

*Original Research*

## **Unveiling Future Trends in Employer Branding: Systematic Review and Bibliometric Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

Employer branding, an emerging area in Human Resource Management (HRM), has gained significant importance. Despite its importance, the literature on employer branding remains fragmented due to the absence of a comprehensive review that consolidates the intellectual structure of the field. This study addresses the existing knowledge gap by conducting a systematic literature review accompanied by bibliometric analysis utilizing performance analysis and science mapping through the Tableau software package. Through a comprehensive review of 27 articles, this study reveals the key branding elements, top journals, contributing countries, industries, citation trends, sample statistics, theoretical contribution, and six key themes (i.e., Employer branding attributes, sustainable employer branding, employee-centric employer branding, social media employer branding, recruitment strategies, HRM practices of employer branding) that characterize the body of the employer branding. Finally, the study has identified an integrative framework and set the direction for future research. It offers actionable recommendations for HR practitioners, emphasizing technology integration in employer branding initiatives and incorporating sustainable practices to enhance organizational attractiveness. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the concept of employer branding. It provides valuable guidance for organizations seeking to navigate and optimize their employer branding strategies for the future.

**Keywords:** Employer Branding, HRM Practices, Signalling Theory, Systematic Literature Review (SLR), Integrative Framework.

### **Introduction**

Employer branding is an organization's strategic approach to establishing and promoting its reputation as an employer. It encompasses the company's perception as an attractive workplace by highlighting values, culture, benefits, and growth opportunities. During the late 1990s, employer branding emerged to distinguish organizations in competitive job markets,

evolving to establish unique employer identities. This led them to focus on creating a unique and attractive employer identity. However, by recognizing the significance of talent acquisition, organizations moved beyond traditional recruitment, emphasizing an exceptional employer brand to attract and retain top talent (Saini and Jawahar, 2019). It serves as the primary allure for a talented workforce in today's competitive market (Lehrer et al., 2020). Empirically, the prior research affirms the remarkable progress of employer branding in today's dynamic environment (Yousf & Khurshid, 2021). Every organization's existence and success depend on the caliber of its talented workforce (Yadav, Kumar & Mishra, 2020). Specifically, a well-designed strategic approach helps the organization attract and retain a talented workforce (Arasanmi and Krishna, 2019a). Every organization has two facts to incorporate: its brand and employees (Bellou, Chaniotakis, Kehagias & Rigopoulou, 2015).

Moreover, the employer brand presents the organizational image to outsiders to represent employment personality (Backhaus, 2017). It is a long-term strategy to attract, retain, and motivate their employees (Tanwar and Prasad, 2016). Organizations aim to create compelling impressions for current and potential employees (Maheshwari, Gunesh, Lodorfos & Konstantopoulou, 2017). However, according to the Randstad Employer Brand Research 2021, Google, Amazon, and Microsoft are India's most desirable employer brands. At the same time, Google India scored well in terms of financial health, reputation, income, and perks (Ghielen, De Cooman & Sels, 2020). Research on employer branding, spanning enterprises, organizations, and academia, has grown since 1996, although some areas remain underexplored. The most comprehensive definition of Employer branding has been offered by Ambler and Barrow (1996), "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company." Although these areas are still understudied, the contribution to this topic has increased since 1996. This systematic literature research mainly aims to identify Employer branding elements by looking at Emerald publishers from 1996 to 2021. Empirical evidence shows that most employer branding studies have focused on antecedents and consequences, various factors influencing employer branding, and ways to recruit and retain existing and potential employees. However, this research provides a quick review of the Employer branding elements that researchers have studied thus far.

This article explores three significant avenues for advancing the understanding of employer branding elements through the findings of bibliometric reviews. Firstly, this review encompasses a full year of data until December 2021. Secondly, it provides perspectives on the journal clusters associated with employer branding elements, including management, education, media, accounting, psychology, etc. Thirdly, the review thoroughly examines employer branding elements across different timeframes- past, present, and future. However, the study employs co-citation, keyword analysis, and thematic analysis techniques (Hollebeek, Sharma, Pandey, Sanyal & Clark, 2022; Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2021). This approach aligns with recommendations to enhance the understanding of how employer branding elements are interconnected, enabling future research to gain a synthesized and coherent understanding of bibliometric reviews (Lim, Rasul, Kumar & Ala, 2022). Even though prior reviews of the literature on employer branding features give a variety of perspectives, their scope is constrained, and their method is qualitative, mainly using essential content and thematic analysis. However, these constraints can be circumvented using a systematic review approach that can efficiently oversee adequate research utilizing quantitative and qualitative

methodologies. The approach above is called a bibliometric review, a thorough and knowledgeable overview of the area (Donthu, Kumar, Pattnaik & Lim, 2021). Notably, bibliometric studies provide a bird's-eye view of the literature that has already been published, making them helpful in interpreting and mapping scientific knowledge, identifying knowledge gaps, and generating suggestions for further study. The study investigates the methodologies, key contributors, and productivity of academic papers, authors, countries, and journals. Further, this study ensures that the future scope of the study, novel avenues, and the state of the field today are presented to facilitate future research.

Following are the research questions addressed in the present study.

RQ1: How have the bibliometric trends of employer branding evolved?

RQ2: What are the key themes emerging from an extensive analysis of Employer branding literature?

RQ3: What potential areas could form the future research agenda for exploring and advancing the field of employer branding?

### **Materials and Methods**

The present study adopts a systematic literature review to identify the literature contributed in the domain of employer branding. A bibliometric approach is used to determine the contributors' in-depth knowledge of different perspectives. In that vein, the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol outlines the decisions and actions in data collection, filtration, and analysis strategy.

#### **Systematic literature review**

Systematic literature reviews are highly valued for their thoroughness in secondary research, notably in management, marketing, and human resource management (Floren, Rasul & Gani, 2020). This review, focusing on employer branding elements, falls under framework-based literature reviews. In this approach, the systematic nature of the review follows the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol. By analyzing bibliometric contents within the framework of the SPAR-4-SLR protocol, this review aims to provide a comprehensive and methodologically sound examination of the subject matter.

#### **Bibliometric analysis**

Bibliometrics gained prominence in the literature with its first appearance credited to Pritchard (1969), described as "the application of mathematical and statistical methods to articles and other means of communication," highlighting its focus on quantitative analysis in the realm of articles and related communication channels (Osareh, 1996). Bibliometric analysis encompasses two primary types: performance analysis and science mapping (Baier-Fuentes, Merigó, Amorós & Gaviria-marín, 2019). Performance analysis evaluates the impact and productivity of academic works, authors, countries, and journals, relying on metrics like citations and publications (Baier-Fuentes et al., 2019; Donthu et al., 2021). Additionally, science mapping involves creating networks of article attributes based on specific characteristics (Van Raan, 2009). Consequently, co-citation and keyword co-occurrence analyses are mainly used in science mapping methodologies. Co-citation analysis helps to understand the relationship between the cited papers and provides insights into the particular

area gained over the years (Donthu et al., 2021; Van Raan, 2009). The keyword co-occurrence analysis employs the authors' keywords provided in the selected group of articles because they are considered to be indicative of article content. These methodologies aid in comprehending the scholarly landscape and the thematic evolution within a given field.

