

**EMPLOYER BRANDING AND ORGANISATIONAL APPEAL: ANALYSING THE  
FUNCTION OF BRAND TRUST AS A MEDIATING FACTOR****Puja Kumari\* and Dr. Mili Dutta\*\***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study looked into how brand trust affects how prospective candidates see the company and how it communicates the employer brand image to them. Through the use of step-wise linear regression, 211 prospective job seekers' data were examined in SPSS 22. According to the study, potential applicants' perceptions of an organisation as an attractive employer were influenced by their faith in its brand, which in turn strongly predicted the organization's attractiveness. It has also been scientifically demonstrated that brand trust acts as a mediator between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness. This suggests that brand trust functions as a middleman, converting favourable employer brand views into an organisation that attracts more prospective candidates. In addition to offering theoretical insights into the dynamics of employer branding, brand trust, and organisation attractiveness in the context of recruiting, the study emphasises the strategic significance of developing brand trust to improve employer brand perception among potential applicants. It provides insightful managerial advice for businesses, especially those in the Indian IT industry, highlighting the need of putting a strong emphasis on brand trust to build employer brands and draw in top candidates in a cutthroat labour market.

**Keywords:** Employer brand (EB), Mediator; Brand trust (BT), organization attractiveness (OA)

**1. Introduction**

Attracting prospective employees to an organisation is the primary goal of recruitment (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). However, in the contemporary corporate environment, issues like globalisation, high technology usage, ageing populations, and fierce market competition make it difficult for organisations to hire new employees (Ployhart, Tippins & Schmitt, 2017). A "war for talent" has resulted from these difficulties since there aren't enough competent applicants (Lievens et al., 2005). Businesses view elite talent as essential to their operations and understand how important it is to hire those (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). However, in the current environment of heightened global competitiveness, firms everywhere are having difficulty locating competent personnel due to a lack of skilled experts (Schlechter et al., 2014). Since human capital is seen as a crucial element in obtaining sustained competitive advantages, an organization's performance primarily depends on its capacity to draw in and keep talented workers (Bryme, Molloy & Gilbert, 2014; Baum & Kabst, 2014).

Organisations must concentrate on talent attraction and retention methods in order to acquire a competitive edge and get past these obstacles (Boxall and Purcell, 2003; Barney and Wright, 1998). Here's where brand trust may act as a vital mediator during the hiring process. The degree of trust and confidence that prospective employees have in the company as an employer is known as brand trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Potential applicants are informed that an organisation is a dependable and trustworthy employer when it has a strong employer brand and high brand trust (Schelechter, Hung, & Bussin, 2014). We argue that the favourable and affective bond established by brand trust amplifies the organization's appeal and standing as a sought-after employer. Candidates are more likely to be drawn to a company they believe will live up to its promises and which they trust. Employer branding initiatives can build brand trust and have a favourable impact on how prospective candidates view the company. Examples of these initiatives include promoting the organization's values, work culture, benefits, and career progression prospects. According to Nasir et al. (2023), an employer brand that is powerful and in line with candidates' beliefs can increase brand trust and, as a result, attract more candidates to the organisation. In conclusion, given the difficulties in hiring and the fierce "war for talent," brand trust is essential in acting as a mediator and helping companies draw in and keep top talent. Positive opinions of the company are fostered by a strong employer brand and brand trust, which increases the organization's attraction to prospective candidates.

The relationship between employer brand, brand trust, and organisation attractiveness is the study's main focus. Organisations increasingly understand how critical it is to build a strong employer brand in order to draw in and keep top people. An organization's reputation as an employer of choice (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019) among its present and prospective workforce is referred to as its employer brand. The effect of employer brand on commitment, engagement, and retention of employees has been the subject of numerous research (Yadav, Kumar & Mishra, 2020; Kashyap and Rangnekar, 2016; Kashyap and Rangnekar, 2014). The aforementioned studies have illuminated the significance of fostering a favourable employer brand in order to augment the entire employee experience and propel organisational prosperity. Research has also focused on the relationship between employer brand and organisation attractiveness. Prospective workers or job seekers are likely to view an organisation with a strong employer brand as an attractive and desirable place to work. However, prior research has mostly examined the impact of trust on employer brand attractiveness and brand personality from the perspective of present employees (Rampl and Kenning, 2014); thus, there is a knowledge vacuum regarding the ways in which brand trust affects organisation attractiveness from that of prospective employees or job seekers. By investigating the direct and indirect relationships between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness, the proposed study aims to close this research gap. It aims to comprehend how an organization's perceived appeal to prospective recruits is influenced by a positive employer brand. The study will also investigate brand trust's mediation function in this relationship.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Employer Brand**

