

Influence of training and development interventions on employee retention – an employer brand-based agenda

An employer
brand-based
agenda

157

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of the study is to assess the effect of employer branding dimension of training and development on the retention of employees through the mediation of organizational identification (OI).

Design/methodology/approach – The study is based on data collected from the Indian IT employees. Regression and PROCESS Macro were used to test the hypotheses.

Findings – The regression results revealed that employer branding attribute of training and development influence employee retention (ER). Second, training and development influences OI and ER. Third, the relationship between training and development and ER is mediated by OI.

Research limitations/implications – The research provides a new direction, strategizing a brand around development value is effective to enhance OI and their intent to stay. The major limitation is that the data is collected from a single source that may result in the issue of common method biasness.

Originality/value – The paper focuses on measuring the effects of training and development on the retention of employees through the mediation of OI, for which studies are very limited.

Keywords Employer branding, Organizational identification, Training and development, Employee retention, Social identity theory, India

Paper type Research paper

1. Introductory background

Today's dynamic, disruptive and competitive environment demands companies to continuously respond to the growing need for highly skilled and competent workforce (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014). The booming economies are one of the prime reasons for intensified competition for a highly qualified taskforce (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michales, 1998). The companies are engaged in adopting strategies to acquire a pool of skilled employees. One such strategy that is likely to win the *war for talent* is employer branding. Employer branding is a contemporary human resource (HR) tool that has become quite popular among researchers in the recent past. It has been identified as a strategic lever and desirable among companies (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). Given the competitive landscape, organizations use an employer branding strategy to highlight the distinct bundle of benefits provided to the employees, portraying themselves as a better employer. This is because companies have become more receptive to the shifts in the labor market, where employees possess more bargaining power than employers (Saini, Rai, & Chaudhary, 2014).

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An upsurge in research on training and development as an employer branding attribute stresses its importance in gaining a competitive advantage (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). Our selection is based upon the issue that IT sector faces high pressure while retaining skilled professionals due to the rapid technological advancements (Khan, Bharadwaj, Khatoun, & Jamal, 2021), where skills are easily measurable and companies can earn a lot of money with highly skilled employees on board. Furthermore, it has been previously explicated that organizations could sustain in the competitive environment with effective utilization of company's talent (Yameen, Bharadwaj, & Ahmad, 2020). Although companies' training policies and programs have been researched upon to positively impact retention levels (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016), the present study aims to empirically investigate how existing employees' perception of training and development could affect their decisions to remain for longer in an organization in the Indian IT context. Furthermore, the present study answers Arasanmi and Krishna (2019) call for future research to tap into the unexplored employer branding characteristics and investigate its influence on talent retention in organizations.

To conduct the study, the most burgeoning sector has been chosen. With the "revenue generated at US\$181 bn and 7.7% contribution to the country's GDP", the Indian IT industry is the growth engine of the economy (IBEF, 2019b). The IT sector is a leading sourcing destination that accounts for "approximately 55% market share of the US\$ 185-190 bn in 2017-18" (IBEF, 2019a). Also, this sector is persistently facing the issue of retaining employees and has witnessed high turnover rates of about 20 to 23% (News, 2019). Addressing the issue, the Indian IT sector has witnessed accelerating growth recently. Due to the mushroom growth of small and medium-sized IT companies with immense employment opportunities, employees are likely to have short stints at companies. This solidifies the idea in the minds of the employer that *job-hopping* is a negative trait. To minimize it, employers are resorting to employer branding to stand in the market as a *great place to work* to achieve a competitive advantage (Aldousari, Robertson, Yajid, & Ab Ahmed, 2017).

While addressing the strategy of branding, previous studies have deliberated upon the relevance of social identity attempting to integrate HR practices and behavioral outcomes (Bharadwaj, Khan, & Yameen, 2021). Utilizing the social identity theory, many approaches have comprehended employees' brand-building behavior predicting behavioral choices based on their perception of envisioned value propositions (Löhdorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014). In words of Wang, Demerouti and Le Blanc (2017), a positive identity infuses a company's values in employees' self-concept and when these values are ingrained in one's self-concept, the greater is likely to be their degree of identification. Thus, employees begin to value their memberships and exhibit positive workplace outcomes.