### SPAR-4-SLR protocol

The systematic literature review of employer branding in Figure 1 follows the Scientific Procedures and Rationales for Systematic Literature Reviews (SPAR-4-SLR) protocol developed by Paul, Lim, O’Cass, Hao, and Bresciani (2021). This protocol serves as a guide for conducting the assembly, arrangement, and assessment of tasks involved in the review. The methodology chosen for each protocol stage will be discussed and elaborated on in the subsequent sections.

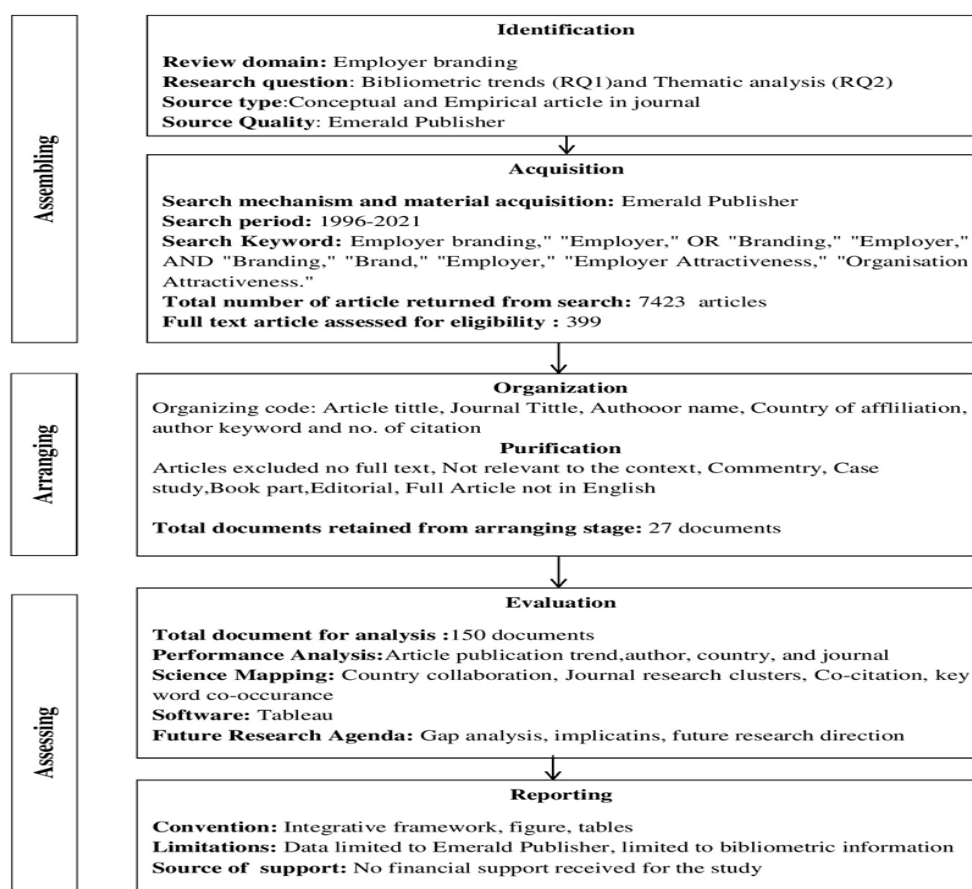


Figure 1: SPAR-4-SLR protocol

### Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to describe the data used in the studies. It provides summaries of the literature, sampling methods, and measures and gives an overview of the entire study.

### Source of employer branding articles

Figure 2 presents the collection of articles from the following journals: Industrial and Commercial Training (18.5%) and Management Research (7.40%). These two journals contributed the most articles to this domain compared to other journals.

**Key employer branding elements**

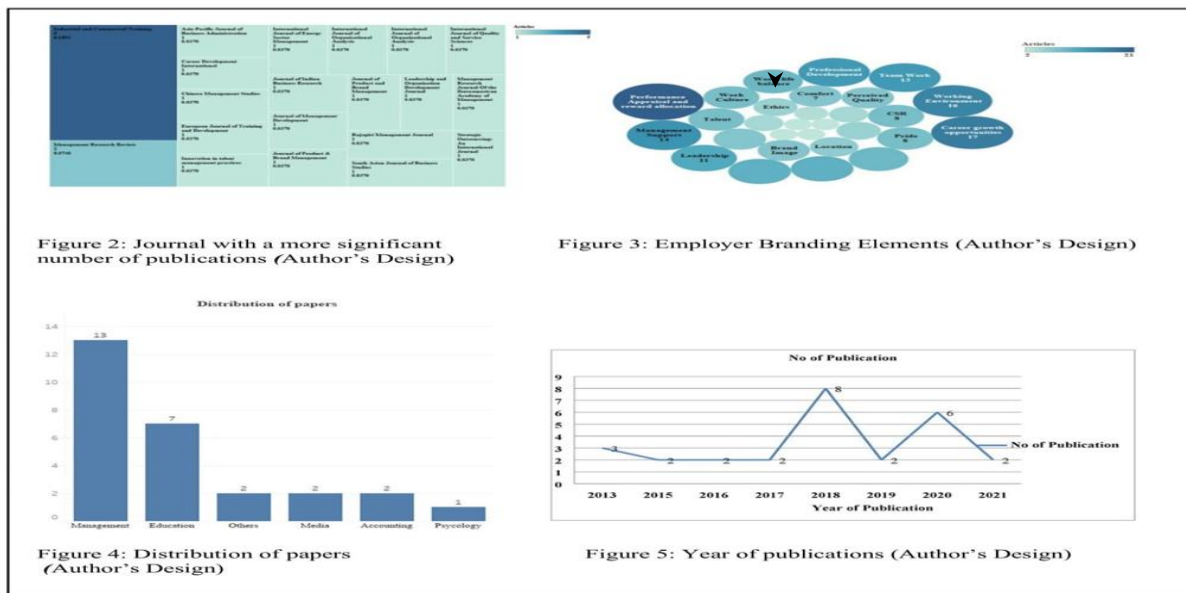
Figure 3 represents the key employer branding elements used by most authors. Performance appraisal and reward allocation are recognized by 21 authors with a contribution of 77.77 %. Moreover, opportunities for career progression and working environment contribute 62.96 % and 59.25 %, respectively.

**Employer branding research article classification**

Figure 4 shows 13 articles that contributed to management and seven to education. These findings represent a noticeable lack of scholarly articles in psychology and other areas. The majority of papers are distributed across management and education.