Employer branding plays a crucial role in the recruitment and retention of talent in today's fiercely competitive job market (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2014). It encompasses an organization's ability to attract and retain exceptional individuals, constituting a wide array of

advantages offered to prospective employees, spanning psychological, functional, and financial factors (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Ambler and Barrow (1996) propose that the concept of employer branding stands as a comprehensive framework adopted by management to enhance productivity, bolster employee commitment, facilitate more effective recruitment, and improve retention rates. Employer branding, as highlighted by Ewing et al. (2002), represents the message conveyed by an employer to potential employees, whether intentionally or inadvertently, aiming to cultivate a favourable impression of the organization. Stotz and Wedel (2013) emphasize that the primary objective of an employer brand is to establish a positive image within its target audience, positioning the organization as the preferred choice of employer and ultimately becoming an 'employer of choice.'

In the context of the current study, the focus lies on the early stages of recruitment, where an organization's appeal and attractiveness are influenced by its employer brand. This encompasses how potential applicants perceive various organizational characteristics, including pay, opportunities for career advancement, job location, and career enhancement programs (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Cable & Graham, 2000; Turban & Keon, 1993).

Despite its significance, prior research has given scant attention to how brand perception is developed, managed, and communicated throughout the recruitment process (Lievens and Slaughter, 2016). Micik and Micuduva's (2018) research suggests that effectively communicating an organization's culture or brand positively impacts its image. Additionally, Collins and Kanar (2014) highlight the substantial impact of how an organization presents its employer brand image on prospective employees' perceptions. As a result, companies prioritize endorsing a distinct and positive brand image to attract candidates successfully (Carpentier et al., 2017). Organizations that effectively communicate a compelling employer brand image are more likely to experience favorable outcomes at the organizational level (Priyadarshi, 2011). Moreover, Cable and Turban (2001) underscore the importance of exhibiting the brand in attracting talent to companies.

## **2.2 Organization Appeal or attractiveness**

Jiang and Iles (2011) offer a significant definition of organizational attraction as "The power that draws applicants' attention to focus on an employer brand and encourage existing employees to stay." This concept, as elucidated by Highhouse et al. (2003), is crucial in understanding organizational behaviour and human resource management. It emphasizes the role of organizational attractiveness in shaping employment decisions and outcomes, highlighting that individuals actively evaluate organizations based on their preferences and goals rather than solely pursuing job opportunities.

Turban et al. (1998) further contribute to this understanding by identifying positive organizational image and salary incentives as factors related to organizational attraction. Jiang and Iles (2011) stress the importance of employer brand factors, particularly the development value, economic value, social value, and interest value, along with brand trust dimensions, in improving applicant attraction. Rynes et al. (1991) describe organization attraction as the extent to which current and prospective employees perceive the organization positively as a desirable place to work, while Aiman-Smith (2001) equates it with the favorable attitude of job-seekers towards an organization. Cable and Turban (2001) underline organization attractiveness as a source of competitive advantage for employers in attracting job-seekers with the necessary

skills and knowledge required by the organization. Therefore, understanding and effectively managing organizational attraction, encompassing employer branding, brand trust, and various factors influencing candidate perceptions, are essential for organizations seeking to attract and retain top talent in today's competitive job market.

