

Unravelling Facets of Employer Branding Leading to Talent Retention: A Study of Indian KPO Industry

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Abstract:

Talent crunch is a regular challenge for organizations in modern economic world. Demand for highly skilled workers trumps over talent supply, ensuing in a war for employable talent. Therefore, it is essential to allure and preserve key talent as the destiny of an organization is decided by its human capital especially in a knowledge process outsourcing (KPO) organization. This can be achieved by focusing on employer branding model. An integrated interpretive structural modelling (ISM) and Fuzzy MICMAC (Matriced'Impacts Croisés Multiplication Appliqués à un Classement) approach was deployed to identify relationship and understand mutual effect among facets of employer branding. This research involved intensive consultation with subject matter expert on facets of employer branding from both academia as well as KPO organizations in India. ISM was used to get insights into collective understanding of the interrelationships among facets of employer branding. MICMAC analysis was used to determine the degree of dependence and influence variables. Based on this research work, it has been identified that there are five drivers viz. employee branding, employee attraction, employee engagement, employee commitment and loyalty which help in talent retention in Indian KPO organizations. This research works contribute to the literature on talent retention by bolstering the importance of identified drivers using Fuzzy MICMAC approach. Further, intensive involvement of industry practitioners in building structural model increases possibility of deploying talent retention strategy in other KPO organizations.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Interpretive Structural Modelling, MICMAC, Talent Retention.

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1. Introduction

The previous decade witnessed a drastic change in the way businesses were done complemented by the upheaval in the technological frontage leading to disruption in the progress and development of the

Indian economy. "Master of core business" is the redefined paradigm of smart organizations.

Outsourcing the non-core business to an outside entity has become a viable strategic choice. Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) is a higher-

end form of outsourcing of business processes that entails substantial domain proficiency. As KPO is a people intensive business therefore success of a KPO is determined by the possessed talent. The war for employable talent persists. The dearth of employable talent necessitates retention of existing talent in the organization. Organizations appreciate the fact that intellectual capital and talent are essential for achieving organizational goals. Therefore, organizations must focus on nurturing talent rather than poaching talent from rival companies. As at the end, it is the contribution and commitment from employees that decides the success of any organisation (Baum and Kokkro-nikal, 2005).

1.1 KPO in India

The Indian KPO services industry offers a plethora of solutions to sundry industry segments. KPO industry in India experience sky-high attrition levels. Dube and Verma (2015), reports more than 50-60% attrition rate in KPO sector in India. This industry has to counter the trial of ample talent availability and high attrition rate amongst young mavericks. Pros and domain mavericks are desired in this industry. This urges the need to study the drivers of employee branding for talent retention in KPO sector. Growth of 21st century organizations is extensively dependent on the skills, innovations, and creativity of its employees. Therefore, for organizations "talent" has become tantamount with the term "employee." Due to the increasing pressure from stakeholders, organizations experience intense pressure to revolutionize and mandate a rapid pace of change. Technical skills are degenerating at a rapid speed such that they blunt their edge within a decade. This makes it imperative for the organizations to invest heavily on learning and development (L&D). L&D also plays an important part in attracting talent, as candidates are interested to work for organizations that enhances their intellectual growth by providing necessary opportunities. This also helps organizations to retain talent. However, in contemporary times, companies look forward to more in-depth knowledge and strategies for

employee retention. Organizational capability is a culmination of skills and competencies possessed by organizational talent (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005). It decides the competitive edge and success of the organization (Lock-wood, 2006). Research work (Powell and Lubitsh, 2007; Sharma, Agarwal and Ganjiwale, 2011) on talent management bolster the significance of talent retention to drive organizations towards achieving desired goals. Employer branding has been continuously gaining popularity among organizations. Employer branding accentuates talent retention. Hence this study attempts to identify facets of employer branding leading to talent retention.

1.2 Research Questions

The research work is an attempt to find answers for following two questions:

RQ1. Which facets of employer branding drive talent retention in Indian KPO organization?

RQ2. How to identify interrelationship between multiple facets of employer branding leading to talent retention?

1.3 Organization of research

In this research work, section 1 outlines the introduction along with research questions of the study. Section 2 details the review of literature focused on the concepts of employer branding model which involves employer attractiveness, employee engagement, employee branding, employee commitment, loyalty and talent retention. Section 3, explains research methodology adopted for the study along with analysis and research findings. Section 4 includes discussion and Section 5 entails conclusion along with limitations and scope for future research work.