**Publication year**

Figure 5 highlights the gradual increase from 2013. In 2018, it reached a peak, then dropped again and rose in the upcoming years.



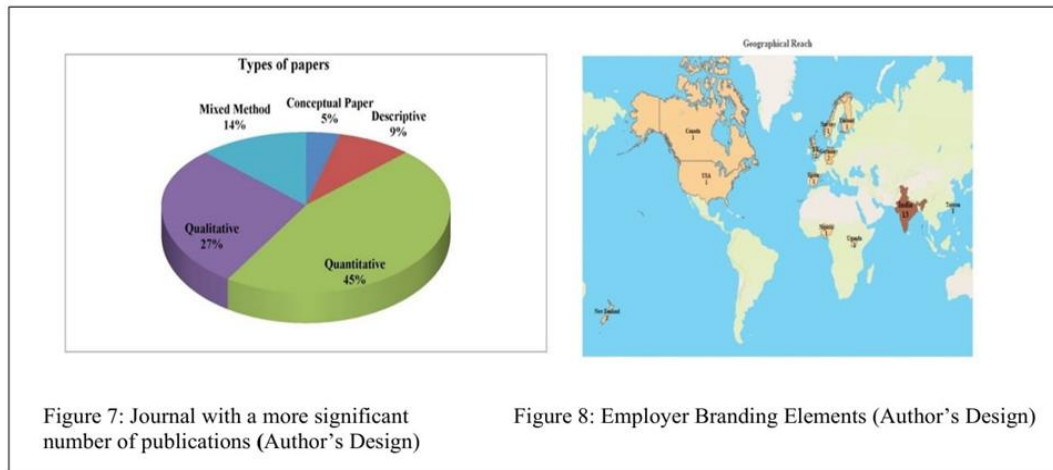
Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5: Sources of employer branding

**Article type in employer branding**

Figure 7 highlights the types of papers in Employer branding research. These findings highlight that 45% of the articles are quantitative, 27% are qualitative, 14% are mixed methods, 9% are descriptive, and 5% are conceptual.

**Geographical reach**

Figure 8 highlights the various countries studied under Employer branding from which the articles investigated; 13 cover the Indian context, two cover Germany, and two cover New Zealand. These findings show the need to explore these areas globally.



*Figures 7 and 8: Article types and geographical reach*

### Industry focus

Figure 10 shows that 14 articles focus on Information Technology, seven on Education, and the remaining are spread across Banking, BPO, Defence, Hospitality, and Maritime. Consequently, there is a need to study Employer branding in other industries.

### Keywords

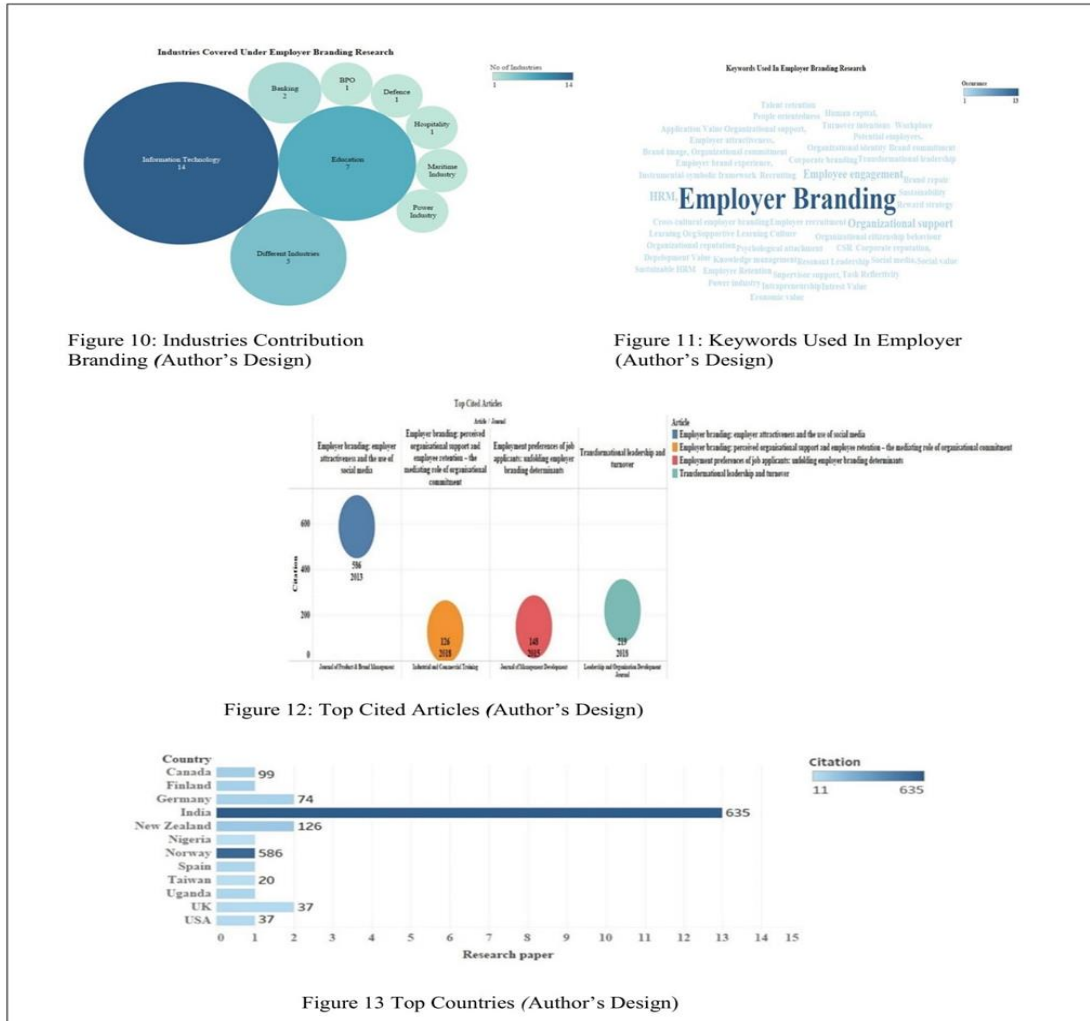
Figure 11 illustrates the keywords used in various articles. In particular, these keywords help readers learn more about the employer branding investigation. Moreover, the term "employer branding" appears nearly 50% of the time in this graphic, indicating its importance. The keywords mainly aid in the search for the article and the creation of new terms. Furthermore, the most widely used terms present the worldview of the various contexts, regions, and industries that utilize the keyword to investigate this area.

### Top cited articles

Figure 12 presents the top-cited articles in the Journal. Out of 90 articles, four articles are highly cited. The article "Employer Branding: Employer Attractiveness and the Use of Social Media" got 586 citations in the Journal of Product and Brand Management. Another article, "Transformational Leadership and Turnover," got 219 citations from the Leadership and Organization Development Journal. Perhaps there will be more contributions in employer branding exploring the future scope of the study.

