Building employee commitment through internal branding - A meta-analytic study

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to quantitatively consolidate the research conducted over the past four decades on how internal branding activities drive employee commitment. It summarizes several operationalizations of internal branding and tests the moderating effect of employee's personal characteristics and job characteristics on the relationship between internal branding and employee commitment.

Design/ methodology/ approach – This paper uses meta-analysis as the research methodology. The analysis includes a sample of 65 studies (from 62 published works), yielding 226 effect sizes (coded into 82 composite effect sizes) over an aggregated sample of 21,706 respondents.

Findings – This study finds that brand communication, brand-centered HRM, training and development, organizational support and culture, brand-centered leadership, and an excellent reward system are the key operationalizations of internal branding. Further, employee's personal (education, age, gender) and job (tenure, work status, level of customer orientation) characteristics significantly moderate the internal branding–employee commitment relationship.

Research limitations/ implications – Limited empirical literature on some of the internal branding operationalizations such as brand-centered HRM and rewards has curbed the scope of moderator analysis.

Practical implications – This paper proposes some effective ways of implementing internal branding strategies and provides support for boundary conditions that brand managers should consider to strengthen the impact of internal branding activities on employee commitment.

Originality/ value – As per the authors' knowledge, this paper is among the few quantitative consolidations of four decades of research on the internal branding-employee commitment relationship.

Keywords: Internal branding, brand communications, brand leadership, organizational structure, culture, rewards, training, brand-centered HRM, employee commitment

Article Type: Literature review

Introduction

In brand parlance, creating a brand identity is an indispensable precursor to building brand image (Kapferer, 2012). The successful transformation of a brand's inherent identity into a clear and appealing image depends largely on how the brand identity is internalized by the people who are expected to deliver what the brand promises (Berry et al., 1976; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Grönroos, 1985). Consequently, the brand-customer touchpoints internal to an organization have been popularized through various names such as internal marketing (Berry et al., 1976; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000), internal branding (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007), internal brand management (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005), and internal market orientation (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), among others.

A holistic internal branding strategy is key to building employee commitment, which eventually leads to brand-related and extra-role behaviors while delivering on the brand promise (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). In the past 45 years, since the concept of internal branding was introduced by Berry et al. (1976), it has been a well-researched field, that has gained equal popularity among academic researchers and brand managers (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). However, despite significant extant literature on internal branding, and its instrumental role in building brand commitment among employees, academic research on the topic is rather fragmented (Morhart et al., 2009; Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). One possible explanation of this fragmentation may be that the impact of internal branding efforts is driven by several contextual factors such as industry context, and employee's personal and job-related characteristics (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Du Preez et al., 2017; Piehler et al., 2018). Ignoring or not controlling for these contextual variables is likely to cause high variability in the findings (as discussed below) across internal branding research. This study aims to quantitatively consolidate the findings from research conducted over the past four decades on how internal branding activities drive employee commitment. Further, for the relationships that demonstrate high variability, we also aim to test the moderating effects of employee's personal characteristics, job characteristics and study characteristics (Hunter and Schmidt, 2011).

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The generalizability of this relationship is affected by diverse constructs and scales used to measure internal branding (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015; Saleem & Iglesias, 2016), as well as stark differences in research findings owing to multiple industrial contexts and methodologies. First, the construct itself (i.e., internal branding) has several conceptualizations, viz., internal marketing, internal market orientation, and internal brand management, each with its own measurement scale. Second, there exist 34 variables spread across 11 different measurement scales of internal branding. Further, since internal branding has been studied in different industrial contexts (e.g., Financial Services, Education, Healthcare, and Hospitality, among others), the research findings across these industries vary even for the same measurement scale. Large variations across internal branding–employee commitment effect sizes (i.e., correlation coefficients) for measurement scales stand witness to this variation. For instance, for the Foreman and Mooney (1995) scale, the values of correlation between the focal constructs vary between 0.130 and 0.794 (Caruana & Calleya, 1998; Huang & Chen, 2013; Sihombing & Gustam, 2007). Similarly, for the Burmann et al., (2009) scale the values of correlation vary between 0.431 and 0.835 across different cases in a single study (Du Preez et al., 2017).

There have been qualitative (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016) as well as quantitative (Afshardoost et al., 2021) attempts in the literature to reconcile and provide a cumulative understanding of the focal relationship. For instance, Saleem & Iglesias (2016) highlight the fragmented state of the literature on internal branding, attempt to develop an updated definition and operationalization of internal branding, and distinguish it from employer branding. On the other hand, Afshardoost et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analytic investigation of a broader set of consequents of internal branding, viz., brand understanding, employee brand commitment and brand citizenship behaviors, with a limited sample of 38 studies. They incorporate only three out of the existing 34 different operationalizations of internal branding in their research. They consider only country and industry contexts as moderators, probably owing to the complexity of several direct relationships in their proposed framework.

This study attempts to advance internal branding research by: (a) providing a comprehensive

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definition of internal branding, (b) proposing and defining a consolidated list of seven key operationalizations of internal branding based on its comprehensive definition, (c) hypothesizing and testing the moderating effects of employee's personal characteristics (viz. education level, gender and age), and job-related characteristics (viz. organizational tenure, work status, customer orientation and leadership status) (d) testing the moderating effects of study characteristics (viz. internal branding operationalizations, industry types (utilitarian vs hedonic, and public vs private), measurement scales for internal branding, measurement scales for employee commitment, reported effect size types, time period of study and continents). Not only do the comprehensive consolidation of internal branding literature and holistic understanding of a wide range of contextual factors advance the research in this area (as argued by Piehler et al, 2018), but it also offers many key insights to marketers about ways to strategize about their internal branding efforts depending on the context in which their firms operate.

Our study makes several contributions to branding and organizational behavior literature. For branding literature, we offer a comprehensive definition of internal branding and propose a consolidated list of seven operationalizations of internal branding based on past research. For both branding and organizational behavior literature, we test and discuss the effects of employee's personal, job-related characteristics and other contextual factors that moderate the relationship between internal branding and employee commitment. The study also offers strategies for managers. First, this research presents seven ways of building employee commitment to the brand, which include hiring people who are passionate about the brand, ensuring their development with conducive organizational support and culture, transformational leadership, and training, ensuring their brand understanding using clear communication of the brand's vision, purpose, and values, and rewarding them for staying consistent with the brand messages. Second, this study offers strategies that organizations may pursue to balance the impact of personal and job-related factors. For instance, since age weakens the relationship between internal branding and employee commitment, it is recommended to involve veterans in driving internal brand ambassador communities. Such initiatives are likely to rekindle their pride in the brand as they share

brand stories with younger members of the organization.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical background of the operationalization of internal branding and the moderators of the focal relationship. It lists the hypotheses that are tested and analyzed in the subsequent sections. Section 3 describes the meta-analysis method with details on sampling, coding, effect size extraction, aggregation, and correction. Section 4 delineates the results of the meta-analysis. Finally, Section 5 presents the theoretical and managerial implications of the results and recommendations for future research.

Theoretical background

The literature on internal branding and employee commitment includes a plethora of investigations including noticeable and detailed literature reviews by Rafiq & Ahmed (2000), Saleem & Iglesias (2016), Afshardoost et al. (2021) and Mathieu & Zajac (1990). Both Rafiq & Ahmed (2000) and Saleem & Iglesias (2016) use narrative reviews to summarize the scope of internal branding. Saleem & Iglesias (2016) also attempt to find a holistic definition of internal branding and its components and delineate how it is different from employer branding. Furthermore, Mathieu & Zajac (1990) and Afshardoost et al., (2021) perform detailed meta-analytic investigations on internal branding. Mathieu & Zajac (1990) focus on one conceptualization of employee commitment – that is, organizational commitment; they do not address alternate conceptualizations of employee commitment, that is, brand commitment; also, their research does not consider internal branding as an antecedent to organizational commitment. Afshardoost et al., (2021) performed a meta-analysis of three key consequents of internal branding with the help of three out of the existing 34 operationalizations across 38 studies (N = 14,909). Even as the authors broadened the scope of meta-analytic investigation on internal branding, there is still a considerable number of studies that were not included in their investigation. Moreover, the authors tested the moderating effect of only a couple of study characteristics (i.e., country and industry contexts). The current study attempts to address these gaps by: (a) focusing on one key consequent of internal branding

– that is, employee commitment, (b) incorporating a wider scope with the inclusion of 65 studies (N = 21,706) for better generalization of the results, and (c) identifying and testing a comprehensive list of moderators of the focal relationship. We present and discuss our conceptual model in the next sub-sections.