2. Review of Literature

The theoretical basis for this research work comprises of social exchange theory and reciprocity theory. Social exchange theory elucidates "social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties" (Emerson 1976). Reciprocity theory puts forth that "reciprocity is a social rule which implies that one should repay. Individuals reward kind actions and punish the

unkind ones” (Paese and Gilin 2000).Juxtaposing these two theories creates foundation for the argument that organization and employees work in tandem to benefit from each other and thereby achieve desired goals. Therefore, it is equal need for employee to work at an organization as it is for organization to get the work done effectively and efficiently. Hence, organizations must focus on talent development and talent retention. Employer branding takes both the ideas together and carries immense potential to drivetalentretention.Across the globe, organizations are striving to attract talent who can join them and work towards achieving vision and mission set by the organization. This incessant need of each organization leads to the competition among them to attract right pool of talent. Employer branding is this process of creating good image among the potential talent pool, so that they will be attracted to work with the organization. Organization with a well-built brand image are considered as place of nurture and growth by prospective employees which can guide their career path in the right direction. With ever increasing pressure to deliver, organizations vigorously pursue their way to create attractive employer brand to gain traction of talent pool and to retain them over a longer duration. Table 1 refers to important definitions of employer branding given by various researchers.

Table 1. Definitions of Employer Branding

Author	Year	Definition
Ambler and Barrow	1996	The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company.
Sullivan J	2004	A targeted long strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm.
Kimpakorn and	2009	An organization’s image

Tocquer		as seen through the eyes of its actual and potential employees
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Wilden, Gudergan and Lings (2010) found that prospective talent pool evaluates employer on the basis of employer attractiveness and employer reputation. Also, their perception about the employer brand is heavily influenced if they had any previous work experience with that employer. In a globalized world where information is readily available on social platforms about the experience of working with any global employer, the need for a good employer brand image among talent pool becomes necessity to survive in this fierce global economy.Eveliinaand Suikkanen (2010) asserts that strong positive perception regarding an employer brand among employees, leads to higher employee retention. Employer brand works on creating fantastic employment experience for the employees and it also promotes to the concept of great place to work which in turn reduces voluntary attrition. These findings can be corroborated with the findings ofSokro (2012),that organizations work on their brand as an employer to lure employee to stick with the workplace. It also identified that perception about the employer brand can be a decisive factor in employee’s choice to leave or stay with an employer.Further, Lloyd (2002) claims that employer branding is an overall efforts done by an organization to promote the notion of great place to work among employees and prospective talent pool.

Following subsections present detailed review of literature on facets of employer branding viz. employer attractiveness, employee engagement, employee commitment, employee loyalty and talent retention which were found at the centre stage with respect to the objectives of this research work.

2.1 Employer Attractiveness

Berthon et al. (2005) defines employer attractiveness as perceived benefits by an existing employee or a prospective employee to work for that specific

employer. These perceived benefits can be measured by pay structure, career growth plans provided by an organization along with organizational reputation (Anitha and Madhavkumar, 2012). Berthon et al. (2005) also developed a scale EmpAt to measure employer attractiveness scale. This in-depth scale encompasses total of 25 attributes which contribute towards employer attractiveness. War of talent is on and organizations across the globe are in competition to allure and retain highly skilled professionals in technical as well as business domain (Mahroum 2000). A strong positive employer brand value increases employer attractiveness which in turn leads to higher number of people in talent pool vying to work with the employer. It can also positively impact relationship between existing employees and employer (Pingle and Sodhi, 2011). Empirical evidence shows that organizational attraction and recognition intent are extremely associated with ensuing job choice decisions (Chapman et al., 2005). Davies (2008) contemplates that employer attractiveness is all about seeding a thought in mind of prospective talent pool and to fuel their desire to work for that organization. Olapido et al. (2013) emphasizes on the need to measure employer attractiveness separately from the perspective of existing employees vis-à-vis prospective employees. Apart from attracting candidates from talent pool, employer branding also contributes to higher motivation and retention among the existing workforce.

2.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement engages employees to connect emotionally with organization to work towards achieving goals and not just to achieve individual financial excellence (Corporate Leadership Council, 2004). To an engaged employee, an organization is not just a workplace to earn salary but a holistic intervention to support physiological and psychological well-being (Crabtree, 2005). Bhatnagar and Srivastava (2006) found that to achieve employee engagement, employees must feel a sense of pride regarding

working for employer. They further assert that such an experience also leads to trust among employees and management. Employee engagement is considered as one of the most important drivers to achieve organizational success. Engaged employees are committed to work with more dedication and go beyond contract to not just meet the expectations but surpass it to achieve something which is way beyond expected organizational goals (Lockwood, 2007). Employee engagement helps in gaining unforced commitment from the employees, so that employees desire to work with full enthusiasm and motivation towards achieving organizational goals. It is all about creating ecosystem of perceived belongings in the heart and mind of employees which trumps the priority of achieving organizational goals over self-centeredness. Rich et al. (2010) found that employee engagement and employee performance are linked where higher employee engagement drives higher employee performance vis-à-vis less engaged employees. Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) emphasize on employee satisfaction and employee engagement as independent factors which contribute significantly in determining longevity of employee lifecycle at an organization. They also assert that there is a strong effect of type of relationship between employee and immediate supervisor on employee engagement and employee satisfaction. Also, there is greater probability that engaged employees will deliver better productivity. Macey and Schneider (2008) suggests that behavioural state engagement, trait engagement and psychological engagement can be measured to assess employee engagement levels at an organization. An engaged employee not just has higher probability to stay with an organization but can also engage with potential talent and persuade to join the workforce. Research recommends that L & D practices cultivate employer brand and can have an affirmative impression on an organization's reputation, and organizational performance, by aggregating a firm's capability to attract, engage and retain talent (Schulte, 2010). Employer brand embodies a unique value proposition, the takeaways