### Top countries

Figure 13 describes the top-cited countries. India is leading with 635 citations and contributes 13 papers in this domain. Norway leads with 586 citations and contributes one research paper in this domain, and New Zealand leads with 126 citations and two research papers, respectively. However, these top countries' representations help focus on further exploring employer branding.



Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13: Top contributors

**Co-authors citation**

Table 1 highlights the co-author’s citations; the authors Anne-Mette Sivertzen, Etty Ragnhild Nilsen, and Anja H. Olafsen received 586 citations for “Employer Attractiveness and Use of Social Media” in the Journal of Product & Brand Management. Secondly, Sangeeta Sahu, Avinash Pathardikar, and Anupam Kumar received 219 “Transformational leadership and turnover” citations in the Leadership and Organization Development Journal. The following sets of papers are implied by co-author contributions and are cited together in the source publications. When two articles are referenced together, they indicate that their subjects are almost identical and focus on future exploration of these areas.

Table 1  
Co-Author’s Citations

Co-Author’s	Citation	Article	Journal
Usha Lenka and Saniya Chawla	26	Higher educational institutes as learning organizations for employer branding	Industrial and Commercial Training
Stefanie App and Marion Büttgen	51	Lasting footprints of the employer brand: can	Employee Relations

Co-Author's	Citation	Article	Journal
		sustainable HRM lead to brand commitment?	
Vaneet Kashyap; Neha Verma	70	Linking dimensions of employer branding and turnover intentions	International Journal of Organisation Analysis
Chi-Cheng Lee; Rui-Hsin Kao; Chia-Jung Lin	20	A study on the factors to measure employer brand: the case of undergraduate senior students	Chinese Management Studies
Asuman Matongolo, Francis Kasekende and Sam Mafabi	66	Employer Branding and talent retention: perceptions of employees in higher education institutions in Uganda	Industrial and Commercial Training
Brooke Z. Graham and Wayne F. Cascio	37	The employer-branding journey Its relationship with cross-cultural branding, brand reputation, and brand repair	Management Research Journal Of the Iberoamerican Academy of Management
Ruchika Sharma; Asha Prasad	49	Employer brand and its unexplored impact on intent to join Ruchika	International Journal of Organizational Analysis
Lorena Ronda and Carmen Valor; Carmen Abril	57	Are they willing to work for you? An Employee-centric view of employer brand attractiveness	Journal of Product and Brand Management
Christopher N. Arasanmi and Aiswarya Krishna	126	Employer branding: perceived organizational support and employee retention – the mediating role of organizational commitment	Industrial and Commercial Training
Jack K. Ito; Celeste M. Brotheridge; Kathie McFarland	99	Examining how preferences for employer branding attributes differ from entry to exit and how they relate to commitment, satisfaction, and retention	Career Development International
Anne-Mette Sivertzen, Ety Ragnhild Nilsen and Anja H. Olafsen	586	Employer branding: employer attractiveness and the use of social media	Journal of Product & Brand Management
Pia Heilmann, Sami Saarenketo and Katja Liikkanen	89	Employer branding in the power industry	International Journal of Energy Sector Management
Neetu Jain; Prachi Bhatt	148	Employment preferences of job applicants: unfolding employer branding determinants	Journal of Management Development
Hasan Gilani; Shabana Jamshed	37	An exploratory study on the impact of recruitment process outsourcing on employer branding of an organization	Strategic Outsourcing: An International Journal
Vishwas Maheshwari; Priya Gunesh; George Lodorfo;	80	Exploring HR practitioners' perspective on employer	International Journal of Organisational

Co-Author's	Citation	Article	Journal
Anastasia Konstantopoulou		branding and its role in organizational attractiveness and talent management	Analysis
Sangeeta Sahu; Avinash Pathardikar and Anupam Kumar	219	Transformational leadership and turnover	Leadership and Organization Development Journal
Ines Bruschi; Michael Bruschi; Therese Kozlowski	23	Factors Influencing Employer Branding	International Journal of Quality and Service Sciences
Christopher N. Arasanmi and Aiswarya Krishna	126	Employer branding: perceived organizational support and employee retention – the mediating role of organizational commitment	Industrial and Commercial Training
Rajwinder Kaur; Reena Shah	8	Employer branding at armed forces: current and potential employees' perspective	European Journal of Training and Development
Neerja Kashive; Vandana Tandon Khanna; Manish Naresh Bharthi	37	Employer branding through crowdsourcing: understanding the sentiments of employees	Journal of Indian Business Research
Shubhangi Bharadwaj and Mohammad Yameen	12	Analyzing the mediating effect of organizational identification on the relationship between CSR employer branding and employee retention	Management Research Review
Oluyemi Theophilus Adeosun; Adeku Salihu OHIANI	11	Attracting and recruiting quality talent: firm perspectives	Rajagiri Management Journal
Sakshi Gupta, Jaya Bhasin, and Shahid Mushtaq	6	Employer brand experience and organizational citizenship behavior: the mediating role of employee engagement	Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration

### Methodology used in employer branding articles

This section describes the methodologies used in the studies collected for a systematic literature review (SLR), including the sampling method and respondents.

#### Sampling method

This part represents the sampling methods used in the articles covered in the study. In Table 2, 11.11% of articles used random sampling, and 7.04% used convenient sampling. Criterion and Judgmental sampling are rarely used, and the remaining 18 articles did not cover any sampling methods.

Table 2  
Sampling Method in Employer Branding Research

Sampling Method	No of Articles	Contribution (%)
Random sampling	3	11.11%
Convenient Sampling	2	7.04%
Criterion sampling	1	3.70%
Stratified sampling	2	7.04%
Judgmental sampling	1	3.70%

### Sampling respondents

Figure 14 represents the sampling audiences used in research articles. The figure highlights that 77% of the studies focused on employees and 23% on students as their sampling audiences. These collections of articles provide information regarding the sampling audiences in these studies.