### **2.3 Brand Trust:**

The willingness of the average consumer to put their faith in a brand's ability to achieve its stated goals is known as brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001, p. 82). When there is knowledge asymmetry and possible opportunism, trust becomes more important. There is an increase in trust when there is less information asymmetry. Thus, by giving consumers vital information about the product and the brand, brands may foster trust in their clients (Chiu, Huang, & Yen, 2010; Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust is the conviction that a group's exchange partner is trustworthy and honest. When someone is in a dangerous position, trust is a state of positive expectancies about the intentions of other parties (Boon & Holmes, 1991). The ability of a brand to be depended upon is known as brand trust or brand reliability. This trust is a result of consumers' belief—known as brand intention—that the product will live up to the expectations set forth. In turn, this assurance stems from the conviction that the brand puts the needs of the customer first (Delgado & Munuera, 2005). The most important component of a brand is trust, which has the power to increase or decrease the brand's value. Several literatures in marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Nasir et al., 2023; Liu, Guo, and Le, 2011; Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001) related brand trust to the product and consumer's purchase intentions and loyalty towards it. Customers develop a feeling of attachment to the brand as a result. According to Moormal et al. (1992), in marketing context, trust can influence consumers' decisions to purchase a brand, suggesting that a brand can elicit emotional ties with consumers. Conversely, brand trust was described by Delgado and Munuera (2005) as the brand's ability to satisfy the needs of its customers. As a result, one element that can create strong emotional connections with the brand and encourage customer loyalty is brand trust. It is essential to building brand loyalty among consumers and has a big effect on a product's long-term viability. A brand gains market share and establishes it more when customers trust it. Lau and Lee (1999) assert that innovative approaches to creating strong emotional bonds with customers and reliably supplying a range of complete product features can foster consumer trust in a brand. Brand trust is fundamental to consumer-brand connections and is directly associated with brand loyalty, as noted by Morgan and Hunt (1994). The degree of brand trust increases with the degree of brand values' alignment with customer values. According to Lau and Lee (1999), brand trust is characterised by customers' propensity to rely on a brand, particularly when faced with potential risks and the expectation of positive outcomes.

Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) underscore that consumers' readiness to place their trust in a brand's ability to perform as promised is a key component of brand trust. Chi et al. (2009) emphasise that brand trust is a measure of how consumers view a business's expertise in providing dependable products with all the features they need, quality control, and top-notch customer service. According to Liu, Guo, and Le (2011), trust plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making and eventually results in brand loyalty, which fortifies the long-term bond between customers and the brand.

In conclusion, a consumer's activity that is indicative of a trustworthy and conscientious relationship that produces favourable results between the consumer and the brand is known as brand trust. Consumers and the company need to agree on something in order for brand trust to grow, and pertinent information is essential. Brand trust increases when a company's actions, words, and communications match what customers consider to be worth it. Consumer perceptions of the product/brand's trust worthiness contribute to an even greater degree of brand trust (Funder & Morgan, 2015; Baroughi & ZAREI, 2013).

#### **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

A useful paradigm for comprehending the relationships between employer brand, brand trust, and organisational attractiveness is the Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964). In social interactions, resources are exchanged with the expectation of reciprocal gain between individuals or entities, according to SET. This theory can be used to explain the mutually beneficial relationship that exists between employers and employees in the context of employer branding. According to the SET principle of reciprocity, employees grow trusting of their employers when they invest in creating a positive employer brand through equitable HR practices, open communication, and employee-centric policies (Gouldner, 1960). The basis of a solid employer-employee relationship is trust. According to SET, when one party does actions that indicate support and good intentions, the other party will respond in kind (Blau, 1964). Organisational efforts to establish and preserve a distinctive employer brand send a message of support to workers in the context of employer branding (Whitener, 1997). Consequently, workers show their dedication to the company in return. The favourable interactions among employer brand, brand trust, and organisational support add to the organization's allure. An organization's appeal to both present and prospective employees is increased when it has a great employer brand and a supportive work environment.

#### **2.5 Relationship between the Key Concepts**

Backhaus and Tikoo's (2004) model underscores the significance of actively managing and nurturing the employer brand to efficiently attract and retain high talent. By comprehending the sequence of steps that contribute to employer attraction, organizations can strategically position themselves as appealing employers, thereby enhancing their attractiveness to job seekers. Tanwar and Kumar (2019) highlight an interesting observation in their findings, indicating the absence of a direct relationship between employer branding (EB) dimensions and being perceived as an 'employer of choice.' This term refers to prospective applicants feeling that their values and expectations align with the offerings of the organization. Conversely, Agrawal and Swaroop (2009) along with Chhabra and Sharma (2014) empirically establish a positive and significant relationship between a positive employer brand image and students' intentions to apply to a particular company.