Employee commitment

This study identifies two conceptualizations of employee commitment from the literature – organizational commitment and brand commitment. Mowday et al (1979) define organizational commitment as the "relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization". Brand commitment is the level of an employee's psychological attachment to the corporate brand (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). This attachment drives their willingness towards extra-role and brand citizenship behaviors (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri et al., 2009). It is clear from both definitions that for a corporate brand, the concept of brand commitment is analogous to organizational commitment (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). Thus, we use employee commitment as a representation of both brand and organizational commitment as has been identified in extant research. Employee's brand or organizational commitment (together with job satisfaction and employee turnover), has been one of the proven outcomes of well-coordinated internal branding campaigns (Asiamah et al., 2020; Lai & Yang, 2013; Mowday et al., 1979).

Internal branding

The literature presents various divergent conceptualizations of internal branding such as internal marketing (Berry et al., 1976; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000), internal brand management (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005), and internal market orientation (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993), leading to varied definitions and expanded scope of the construct (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016). In this research, we delineate the scope of internal branding and define it as *the collection of brand-centered organizational practices together with*

the supporting organizational environment, which enables employees to deliver on the brand promise

willingly and consistently. This collection of brand-centered activities includes: (1) brand-centered

leadership, (2) brand-centered HRM, (3) brand communication (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Burmann et

al, 2009); and the supporting organizational environment includes (4) organizational support and culture,

(5) employee training and development, and (6) reward and recognition (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007;

Alves et al., 2015; Lombard and Burin, 2017) for demonstrating consistent brand-orientation in customer

interactions. Table 1 provides the definitions and references for these seven operationalizations of

internal branding, employee commitment and moderators used in this meta-analysis.

----- Insert Table 1 about here -----

The literature on internal branding and employee commitment underscores the importance of

employee's personal and job-related characteristics, which are likely to affect the focal relationship

(Huang & Chen, 2013; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Porricelli et al., 2014; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011; Yang et

al., 2015). Personal factors such as employee education, gender, age, and job-specific factors such as

employee's tenure, work status, customer orientation, and leadership status in the organization moderate

the strength of impact the internal branding efforts have on building committed employees.

All hypotheses on direct effects and moderators are presented in the following sub-sections.

Brand communication. Brand communication, both internal and external, has a key role in the

creation of brand identity among employees. Thomson et al. (1999) argue that if "inside in"

communication efforts are not effectively managed in the organization, the "inside out" communication

has minimal chances of success. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) assert that a carefully crafted brand

communication strategy helps employees identify with the corporate brand and internalize it. This is a

more holistic approach to internal branding as opposed to the one that is driven by compliance (Burmann

et al., 2009). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H_1: The relationship between brand communication and employee's commitment to the organization is

positive.

Brand-centered HRM. When employee's attitude towards the brand becomes positive, they attempt to "live the brand" and start acting as brand citizens (Chang et al., 2012). Thus, management of these 'internal touch points' is necessary to deliver on the brand promise and it is the key responsibility of human resource managers (Aurand et al., 2005). Recognizing this need calls for a brand-centered human resource management (HRM), that is instrumental in helping employees develop a favorable attitude towards the brand. However, it is a tough task for the HRM function in the organization to align its activities with the externally focused marketing of the organization. It can work only when employee engagement activities synergize with the brand identity of the firm. This perspective towards HRM practices is called brand-centered HRM. We posit that:

H₂: The relationship between brand-centered HRM and employee's commitment to the organization is positive.

Training and development. Training and development programs reinforce the foundation of brand-centered HRM. Not only do these programs impact employee performance but they also ensure that employees deliver a consistent brand experience (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). The process starts through brand orientation sessions as early as when the employee joins the organization, and it is reinforced by their participation in brand fests and events (Koo & Curtis, 2020; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). It has been demonstrated multiple times in the literature that reinforcing brand strategy, vision and values with the help of brand training increases employee commitment to the corporate brand (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Koo & Curtis, 2020; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007; Yang et al., 2015). Therefore, we state that:

H₃: The relationship between training and development programs and employee's commitment to the organization is positive.

Organizational support and culture. Schein's (2012) three-level cultural model argues that an organization's culture is experienced by employees at three levels, viz., organizational artifacts (e.g., obvious structures and processes), accepted values and beliefs (vision, mission, ideologies etc.), and related assumptions (subconsciously accepted beliefs and values). In other words, with exposure to an

organization's culture, employee's values, beliefs, and ideologies get aligned with those of the

organization, thus building commitment through the process of organizational identification (Burmann

and Zeplin, 2005; Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014; Schein, 2017). In the absence of this alignment

(for instance, for new joiners), employees perceived organizational support as a viable alternative

(Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014). As social exchange theory posits, employee's perception of

organizational support is a measure of the quality of the exchange-based relationship with the

organization (Rousseau and Parks, 1993). It acts as a strong driver of employee commitment both when

an employee's values, beliefs, and ideologies are aligned with that of the organization, as well as when

they are not (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014). When this alignment occurs, the perceived

organizational support drives employee's voluntary participation in developing brand identity and ignites

positive "lateral communication" (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). In the absence of this alignment, it drives

on-the-job brand building by employees, ensuring a win-win situation (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos,

2014). Therefore, we posit that:

H₄: The relationship between organizational support and culture and employee's commitment to the

organization is positive.

     Brand-centered leadership. Leadership brings credibility and urgency to internal branding

activities and is crucial at both macro (executive and senior management) and micro (middle

management) levels (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). While macro-level leadership commitment to internal

branding efforts ensures the seriousness of communication, micro-level leadership ensures exemplary

behavior as employees follow their managers (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005). By acting as a role model in

demonstrating extra-role behaviors, a leader's idealized influence, inspirational motivation, personalized

consideration, and intellectual stimulation build the commitment of his/her team members to the

organization (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Morhart et al., 2009). Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H₅: The relationship between exercising brand-centered leadership and employee's commitment to the

organization is positive.

Reward. Rewarding and recognizing employees is essential for the organization to maintain its brand standards, and such actions enhance employee commitment (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Moreover, rewarding employees who demonstrate high customer orientation motivates their fellow workers to emulate brand commitment and eventually, leads to brand-supportive behavior (Huang & Chen, 2013). Literature has abundant evidence that rewards significantly predict the affective organizational commitment of employees (Joung et al., 2015). We posit that:

H_6: The relationship between a reward and recognition system and employee's commitment to the organization is positive.

Holistic organization-level practices: It has been well-established in the branding literature that employee brand commitment is the affective outcome of internal branding (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Burmann et al., 2009; Saleem and Iglesias, 2016; Piehler et al, 2018). By orienting the management of the brand internally, the organization ensures that employees are able and willing to deliver the brand promise (Thomson et al, 1999, Barros-Arrieta and García-Cali, 2021). While this ability to deliver the brand promise marks the cognitive outcome (brand knowledge, Thomson et al., 1999) of internal branding, the willingness translates into the affective element, viz., brand commitment. For corporate brands, brand commitment is synonymous with organizational commitment (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005), indicating that internal branding is highly correlated with both forms of employee commitment. Therefore, we posit that:

H_7: The relationship between holistic organization-level practices and employee's commitment to the organization is positive.

Moderators of internal branding-employee commitment relationship

The success of internal branding efforts is strongly driven by several contextual factors such as industry context, employee-related and organizational or job-related characteristics including HR practices (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Burmann et al, 2005; Du Preez et al., 2017; Piehler et al., 2018). For

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instance, managers are more responsive to internal branding efforts than non-managers (Poricelli et al., 2014), which is expected to ensure a deeper internalization of brand identity among managers. Furthermore, employees aged over 30 years are less likely to develop commitment in response to internal branding activities in an organization, owing to their lack of interest and lower engagement levels compared to younger employees (Simons and Enz, 1995; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). Therefore, a meta-analytic consolidation of past internal branding research is incomplete without an understanding of these contextual factors.

Hence, we review past literature and propose the direction of the moderating effects of employee's personal and job-related characteristics. We follow the recommendations of Punjaisri and Wilson (2011), and Piehler et al., (2018) to review the moderating effect of education level, gender and age as employee's personal characteristics. Further, we follow Poricelli et al. (2014) and Joung et al. (2018) and include employee's organizational tenure, hiring/work status, customer orientation, and leadership status (manager/ non-manager), as job-related moderating variables.