that individuals might obtain owing to working for an employer. A firm's positive reputations as a workplace can be strengthened, if employee experience is provided as promised. The significance of engaging existing employees and impelling their obligation to augment organizational objectives is a vivacious initiative of employer brand. The learning and development function aids in developing organizational commitment and fosters workplace behaviours that boost employee engagement leading to enhanced employee engagement and performance. Professional development is an essential strategy to attract and retain millennials. Learning and development encourages engagement by offering assured prospects for professional advancement and career progression. Learning and development also shapes requisite workplace demeanour comprising of facts, abilities and skills indispensable to provide customer satisfaction and the administration skills crucial to craft and endure the working conditions guaranteed as the employee experience. Learning and development also bolster distinctiveness and tenets of the organizational culture. Therefore, learning and development is a strong core in-house manifestation of employee engagement.

2.3 Employee Branding

Employee branding is a process of instilling belief in the mind of employees that their employer provides an environment of nurture and growth to them. In turn, employees work with full confidence, motivation and enthusiasm for the organization to serve its customers (Edwards, 2005). Therefore, employee brand is the value proposition that organization holds for its employees. It also helps immensely to attract potential employees from talent pool. Overall, aim of employee branding also helps to create an ecosystem where people would love to come to work. This helps in talent retention immensely. Miles and Mangold (2004) argued that employee branding is all about perceived organizational culture by the employees. It involves how employees take cognition of unsaid messages

from organization. It is extremely essential for an organization to focus on direct and indirect communication, L & D opportunities, grievance redressal and feedback incorporation to bolster employee branding.

2.4 Employee Commitment

Meyer (1991) states that employee commitment is a behavioural trait within employee which encourages employee to work with dedication towards achieving organizational goals. Employee commitment makes employee feel that organizational goals are their own goals and hence must be completed within deadline. Employee commitment will happen when employees will perceive that the organization is committed for the growth and betterment of employee's life and career (Fuller, Barnett, Hester, & Relyea, 2003). Dessler (1999) asserts that organization that take care of employee development and well-being of their employees tend to have higher levels of commitment from employees. Pepe (2010) says employee commitment comprise of three levels viz. affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Pepe further asserts that employees with high affective commitment level are self-starters and work not because they need to do the job but because they want to get the job completed successfully for the organization. Therefore, employee with high levels of affective commitment is likely to stay with an organization for longer duration. Employee who have continuance commitment continue their relationship with employer because they perceive there is huge emotional cost involved in finding and settling with a new employer. Such employees do not want to take risk of switching their jobs and findings themselves into a new territory. Employees who have normative commitment level, tend to continue their relationship with employer because they feel that they have not completed the minimum number of expected years with an organization as per the social norms. This drives them to continue to work with same employer until they feel that they have fulfilled norms for working with that

organization on a particular job role. Meyer and Maltin(2010) confirm that attaining employee commitment demands a strong grievance redressal system from employer. Commitment is a two-way street and employer needs to show it equally to the employee. In turn this increases the possibility of employee showing affective commitment which is the highest level of employee commitment. This also leads to employee wellness over a longer time period. It is also recommended that employees should be empowered to make decisions within organization, this also leads to increase in employee commitment (Honold, 1997). Overall, it is not easy for an organization to achieve employee commitment as it demands huge investments across employee lifecycle to germinate commitment within employee.

2.5 Loyalty

Loyalty is an outcome when employer shows care and nurture the life of employee (Pfeiffer, 1992). When an employee goes beyond the line of contract to serve the organizational goals without expecting something in return from employer, that shows employee's loyalty towards the organization. Loyalty always drive employee to put organizational goals first before self (Elegido, 2013). Employee loyalty has a strong positive correlation with employee's performance at an organization. It even manifests into high service quality and increased customer satisfaction which increases profit of an organization (Yee, Yeung and Cheng, 2010). Therefore, it is must for an employer to treat their employees with utmost compassion and care to generate loyalty within them. Roehling, Roehling and Moen (2001) confirm that loyalty is an outcome when employer develops policies supporting work-life balance of an employee and provides necessary support to employee in challenging times. Also loyalty makes goodwill brand ambassador within an employee which helps in employee branding.