Moroko and Uncles (2009) emphasize one crucial characteristic of employer branding, which is fulfilling a psychological contract. This aspect holds significant importance as successful employer brands are perceived to align consistently with the implicit promises of the brand. This consistent fulfillment of promises strengthens employees' perception of trust in the organization. Kashyap and Rangnekar (2016) highlighted that when it comes to current employees and retention, how workers view their employers—including their dedication to transparent policies, honest communication, and interactions while putting employer-branding

practices into practice—is critical to fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust and solid employee-employer bonds. In turn, this reciprocal trust is crucial for improving staff retention in businesses.

Searle et al. (2011) elucidate trust in the employer brand as confidence in the working processes, organizational procedures, and overall internalization of the firm. Considering that brand trust implies reliability, confidence, and trustworthiness in the firm, it is evident that fostering brand trust can enhance both the brand's value and attractiveness, thus increasing the appeal for individuals to work with the firm. When a company is associated with a high level of brand trust, prospective employees perceive it as dependable and trustworthy, leading to a positive employee experience. This favorable perception attracts potential applicants to the organization, thereby enhancing its appeal as a desirable place to work (Kleine et al., 2019).

### Proposed Hypotheses for the Study

Thus, we hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 1:** The attractiveness of an organisation is positively and directly correlated with the aspects of the employer brand.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive correlation between brand trust and how prospective candidates view the company brand.

**Hypothesis 3:** Organisation attraction is positively impacted by brand trust.

**Hypothesis 4:** The association between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness is mediated by brand trust.

**Table 1: Details of the Measures**

S. No.	Dimensions	Total Items	Source	Cronbach's Alpha
1.	Employer Brand	25	Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005	0.930
2.	Brand Trust	5	Hon & Grunig, (1999) and Kim et al., 2014	0.843
3.	Organization Attractiveness	3	Lievens et al., 2005	0.716

(Source: Author's creation from primary data)

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis**

S.N	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1.	Employer brand	3.75	0.60	(0.93)		
2.	Brand trust	3.90	0.581	0.845**	(0.843)	
3.	Organization attractiveness	3.39	0.85	0.703**	0.688**	(0.716)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Cronbach's alpha value represented diagonally within bracket

(Source: Author's creation from primary data)

### 3. Methodology

**3.1 Sample characteristics and Procedures:** The survey included 211 final-year B.Tech, BE, and MCA students looking for work in the Indian IT industry. The focus of this study was the

Indian IT industry, which was chosen since it was named the "most attractive sector" by the Randstad Employer Brand Awards for 2020 and 2021. Out of the approximately 300 potential participants that the researchers contacted, 211 replies were deemed suitable for examination within a four-month period. Among the 211 participants, 140 (66.35%) self-identified as male, and 71 (33.65%) as female. In terms of education, 64 (30.2%) participants were post-graduates, 19 (9%) individuals had various educational backgrounds, and 128 (60.4%) participants were graduates. The respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 40, with the majority of them being in the 20–25 age groups.

### 3.2 Measures:

A total of 33 items (questions) from recognised standard scales were included in this study. The respondents rated their answers on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 meant "strongly disagree" and 5 meant "strongly agree." English was used to administer the questionnaire. In order to learn more about the participants, demographic questions were also added to the questionnaire.

For each of the three constructs, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was calculated in order to evaluate the measurement's dependability. The recommended criterion of 0.7 (Hair et al., 1995) was exceeded by the Cronbach's alpha values, which ranged from 0.716 to 0.930. This shows a valid measurement for the variables under study and that the internal consistency of the items within each construct was satisfactory.