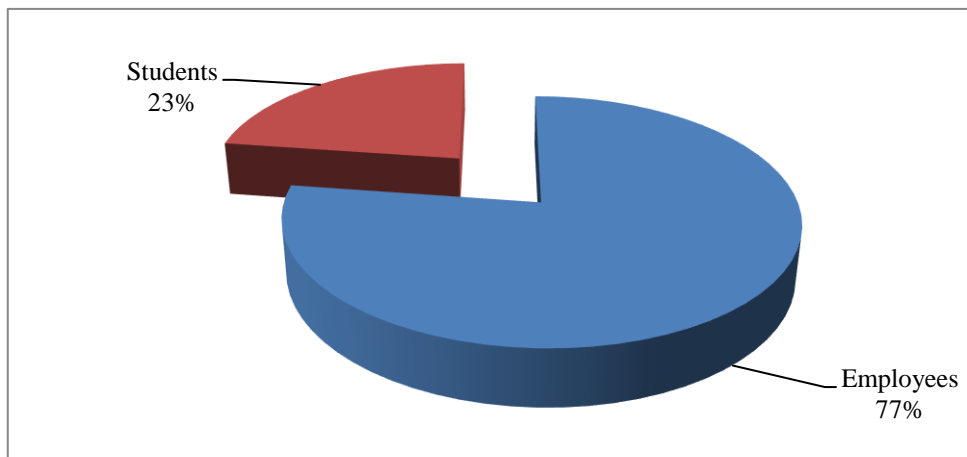


Figure 14: Sampling respondents in employer branding

## Results

### Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a research method that systematically extracts qualitative data, such as text, from documentation like articles or interviews (Agyekum, Adinyira, Baiden, Ampratwum & Duah, 2019). It allows researchers to explore emerging themes independently from their research data (Ampratwum, Agyekum, Adinyira & Duah, 2021). In some studies, thematic analysis is combined with other qualitative research methods (Holloway & Todres, 2003); in others, it is considered a standalone qualitative research approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They propose that researchers adhere to procedural guidelines when conducting a thematic analysis, regardless of whether the analysis is conducted independently or in combination with other qualitative research methods. Consequently, the thematic analysis was applied to examine qualitative data through article text discussing implications and future research directions. Table 3 highlights the focus area, key findings, and future research agenda identified in past research on Employer branding.

Table 3  
*Research Themes and Future Research Agenda*

Focused Area	Key Findings	Future research agenda
Learning organization	Centered on developing a strong employer brand to increase employees' emotional attachment.	The conceptual model of the learning organizations should be further investigated.
Sustainable HRM approach	Perceived long-term supervisor support and perceived long-term organizational support have a beneficial impact on trust.	Next, focus on employee samples, as well as perceived long-term supervisor support and perceived organizational support.
Employer branding dimensions	Employee turnover intentions are adversely linked to employer branding.	The longitudinal study design is being investigated further.
Factors of Employer Branding	Identifies functional characteristics that will entice young Taiwanese to join the military.	Concentrate on different types of academic follow-up studies and young Taiwanese viewpoints.
Employees' perceptions of higher education	CFA denotes three elements of employer branding: reward strategy and people-orientees, key predictors.	Exploration of large sample sizes and varied groups of samples is encouraged.
Brand ambassadors	A positive brand helps an organization attract and retain top people by improving its reputation.	Further research into the features of employer branding
Employer branding dimensions	It investigates the elements of employer branding.	Implications of employer branding and its diversification across industries.
Employee centric framework	Presents high-quality techniques for promoting the company's brand.	Employee-centric viewpoints are also addressed in this study.
Employer branding attributes	The strong link between organizational commitment and employee retention.	Focus on longitudinal design, a large sample size, and investigating several other elements.
Employee value proposition	Value proposition benefits from the psychological contract's moderating influence.	Focusing on potential employees and job seekers and exploring a longitudinal design.
Instrumental-symbolic framework	Instrumental and symbolic qualities have a considerable favorable impact.	Learning more about diverse countries, contexts, and cultures.
Branding attributes for entry and quit	Data on entry and departure perspectives and branding aspects.	Predicts large-scale businesses and more heterogeneity.
Use of social media	Favorable relationship with the employer brand attribute.	Social media should be investigated for branding purposes.
Firm's motives and practices	Potential and current employees highly value their work.	More specialized talents should be targeted for further exploration.
Job applicants preferences	Potential employees prefer the private sector due to its flexibility.	Employee attraction and retention tactics.

Focused Area	Key Findings	Future research agenda
Recruitment process outsourcing	Recruitment process and outsourcing, which improves core tasks.	Organization's future study of recruiting process outsourcing.
HR practices on Employer branding	Businesses are competing for the best employees.	Extending the brand both locally and worldwide with a diverse workforce.
Transformational leadership	Transformative leadership considerably impacts employee intention to leave.	The link between transformational leadership and employee turnover in greater depth.
Factors Influencing Employer Branding	Numerous aspects are employed in workplace branding efforts.	Metropolitan regions will be explored further in the future.
Employer branding: attributes	Perceived organizational support and organizational commitment have a substantial link.	Large samples and a triangular strategy should be addressed for further exploration.
Employer branding strategy	The link between person-organization fit and employee engagement.	Work satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior for more outcomes.
Perceptions of current and potential employees	Instrumental and symbolic framework of contemporary employees' perceptions.	Diversifies the geography, varied contexts, and cross-cultural approach for further investigation.
Role of social media	Text analytics identifies various themes to understand employees' opinions better.	Employer branding should be centered on social media platforms in the future.
CSR Employer branding	Various aspects of corporate branding and its impact on staff retention.	Idea development and cross-cultural situations.
Drivers of attraction and retention of talents	Social media and online platforms to find talented workers.	Digital transformation within an organization.
Employer brand experience	The link between employer brand experience and organizational citizenship behavior.	Perceptions of organizational prestige, support, trust, and psychological contracts.
Gen Z mindset	Examines z-generation working methods and mindsets in the workplace.	Metro cities and the preferences of the z generation.

Table 3 of the research themes is categorized into six themes: employer branding attributes, sustainable employer branding, employee-centric employer branding, social media employer branding, recruitment strategies, and HRM practices of employer branding, which is presented in Figure 15.

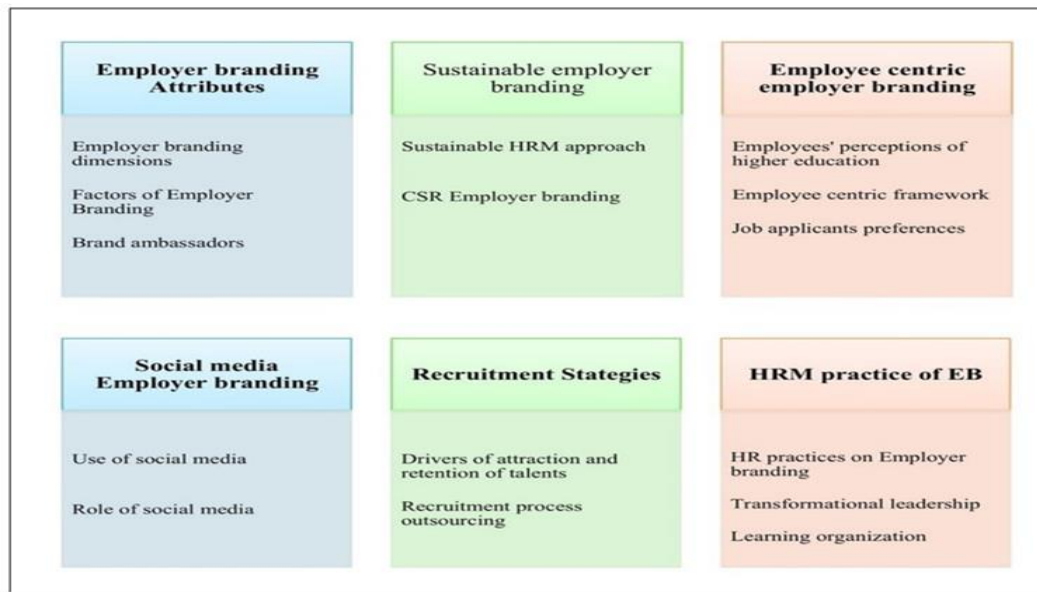


Figure 15: Key themes in employer branding

**Theoretical underpinning**

Figure 16 shows the numerous theories used in employer branding. Social exchange and identity theories are the most frequently used theories in the existing literature. However, this statistic demonstrates the need for theories to be expanded. Thus, these findings aid in further exploring theories of employer branding in various contexts.