2.6 Talent Retention

Talent retention can be defined as the mindful, attentive approach to enthrall, develop and retain skilled human resource who can work towards achieving organizational goals (Stockley, 2005). Creelman (2004) asserts that talent retention involves attracting talent on board and then nurturing that talent so that they will continue association with the organization. D'Annunzio-Green (2008) proposes that talent retention envelopes series of steps involving attracting, developing and retaining talent which leads to enhanced performance. Organizational capability is a culmination of skills and competencies possessed by organizational talent (Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005). This decides the competitive edge and success of the organization (Lock-wood, 2006). An established employer brand attracts people from available talent pool (Rosethorn, 2009; Willock, 2005). People possessing differentiated capabilities and abilities to deliver strategic growth to an organization are termed as talent for that organization. They are extremely essential for the longevity of the organization as they deliver growth. However, due to potential such talent is always in demand among rival organization and therefore it makes it essential but challenging for organization to retain them (Boshard & Louw, 2010; Charest, 2011; Cheese *et al.*, 2007; Leonardi, 2007; Prinsloo, 2008). Review of literature reveals the need of a strong employer brand for talent attraction and retention (Armstrong, 2007; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Crous, 2007). This makes it interesting to study facets of employer brand in Indian context. The exploratory research by Ambler and Barrow (1996) emphasized the need to juxtapose learning from marketing and human resource management together to develop a stronger strategy for improving brand image of organization not just among customer but also among available talent pool. This will also motivate existing employees who will work hard towards achieve organizational excellence in turn leading to consistent achievement of organizational goals. This will generate positive vibes among the employees and will motivate them to work with

organization for an enhanced time period. Eveliina and Suikkanen (2010) explain influence of employer branding on talent retention. They assert that activities linked with enhancing employer brand also increases loyalty over a period of time. It also develops ecosystem within organization supporting employee engagement which fosters organization culture. This in turn motivates employees to go beyond written contracts and deliver results for the organization leading to employee retention with enhanced work satisfaction.

Overall we can conclude that employer attractiveness promotes employee branding (Rynes et al., 1991; Reichheld, 1996; Chambers et al., 1998; Michaels et al., 2001; Miles and Mangold, 2004; Knox and Freeman, 2006; Davies, 2008). Employee engagement enhances employee branding (Heskett et al., 1994; Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Lievens, 2007). Employee branding promotes talent retention (Schultz et al., 2004; Miles and Mangold, 2004). Employee engagement enhances talent retention (Miles and Mangold, 2004; Bhatnagar and Srivastava, 2008; Lundkvist, 2015). Employer attraction promotes talent retention (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Knox and Freeman, 2006; Nasir and Mahmood, 2016a, 2016b; Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). Employee commitment promotes employee branding and talent retention propensity (Roodt and Kotze, 2005). Internal marketing accentuates loyalty and organizational commitment leading to talent retention (Yao, Huang and Fan, 2008). These trends highlighted the need for empirical validation of the facets of employer brand model that can help in strategizing talent retention, and can provide a detailed coherent view regarding interrelationships among the drivers of talent retention. Saraswathy and Balakrishnan (2017) used structural equation modelling to assert that employer branding lead to talent retention in IT industry. Therefore, this research work attempts to draw upon their findings to study relevance of facets of employer branding in talent retention specific to the context of Indian KPO organizations.

3. Research Methodology, Analysis and Research Findings

Solving complex problem can be done in various ways. In this research work we believe that best way to solve the complex problem is to break the problem in parts and keep focus on solving small problems. Later, solutions of those small problems can be merged together leading to comprehensive answer to the original problem. ISM is similar practical approach which builds upon the experience of the experts and their concerned knowledge to deliver solution. Therefore, ISM was deemed suitable to find answers for RQ1 mentioned earlier.

3.1 Criteria used for selecting drivers of talent retention

Step 1: Classified selection factors into the categories:

In this step, a decision group consists of experts was formed to confirm and classify the problem criteria. As mentioned in the literature review, comprehensive evaluation criteria through existed studies were identified and then by expert's opinions is classified into six categories. The data was collected from the experts associated with KPO and also from the academic fraternity in human resource management domain (names of KPOs and individuals are not revealed due to confidentiality promise). Through rigorous literature reviews, six key drivers of employer branding model in the Indian KPO sector have been identified (refer Table 2). Also, Delphi technique was used to ensure proper grouping of identified drivers from literature review. Delphi technique is widely used across research paradigms to gather subject matter expert's opinion on specific subject (Yousuf, 2007).