Personal characteristics

Education. It has been observed that employees with different levels of education develop varied levels of commitment in response to internal branding efforts orchestrated by the organization (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). There is substantiative evidence in the literature that with higher levels of education, employees are confident in looking for alternate job opportunities (Steers, 1977), and as a result, their expectation from the organization increases, thus negatively impacting their commitment to the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Verma et al., 1985). Thus, stronger, and more personalized internal branding efforts in terms of tailored brand training and development programs, exhibition of stronger charisma and targeted mentoring and coaching by the leadership (Morhart et al., 2009), and better rewards system (Mottaz, 1986) by the organization are required to enable employees with higher qualification to build stronger brand commitment. Therefore, we argue that:

H₈ₐ₋g: Employees with higher (lower) education exhibit weaker (stronger) internal branding-employee commitment relationship.

Gender. Internal branding literature establishes that the strength of the internal branding-employee commitment relationship is not the same across all employees in an organization (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Piehler et al., 2018). When it comes to gender differences, two schools of thought exist – job role and gender role perspectives. While job role is a situational or position-centric perspective, the gender role perspective is based on the priorities of women and men (Aven et al., 1993). The gender role view asserts that women's primary identity and contentment comes from their family roles and seeks to explain their lower engagement in workplace activities (such as those related to internal branding), eventually leading to lower commitment compared to men (Loscocco, 1990; Aven et al., 1993; Rajadhyaksha et al., 2015). Another perspective underscores women's stronger perception that they face gender discrimination more than men, leading to lower engagement and commitment in organizational initiatives as compared to men (Foley et al., 2005; Rana & Singh, 2022). Therefore, we posit that:

H₉ₐ₋g: The internal branding-employee commitment relationship is weaker (stronger) for females (males).

Age and Tenure. Organizational behavior researchers have treated age and tenure as similar variables. In most cases, it is safe to do so since the variables are time-related and covary, but when it comes to their impact on commitment, the variables behave differently based on an individual's earlier employment stage compared to the later ones (Cohen, 1993).

Becker's (1996) side-bets theory, which is based on the premise of increased 'sunk costs' for an employee who has spent a longer time in an organization, can help rationalize the impact of age (and tenure) on the internal branding-employee commitment relationship (Cohen, 1993). For instance, with time, an employee's side-bets are accumulated in the form of seniority and respect, network and connections, and in some cases as higher income than the market median (working in one role for a long time). This reasoning means that at later employment and experience stages, the (older) employees are in

a 'know-it-all' zone and are expected to be less engaged in the organization's efforts (such as internal branding activities) to build commitment. However, during the initial stages of employment bets toward the corporate brand are low and younger employees are easily distracted toward alternate corporate brands (Meyer and Allen, 1984; Cohen, 1993). In these scenarios, the internal branding efforts such as organizational communication around the brand, training and development efforts, organizational and leadership support and rewards programs targeted at younger employees ought to bear fruit faster than those targeted at older, well-settled employees (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). Therefore, we posit that:

H_{10a-g}: *The internal branding–employee commitment relationship is weaker (stronger) for older (younger) employees.*

H_{11a-g}: *The internal branding-employee commitment relationship is weaker (stronger) for employees with a longer (shorter) tenure in the organization.*

Job-related characteristics

Work-status. It has been established in the organizational behavior literature that employee's work status decides the type of exchange relationship they develop with the organization (Huang & Chen, 2013; Tsui & Wu, 2005). A part-time employee has a more transactional relationship, while a full-time employee is more likely to have a relationship depicting a social exchange (Tsui & Wu, 2005). Therefore, we argue that:

H_{12a-g}: *Full-time (part-time) employees are likely to exhibit a stronger (weaker) internal branding– employee commitment relationship.*

Customer orientation. Brown et al. (2002) define customer orientation as "… an employee's tendency or predisposition to meet customer needs in an on-the-job context." The frontline employees are more pre-disposed to be customer-oriented as compared to those handling backend operations (Brown et al., 2002; Huang & Chen, 2013). Furthermore, positive customer orientation of employees, resulting from better person-job fit, drives the impact of internal branding on their commitment to the organization (Huang & Chen, 2013; Meyer & Allen, 1997). We posit that:

H13a-g: Employees with higher (lower) customer orientation have a stronger (weaker) internal branding-employee commitment relationship.

Leadership status. There is ample evidence of the impact of leaders exercising different leadership styles to create an environment that eventually drives the commitment of their team members (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Haque et al., 2019; Meyer & Alien, 1991). There is conclusive evidence that leaders exercising a transformational style of leadership magnify the effect of communication, perceived organizational support, and training and development opportunities for their team members in driving organizational commitment. An increase in "responsibility" also strengthens the impact of organizational efforts on internal branding to drive the leader's commitment to the organization (Haque et al., 2019; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). We argue that:

H14a-g: Employees holding leadership (non-leadership) positions have a stronger (weaker) internal branding–employee commitment relationship.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the impact of internal branding on employee commitment, and this relationship is moderated by several moderators. The conceptual model depicts how internal branding (operationalized in a variety of ways) drives individual-level behavior (employee commitment). The proposed model is substantiated by several theoretical frameworks from the organizational psychology literature, viz., social identity theory or SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), psychological contract theory (Rousseau and Parks, 1993), and self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985). SIT posits that individuals derive their self-contract from continued membership in a group such as an organization (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Psychological contract theory reinforces the obligatory aspect of an individual's association with an organization (Rousseau and Parks, 1993). Self-determination theory marks the duty of an organization to create an environment such that individuals are motivated to perform those behaviors that are in line with the organizational mission, purpose, and values.

----- Insert Figure 1 about here -----

Method

In this study, we employ the meta-analysis procedures suggested by Hunter & Schmidt (2011), and Grewal et al. (2018). The research design is depicted in Figure 2. The procedures help control the effect of statistical artifacts – reliability of measurement and sampling error of the effect size and thus, help in estimating the 'true' effect sizes. The procedures also help in estimating the extent of heterogeneity in the effect sizes included in the meta-analysis to identify and test the effect of moderators.

----- Insert Figure 2 about here -----

Literature search and sampling strategy

Since the construct of internal branding came into existence in the late 1970s, which is before any discussion about *commitment* started in the organizational behavior literature, all eligible empirical studies that are included in this review were published between 1975 and 2023.

Sampling. The objective of sampling is to select published studies that empirically examine the impact of internal branding on employee commitment. Therefore, only the studies that quantitively examine the relationship between various operationalizations of internal branding (i.e., seven operationalizations) and realizations of employee commitment (e.g., organizational commitment, brand commitment) are included in this review (see Figure 2).

Literature search. We search citation databases including EBSCO, ABI/INFORM, and Web of Science, using the following query (with minor adaptations to the syntax for each database):
("Internal branding" OR "internal brand management" OR "internal marketing") AND[1]
("brand commitment" OR "organizational commitment" OR "affective commitment" OR
"continuance Commitment" OR "normative commitment" OR "employee commitment")

Additionally, citations in the already-published reviews (including those by Saleem & Iglesias

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[1] In Web of Science database, NEAR operator was used instead of AND operator.

(2016), Rafiq & Ahmed (2000), and the meta-analytic reviews by Afshardoost et al. (2021) and Mathieu & Zajac (1990) are consulted to include relevant studies. Eligible articles that empirically examine the direct relationship between internal branding and employee commitment are identified in this process. Requests are also posted for obtaining relevant studies on pertinent listservs – ELMAR, ACR-L, Research Gate, Mendeley, and SSRN –to find articles that are not published in academic journals (Grewal et al., 2018). Additionally, e-mails were sent to the top authors in the field requesting them to share their latest works in the field. The objective of this step is to make the literature search as comprehensive and unbiased as possible (Grewal et al., 2018). All efforts yielded 348 studies. Studies for the next stage of analysis are identified using the established inclusion-exclusion criteria explained in Figure 2. Sixty-two (62) research papers reporting 65 relevant studies are selected that yield a sample size (n) of 21,706 and 226 effect sizes (coded into 82 composite effect sizes). The list of studies with individual sample sizes is given in Appendix A.

Coding

The aim of coding studies based on study characteristics is to identify and isolate the various characteristics of studies as possible sources of variation in results (Grewal et al., 2018). Additionally, the items of 34 operationalizations were analyzed and were categorized into seven operationalizations of internal branding (as already described in Table 1). Since the number of codes was not large and the data was nominal, we used Holsti's CR method (Parker & Holsti, 1970) for testing inter-coder reliability and Cohen's Kappa is also reported (Nili et al., 2017; Parker & Holsti, 1970). To do this, first, 23 studies are coded by one coder. This is followed by a sampling of five studies by the second coder and an inter-coder comparison of 36 codes (internal branding operationalizations, personal, job and study characteristics as moderators) by the two coders for the sample of five studies. Based on the first stage of coding, an intercoder reliability of 0.92 is achieved (Parker & Holsti, 1970). The Cohen's Kappa test results in 0.84 as the measure of agreement (valid cases = 36; asymptotic SE = 0.154; t-value = 5.117),

which is found satisfactory (Landis & Koch, 1977). After resolving disagreements, coding for the

remaining studies is completed.