The initial literature on employer brand concept has focused more on development and validation of scales for measuring its impact on potential employees' outcomes (Ruchika & Prasad, 2019; Tanwar & Kumar, 2019). However, extant literature has not comprehensively explained how a positive social identity could enable an organization to project a positive employer brand perception in the minds of working employees. In addition to this, Tanwar and Kumar (2019) have also stressed upon the need to assess the mediating effect of social identity to add new dimension to the employer branding literature.

Consequently, the study proposes social identity as an integral mediating mechanism between employer branding and retention. Specifically, it is argued that feeling of self-worth and self-enhancement integrates both training and development and retention of IT professionals. The focus on identification as a mediator also answers call from social exchange literature (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2020) by exploring how identity-based interactions associate with employee's attitudes.

2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

2.1 Theoretical foundation

2.1.1 Employer branding. The concept of Employer branding emerged in the 1990s, when the proponents, Ambler and Barrow extended the concept of branding to the HR management. The three-dimensional conceptualization of employer branding includes “functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company” (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). According to Conference Board (2001), the employer brand aids in establishing organization’s identity as a workplace, encapsulating organization’s beliefs and behaviors to attract, motivate and retain current and potential employees.

The recent fascination with employer branding among researchers and academicians across the globe owes to its ability to attract and retain a proficient workforce. It is understood as a tool to help companies distinguish from their competitors through unique employment offerings (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer branding is fueled by an organization’s stance in a competitive market and corporate identity (Elving, Westhoff, Meeusen, & Schoonderbeek, 2013). Studies illustrate employer branding as the process of developing a distinct and unique employer quality, where an employer brand is connected with the corporate entity, distinguishing it from other brands (Yousf & Khurshid, 2021).

2.1.2 Conceptualization of social identity theory. Social identity theory (SIT) centers on the notion that individuals categorize themselves and others in several social categories and allocate to a specific environment that reduces uncertainty and shapes their social environment (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004). Tajfel (1978) has defined it as “as that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership”. The transition of self-identity into social identity is central to this theory. As a result, one tends to identify with positive organizational attributes and act following the organizational goals. The shared association infuses the feeling of pride and happiness among them. Organizational identification (OI) is defined as “the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of their membership in a particular organization” (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Here, the values, norms and beliefs of an organization are imbued in one’s self-concept (Sluss & Ashforth, 2008), where the power of identification is contingent upon the distinct characteristics of organizations’ values, reputation, awareness and competitive power (Ashorth & Mael, 1989). Even the reciprocity norm supports to social identity theory and argues that conformity to the values, beliefs, attitudes and feelings is a two-way dynamic and reciprocal process (Korte, 2007). Thus, when social identity is primary, one will act as a member of an organization, but when personal identity becomes primary, one will not (Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

2.2 Hypotheses development

2.2.1 Training and development and employee retention. Training and development as one of the critical employer branding dimensions involves providing employees with online training courses, conferences, seminars and workshops, career advancement opportunities, among other things. It has been advocated that employees are delighted when their organization spends on training and developing them as they get an opportunity to interact with experts from various fields (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Pertinent to the IT sector, it has been recognized to face many challenges, one being rapid technological changes demanding continuous training and retooling of professionals (Sharma, Singh, & Rana, 2018). A report by Capgemini stressed upon the rising talent gap between skilled and not so skilled employees, where the skill gap being highest in the USA (70%), India was ranked second with a skill gap of 64% (Some, 2019).

More pertinent to branding, researchers have associated training and development with employer branding and employee-related outcomes (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Bharadwaj *et al.*, 2021). Previous literature has demonstrated that job-centric development program imbues required skills to employees for enhancing their decisions to stay with an organization (Ahmad & Daud, 2016). Due to which, training employees has become more pressing among organizations for recruiting, engaging and retaining most sought after employees (Lievens, Van Hove, & Schreurs, 2005).