Table 2: Drivers of Employer Branding Model

Drivers of employer branding model	Sources
Employer	Berthon et al. (2005); Anitha and

Attractiveness	Madhavkumar (2012); Mahroum(2000); Pingle and Sodhi (2011); Chapman et al. (2005); Davies (2008)
Employee Engagement	Crabtree (2005); Bhatnagar and Srivastava (2006); Lockwood, 2007; Rich et al. (2010); Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002); Macey and Schneider (2008)
Employee Branding	(Edwards, 2005); Miles and Mangold (2004)
Employee Commitment	Meyer (1991); Fuller et al.(2003); Dessler (1999)
Loyalty	Pfeiffer(1992); Elegido(2013); Yee, Yeung and Cheng (2010); Roehling, Roehling and Moen (2001)
Talent Retention	Stockley (2005); Creelman (2004); Green (2008); Boudreau and Ramstad (2005); Lock-wood (2006)

Six factors viz. Employer Attractiveness (EA), Employee Engagement (EE), Employee Branding (EB), Employee Commitment (EC), Loyalty (L) and Talent Retention (TR) are taken into account for the employer branding model of KPO organizations and Table 2 refers to relevant resources regarding each factor. Contextual relationship among drivers was established by taking the drivers in an order in vertical axis followed by the reverse order of the drivers in the horizontal axis.

Step 2: Application of ISM and Fuzzy MICMAC to finalize the criteria for talent retention Warfield (1973) initiated ISM to analyse socioeconomic systems. ISM is widely used to map

associations among various drivers involved in a multifaceted system. It heavily relies on subject matter experts' knowledge and opinions to unravel complexity of interrelationship embedded into parts and finally converting them into a hierarchical structured form. MICMAC analysis is concerned with the identification of driving and dependence powers of variables involved in a model. MICMAC classifies these variables into four sectors viz. autonomous (Sector I), dependent (Sector II), linkage (Sector III) and driver (Sector IV). Sector I comprises of variables possessing low driver power and low dependence and are called as autonomous elements. Sector II comprises of variables possessing low driver power and strong dependence on other variables and are called as dependent elements. Sector III has variables which have high driver power as well as high dependence, such variables are called as linkage elements. Linkage elements affect other elements immediately due to their high driver power and high dependence and therefore such elements are highly unstable in the system. Finally, sector IV comprises of elements with high driver power but low dependence and are called as driver elements (Kannan et al., 2008).

3.2. Structural Self-Interaction Matrix

Based on the contextual relationship among the identified variables, a structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM) was developed, which indicates pair-wise relationships (refer Table 3). For this step, subject matter experts were asked to respond to the contextual relationship questionnaire and majority of the responses were used for getting the consolidated SSIM.

Table 3. Structural Self-Interaction Matrix

S.No.	Determinants of Employer Branding (i- rows, j- columns)	6	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Employer Attractiveness	C	A	B	C	C	X
2.	Employee Engagement	A	B	A	C	X	
3.	Employee Branding	C	B	B	X		

4.	Employee Commitment	A	A	X			
5.	Employee Loyalty	A	X				
6.	Talent Retention	X					

The variables A, B, C, D mentioned in the table have following connotation regarding interrelationship among variables:

A - i^{th} driver will help to achieve j^{th} driver

B - j^{th} driver will help to achieve i^{th} driver

C - i^{th} driver and j^{th} driver help to achieve each other

D- i^{th} driver and j^{th} driver are completely unrelated.

3.3 Developing Reachability Matrix

The reachability matrix (Table 4) was derived from the structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM) developed in the previous step. The initial reachability matrix was constructed from the structural self-interaction matrix (SSIM) using the following rules:

- If the (i, j) entry in the SSIM is A, then the (i, j) entry in the reachability matrix is represented as 1 and the (j, i) entry is represented as 0.
- If the (i, j) entry in the SSIM is B, then the (i, j) entry in the reachability matrix is represented as 0 and the (j, i) entry is represented as 1.
- If the (i, j) entry in the SSIM is C, then the (i, j) entry in the reachability matrix is represented as 1 and the (j, i) entry is also represented as 1.
- If the (i, j) entry in the SSIM is D, then the (i, j) entry in the reachability matrix is represented as 0 and the (j, i) entry is also represented as 0.

Table 4. Initial Reachability Matrix

S.No.	Determinants of Employer Branding (i-rows, j- columns)	6	5	4	3	2	1
1.	Employer Attractiveness	1	1	1	0	1	1
2.	Employee Engagement	0	1	1	1	0	1
3.	Employee Branding	0	0	1	0	0	1

4.	Employee Commitment	1	0	1	1	1	1
5.	Employee Loyalty	0	1	1	0	1	1
6.	Talent Retention	0	0	0	0	0	1

The Final reachability matrix (refer Table 5) is derived from the initial reachability matrix using the Transitivity property. The transitivity property is analyzed through Warshall's Algorithm.