Effect-sizes extraction, correcting for attenuation, and creating composites

An effect size is the primary parameter in a meta-analysis. It is an estimate of variance across groups and

is independent of sample size (Borenstein et al. 2009). The present study uses correlation (r) as the effect

size. However, we note that 145 effect sizes out of 226 effects are reported as *r*. Therefore, for the

remaining effect sizes, r is computed from t-values and standardized regression coefficients (β) using the

procedure proposed by Wilson (1999) and Peterson & Brown (2005) respectively. Further, it is observed

that both internal branding and employee commitment are measured using multiple scales across the

sample of studies. Therefore, all effect sizes are corrected for measurement error by calculating the

attenuation factor using the reliability (Cronbach α) of the independent and dependent variables (Grewal

et al., 2018; Hunter & Schmidt, 2011).

For a barebone meta-analysis to test hypotheses $H_1 – H_7$, first, the sampled 226 effects are

categorized as per the seven internal branding operationalizations reported in Table 1. In line with

Afshardoost et al. (2021) recommendation, some studies using internal branding as a holistic

(organization-level) construct are also included at this stage. This results in 82 composites. Further, one

composite effect size per study for each operationalization is computed using the averaging method

(Geyskens et al., 2009), since the standard deviation across individual effect sizes is not very large

(Hunter & Schmidt, 2011).

Testing the main effect

To investigate the main effect of internal branding on employee commitment, a random-effects model is

used. Borenstein et al. (2010) argue that while performing meta-analyses for a relationship, a random-

effects model is more consistent in fitting the model since each study's effect size is treated as a unique

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parameter. This is different from a fixed-effect model wherein the assumption is that all studies are taken

from the same population, which is not true in the current context because a highly fragmented prior

literature (Saleem & Iglesias, 2016) on internal branding is the starting point of this meta-analysis.

Metafor package from R-statistical software is used for the meta-analyses (Viechtbauer, 2010).

Results

Operationalizations of internal branding

Reporting the composite effect sizes, Table 2 shows the results of the test of hypotheses $H_1 - H_7$. From

among the seven conceptualizations used to measure internal branding, brand communication (20 cases),

brand-centered leadership (18 cases), and training and development (17 cases) have been the most

popular operationalizations; organizational support and culture (8 cases), brand-centered HRM (5 cases)

and reward (5 cases) are the least popular ones. All internal branding operationalizations show strong and

statistically significant correlations ($r > 0.30$ on Cohen's effect size index, Cohen and Cohen, 1983) with

employee commitment, supporting $H_1 - H_7$. Among these, holistic organization-level practices ($r = 0.79$;

$Z = 10.99***$), organizational support and culture ($r = 0.55$; $Z = 5.98***$), reward ($r = 0.53$; $Z =$

$2.47***$), brand communication ($r = 0.52$; $Z = 5.38***$), and training and development ($r = 0.50$; $Z =$

$6.31***$) demonstrate a correlation ≥ 0.50. Other operationalizations – brand-centered leadership ($r =$

0.48; $Z = 7.22***$), and brand-centered HRM ($r = 0.46$; $Z = 5.69***$) also show strong effect sizes but <

0.50. Our findings reveal that all proposed antecedents of internal branding are significant contributors to

building employee commitment.

----- Insert Table 2 about here -----

Moderator analysis

It is clear from Table 2 that the amount of variation observed (i.e., statistically significant Cochrane's Q,

τ^2, and I^2), indicates heterogeneity for all the operationalizations of internal branding. This confirms the

presence of potential moderators for the relationship between each operationalization of internal branding and employee commitment. To test moderation hypotheses $H_8 - H_{14}$, meta-regression is conducted over all the 226 effects because there are inadequate degrees of freedom using composites to perform meta-regression with all moderators. It must be noted that using all effects within a study violates an important assumption of meta-regression that each sample is independent. Therefore, we follow the guidelines provided by Hedges et al. (2010) and estimate the 90% confidence intervals of regression coefficients using cluster-robust standard error estimation. We employ 'robust()' function of 'metafor' package in R to do this. Two meta-regressions – one for employee's personal characteristics and the other for job characteristics are run for each of the seven internal branding operationalizations (Table 3). A third meta-regression model is run for all study characteristics (Table 4).

----- Insert Table 3 about here -----

Personal characteristics

Employee education. Findings reveal that the relationship between brand communication (-0.54** [-.89, -.19]), training and development (-0.42** [-.72, -.12]), and brand leadership (-0.20** [-1.19, -.08]) with employee commitment weakens with employee's education level, thereby confirming that employees with higher education have weaker internal branding-employee commitment relationship (Table 3). Further, the meta-regression models are also statistically significant (F = 48.00***, $R^2 =$ 87.37%) for these three operationalizations. Thus, we find support for H_{8a}, H_{8c}, H_{8e}. Organizational support, brand-centered HRM, reward, and holistic organization-level practices were dropped as redundant predictors from the regression models in the absence of common cases for education as a moderator. Thus, the results for H_{8b}, H_{8d}, H_{8f}, and H_{8g} were inconclusive owing to limited degrees of freedom.

Gender. Gender exhibits a positive significant moderating effect on the brand communication-employee commitment relationship, meaning that the commitment of female employees tends to increase

with brand communication initiatives in an organization. This contradicts H_{9a}. However, this anomaly may be explained by the gender differences in employee's communication processing tendencies. When it comes to assimilating communication, females tend to use more available communication cues than men (Meyers-Levy and Maheswaran, 1991), and respond more favorably to (brand-related) advertising communication (Darley and Smith, 1995). Thus, the impact of brand communication may be stronger on females than males, who tend to rely more on their past experiences and encounters (Darley and Smith, 1995; Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire, 2015). Further, gender has a negative significant moderating effect on the relationship between brand leadership and employee commitment (-0.28** [-4.12, -.56]), demonstrating that the effect is weaker for females, providing support for H_{9e}. Findings for the other five hypotheses are not significant (H_{9b}, H_{9c}, H_{9d}, H_{9f}, and H_{9g}).

Age. Following the recommendations of Cohen (1993), we create three sub-groups based on age – explorers (< 30 years), advancers (31 – 39 years), and maintainers (≥ 40 years) signifying three main career stages of employees (Table 2). We find that across brand communication (-0.71*** [-.80, -.61] for ≥ 40 years), organizational support and culture (-0.59** [-1.32, -.58] for 30-39 years), brand leadership (-0.37** [-.64, -.10] for 30-39 years), reward (-0.85** [-.96, -.34] for 30-39 years), and holistic organization-level practices (-0.83 [-1.24, -.42] for 31-39 years and -0.90 [-1.08, -.73] for ≥ 40 years), the advancers and maintainers exhibit weaker commitment compared to explorers or younger employees at their early career stages. Thus, we find support for H_{10a}, H_{10d}, H_{10e}, H_{10f}, and H_{10g}. Here, it must be noted that for brand communication the explorers and advancers behave in the same way, but moderation gets significantly weaker for people more than 40 years of age. difference between exploders and advancers is not significant, but the moderating effect of age on training & development (H_{10c}) is weak (≤ 0.10, Cohen and Cohen, 1983) and insignificant (0.10^{ns} [-.31, .51]). The results for brand-centered HRM (H_{10b}) were inconclusive owing to the limited degrees of freedom.

Job-related characteristics

Tenure. As in the case of age, we use the recommendations of Cohen (1993) and create three sub-groups based on tenure – explorers (< 5 years), established (5 – 8 years) and maintainers (≥ 9 years) signifying three main experience stages of employees (Table 2). We find that with tenure the relationship of brand communication (0.44** [.28, .60]) and brand-centered HRM (0.30** [.14, .47]) with employee commitment is significantly strengthened as employees transition from the "explorers" stage to the "established" stage, to the "maintainers" stage. At this last stage, the difference in commitment compared to the "explorers" stage becomes nonsignificant (Table 3). These findings are in contradiction to H_{11a} and H_{11b}. One school of thought that may explain this anomaly is that tenured employees accumulate more knowledge about the brand, its vision, mission, and values and are more likely to identify with the corporate brand than the explorers, leading to higher organizational identification among the maintainers. Organizational identification can amplify the effect of brand communication and brand-centered HRM (which also aim to communicate the brand's vision, mission, and values in different ways to employees) and eventually lead to commitment (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014). Findings for the other five hypotheses are not significant or could not be tested (H_{11c}, H_{11d}, H_{11e}, H_{11f}, and H_{11g}).

