides relevant training courses to academic staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TD2</td>
<td>My employer brand has structured training programs for its academic staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TD3</td>
<td>My employer brand organizes various conferences, workshops and training programs on regular basis.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>TD4</td>
<td>My employer brand trains academic staff on skills that prepare them for future job position.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TD5</td>
<td>My employer brand invests heavily in training and development of its academic staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>TD6</td>
<td>My employer brand provides information to academic staff on the availability of job openings inside the organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Employer Brand Reputation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EBR1</th>
<th>My employer brand is highly reputable nationally and internationally.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>EBR2</td>
<td>Friends and colleagues consider this employer brand as a great place to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>EBR3</td>
<td>My employer brand produces innovative products and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>EBR4</td>
<td>My employer brand’s name adds value to the resume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>EBR5</td>
<td>There are probably many who would like to work for my employer brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>EBR6</td>
<td>I am proud to say I work for this employer brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>EBR7</td>
<td>My employer brand supports good causes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work Life Balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WLB1</th>
<th>My employer brand provides flexible working hours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>WLB2</td>
<td>My employer brand provides opportunity to work from home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>WLB3</td>
<td>My employer brand provides access to paid parental leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>WLB4</td>
<td>Academic staff is permitted to leave the workplace in case of family emergency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>WLB5</td>
<td>My employer brand provides on-site sports activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organization Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OC1</th>
<th>My employer brand provides autonomy to its employees to take decisions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>OC2</td>
<td>Team work is highly encouraged by our employer brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>OC3</td>
<td>Employees apply latest technology at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OC4</td>
<td>My employer brand provides opportunity to move around and work in different roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>OC5</td>
<td>The management genuinely responds to academic staff’s suggestions and ideas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corporate Social Responsibility**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CSR1</th>
<th>My employer brand has a comprehensive code of conduct.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>CSR2</td>
<td>My employer brand behaves responsibly towards the environment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSR3</td>
<td>My employer brand gives adequate contributions to charities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSR4</td>
<td>My employer brand establishes procedures to comply with students complaints.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CSR5</td>
<td>A confidential procedure is in place to report any misconduct at work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compensation and Benefits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CB1</th>
<th>In general, the salary offered by my employer brand is high.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>CB2</td>
<td>My employer brand provides overtime pay.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CB3</td>
<td>My employer brand provides good health benefits.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CB4</td>
<td>My employer brand provides insurance coverage for employees and their dependents.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Diversity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DIV1</th>
<th>Employees are hired based on their skills and abilities regardless of their gender, ethnicity or culture.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>DIV2</td>
<td>Employees from different cultures are welcomed by our employer brand.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DIV3</td>
<td>My employer brand offers good variety of work activities.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DIV4</td>
<td>My employer brand has equal rights for men and women.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DIV5</td>
<td>My employer brand provides opportunity to work on different projects.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

**Employee Engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EE1</th>
<th>The job I have makes me enthusiastic.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>EE2</td>
<td>I view my job as being meaningful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE3</td>
<td>I like to work intensely.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE4</td>
<td>I often become absorbed in the job I am doing.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE5</td>
<td>The job gives me energy.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE6</td>
<td>I persevere when I encounter challenges.</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>EBL1 I say positive things about my employer brand to other people.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>EBL2 I recommend my employer brand to anyone who seeks my opinion.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>EBL3 I consider this employer brand as my first choice of working place.</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>EBL4 I intend to stay with this employer brand for a longer period.</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>EBL5 I would not switch my employer brand even if another brand offers a better remuneration.</td>
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**Employee Brand Loyalty**

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**UUM**

Universiti Utara Malaysia
General Data: Please tick () the best box according to your information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution’s Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Under 25 years</th>
<th>26 years to 35 years</th>
<th>36 years to 45 years</th>
<th>46 years to 55 years</th>
<th>56 years and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job Position</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Professor</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly income</th>
<th>Less than 50000 PKR</th>
<th>51000 to 100000 PKR</th>
<th>Above than 100000 PKR</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>MPhil/MS</th>
<th>PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job tenure</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Visiting</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Thank you for participating in this survey.