**Employer brand:** The Employer Attractiveness Scale (EmpAt), created by Berthon et al. (2005), was used to measure employer attractiveness in this study. Twenty-five indicators make up the scale, which is divided into five categories: interest value ("The organisation produces high-quality products and services"), development value ("Gaining career-enhancing experience"), social value ("Happy work environment"), economic value ("Good promotion opportunities within the organisation"), and application value ("Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution"). On the scale, there are twenty-five indicators total. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to evaluate the EmpAt scale's reliability; the result was 0.924. There is significant internal consistency among the scale's items, as indicated by this high Cronbach's alpha number. It implies that the EmpAt scale's indicators are capable of accurately gauging the many aspects of employer attractiveness, which makes it a reliable and valid measurement tool for this research.

**Organization attractiveness:** "This organisation would be a good place to work for me" was one of the scale items that was taken from Lievens et al. (2005) and used in this study. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the specific scale's reliability; the resultant computed value was 0.716. This number shows that the three items have an appropriate degree of internal consistency, indicating that they are accurately measuring a similar concept..

**Brand Trust:** Four items from Hon and Grunig (1999) and one self-created item were combined in this study to examine the mediating variable to assess brand trust. Kim et al., (2014). Cronbach alpha was used to evaluate the dependability of this specific scale, and the resultant value was 0.843.

## 4. Data Analysis & Interpretation

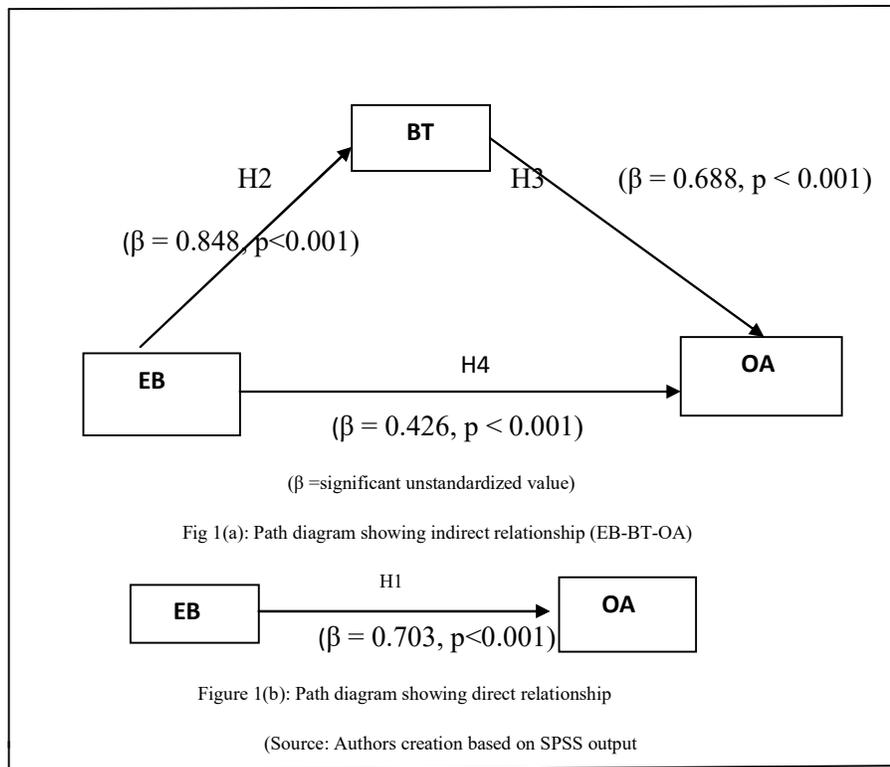
Investigating the function of brand trust as a mediator in the relationship between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness is the primary goal of this study. Step-wise

regression was used with SPSS 22 to examine this association, and a number of control variables were taken into account, including age, gender, highest degree, and work experience. The study assessed whether brand trust functions as a mediator between employer brand perception (an independent variable) and organisation attractiveness (a dependent variable), using the mediation analysis approach described by Baron and Kenny (1986). The mediation can be established when four conditions are met:

- (1) The independent variable (employer brand) has a significant effect on the mediating variable (brand trust).
- (2) The independent variable (employer brand) must influence the dependent variable (organization attractiveness) when the mediator (brand trust) is not considered.
- (3) The mediating variable (brand trust) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (organization attractiveness).
- (4) Finally, adding brand trust as a mediator to the model reduces or eliminates the impact of the independent variable (employer brand impression) on the dependent variable (organisation attractiveness). Through the use of these procedures, the study hopes to learn more about the process by which employer brand perception affects organisation attractiveness and whether or not brand trust is important in this relationship.