Recurrence relating elements $R(k)$ to elements of $R(k-1)$

$R(k)[i,j] = R(k-1)[i,j]$ or $(R(k-1)[i,k] \text{ and } R(k-1)[k,j])$

It implies the following rules for generating $R(k)$ from $R(k-1)$:

Rule 1: If an element in row i and column j is 1 in $R(k-1)$, it remains 1 in $R(k)$.

Rule 2: If an element in row i and column j is 0 in $R(k-1)$, it has to be changed to 1 in $R(k)$ if and only if the element in its row i and column k and the element in its column j and row k are both 1's in $R(k-1)$.

Table 5. Final Reachability Matrix

S.No	Determinants of Employer Branding (i-row, j-column)	6	5	4	3	2	1	Driving Power
1.	Employer Attractiveness	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
2.	Employee Engagement	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
3.	Employee Branding	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
4.	Employee Commitment	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
5.	Employee Loyalty	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
6.	Talent Retention	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Dependence Power	4	4	5	4	4	6	

From the final reachability matrix, the dependence power and driver power were calculated. Dependence power is calculated by counting the number of 1s in the vertical columns and driver power is calculated by counting the number of 1s in the horizontal rows.

3.4 Partitioning of Levels

The reachability and antecedent set for each driver were found from the final reachability matrix (refer Table 6). The antecedent set is obtained by representing the positions of 1 in the vertical columns. The reachability set is obtained by representing the positions of 1 in the horizontal rows. The presence of similar positions is

represented in the intersection set. The driver is labelled as level I if its intersection set and reachability set are same. Also, in such case it is given the highest position in hierarchy of ISM. Table 6 shows level for each driver identified using ISM process.

Table 6: Partitioning of Levels

S.No	Determinants of Employer Branding	Antecedent Set	Reachability Set	Intersection Set	Level
1.	Employer Attractiveness	1,2,4,5	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,4,5	3
2.	Employee Engagement	1,2,4,5	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,4,5	3
3.	Employee Branding	1,2,3,4,5	3,6	3	2
4.	Employee Commitment	1,2,4,5	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,4,5	3
5.	Employee Loyalty	1,2,4,5	1,2,3,4,5,6	1,2,4,5	3
6.	Talent Retention	1,2,3,4,5,6	6	6	1

From the table we inferred that talent retention occupied level 1, employee branding Level 2 and employee attractiveness, employee engagement, employee commitment and loyalty occupied level 3.

3.5 MICMAC Analysis

On performing the MICMAC analysis on the basis of the dependence power and the driver power, the type of power for various drivers were found. For this model all the drivers fall in either sector II and sector III and not in any other sectors. Talent retention and employee branding were found to

have low driver power and high dependence and hence they fall in sector II on the MICMAC analysis. Therefore, they are the dependent elements of the model and are dependent on the other drivers lying below their levels. As drivers such as employee engagement, employee commitment, loyalty and employer attractiveness were falling in sector III in MICMAC analysis, therefore we can conclude that these drivers have both high driver power and high dependence. Such elements are called as linkage elements of the model. The above mentioned drivers are highly unstable due to the fact that any action on these elements will affect the

others, and may also have a feedback effect on them (refer Figure 1).

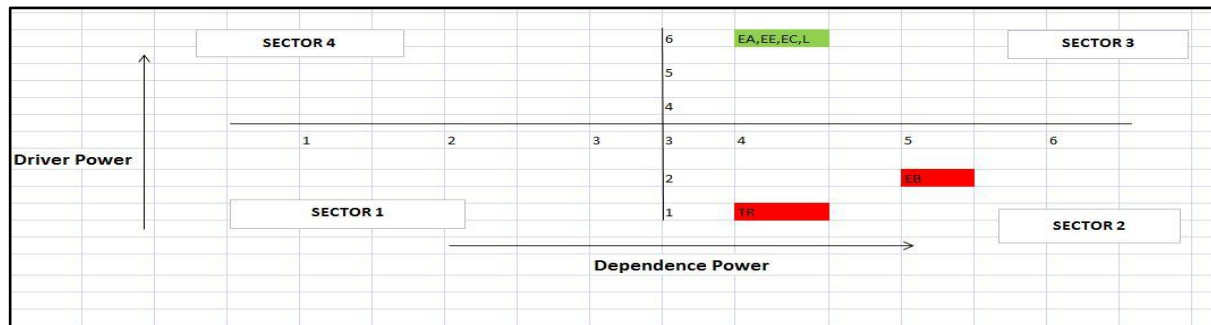


Figure1. MICMAC ANALYSIS

From the graph (refer Figure 1) we can confirm that Employer Attractiveness (EA), Employee Engagement (EE), Employee Commitment (EC) and Loyalty (L) are falling in sector III, the linkage elements which indicate that a change in any one of these elements will have an effect in the other elements. Also from the MICMAC graph we can see that Employee Branding (EB) and Talent Retention (TR) fall in Sector II which indicates that these elements are the dependent elements. This is how, ISM and MICMAC analysis helped in finding answer for RQ2 mentioned earlier. This helps to identify and find out the interdependencies among all drivers of talent retentions.