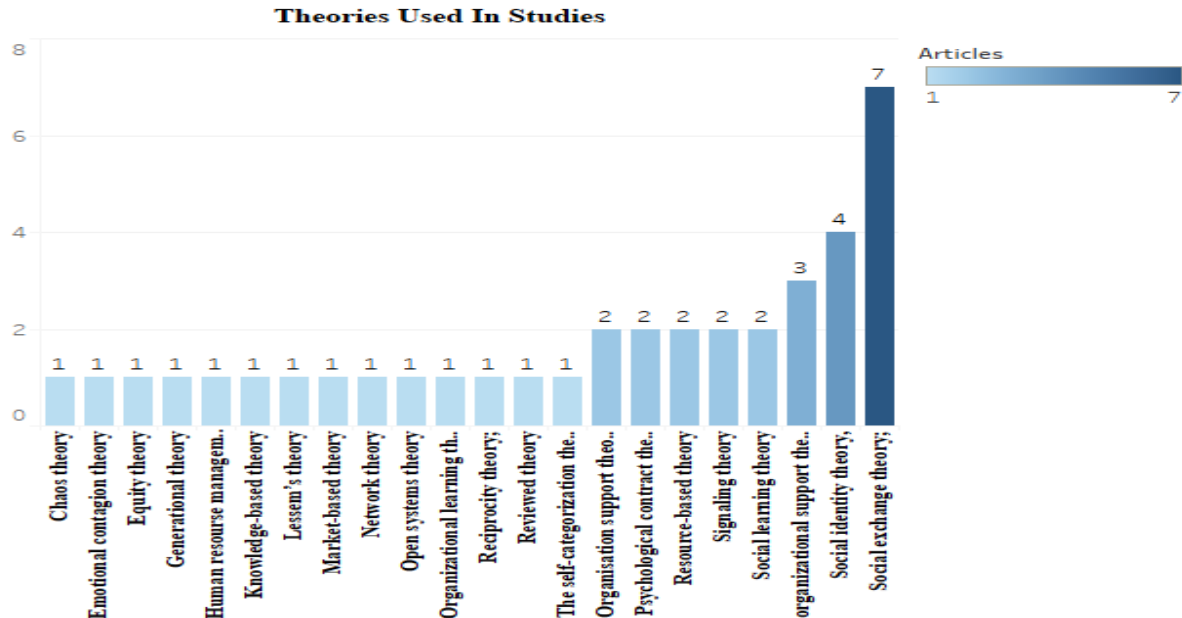


Figure 16: Theories used in studies

**Mediators and moderator tasks**

Table 4 represents the mediation effect between the independent and dependent variables. Prior studies present brand distinctiveness, organizational commitment, and organizational identification as mediators used to examine the positive influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This table provides insights into the need for further mediator

variables to expand and know their influence on the various studies and contexts.

Table 4

*Key Mediators in the Employer Branding Literature*

Independent	Mediators	Dependent	Effect
Perceived Sustainable Supervisor Support (PSS) Perceived Sustainable Org Support (PSOS)	Brand Distinctiveness; Brand Prestige; Brand Trust	Brand Commitment	Positive
EB (Growth and development; Company's reputation; Acceptance and belongingness; Work-life balance, Ethics, and CSR)	General Attractiveness, Prestige, Intention to pursue	Organizational Pursuit	Positive
Perceived Organisational Support	Organizational Commitment	Employee Intention	Positive
Interest Value, Social Value, Economic Value, Development Value, Application Value	Corporate Reputation	Intention to apply	Positive
Transformational Leadership	Employee Engagement, Employer Branding, Psychological Attachment	Turnover Intention	Positive
CSR	Org Identification	Employee Retention	Positive
Employer Brand Experience	Employee Engagement	Organization Citizenship Behaviour	Positive

### Moderators

Table 5 highlights the moderators used in Employer branding studies. This study consists of the moderators used in previous literature, such as social identity, psychological contract, and social media, which examine the effect on a dependent variable. The overview of this table highlights the usage of moderating variables to assess the various contexts of Employer branding studies.

Table 5

*Key Moderators in the Employer Branding Literature*

Independent Variable	Moderating Variable	Dependent Variable	Effect
EVP ( Social, Economic, Development, Interest, Application)	Social Identity; Psychological contract	Employees' Intention To Stay	Positive
Interest Value, Social Value, Economic Value, Development Value, Application Value	Use of social media	Intention to apply	Positive

### Integrative framework

Figure 17 represents the integrative framework of the variables used in the literature. Additionally, it provides information regarding the variables so far used in studies. This

integrative framework provides a lens of significant variables included in studies. This figure presents the variables used in studies as mediators and moderators.

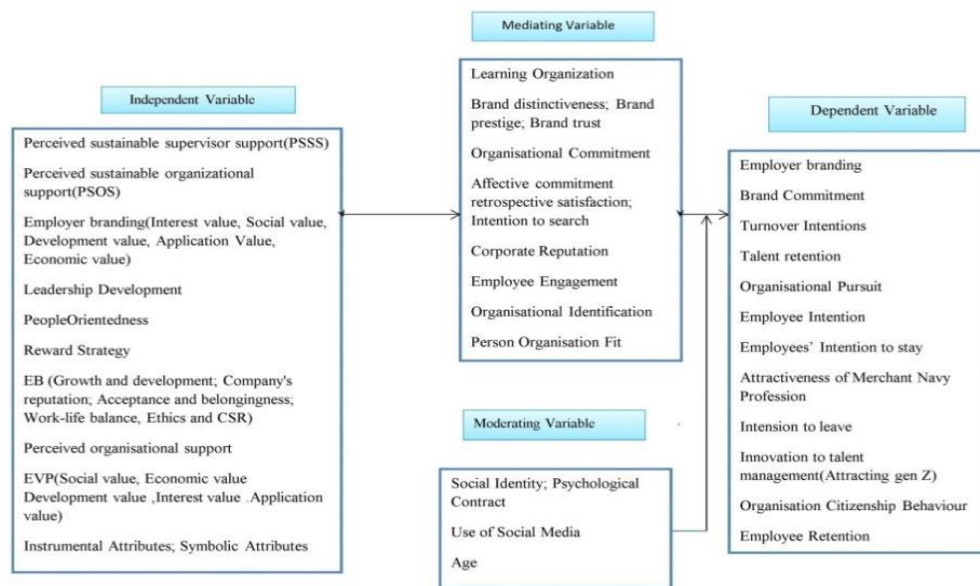


Figure 17: Integrative framework

## Discussion

This study briefs a systematic and bibliometric analysis. The primary objective of the study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of various aspects related to employer branding research, including the identification of relevant journals, key elements of employer branding, types of articles, publication years, geographical distribution, industry focus, keywords, top-cited articles and countries of origin. A systematic literature review may help to get a blueprint for a particular domain. However, three research questions are addressed. The findings of each research question are presented in the visualization and table forms. Addressing these aspects equips academicians with valuable insights, enabling them to navigate the evolving dimensions of employer branding in the contemporary organizational landscape.