**Findings:**

For each of the study's constructs, Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics, correlations, and scale reliability findings. Brand trust has a mean value of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.581 across the three constructs, but employer brand impression has a mean value of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 0.60. In contrast, the mean value of organisation attractiveness is 3.39, with a standard deviation of 0.86. The scale's internal consistency or reliability is indicated by the Cronbach's alpha scores for each construct. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.9, employer brand is the most reliable, followed by brand trust (0.843) and organisation attractiveness (0.716). Since these values are higher than the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, as recommended by Nunnally (1978), they imply very good to exceptional scale reliability. This suggests that each scale has a high degree of homogeneity, guaranteeing that the items measure the corresponding constructs consistently. Furthermore, at the 0.01 significance level, the correlation analysis reveals positive correlations between each of the three constructs.



According to the path diagram 1(a), there is a high positive link ( $r = 0.848$ ) between employer brand perception (EBP) and brand trust (BT). There is a positive correlation between brand trust (BT) and organisation attractiveness, as evidenced by the correlation coefficient of 0.688. The correlation coefficient between employer brand (EB) and overall organisation attractiveness is 0.703 (fig1b), suggesting a favourable association between employer brand perception and overall organisation attractiveness. These correlation coefficients imply that the constructs are connected and are probably going to be important in the mediation analysis that is being done.

The study evaluated four different models using step-wise regression in order to assess the proposed hypotheses. The first hypothesis (H1) primarily aimed to evaluate the possible impact of employer brand on the attractiveness of the organisation. Regressing the organisation attractiveness on the predictor variable, employer brand perception, allowed for the examination of H1. With an F-value of 205.433 and p-value of  $\leq 0.001$ , the findings showed that employer brand perception substantially impacted organisation attractiveness. This suggests that OA is significantly enhanced by the way one perceives the EB ( $\beta = 0.703, p \leq 0.001$ ) refer fig 1(b). These findings clearly demonstrate the beneficial impact of employer brand perception on organisation attractiveness. Furthermore, the model explains 49.5% of the variance in organisation attractiveness, according to the R-squared value of 0.495. Table 4 presents an overview of these findings.

The strong correlation found between the perception of the employer brand and the attractiveness of the organisation implies that prospective employees' perceptions of the employer brand have an impact on their attraction to the company. According to the R-squared

value, the employer brand's impression accounts for about 49.5% of the variation in organisation attractiveness. This bolsters the idea that, in the fiercely competitive job market, corporate branding plays a critical role in drawing in and retaining potential candidates.

**Table 4: Hypotheses table**

	Hypotheses	Regression weights	$\beta$ - coefficient	$R^2$	p-value	Hypothesis supported
Model 1	H1	EBP $\rightarrow$ OA	0.703	0.495	.000	Yes
Model 2	H2	EBP $\rightarrow$ BT	0.848	0.719	.000	Yes
Model 3	H3	BT $\rightarrow$ OA	0.688	0.474	.000	Yes

*Source: Authors' creation,*

The purpose of the second hypothesis (H2) was to investigate if employer brand perception significantly affects brand trust. The dependent variable, brand trust, was regressed on the independent variable, employer brand impression, in order to test this hypothesis. With an F-value of 537.582 and a p-value of  $\leq 0.001$ , the regression analysis's findings showed that employer brand perception strongly influenced brand trust. This suggests that brand trust is significantly influenced by how people perceive their employer brand ( $\beta = 0.848$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings unequivocally show that employer brand perception has a favourable impact on brand trust. Moreover, the R-squared value of 0.719 suggests that 71.9% of the variation in brand trust can be explained by the model. This strong R-squared value indicates that changes in employer brand perception can account for a sizable amount of the variation in brand trust. Table 4 presents an overview of these findings.