Work status. We find that the reward-employee commitment association is significantly strengthened as a greater percentage of employees join full-time in the workforce (0.42** [.39, .44]), supporting H_{12f}. The results for other operationalizations were inconclusive owing to the limited degrees of freedom (H_{12a}, H_{12b}, H_{12c}, H_{12d}, H_{12e}, and H_{12g}).

Customer orientation. Our findings show that customer orientation has a positive significant moderating effect on the brand-centered HRM-employee commitment (0.15* [.02, .28]), training and development-employee commitment (0.22* [.01, .42]), and brand leadership-employee commitment (0.67** [.26, 1.07]) (Table 3), providing support for H_{13b}, H_{13c}, and H_{13e}. The results for H_{13a}, H_{13d}, H_{13f}, and H_{13g} were inconclusive owing to the limited degrees of freedom.

Leadership status. Employee's leadership status does not seem to significantly moderate the

relationship of brand communication, brand-centered leadership, and reward with employee commitment (H_{14a}, H_{14e}, and H_{14f} not supported) (Table 3). The results of H_{14b}, H_{14c}, H_{14d}, and H_{14g} were inconclusive owing to the limited degrees of freedom.

Other study characteristics

We also check the moderating effects of several study characteristics on the focal relationship. The study characteristics used are industry type (utilitarian vs hedonic; public vs private); continent, where the study is undertaken; measurement scales for internal branding and employee commitment; type of reported effect sizes in the studies; and time period of study. A single meta-regression model is run, and results are presented in Table 4.

----- Insert Table 4 about here -----

Internal branding operationalizations. We find that organizational support and culture is the strongest predictor of employee commitment (almost equally strong compared to holistic organization-level practices, 0.01 [-.09, .12]), with all other estimates showing negative (although weak, $| r | \leq 0.10$, Cohen and Cohen, 1983) values. However, this difference is statistically significant only for brand communication (-0.07** [-.13, -.003]), training and development (-0.10** [-.17, -.03]), and rewards (-0.10* [-.19, -.001]). This is in line with our correlation analysis (Table 2), wherein we find the grand mean correlations at par among all internal branding operationalizations. This test acts as a robustness check of our findings.

Industry type. We code industry type in two different dichotomous ways, viz., utilitarian vs hedonic, and public vs private. We find that the focal relationship holds statistically stronger for hedonic industries than for utilitarian ones (0.13*** [.06, .19]), and for public industries than the private ones (-0.12** [-.21, -.04]).

Measurement scales. We compared the most preferred measurement scales of internal branding and employee commitment with the mixed scales researchers prefer to use for the focal relationship. We

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observe that for internal branding, the Burmann et al. (2009) scale (-0.46** [-.77, -.16]) and the Foreman and Mooney (1995) scale (-0.30* [-.58, -.02]) show significantly weaker correlations compared to mixed scales. We did not find any significant difference between the key employee commitment scales and the mixed ones.

Our analyses show that there is a significant difference in the reported effect of internal branding on employee commitment in the studies across various industries (Q_{bet}=20.09**) (Table 4). The strongest effect is observed in the studies conducted in the sports industry ($\bar{r}$ = 0.74), followed by a moderately high effect in construction ($\bar{r}$ = 0.56), healthcare ($\bar{r}$ = 0.53) and retail ($\bar{r}$ = 0.51) industries. Studies across financial services ($\bar{r}$ = 0.46), education ($\bar{r}$ = 0.48), and hospitality ($\bar{r}$ = 0.48) industries report relatively lower yet substantial effects.

Reported effect sizes. We find that correlations converted from t-values are statistically weaker compared to p-values (-0.37** [-.61, -.13]). The difference between the reported correlations and those converted from t-values is negligible and not significantly significant.

Time period of study. When we study the strength of the focal relationship for specific time periods, we find that the strength of the relationship is moderately weaker in the '2006 – 2015' (-0.39** [-.53, -.24]) and '2016 - 2023' (-0.31* [-.47, -.15]) time periods, compared to that 'before 2006'.

Continent. We find that when compared with the reported strength of the focal relationship in Africa, the Middle East (0.27* [.02, .52]) and Asia (0.18** [.03, .34]) show significantly stronger effects.

Publication bias

Publication bias is the key criterion for investigating and reporting bias in the selection of published studies (Hunter & Schmidt, 2011). We use a tandem procedure recommended by Ferguson & Brannick, (2012) to test the publication bias, in which one file drawer method (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 2008), one regression method and one graphical method are used to increase the robustness of the publication bias testing. First, we observe the difference between the number of cases and the value of Orwin's fail-safe

N, and find that it is zero for each operationalization of internal branding ($N \leq k$; Ferguson & Brannick, 2012) (Table 2). Second, we perform the Egger regression and report the p-values and z-values in Table 2. We observe statistically nonsignificant results for all operationalizations indicating no bias. Third, we check the 'Trim and Fill' funnel plot recommended by Duval & Tweedie (2000). We report the imputed studies and the corrected mean correlation in Table 2, which acts as the revised combined effect and accounts for the suspected publication bias (Ferguson & Brannick, 2012). Here we also find that apart from two relationships (without a significant change in corrected grand mean, Table 2), the imputed studies for every other relationship are zero. Thus, we do not find any evidence of publication bias.

Discussion

This study offers a quantitative consolidation of the past four decades of research on how internal branding activities drive employee commitment. This research makes a strong contribution to marketing theory and practice, offering a nuanced understanding of the focal relationship, which is valuable to academia and managers. Further, since building employee commitment is instrumental to fostering citizenship or extra-role behaviors among the workforce, and enhancing brand performance, the importance of this research cannot be overemphasized. Research on operationalizations of internal branding is fragmented owing to inadequate attention by researchers in controlling contextual factors that are proven to impact the internal branding-employee commitment relationship. This oversight has led to questioning of the robustness and generalizability of internal branding research so far. Therefore, to fill this gap, an extensive investigation of the impact of a comprehensive set of moderators offers a deeper understanding of the nature of the focal relationship (i.e., internal branding-employee commitment).

Theoretical contribution

This meta-analysis makes several contributions to the marketing literature. First, it examines the fragmented understanding of internal branding that exists in current literature, integrates the existing

conceptualizations, and offers a simple yet holistic definition of the construct. Our quantitative review of the literature unravels 34 different operationalizations of internal branding and 11 different measurement scales (Table 1) across the seven conceptualizations of internal branding reported in this research (Table 1). All these conceptualizations recommend a brand-oriented approach to hiring, developing, and leading employees, and offering them a supportive and encouraging organizational environment to enable them to deliver the brand promise. These practices include brand-centered leadership, brand-centered HRM, and brand communication. The supporting and encouraging organizational environment comprises providing organizational support and culture, employee training and development, and a robust reward system. Among these, a supporting environment is found to be the strongest driver of employee commitment.

Second, this study answers calls to investigate a comprehensive set of contextual factors that impact the focal relationship. We find that higher employee education, advanced career stages, being a female, and having a part-time employee work status weaken the impact of internal branding activities on building employee commitment. On the other hand, increased employee tenure in the organization and greater customer orientation strengthen the focal relationship. We also observe more conclusive and actionable results for moderation by age and tenure when we (a) study them as separate predictors and (b) when we profile the employees of different age groups and tenures based on their career and experience stages (exploration, establishment and advancement, and maintenance) (as is suggested in the literature (Cohen, 1993)). We also observe that the brand-centered leadership-employee commitment relationship is most sensitive to employee's personal and job characteristics. That is, the focal relationship is moderated by the level of education, gender, age, and customer orientation of the employees.

Third, the previous meta-analysis studies have either focused on multiple antecedents of employee's organizational commitment (Mathieu & Zajac,1990) or brand commitment (Afshardoost et al., 2021) separately. There has been no quantitative review of the relationship between internal branding

and overall employee commitment. We address this gap by studying the impact of internal branding on

employee commitment – an overarching construct for organizational and brand commitment and provide

a consolidated view of the internal branding-employee commitment relationship.