While various studies have examined the links between training and development and employee retention (ER) (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Khan *et al.*, 2021), the widening talent gap has made training and development an important element, influencing an employer branding strategy. Additionally, it is notable that numerous studies on employer branding have focused primarily on external stakeholders as *recruitment strategy* aimed at attracting prospective employees (Santos, Monteiro, Martinho, dos Reis, & Sousa, 2019), however, the empirical research on internal stakeholders is needed. Thus, it can be hypothesized that,

H1. Training and development has a positive relation with ER.

The social identity has been studied by researchers as an important theory that contributes positively to the process of attracting, retaining and motivating the employees (Khan *et al.*, 2021). The obligation toward the organizational brand emanates when individuals strongly identify with it. The degree of identification is subjected to how one defines and applies brand characteristics and behaves accordingly with others to become organizational member (Dechawatanapaisal, 2018). Prior work also supports that employer branding significantly influences OI among employees (Schlager, Bodderas, Maas, & Luc Cachelin, 2011). Reviewing training and development through social identity, organizational learning is subjected to the group and social norms. Korte (2007) in his article has furnished and analyzed training and development through social identity perspective with two critical examples of *socialization* and *strategic training*. Socialization is a process designed for newcomers to brief them about the values, beliefs and mission of the organization. This type of training is necessary to enable them to fit within the structure. As the traditional methods of training the newcomers are considered feudal, and learning and knowledge through delivery of experiences from the existing group members to the rookie are considered efficient, thus social identity acts as a key ingredient to influence employees' attitudes and behaviors. The author further stated that the process of socialization not only trains one to learn varied skills but also makes one participative, thus, building their social identities.

Moreover, the role of strategic human resource development (HRD) for training and development aims to align ones' goals with the organizational goals to foster learning (Yorks, 2005). Strategic training using ontological learning interventions about who the learner is and how learners' identity is changed are considered better than epistemological interventions that solely addresses the question of what the learners know (Wortham, 2004). These ontological interventions have been found to influence individuals' learning new skills and practices via social identity (Korte, 2007). Thus, it could be assumed that training design could foster a sense of oneness and belonging among employees. Thus, we hypothesized that,

H2. Training and development has a positive relation with OI.

2.3 Organizational identification and employee retention

OI evokes the sense of being "one" and internalizes organizations' goals and objectives among employees. According to Sluss and Ashforth (2008), a distinct employer brand improves identification **with an organization**, which has been shown to influence one's distinct behavior. It has been further asserted that employees with a strong sense of identity are considered better organizational citizens and are willing to stay for a long-term

(Vardaman, Allen, & Rogers, 2018; Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2020). Riketta's (2005) meta-analysis demonstrated that employees who strongly identify with their organization often display positive work-related attitudes such as organizational commitment, performance and satisfaction. Furthermore, past studies have also provided OI as a critical variable that impacts ER (Riketta, 2005). These findings have made scholars embrace OI as a *magic bullet* in pursuit to enhance various employee-related outcomes. Consequently, we hypothesized,

H3. OI has a positive relation with ER.

Social identity theory argues that a strong sense of identification motivate employees to further their memberships with the work organization (Ashorth & Mael, 1989). Scholars have supported the notion that a positive image and reputation could act as strong drivers of identification among employees (Edwards, 2010). In the employer branding context, individuals seek memberships of an organization with a strong brand image to enjoy psychological distinctiveness and enhanced positive identity (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019). It satisfies ones' need for high self-esteem and, in turn, intensifies the employer–employee relationships (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019).

Past studies provide that training may offer individuals with required knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of universal value that can be fully applied to their current work (Ahn & Huang, 2020). More pertinent to the branding concept, scholars have deliberated upon the need to focus on training and development interventions to enhance OI. For instance, according to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) employees pursue and may identify with those employers that stress the need to provide marketable skills to their employees through training and development programs. Furthermore, these training interventions have been studied to encourage employees' learning attitudes, playing an important role in eliciting their extra-role behavior (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014; Gupta, Bhasin, & Mushtaq, 2021).