4. Discussion

With the help of the level partitioning shown in Table 6, a model of determinants of

employer branding was developed and shown in Fig. 2. The top most level in the system is talent retention, which is in level 1 and this driver is affected by all the remaining drivers of the model. The second top most level is occupied by employee branding and is affected by all the factors in the level 3 such as employee engagement, employee commitment, loyalty and employer attractiveness. Also, employee branding in level 2 is affecting the talent retention in level 1. Lower most level comprise of drivers such as employee engagement, employee commitment, loyalty and employer attractiveness which found to be highly related and dependent on each other. All these four elements are highly affecting all the remaining drivers in the other top levels of the model.

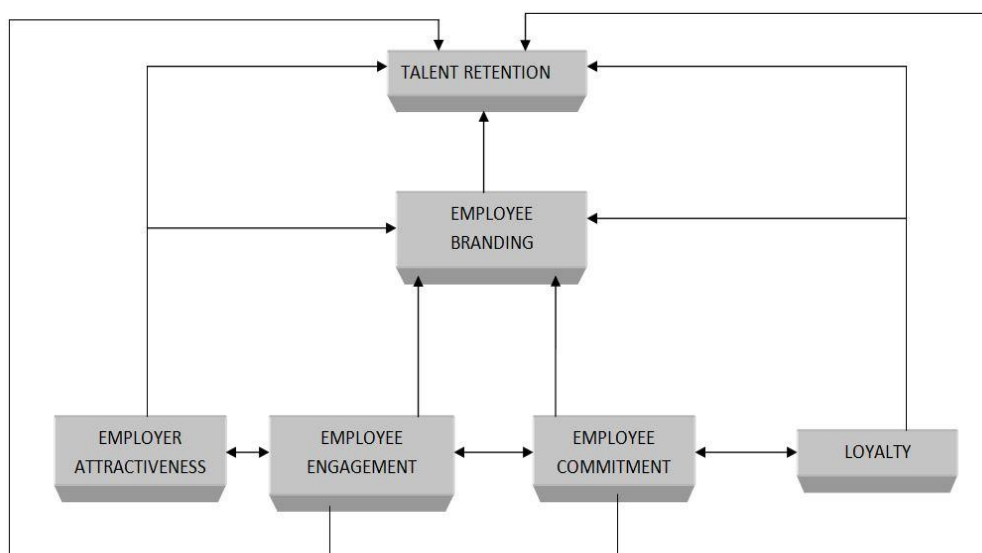


Figure 2. Employer Branding Model

Therefore, from this model it was discerned that employee commitment, employer attractiveness, loyalty and employee engagement form the base of employee branding which in-turn synergistically influence talent retention.

4.1 Practical Implications

As employee engagement is one of the most important driver of talent retention, therefore, investments in L&D can assist to enrich company's brand and boost its standing as an "employer of choice". Therefore, outcome of this study supports findings of Schulte (2010), emphasizing role of learning and development on enhancing employer brand. Organizations must communicate their brand strength explicitly through an employer value proposition (Sharma, Agarwal and Ganjiwale, 2011). Investing in L&D will demonstrate to candidates that companies are interested in the employee's future. Concentrating on L&D opportunities serves as a fundamental tactic to differentiate with rival organizations. Thus, L&D can be a competitive advantage for an organization's employee brand and talent retention. The learning and development function aids in building organizational commitment and fosters workplace behaviours that energises employee engagement and

high performance (D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008). Learning and development encourages employee engagement by offering assured prospects for professional advancement and career progression (Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000). Employer brand has a remarkable influence on the performance and retention of employees (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). For practitioners, the preceding discussion may be beneficial in assessing if any benefit would be accrued from devoting resources to an employee branding program. As such, human resource development (HRD) professionals need to tailor employer attractiveness, employee engagement and employee branding programs to meet the needs of the KPO employees. There are additional implications for HRD professionals to broaden its

sphere to embrace development tools that are more fluid and can reflect the changing nature of millennial employees (Ferri-Reed, 2014). This will promote use of employer branding and employee engagement, as a tool with the potential to satisfy talent management challenges and for their inclusion as part of development plans of the critical talent. Present day job seekers and employees are consumers, engrossed constantly in what employers can provide them for growth. Therefore, it is suggested to Indian KPO, to consider the essential role that L&D plays in employee branding and talent retention. With the mainstream of millennials trusting it is management's duty to offer development opportunities, this demographic is scouting for employers that will participate in building their future. Training is a topmost priority for all workers, predominantly those who want to upskill in light of digital disruption. With today's prominence on learning, and the subsequent investment employers strongly believe that L & D has the potential to be a brand element that can attract and retain talent.