Finally, we find significant differences in the effect sizes of the focal relationship especially for

industry types, measurement scales, time period of study, and continents, thus explaining the different

strength of effect sizes for these study contexts. Among these results, the impact of measurement scales

and industry types offers useful insights. We find that mixed scales tend to get stronger effects for the

focal relationship than key scales such as those offered by Burmann et al., (2009) and Foreman and

Mooney (1995). Additionally, since ~ 37% of the studies in our review use mixed scales, this indicates

their popularity (Table 4). Further, we note that hedonic and public-sector industries tend to enjoy a

stronger focal relationship compared to utilitarian and private-sector industries. This may happen because

firms in utilitarian industries exhibit task-and-result orientation in their culture, while those in the

hedonic industries are more creative; thus, collaborative culture possibly leads to a stronger commitment.

Differences in the results for public and private industries may be attributed to job stability, clarity of

social goals, and direct connection with citizens of a nation, which strengthens the focal relationship for

organizations in the public sector.

Managerial implications

This in-depth review of the internal branding–employee commitment relationship offers many insights

for practitioners. It highlights the seven-dimensional approach to effectively implementing internal

branding efforts for building employee brand commitment. Hiring people, who are not just experts in

their respective areas, but are also extremely passionate about the brand (Aurand et al., 2005) is vital. At

the same time, fostering an organizational environment where employees (new and existing) are

encouraged to gain knowledge about the brand through internal collaborations, is equally important.

Training and development efforts consistent with the brand image further reinforce understanding

regarding the brand, which eventually builds the willingness of the employees to act on behalf of the brand (Afshardoost et al., 2021; Thomson et al., 1999). With the concept of situational leadership, HRM is getting more centralized, and the roles of leaders are becoming even more crucial than before. Leaders demonstrating a brand-centered transformational leadership style ensure that their idealized influence, inspirational motivation, personalized consideration, and intellectual stimulation build the commitment of their team members to the organization (Morhart et al., 2009). A robust reward system also offers brand consistency by recognizing employees who not only understand the brand but internalize it and exhibit extra-role behaviors (Burmann et al., 2009). Further, since organization support and culture emerges as the strongest predictor of employee commitment, enhancing the quality of work, fostering a collaborative culture (especially for millennials), and improving inter-functional coordination and integration are essential to making internal branding efforts effective.

We observe differences in the strength of the focal relationship based on employee's personal and job-related characteristics. For instance, the focal relationship is found to be stronger for employees at very early career and experience stages (trial and exploration, Cohen, 1993). The takeaway for leaders is to have a two-pronged engagement strategy for internal branding implementation. On one hand, they must engage the younger and new-joiners to the organization in more employee-driven brand-centered activities such as brand fests. Simultaneously, organizations should engage older employees or veterans in building and driving brand ambassador communities because their immense understanding of the organization's brand value and its heritage will not only benefit the younger members of the communities but also make the older employees proud of the brand as they share stories from their past about living the brand values.

We also observe that employees with higher education tend to exhibit a weaker focal relationship. This is expected because they have more job alternatives and do not want to stick to one position. Therefore, organizations, both large and small, must install a transparent and robust internal mobility program for their employees. Such a program will ensure that highly educated employees have more

flexibility to change roles within the organization instead of moving out. We also find that full-time employees exhibit a stronger focal relationship than part-time workers. Since part-time employees either spend less time in the organization or are tasked to ensure their time is better utilized, they usually do not get time to learn about the brand's vision, mission, and values as deeply as full-time employees. Therefore, an organization must provide better opportunities for part-time employees to understand and live the brand values, especially for those who interface more frequently with customers. Leaders should spend time with their part-time counterparts and should also encourage their participation in brand training, brand fests, and brand ambassador communities.

Finally, employees with greater customer orientation exhibit a stronger focal relationship as compared to those with lower customer orientation. This is because while working with the customer, front-line employees need to constantly refresh their brand understanding, which is not the motivation of a support or back-office employee. Therefore, organizations must encourage and support back-office employees to also participate in internal branding efforts.

Limitations

We present the results of a meta-analytic investigation on the internal branding–employee commitment relationship using Pearson's product-moment correlation (r). The included studies also report standardized regression coefficients (β) and t-value, which need conversion into correlation (r), which is not always as accurate an effect size as using the reported correlation (r). We also note that employee commitment is a construct that has a broad scope, which the present study does not explore. More empirical research on the specific commitment constructs such as organizational commitment and brand commitment needs to be undertaken to study the impact of internal branding on each of these separate types of commitment.

Proposed future research themes

We note that 40 years of academic research on internal branding offers diverse perspectives on how it builds employee commitment. We empirically analyze the strength of the focal relationship from effect sizes collected across 65 studies and try to find points of convergence in the research. As a logical next step, we prepare some concrete future research themes and related research questions as potential ways to advance literature.

Theme 1: Building a holistic model of internal branding. We attempt to consolidate 34 different operationalizations of internal branding into a concise list of seven indicators. We also acknowledge that the foundation of these seven measures (and for that matter, the broader set of 34 measures) lies in the organization's top-down approach to implementing internal branding strategy since all these operationalizations (Table 2) are organization-driven. Such an approach is one-sided and in many cases control-driven. At the same time, there has been an evolved understanding of internal branding, which is rooted in the idea of co-creating the brand identity with employees and even customers (Iglesias and Ind, 2020, Merrilees et. al., 2021). For internal co-creation, Devasagayam et al. (2010) and King and Grace (2012) put forward a compelling case for fostering employee-driven inter-organizational brand communities, where employees internalize the brand identity as they experience organizational socialization. Acknowledging this perspective, we believe that a holistic model of internal branding may be two-dimensional – organizational-driven top-down efforts coupled with employee-driven bottom-up engagement in internal brand communities. Some pertinent questions that may be addressed are:

RQ 1: How can an employee socialization-driven brand identity co-creation model be developed that supplements the impact of the contemporary top-down internal branding approach?

RQ 2: How can such a two-pronged internal branding model drive employee commitment?

RQ 3: What will be the impact of contextual factors identified in this study on a co-creation-based internal branding approach? What other contextual factors may be included in an employee socialization-driven brand identity co-creation model?

RQ 4: Which organizational functions should assume the ownership of integrating the two-pronged execution efforts to have a multiplier effect?

Theme 2: Internal branding opportunities and challenges in the post-pandemic, geo-political scenario. Post-pandemic workplaces review new approaches to internal branding amidst hybrid work scenarios. The landscape has precipitated a significant transformation in consumer behavior, with a notable shift toward online platforms and a reduced reliance on offline channels for both brand managers and consumers. The proliferation of digitalization is rendering the concept of a fixed brand identity obsolete. With the proliferation of brand interactions online, an organization's stakeholder groups are actively shaping the definition and breadth of a brand's identity, thereby transforming it from a static concept to a fluid one (Iglesias and Ind, 2020). This fluid identity is dynamically co-created via active conversation with the organization's multiple stakeholder groups. In this emerging school of thought, the continued assessment of a brand's identity pivots around its purpose. Additionally, in the context of a gig economy, an increase in part-time workers across the globe is also forcing organizations to reformulate their internal branding strategy. In fact, in the present study, we note that part-time workers tend to feel a weaker effect of internal branding efforts compared to full-time workers. Some pertinent questions that may be addressed are:

RQ 5: What are the possible employee engagement models apt for hybrid and part-time work scenarios?

RQ 6: How will a co-creational approach to building brand identity affect employee commitment?

RQ 7: What key opportunities for co-developing a brand identity are unlocked with the hybrid and part-time work scenarios?

Theme 3: Methodological considerations. In the present study, we test the moderating impact of employee's personal and job-related characteristics on the internal branding-employee commitment relationship. From the methodological viewpoint, we run two separate meta-regression models for personal and job characteristics for each internal branding operationalization (Table 3), and a third meta-regression model including all study characteristics (Table 4). In the first two models, we see the

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moderating effect of almost all personal and job-related characteristics of the employees. In the third

model, we find statistically significant differences among the industry types and continents reported in

the primary studies. Given these findings, we believe there is value in asking the following questions on

methodological considerations in future studies:

RQ 8: What could be the difference in results if all contextual factors are entered into a single meta-

regression model based on a large dataset?

RQ 9: What could be the effect of employee's personal and job-related characteristics across two (or

more) industry groups (utilitarian vs hedonic or public vs private) across continents, when tested using a

3-stage hierarchical linear regression model? Would the effect of employee's personal characteristics

vary across industry types in a particular continent?

This research hopes to provoke future research, especially along the lines of the gaps identified,

and the research questions raised here. Such investigations will expand the understanding of internal

branding and employee commitment, which have very important implications for marketing strategy.