Taking a cue from self-categorization theory, individual categorizes himself or herself and others in various social categories or groups (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2020). Employees striving for self-esteem are likely to engage with groups or those organizations that are consistent with their sense of self (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Utilizing self-categorization theory, employer brand messages in the form of value proposition could communicate to employees that their organizations provide them with high-quality employment experience, causing employees to identify strongly with their organizations, thus, exhibiting higher levels of retention.

However, the present research has identified one such study of Liu, Cai, Li, Shi, and Fang (2013) that has assessed the impact of OI and reported its intervening role in the relationship between HR practice and employee turnover intentions. Thus, its intervening role in the relationship between employer branding attribute of training and development and ER is needed. Given the paucity of literature in this area, we hypothesized,

H4. OI mediates the relationship between training and development and ER.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Sample selection

A survey questionnaire was administered, and the top three IT brands were selected based on “Employer Brand Research, Randstad”; “employer branding expert rankings of world’s most attractive employers, Universum”, and “great place to work”. The authors mailed the questionnaires and personally collected the data employing non-probability sampling, i.e. convenience sampling. Prior to being administered in the field, the questionnaire was pre-tested. A total of 100 respondents were contacted from the target population, out of which 76 responded. These respondents provided feedback that confirmed the proper flow of the

questionnaire. Although, according to [Isaac and Michael \(1997\)](#), 10-30 participants are enough for conducting a pilot study. Furthermore, the reliability of the measurement items was judged using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's value for all the constructs exceeded the recommended value of 0.70 ([Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009](#); [Nunnally, 1978](#)); thereafter no changes were deemed necessary in the original questionnaire.

The researcher managed to collect 352 valid data samples out of approximately 400 distributed questionnaires from professionals placed in IT hubs of Delhi-NCR and Bangalore, yielding a response rate of 87% ([Baruch & Holtom, 2008](#)). Furthermore, according to [Bryant and Yarnold \(1995\)](#), "one's sample should be at least five times the number of variables. The subjects-to-variables ratio should be five or greater". Additionally, "a good size sample, e.g. 200-500, is needed for multiple regression, analysis of covariance, or log-linear analysis, which might be performed for more rigorous state". Thus, sample of 352 (18-items) was found sufficient for the present study. Consequently, these responses were subjected to SPSS and Process Macro for analyzing the relationships among the study variables (refer to [Table 1](#) for demographic characteristics). The study has used PROCESS Macro for mediation analysis as it estimates all the path coefficients, standard errors, t and p-values, confidence intervals and indirect effect ([Hayes, 2012](#)).

3.2 Measurement scales

A seven-point Likert scale was used to gather the data. The following measurement scales were:

Training and development (T_D) – Six items of T_D were used given by [Tanwar and Prasad \(2017\)](#). Previous studies have also validated these items in the Indian context ([Khan et al., 2021](#)). The reliability was $\alpha = 0.88$.

Organizational identification (OI) – Six items were used to measure OI adopted from [Mael and Ashforth \(1992\)](#). The captured reliability was $\alpha = 0.88$.

Employee retention (ER) – ER was measured through items given by [Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsens, and Moeyaert \(2009\)](#). The reliability was $\alpha = 0.90$.

Variables	Subgroups	Frequency	Per cent
Years with the organization	0-3 years	129	36.6
	3-5 years	127	36.1
	More than 5 years	96	27.3
Gender	Female	134	38.1
	Male	218	61.9
Age	Less than 25 years	47	13.4
	25-39 years	265	75.3
Designation	40-54 years	40	11.4
	Managerial	125	35.5
	Non-Managerial	227	64.5
Marital status	Married	140	39.8
	Single	212	60.2
Education level	Graduate	125	35.5
	Post-graduate	204	58.0
	Others (e.g. executive program)	23	6.5
Nature of employment	Full-time	328	93.2
	Part-time	24	6.8
Source(s): Author's Work			

Table 1.
Demographic
profile *n* = 352

3.3 Analysis

Before examining the issue of common method variance, the boxplots were used to deal with the outliers. Since the data were gathered using a single questionnaire from all the employees, the chances of common method variance cannot be neglected. The Harman one-factor test revealed that common method variance was less of a concern because all of the item loadings on a general factor accounted for less than 50%, i.e. 32% in our study (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

3.3.1 Reliability and correlation statistics. Cronbach's α was used to test the internal consistency of measurement scale. The analysis reported α values more than 0.70 are acceptable, confirming the reliability of scales (Nunnally, 1978). The correlation statistics reported a positive association between T_D and ER ($r = 0.50, p < 0.01$), OI and ER ($r = 0.80, p < 0.01$) and further; T_D and OI ($r = 0.51, p < 0.01$) as depicted in Table 2.