### RQ1: How have the bibliometric trends of employer branding evolved over time?

#### Employer branding elements

In this systematic literature review, many key determinants were identified from the various articles. From the list of the key determinants, performance growth and performance appraisal, career growth opportunities, and working environment are cited mainly by the authors (Bharadwaj et al., 2021; Chawla & Lenka, 2015; Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2012; Murray et al., 2018; Sharma & Prasad, 2018; Ronda, Valor & Abril, 2018; Rai & Nandy, 2021). Some variables still need future exploration, such as artificial intelligence, communication channels, and technology (Chawla & Joshi, 2019; Heilmann, Saatenketo & Liikkanen, 2013; Lehrer et al., 2020; Yameen, Bharadwaj & Ahmad, 2021; Pandita, Mishra & Chib, 2021). As the changes in an organization's culture and working style change, appropriate determinants must be applied to practice in the organization. This study focuses on the future exploration of the key determinants that need further expansion of employer branding practices in various industries.

### Top journal contribution

Figure 2 presents the prominent journals that have significantly contributed to Employer branding. Notably, “Industrial and Commercial Training” accounts for 18.5% of the contributions, while “Management Research” contributes 7.40%. It is noteworthy that since 2010, there has been a noticeable increase in contributions to the domain of Employer branding from various journals (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019a, 2019b; Matongolo, Kasekende & Mafabi, 2018; Mishra & Kumar, 2019; Naim & Lenka, 2017). These findings provide valuable insights into the specific journals that are key in advancing research in the Employer branding domain.

### Article classification

Figure 4 visually represents how articles are categorized across various domains. Notably, 13 articles have made significant contributions to the field of management. This indicates a growing interest in exploring Employer branding within the management domain, particularly in areas like human resource management (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005; Kargas & Tsokos, 2020; Wilden, Gudergan & Lings, 2010). These findings reveal that the management domain places great attention on employer branding because of its multiple impacts on attracting and retaining talent as well as the overall success of the firm. Indeed, a strong employer brand is essential for drawing in top talent and keeping competent workers in an era where the labor market is highly competitive. Subsequently, it implies that HR managers focus on branding strategies to attract prospective employees.

### Publication year

Figure 5 illustrates the growth of Employer branding in recent years, with a notable peak in contributions during 2018. It is worth noting that earlier studies in the area had relatively modest contributions, which have significantly increased in recent years (Graham & Cascio, 2018; Kashyap & Verma, 2017; Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). These findings reveal that the increased emphasis on employer branding from 2018 can be attributed to a transformative shift in the job market dynamics and organizational priorities. During this period, there was a noticeable talent shortage, intensifying the competition among companies to attract and retain skilled professionals. The rise of social media played a crucial role by providing individuals with unprecedented access to information about workplace cultures, making employer reputation more visible and influential. Consequently, this collective shift in mindset and the recognition of employer branding as a strategic imperative marked a turning point, prompting organizations to invest significantly in crafting and communicating their employer brand to attract and retain top talent.

### Article types

Figure 7 provides insights into the types of articles that have contributed to this area. Notably, quantitative research articles dominate the landscape, outnumbering other types. Conversely, there is a limited number of contributions in the form of conceptual papers (Kryger Aggerholm, Esmann Andersen & Thomsen, 2011; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The findings reveal that further conceptual, qualitative, and mixed-method studies are required to comprehend every aspect of the employers and employees. However, it implies employers about the employees' preferences, as well as employees' being attracted to the organization as

per their perspectives. In future exploration, academicians can explore employer and employee perceptions regarding an organization.

### **Industries to be covered for future studies**

This systematic literature review found that most of the studies conducted in information technology, compared to other industries such as education, hospitality, and banking, are scarce. The future expansion of Employer branding is needed in various contexts and industries. As much as these concepts expand in multiple regions and industries, their result and scope help the researchers understand the geographical changes and the importance of employer branding in sectors. Currently, the working style and organizational practices differ in almost every industry. Considering this, expanding Employer branding in diverse industries should be encouraged. Figure 10 illustrates the primary sectors where employer branding has made significant contributions. The results highlight the IT sector as the leading contributor. In today's contemporary business landscape, identifying the right talent for organizations presents a substantial challenge in meeting employees' specific needs and expectations (Dabirian, Berthonc & Kietzmann, 2019; Dabirian, Paschen & Kietzmann, 2019; Deepa & Baral, 2019). These results reveal that employer branding has gained significant traction in the IT industry for multiple reasons.

First and foremost, there is intense rivalry for the best talent in industries like cybersecurity and software development. Organizations recognize that to draw in and keep the top talent; they must have a strong employer brand in this environment of high demand. In addition, the It sector's reputation as a center of innovation and a pioneer in cutting-edge technology gives organizations a unique opportunity to highlight an innovative and dynamic workplace.

### **Geographical reach**

This systematic literature review provides an outlook on the geographical reach of the studies globally. The findings highlight that India contributes more in this area than New Zealand and the UK. This geographical lens provides a roadmap for the future expansion of the studies in Employer branding. Future geographical outreach should be recommended for further studies through this overview lens. Figure 13 provides an overview of countries with the most citations in this field. The data reveals that India is the forerunner with an impressive 635 citations and has contributed 13 papers in this domain. In contrast, other countries are on the list; however, their citation counts are comparatively lower, suggesting that there is potential for further exploration of their contributions (Dabirian, Paschen & Kietzmann, 2019; Deepa & Baral, 2019). These results reveal that contributions from other countries should be made to help academicians explore employer branding more.

### **Co-author citations**

In Table 1, the co-author's citation data reveals that Anne-Mette Sivertzen, Etyy Rangnhild Nilsen, and Anja H. Olafsen have garnered a remarkable 586 citations for their paper titled "Employer Attractiveness and Use of Social Media" published in the Journal of Product & Brand Management (Chawla & Lenka, 2015; Murray et al., 2018). However, these findings offer valuable insights into these authors' noteworthy contributions to Employer branding. Perhaps academicians should come forward to contribute to this domain, which inspires other researchers to contribute to further exploration.