The strong correlation found between employer brand and brand trust suggests that prospective employees' perceptions of employers have a big impact on their level of brand trust. The strong R-squared value indicates that employer brand perception accounts for a significant amount of the variation in brand trust. This study highlights the significance of cultivating a favourable and captivating employer brand image in order to cultivate brand trust among prospective candidates.

The third hypothesis (H3) seeks to determine if organisation attractiveness is significantly impacted by brand trust. The dependent variable, organisation attractiveness, was regressed on the independent variable, brand trust, in order to test this hypothesis. With an F-value of 188.912 and a p-value of  $\leq 0.001$ , the regression analysis's findings show that brand trust strongly influenced organisation attractiveness. This indicates that the degree of brand trust is a major factor in increasing the organization's attractiveness ( $\beta = 0.688$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ). These findings unequivocally show that brand trust has a beneficial impact on an organization's attractiveness. Moreover, the R-squared value of 0.474 shows that 47.4% of the variance in organisation attractiveness is explained by the model. This suggests that changes in brand trust account for a significant percentage of the variation in organisation attractiveness. Table 4 presents an overview of these findings.

The strong correlation shown between brand trust and organisation attractiveness implies that an organization's overall attractiveness is influenced by a higher degree of brand trust. According to the R-squared value, brand trust accounts for about 47.4% of the variation in

organisation attractiveness. This research emphasises how crucial it is to establish and preserve brand trust in order to improve the organization's overall attractiveness to prospective candidates.

The objective of the fourth hypothesis (H4) is to investigate the joint influence of employer brand perception and brand trust on the attractiveness of an organisation. The dependent variable, organisation attractiveness, was regressed on the independent variables, employer brand perception and brand trust, in order to test this hypothesis. Regression analysis results showed that organisation attractiveness was positively correlated with employer brand impression and brand trust, with  $\beta$  values of 0.426 ( $p < 0.001$ ) and 0.326 ( $p \leq 0.001$ ), respectively. The R-squared value of 0.525 shows that the model explains roughly 52.5% of the variation in organisation attractiveness, indicating that changes in employer brand perception and brand trust can account for a sizable portion of the variation in organisation attractiveness. Additionally, when adding brand trust to the model, the beta coefficient fell from 0.703 ( $p < 0.001$ ) to 0.426 ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) when examining the impact of employer brand perception on organisation attractiveness. The decline in the influence of employer brand perception suggests the presence of mediation, indicating that brand trust serves as a mediator in the relationship between employer brand perception and the attractiveness of the organization (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Finally, it was discovered that there was a positive correlation between employer brand impression and brand trust and organisation attractiveness, indicating that the fourth hypothesis was partially validated. Furthermore, it was found that the association between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness was mediated by brand trust. The findings of the summary are presented in the table 4.

The findings highlight how crucial employer brand perception and brand trust are in determining how appealing an organisation is to prospective candidates in general.

**Table 4: Model 4, Testing indirect relation between EB and OA**

Hypothesis	Regression weights	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$ coefficient	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis supported
H4 EBP→BT→ OA		0.525	115.284	0.426	3.633	.000	yes

(Source: Author creation based on SPSS output)

### Discussion on Findings

In the context of the Indian IT sector, the study's findings offer significant insights into the relationship among employer brand perception, brand trust, and organisation attractiveness. The primary goal of the research was to investigate how employer brand perception affects an organization's appeal to potential hires and how brand trust functions as a mediator in this relationship. The outcomes showed a number of significant conclusions that clarified the workings of employer branding and its impact on luring in new hires.

First of all, the study verified that the perception of an employer's brand has a noteworthy and favourable impact on the attractiveness of the organisation. This implies that prospective employees' impression of an organization's attractiveness is significantly influenced by their impression of the organisation as an employer. An organization's attractiveness to prospective

workers can be increased by having a positive employer brand perception, which will make it a more competitive and desirable employer in the labour market. These results are consistent with earlier studies that emphasise the strategic importance of employer branding in obtaining a competitive edge and drawing in top people (Barney, 1991).

Second, the study found that brand trust is significantly and favourably impacted by employer brand impression. According to this research, prospective candidates who have a favourable impression of the employer brand are more likely to have faith in the organization's reputation. It implies that strong employer branding initiatives, such showcasing an organization's culture and principles, can foster trust in the company's reputation and identity and hence influence prospective candidates' decision-making.