Further, the results of principal component analysis coupled with varimax rotation reported that the items loaded on their respective factors and the loadings ranged from 0.62 to 0.81. The values of composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.70 and 0.50, respectively confirms the convergent validity of items (Pallant, 2010). In the present study, values of CR and AVE for all the constructs were greater than 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. The data were checked for conformity using sample adequacy measure of Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) and χ^2 approximation for Bartlett's Sphericity test. The KMO met the minimum standard of 0.70; KMO = 0.95, and Bartlett's Sphericity test at $p < 0.01$ was also significant as depicted in Table 3.

3.3.2 Data analysis and hypotheses testing results. We tested our proposed model by controlling the effects of four other employer branding dimensions proposed by Tanwar and Prasad (2017) namely, healthy work atmosphere, corporate social responsibility, work-life balance and compensation and benefits. The first set of hypotheses, H1 analyzed the relationship between T_D and ER. The regression showed a significant positive relationship between T_D and ER ($c = 0.30, t = 7.74, p < 0.01$). H2 tested the relationship between T_D and OI; and depicted a significant positive relationship between T_D and OI ($a = 0.30, t = 7.87, p < 0.01$). H3 assessed the relationship between OI and ER. The results showed that OI has a significant positive relationship with ER ($b = 0.73, t = 19.20, p < 0.01$). The result of mediation for H4 showed the direct path from T_D to ER is diminished and also significant ($c' = 0.08, t = 2.75, p < 0.01$), indicating a partial mediation. This implies that OI has a mediating effect on the relationship between T_D and ER. Further, it is evident that zero does not lie between lower (LLCI) and upper confidence intervals (ULCI); depicting a significant indirect effect = 0.22 (LLCI = 0.1388; ULCI = 0.3208). Table 4 and Figure 1 present the regression results.

4. Discussion and implications

The proposed model demonstrates the need to collaborate social identity with employer branding in a competitive dynamic market. Grounded on the SIT, the research has studied the nexus between training and development and retention of employees with OI as a mediator.

Items	Mean	SD	T_D	OI	ER
T_D	4.97	1.33	(0.88)		
OI	5.74	0.99	0.51**	(0.88)	
ER	5.81	1.03	0.50**	0.80**	(0.90)

Note(s): The value of Cronbach's alpha is shown in parentheses in italic diagonally in the matrix, ** $p < 0.01$, T_D- Training and development, OI- Organizational identification, ER- Employee retention