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Table 1: Construct scope and definitions in the context of the current meta-analysis

Construct	Definition/ levels[1]	Alternate conceptualizations	Measurement[2]
		Internal branding[3]	
Brand communication	Internal and external communication about the corporate brand. Internal communication is targeted toward employees and external communication is targeted toward customers, partners, and suppliers.	Internal communication, external communication, ascending (upward) communication, briefings, group meetings, orientation, valuing and sharing information, promotional activities	Jou, Chou, & Fu (2008); Buil, Martínez, & Matute (2016); Burmann et al., (2009); Gounaris (2006); Punjaisri & Wilson (2007); Ahmed & Rafiq (2003); Berry (1981); Conduit & Mavondo (2001); Rodríguez-Molina, & Blanca (2014)
Brand-centered HRM	A progressive and business-oriented HRM philosophy in which HRM activities around recruitment, training, and performance appraisal are aligned with the brand values.	Human resource management (HRM), internal people, brand-oriented recruitment	Aurand, Gorchels, & Bishop (2005); Burmann, Zeplin, & Riley (2009a); Lombard, M.R., & De Bruin (2017); Tsai (2014)
Training and development	Brand-related training to educate employees about the brand's vision, mission, and promise.	Brand-centered training, development, feedback	Buil, Martínez, & Matute (2016); Ahmed & Rafiq (2003); Berry (1981); Burmann et al. (2009b); Conduit & Mavondo (2001); Gounaris (2006); Punjaisri & Wilson (2007); Ramos (2018); Ruizalba et al. (2014); Tsai (2014); Foreman & Mooney, (1995)
Organizational support and culture	An aggregate of organizational values, norms shared among the employee groups and employees' social exchange-based relationship with the organization. This characterizes the environmental aspect of internal branding set up by the organization.	Collaborative culture, inter-functional coordination and integration, customer orientation, internal processes, organizational structure, quality of work	Jou, Chou, & Fu (2008); Gounaris (2006); Lombard, M.R., & De Bruin (2017); Ramos (2018); Ruizalba et al. (2014); Foreman & Mooney (1995)
Brand-centered leadership	It highlights the role of the organization's leadership including the executive leadership, senior- and middle-level management in brand building.	Brand leadership, brand-oriented leadership, empathy and consideration, empowerment, management support, motivation, vision	Ahmed & Rafiq (2003); Buil et al. (2016); Burmann et al. (2009b); Conduit & Mavondo (2001); Jou et al. (2008); Morhart, Herzog, & Tomczak (2009); Ramos (2018); Foreman & Mooney (1995)
Reward	The tangible or intangible recognition given to employees when they contribute to the organizational vision.	Reward	Ahmed & Rafiq (2003); Foreman & Mooney (1995)
Holistic organization-level practices	The collection of brand-centered organizational practices together with the supporting organizational environment, which enables employees to deliver on the brand promise willingly and consistently.	Internal branding, internal brand management	Huang and Chen (2013); Aurand et al. (2005); Narteh (2012); Dechawatanapaisal (2019); Yang et al (2015)

Construct	Definition/ levels[1]	Alternate conceptualizations	Measurement[2]
		Employee commitment	
Employee commitment	Degree of employee's identification and psychological attachment with the organizational (corporate) brand.	Brand commitment, organizational commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment	Burmann et al., (2009), Allen and Meyer (1990)
		Employee's personal and job-related characteristics (moderators)	
Education level	Low = graduation or less High = post-graduation		Categorical (binary) - high education level as dummy
Gender	Male Female Non-binary[4] Prefer not to respond		Continuous - percentage females in the sample
Age	*Career-stages model (Cohen, 1993)* Explorers = Trial and exploration stages of the career, typically < 30 years Advancers = Establishment and advancement stages of the career, typically 30 – 39 years Maintainers = Maintenance stage of the career, typically ≥ 40 years		Categorical (three levels[5, 6]; Cohen, 1993) - Advancers and Maintainers as dummy
Tenure	*Experience model (Cohen, 1993)* Explorers = Trial and exploration phase of work experience, typically < 5 years Established = Establishment phase of work experience, typically 5 – 8 years Maintainers = Maintenance phase of work experience, typically ≥ 9 years		Categorical (three levels[5]; Cohen, 1993) - Established and Maintainers as dummies
Work status	Parttime Fulltime		Continuous - percentage fulltime employees in the sample
Customer orientation	No customer contact Customer contact		Continuous - percentage of customer employees in the customer facing roles in the sample
Leadership status	Managers Non-managers		Continuous - percentage of non-managers in the sample

Note: [1] *Definition of internal branding operationalizations and employee commitment, and coded levels for moderators;* [2] *measurement scale for internal branding operationalizations and employee commitment, and variable type for moderators used in the meta-regression;* [3] *Seven categorizations of internal branding are based on the operationalizations reported in primary studies;* [4] *Non-binary coding includes gender reported in the sample as transgender, transgender male, transgender female, gender variant or non-conforming categories;* [5] *For the studies where age and tenure are recorded as mean, they are converted into three levels (Cohen, 1993) in line with their theoretical definition for this study;* [6] *Cohen's (1993) career stage model uses four subgroups, we combine the 31 – 35 years (establishment) and 36 – 39 years (advancement) age groups in line with Tenure's three levels to ensure data sufficiency for meta-regression.*
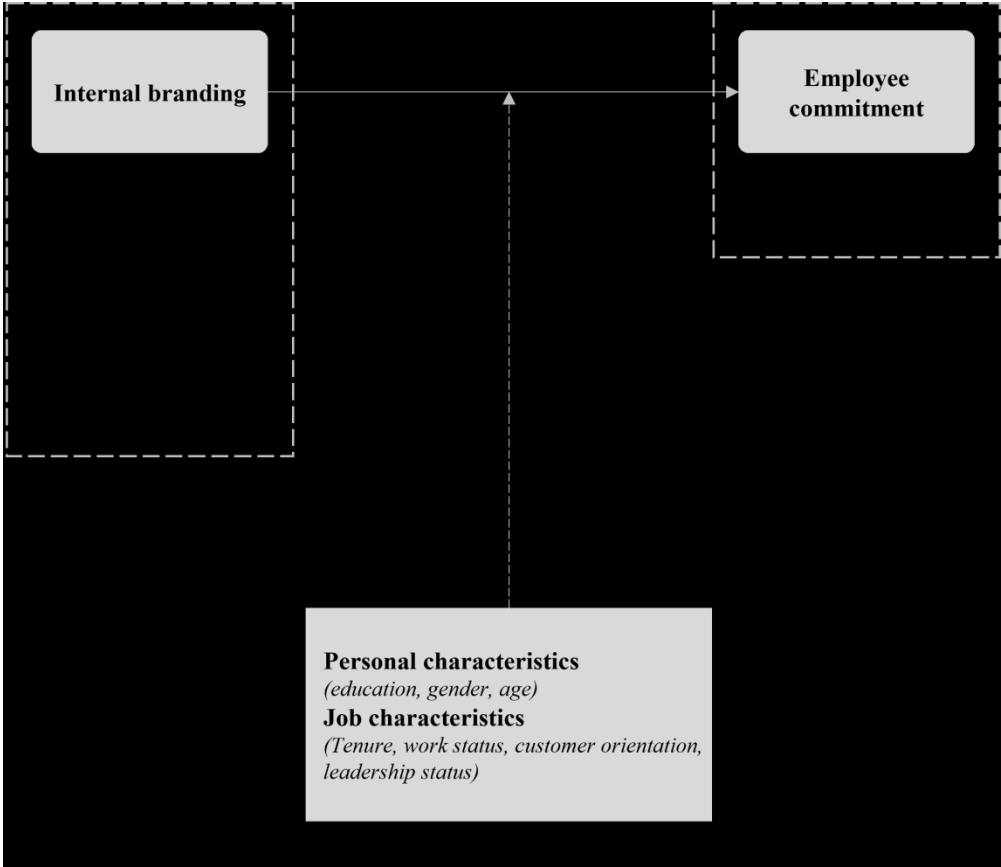
Figure 1

428x370mm (130 x 130 DPI)