Thirdly, it was discovered that organisation attractiveness was significantly and favourably impacted by brand trust. This demonstrates how important brand trust is in shaping prospective employees' opinions of a company as a desirable place to work. A greater degree of brand trust can help prospective employees feel more at ease and confident about the company by fostering a sense of dependability, trustworthiness, and confidence. This result is in line with earlier studies (Yadav, Kumar & Mishra, 2020; Kashyap and Rangnekar, 2016) that highlight the significance of brand trust in fostering consumer loyalty and favourable impressions about a brand.

Lastly, the study showed that the association between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness is significantly mediated by brand trust. When brand trust was incorporated into the model, brand trust acted as a partial mediating factor between employer brand perception and organisation attractiveness. This suggests that brand trust plays a role in communicating the favourable effect of employer brand perception on organisation attractiveness. According to the research, prospective employees' impression of the company as a desirable employer is greatly influenced by their level of trust in the company's brand.

#### **Implications, Limitations and Future scope of the study**

There are significant theoretical and practical ramifications for the study's findings. The study theoretically adds to the expanding corpus of research on employer branding, brand trust, and attractiveness of organisations. It contributes to our understanding of the variables influencing prospective employees' perceptions and decision-making when selecting an employer by offering empirical proof of the mediating function of brand trust in the hiring process. Practically speaking, the results provide insightful guidance on how to strategically use employer branding to increase an organization's appeal to top talent, especially for those in the Indian IT sector. Organisations can effectively present themselves as desired and respected employers in the competitive job market by focusing on developing a positive employer brand perception and cultivating brand trust. Although researching employer brand, organisation attraction, and brand trust can yield insightful information, researchers should be mindful of a few constraints. Furthermore, further research in a number of areas will help us comprehend these ideas better. This conceptualization has implications for both organizations and individuals. For organizations, understanding what makes them attractive to potential employees becomes crucial for recruitment and retention efforts. Meanwhile, individuals can make more informed decisions

about their career paths by considering factors related to organizational attractiveness.

Here are a few study constraints and areas that still need to be explored. First, this study is cross-sectional, which means that data is collected at a particular point in time. The dynamic character of employer brand perceptions, organisation attraction, and brand trust over time may not be adequately captured by this approach. Future research must investigate whether this attraction to the organisation translates into a desire to apply for a job or to be employed in a different capacity over a longer period of time. Second, the study utilizes a relatively small sample size and employs a convenience sampling technique for data collection. Third, the impact of organisational, industry-specific, and cultural factors on the associations that are found should be taken into account in research. The conclusions of some research may not be as applicable to other industries or organisational types because of their narrow emphasis. Additionally, cultural contexts and industry-specific factors can have an impact on the study's generalizability. Finally, it should be noted that the correlations under study may be impacted by outside variables that are not usually taken into consideration, such as shifts in the competitive environment, labour market trends, or economic situations. Future scholars and researchers can add to a more thorough understanding of the relationship between employer brand, organisation attractiveness, and brand trust, as well as its ramifications for businesses and organisations, by addressing these shortcomings and examining the field's future potential.

### **Conclusion**

A robust employer brand has a good impact on organisation recruitment, according to the study's findings. A company can draw in a more varied and skilled pool of applicants when it is seen as an appealing employer with appealing values, a positive company culture, and growth prospects. Brand trust is then moderated by this increased organisation appeal. Potential employees are more engaged with the brand's values and mission as a result of being pulled to the company by its favourable employer brand. They gain a stronger feeling of brand trust from their encounters with the company both before and after the hiring process. The research emphasises how important employer branding is in influencing how stakeholders, potential consumers, and employees view a brand. Additionally, the study notes that employer brand and organisation attractiveness are mediated by brand trust. Because people are more likely to be drawn to an organisation they trust to keep its word, treat employees well, and adhere to ethical norms, a high level of brand trust enhances the organization's appeal as an employer. The study's consequences are significant for companies looking to establish a strong brand identity and gain a competitive advantage in the talent market.

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