Source(s): Author's Work

Table 2.
Mean, standard
deviation (SD) and
correlation statistics

Table 3.
Factor analysis and
validity statistics

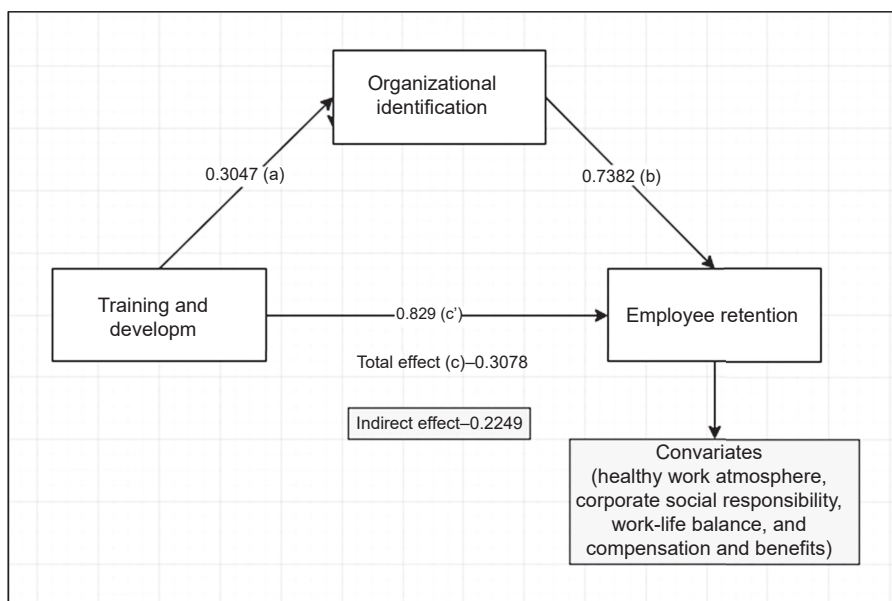
<i>Items</i>	<i>T_D</i>	<i>OI</i>	<i>ER</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>CR</i>
T_D1	0.78			0.59	0.90
T_D2	0.79				
T_D3	0.77				
T_D4	0.70				
T_D5	0.81				
T_D6	0.71				
OI1		0.77		0.51	0.86
OI2		0.77			
OI3		0.79			
OI4		0.63			
OI5		0.61			
OI6		0.64			
ER1			0.68	0.56	0.89
ER2			0.81		
ER3			0.62		
ER4			0.80		
ER5			0.80		
ER6			0.71		
Note(s): KMO 0.95					
Approx. Chi-square 3845.85					
df 153					
Sig. 0.000					
KMO- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin, CA- Cronbach's alpha, AVE- Average variance extracted, CR- Composite reliability					
Source(s): Author's Work					

Table 4.
Regression output

	<i>b</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
<i>Outcome: OI</i>					
T_D (a)	0.30**	0.03	7.87	0.2286	0.3808
<i>Outcome: ER</i>					
T_D (c')	0.08**	0.03	2.75	0.0238	0.1420
OI (b)	0.73**	0.03	19.20	0.6626	0.8138
<u>Total effect</u>					
<i>Outcome: ER</i>					
T_D (c)	0.30**	0.03	7.74	0.2296	0.3860
Note(s): Indirect effect					
(a*b) 0.22, ** 0.04, 0.1388, 0.3208					
** <i>p</i> < 0.01, b- Unstandardized coefficients, se- Standard error, LLCI- Lower level of confidence interval,					
ULCI-Upper level of confidence interval					
Source(s): Author's Work					

The data asserted that ones' identification with their organization manifests in the employer branding dimension of training and development that influences the turnover intentions of employees.

As an employer branding strategy offers a bundle of employer value propositions such as healthy work atmosphere, corporate social responsibility, work-life balance and compensation and benefits (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017), thus, these have been controlled for to get the significance of training and development as an independent employer branding attribute. The study puts forward that training and development could create a sense of progression among employees and act as a vehicle for attracting and retaining employees



Source(s): "Author's Work"

Figure 1. Mediation model depicting direct and indirect relationships between training and development and employee retention (process macro)

(Kuchеров & Zamulin, 2016). Employees are more likely to see training and development programs as an opportunity to reciprocate, thereby enhancing their sense of identification with an organization.

In the light of the above argument, the relevance of training and development among Indian IT professionals could be related to the rapid growth of technology, causing a desire among employees to obtain the necessary set of skills for employment (Khan *et al.*, 2021). The finding aligns with the previous research that has reported a positive relationship between training and development and ER (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016).

Additionally, social identity has been found to advance opportunities to reinforce the understanding of the significant impact of training and development interventions undertaken by training professionals to influence the learning environment (Korte, 2007). The study proposed that these interventions provide marketable skills to the employees, making them proficient enough to attune to the technological advancements. This further infuses pride and builds affiliation (Peterson, 2004) among employees while working in an organization that stresses on training and developing each employee.

The research further holds that positive identity could escort the sense of belongingness and oneness among employees, thereby influencing their intentions to remain for a longer duration in an organization. Prior studies have examined the concept of OI in **enhancing one's intention to stay** (Vardaman *et al.*, 2018; Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2020); the result also puts forward the importance of a positive social identity in retaining IT professionals. This asserts that IT professionals will not leave their current jobs when they perceive themselves as part of their employers.