4.2 Research Implications

This study will add value to the knowledge repository in the KPO literature on employee branding and talent retention. This research work strengthens the findings of Saraswathy & Balakrishnan (2017) on employer branding and talent retention in the context of Indian KPO organization. Our findings on role of employee commitment in talent retention resonates with Roodt & Kotze (2005). Indian KPO organizations must develop sense of commitment among employees, this will ensure talent retention over the period of time. This can be achieved by giving freedom to employees and allowing them to give feedback to the management. It can also be achieved by ensuring quality work is assigned to employees along with sense of job security (Whitener, 2001). This research work done on KPO organizations, also strengthens role of employee engagement as a key driver for talent retention which is in-line with the results of previous research work done in context of

Indian IT industry (Budhwar & Bhatnagar, 2007). Employee engagement can be fostered by regular training and development given to the employees (Taneja, Sewell & Odom, 2015), frequent communication among the employer and employee (Welch, 2011), social media activities and the type of co-workers whom they work with (Shami et al., 2015). This research work also determines employer attractiveness as another key driver for talent retention in Indian KPO organization, thereby, supporting the evidence found in previous literature (Sokro, 2012). Employers should focus on health assistance and educational assistance provided to the employees to bolster the image of the company (Jiang & Iles 2011). This will help in enhancing employer attractiveness among talent pool. Loyalty is another key driver identified to promote talent retention in Indian KPO organizations. This finding is in line with the context of other research work done in different industry and geographical location (Brown, 2003; Janjua, & Gulzar, 2014). As per Shah (2011), loyalty can be developed within employees by work recognition, sense of belongingness, career enhancement possibilities provided to the employees. Productivity enhancement is the primary purpose of learning and development. Importance of an employee is decided by the value they add to an organization. Employees are in command of their personal and professional growth and development. They incline towards opportunities for learning and development which is a major factor in their decision to join an organization. Hence, L&D is an essential tool for employee attraction and retention (Kontoghiorghes, & Frangou, 2009). A proactive employee branding strategy helps in augmenting talent retention. Retention strategies should be customized as employee roles vary and their requirements are diverse. Based on the findings, it can be said that if the employees find employer attractive, are engaged and internalize the brand then the intention to stay emerges within employee which in turn makes employees committed and loyal leading to total talent retention.

5. Conclusion

In the model formed through ISM it is seen that employee commitment, loyalty, employee engagement, employer attractiveness forms the base of the employer branding model for Indian KPO organizations. Therefore, these four drivers must be considered with utmost care as they affect all the other drivers in the top levels viz. employee branding and talent retention.

Table 7. Factors affecting the base drivers

EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS	LOYALTY
Freedom of feedback	Constant Training and development	Health assistance	Work recognition
Quality of work assigned	Frequent communication	Educational assistance	Experience
Supervisors	Social Media	Supporting innovation	Career enhancement possibilities
Internal system	Co-workers	Working environment	Millennial impact
Job security	Encouraging extracurricular activities	Company's image	Job satisfaction

The major factors affecting the base drivers are given in Table 7. If all these factors are taken into consideration and integrated at the initial stages in employee life cycle then it will help Indian KPO organizations to ensure employee branding and talent retention within the organisation. Study inferences will contribute to industry's incessant quest for progress, opulence and productivity. Employee branding acts as a vigorous strategy driver for the firm to stand apart from its competitors. It prepares the organisation with a reasonable lead and acts as a mechanism to magnetise, engage, and retain the 'right fit'. For practitioners, this study may be an eye opener to possess a captivating and deliverable employee value proposition. Top management and

HR departments should attempt to grasp appropriate recruitment processes, selection tools, L & D techniques, reward systems. The study was carried out in KPO organizations. The framework developed depends on the opinion of personal judgements of few industry experts and academicians. Confidentiality concerns and company policy prevented practitioners from revealing exhaustive drivers and so only six determinants were utilized for the study. The relationships between the determinants are identified using brainstorming. The relationship among the variables totally depends upon the users' knowledge and their experience within their industries. Therefore, prejudice of someone who is judging the variables might manipulate the final result. The entire study focuses on only designing the model for leveraging employee branding for talent retention in KPO organizations. A future empirical research can be carried out to test the validity of the model, and to find out what are all the factors influencing each individual driver and an enhanced structural model can be generated. Recruitment driver has not been included in this model. Streamlining the recruitment process forms an integral part of employer branding in any organization. Future study can incorporate recruitment factor as well. The scope of future research work, may address the validity of this talent retention model in different Indian industries. Structural equation modeling (SEM) can be used to adjudicate causal relation among the drivers. Also, future research work can use case study method to validate the model developed in this research work.

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