### **Theories for future recommendations**

By conducting this systematic literature review, various theories on employer branding can be developed. In previous studies, multiple theories are used in articles to present their relation to the context. This study gives a brief frame of theories used by earlier researchers. The most commonly used theories by the researchers are social identity theory, social exchange theory, organizational support theory, and signaling theory (App & Buttgen, 2016; Matongolo et al., 2018; Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019b; Raj, Dwivedi, Sharma, De Sousa Jabbour & Rajak, 2020; Yameen et al., 2021; Adeosun & Ohiani, 2020; Gupta et al., 2021). Other theories still need further expansion in the different contexts and regions. The more the theories modify and expand the contribution to society and the different regions, the more the context gets to be explored. Most researchers are looking for theories that are more suitable for employer branding in various contexts and industries' perspectives. Through this lens, the nation grows well in research and development. In some studies, the authors rarely use theories that need future expansion. Employer branding gives various industries more advantages and benefits as the theories expand and modify.

### **Mediating and moderator for future studies**

This study's articles covered for systematic literature review (SLR) provide a collection of mediating and moderating variables used in previous studies. These variables help to know their influence on studies. However, the changes that occur across the globe concerning industries, geographical views, and organizational practices also affect the studies. To make the study more relevant for the future, further variables should be taken to understand the present scenario of Employer branding.

### **Sampling methods and respondents**

A few of the studies covered in this systematic literature review used sampling methods in their studies. Random sampling is used primarily in articles. While seeing these articles collected for studies, it is worth noting that sampling methods help to provide an overview of the research. It gives an outlook by assessing the population to collect the data for the study and which method is suitable for the study. The methodologies' framing helps the researchers understand what type of data it is, how it is, and how it should be framed for qualitative and quantitative studies. Future research types should be expanded, such as conceptual papers, case studies, experimental studies, analytical studies, and qualitative and quantitative studies. As the methodology gets explored, the sample audiences also change; they differ from context to context. In the future, more studies are needed for the future expansion of Employer branding.

### **RQ2: What are the key themes emerging from an extensive analysis of Employer branding literature?**

Systematic data extraction from research articles has led to identifying various key themes. Table 3 presents these key research areas, their findings, and potential avenues for future research, offering valuable insights for researchers looking to explore these topics further. The primary focus areas include learning organizations, sustainable human resource management (HRM) approaches, dimensions of Employer branding, and the key factors involved in Employer branding. Figure 10 illustrates the theoretical contributions made to this research

area. These results indicate that the social exchange theory has emerged as a prominent contributor. At the same time, prior studies have made contributions to this area. It is important to note that relatively few studies have built upon the foundations laid by these earlier works. These themes revealed in this study help for further exploration in the domain.

### RQ3: What potential areas could form the future research agenda for exploring and advancing the field of employer branding?

Figure 18 outlines the potential avenues for future research in Employer branding. It delineates several key areas that merit further exploration. Firstly, the elements of employer branding should be explored, and future research should delve deeper into various aspects of employer branding, including AI integration, communication channels, digital technology, diversity, and inclusion. Secondly, it is industry-specific, particularly in education, hospitality, tourism, banking, and healthcare. Thirdly, expanding geographical reach is challenging, and future exploration includes New Zealand, UK, Germany, Nigeria, and China. Fourthly, theoretical advancements with a focus on theories like self-categorization theory, reciprocity theory, and knowledge-based theory. Fifthly, mediators and moderators encompass prestige, organizational commitment, organizational support, and corporate reputation. Currently, there is limited research in these areas, and sixthly, sampling methodologies; there is a need for further exploration of sampling methods, including judgmental sampling, systematic sampling, and convenience sampling within the context of Employer branding. These insights provide valuable guidance for researchers looking to chart the course for future investigations in the dynamic field of Employer branding.

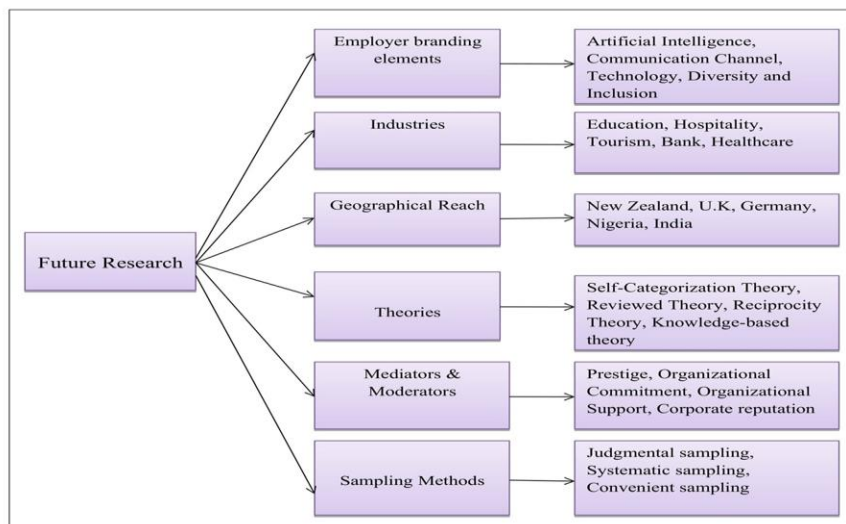


Figure 18: Future research

Based on this systematic and bibliometric review, the theoretical implication is as follows. Firstly, this study covers the article from Emerald Publishers. This study presents a good picture of Employer branding. Secondly, it provides the various determinants of Employer branding and keywords used in previous literature, which explore the subject area of Employer branding and help future researchers understand the subject area in-depth. Thirdly, this study presents an integrative framework of the variables used in previous studies and various theories used in the studies; fourthly, future research needs on the context-based, focused area, key determinants,

and theories are focused. However, the studies in this systematic literature review help practitioners and researchers understand the domain. It also provides a clearer picture of employer branding in light of contributions from various authors and experts. Such contributions help understand the multiple factors affecting employer branding, which guide the framing of policies and prepare a blueprint of the subject area to analyze the changes that arise under various contexts and regions.

### Limitations

This study is limited by its coverage of emerald-published articles between 1996 and 2021. The articles are limited to the proper concept, and the studies' findings are not generalized to the whole subject field. Within this limited time, the proper systematic view of this study aims to generate interest in employer branding among academicians and researchers.

### Conclusion

This article serves as a road map for beginners in this profession who are still learning about employer branding aspects, philosophies, and keywords. This research combines findings from prior studies to help identify essential employer branding features, theories, and phrases. The review of the selected articles emphasizes several theoretical contexts and key findings that indicate the need for future investigations in employer branding. This study demonstrates that employer branding as a research subject is still a vibrant and active. This field has good research potential. Employer branding is essential in the global market because it helps companies attract skilled employees and project an image of a great place to work. Some prospective areas for research require theories to be examined.

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