The results also puts forward that employees identify with organizations' differentiating branding attributes that enhances their decisions to stay in an organization (Kashyap & Verma, 2018); thus reflecting upon the need to add training and development interventions in the bundle of employer branding attributes. It directs organizations to increase their investment in training in practice. The findings align with the previous work (Kashyap &

Rangnekar, 2014; Gupta *et al.*, 2021), which points out that OI could serve as an explanation for the relationship between training and development and ER. Aligning with the self-categorization theory, an employer–employee relationship could be improved by providing high-quality employment experience to employees, leading to enhanced identification and retention level (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2020).

4.1 Theoretical implications

This study aimed to investigate how training and development affect employee's intentions to stay in an organization. Researchers in the past reveal that a considerable research on branding has focused on potential employees as a "recruitment strategy" (Gomes & Neves, 2011; Sharma & Prasad, 2018). However, studies on employer branding as a "retention strategy" have received less attention and empirical investigations are needed to validate the same.

The present study aimed to develop a conceptual model, examining the links between employer branding attribute of training and development, retention and OI. The survey of employees has added insights to validate the proposed theoretical model. Work-related factors, including the intangible factor of employee's training and career development could enhance their retention levels (Kashyap & Verma, 2018; Khan *et al.*, 2021). Development value with growth drivers implies the presence of meaningful work, thereby driving employees to continue with their employers (Ahmad & Daud, 2016).

The results further indicate that the degree to which current employees identify with an organization depends upon the strength of their social identity. Research fetches enough empirical support that employees are better able to identify with those organizations that are unique, focusing on instrumental attribute of training and development for retaining employees. Therefore, strategizing a brand around development value could work as an effective tool to enhance OI. This adds to the argument that employees continue to work and contribute to achieving the targets of an organization if they feel that these values are preserved.

4.2 Managerial implications

For managers, the study implicates, first, the role of training and development as an effective mechanism that helps employers distinguish from similar competitors. The results depict that it is important to enhance the continuous learning experience of employees via various development programs such as coaching and mentoring (Khan *et al.*, 2021). According to Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), "implementing accelerated and dialed down career paths may result in retaining top performers". Therefore, managers are required to make sure that the career path of employees are clearly mapped out to enable employees attune to the new skills required for future development (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017).

While crafting policies, it is important that organizations should have provisions for online training courses, conferences and workshops; offering opportunities to employees to engage them in foreign projects; have a substantial percentage of funds in the training and development budget; an environment of continuous skill development for the career progression of employees.

Second, the importance of training and development could adhere to the fact that the Indian education system lacks to attune the curriculum to the expeditious technological environment (Khan *et al.*, 2021). The students who will become future employees are generally less skilled and expect companies to provide an environment to impart necessary KSAs among them. Thus, managers should focus on continuous tooling and retooling employees for their career development.

Third, the study pinpoints that training and development, while being critical for positive employee outcomes, may not certainly enhance employees' intent to stay unless employees strongly identify with it. Organizations can utilize a variety of communication channels to spread the best practices for their employer brand. For instance, designing interventions directed at

improving the training and development programs and adding an ingredient of oneness to have a possible positive impact on their behavior. This can assist employees in strengthening the congruence between personal and organizational values.

5. Limitations and future direction

The study suffers from a few limitations that can be addressed in the future researches. First, the sample consists of employees working in the IT companies. So, the future studies can replicate this model in other sectors too. Second, the paper has examined the role of training and development as an employer branding dimension; future studies can consider other dimensions to frame new hypotheses and make new inferences. Third, attempts have been made to eliminate common method bias but it cannot be ignored completely. The study is cross-sectional, so it will be crucial to design longitudinal research to respond to the changing needs of the employees. Fourth, future researches can also assess the effect of other mediating variables like commitment, job satisfaction and person-organization fit. Finally, the research was not intended to assess the perceptions of prospective employees; rather, it was aimed at surveying current employees who are *living the brand*. So, in future it will be worthwhile to examine the role of training and development in achieving external employer branding goals.

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Further reading

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