Specify research domain & objectives	**Research domain**	Internal branding as an antecedent of employee commitment (focal relationship)
	Research objectives	• Strength of the focal relationship • Measures for internal branding • Moderators of the focal relationship
Exhaustive literature search	**Inclusion criteria**	• Studies empirically testing focal relationship • Measures of all internal branding conceptualizations • Time frame: 1975 – 2023 • Research papers and conference papers • Correlation (r), t-value, p-value and regression coefficient (β)
	Exclusion criteria	• Studies with other antecedents of employee commitment
	Databases	• EBSCO • ProQuest (ABI/INFORM excluding dissertations & theses) • Web of Science
	Study sample	• Total studies resulted from database search = *348* • Studies testing the focal relationship empirically = *122* • Studies reporting requisite parameters = *65* • Excluded same sample-based duplicate studies = *3 (–)* • Excluded studies with unwanted effect size-types = *5 (–)* • Included unpublished studies = *8 (+)* • Final Included studies = *65*
Preparing data for meta-analysis	**Coding**	• Multiple coders • Intercoder reliability = 0.92; Cohen's Kappa = 0.84
	Effect size extraction	• Correlation (r) • β to r – based on Peterson and Brown (2005) • *t*- and *p-value* to *r* – based on Lipsey and Wilson (1999)
	Calculating composites	Average value based on Geyskens et al (2009)
	Correcting for attenuation	Based on Hunter and Schmidt (2004)
Conducting meta-analysis	**Correlation analysis**	• Random effects model using R (cluster-robust confidence intervals) • Heterogeneity analysis using Cochrane's Q, I^2, • Publication bias (Tandem procedure, Ferguson & Brannick, 2012)
	Study characteristics	Internal branding operationalizations, continent, industry types (utilitarian vs hedonic; public vs private), measurement scales of internal branding and employee commitment, type of effect sizes reported and time-period (one meta-regression model)
	Moderator analysis	Two meta-regression models – (1) employees' personal characteristics (education, gender, age) (2) employees' job characteristics (tenure, work status, customer contact, non-managers)

Figure 2

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Table 2: Internal branding[φ] as antecedent of employee commitment[a]

Antecedent		k (s)[¥]	n[¥]	Obs. $\bar{r}$	Z	95% Confidence interval	Q	τ^2	% of total variance (I^2)	Tandem Procedure for Publication bias[e]			MA[φ]
										Orwin's failsafe-N difference	Egger regression p-value (Z-value)	Trim & Fill imputations (Corrected $\bar{r}$)	
Brand communication	[H₁]	20 (54)	8,709	0.52***	5.38	0.36 to 0.67	2661.43***	0.03	98.67%	0	0.10 (-1.72)	2 (0.55)	Yes
Brand-centered HRM	[H₂]	5 (31)	2,642	0.46***	5.69	0.33 to 0.59	36.75***	0.03	90.40%	0	0.29 (1.27)	0 (0.46)	Yes
Training and development	[H₃]	17 (37)	5,185	0.50***	6.31	0.37 to 0.63	655.15***	0.10	96.79%	0	0.03 (0.98)	3 (0.55)	Yes
Organizational support and culture	[H₄]	8 (20)	2,183	0.55***	5.98	0.40 to 0.70	133.90***	0.06	92.29%	0	0.05 (2.49)	0 (0.55)	Yes
Brand-centered leadership	[H₅]	18 (31)	5,591	0.48***	7.22	0.35 to 0.61	306.87***	0.07	95.40%	0	0.49 (0.70)	0 (0.48)	Yes
Reward	[H₆]	5 (15)	1,350	0.53**	2.47	0.11 to 0.95	131.03***	0.23	98.24%	0	0.18 (1.74)	0 (0.53)	Yes
Holistic organization-level practices	[H₇]	9 (38)	2,334	0.79**	10.99	0.51 to 1.08	360.67**	0.19	97.78%	0	0.24 (1.29)	0 (0.79)	Yes

Notes: k = number of effects used in each analysis {∑k (82) > ∑K (65), since in some cases a single study reports multiple measures}, s = raw effects, ∑s = 226; n = total subjects for k effects {∑n (27,994) > ∑N (21,706), where ∑N is the sum of unique sample sizes per study}; [¥] see 'Annexure A' for number of studies (K) and subjects across studies (N); Obs. $\bar{r}$= the mean weighted observed correlation corrected for attenuation; Q = Cochrane's Q, the weighted sum of squared differences between individual study effects and the pooled effect across studies; I^2= the percentage of variation across studies that is due to

heterogeneity rather than chance; [a] Random effects model; [ρ] Tandem procedure as per Ferguson & Brannick (2012) recommendation; For Orwin's failsafe-N test, difference between failsafe-N and k is presented; For Egger regression, z-value in parenthesis; For Trim and Fill procedure, corrected grand mean correlation in parenthesis; [φ] Whether qualifies for Moderator Analysis; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.001; [φ] Definitions and references for various operationalizations of Internal Branding are presented in Table 1.

Table 3: Moderator analysis of internal branding[φ]-employee commitment: Hypotheses and findings

Internal Branding			Brand communication [a]	Brand-centered HRM [b]	Training and development [c]	Organizational support and culture [d]	Brand-centered Leadership [e]	Reward [f]	Holistic organization-level practices [g]
Moderators									
Personal characteristics[1]			Model 1a $K=16$ $F = 48.00***$ $R^2 = 87.37\%$	Model 2a $K=5$ $F = 1.17^{ns}$ $R^2 = 8.78\%$	Model 3a $K=18$ $F = 37.10**$ $R^2 = 44.13\%$	Model 4a $K=7$ $F = 0.20^{ns}$ $R^2 = 79.90\%$	Model 5a $K=9$ $F = 39.03**$ $R^2 = 91.88\%$	Model 6a $K=10$ $F = 39.50**$ $R^2 = 96.11\%$	Model 7a $K=6$ $F = 2188.588***$ $R^2 = 89.21\%$
Employee Education[2] [vs Low]	High	[H8]	**-0.54** [-.89, -.19]**	Dropped	**-0.42** [-.72, -.12]**	Dropped	**-0.20** [-1.19, -.08]**	Dropped	Dropped
Gender	% Females	[H9]	**0.85** [.36, 3.33]**	-0.35 ^{ns} [-1.99,1.28]	0.68 ^{ns} [-.38, 1.74]	-0.11 ^{ns} [-3.45,1.24]	**-0.28** [-4.12, -.56]**	0.07 ^{ns} [-.04, .18]	0.07 [-.02, 2.12]
Age[2] [vs Explorers (< 30 yrs.)]	Advancers (30 – 39 yrs.)	[H10]	0.21 ^{ns} [-.04, .45]	Dropped	0.10 ^{ns} [-.31, .51]	**-0.59** [-1.32, -.58]**	**-0.37** [-.64, -.10]**	**-0.85** [-.96, -.34]**	**-0.83 [-1.24, -.42]**
	Maintainers (≥ 40 yrs.)		**-0.71*** [-.80, -.61]**	Dropped	0.27 ^{ns} [-.36, .57]	Dropped	-0.23 [-.75, .29]	Dropped	**-0.90 [-1.08, -.73]**
Job characteristics[1]			Model 1b $K=7$ $F = 5.87^{ns}$ $R^2 = 35.29\%$	Model 2b $K=5$ $F = 2.50^{ns}$ $R^2 = 76.69\%$	Model 3b $K=10$ $F = 6.23*$ $R^2 = 24.23\%$	Model 4b $K=7$ $F = 1.30^{ns}$ $R^2 = 0.77\%$	Model 5b $K=7$ $F = 78.12**$ $R^2 = 65.75\%$	Model 6b $K=8$ $F = 413.78**$ $R^2 = 37.71\%$	Model 7a $K=5$ $F = 2.311$ $R^2 = 27.87\%$
Tenure[2] [vs Explorers (< 5 yrs.)]	Established (5 – 8 yrs.)	[H11]	**0.44** [.28, .60]**	**0.30** [.14, .47]**	0.17 ^{ns} [-.15,.48]	Dropped	0.03 ^{ns} [-.40, .47]	Dropped	0.55 [-.03, 1.13]
	Maintainers (≥ 9 yrs.)		0.28 ^{ns} [-.27, .84]	Dropped	Dropped	Dropped	Dropped	**0.48** [.21, .75]**	0.67 [-.04, 1.38]
Work Status	% Fulltime	[H12]	0.41 ^{ns} [-.08, .90]	Dropped	0.37 ^{ns} [-1.13,1.87]	0.40 ^{ns} [-.29,1.10]	0.27 ^{ns} [-.28, .82]	**0.42** [.39, .44]**	0.73 [-.60, 2.06]
Customer orientation	% Customer contact	[H13]	0.04 ^{ns} [-.22, .31]	**0.15* [.02, .28]**	**0.22* [.01, .42]**	0.28 ^{ns} [-.02, .57]	**0.67** [.26, 1.07]**	Dropped	Dropped
Leadership status	% Non-managers	[H14]	0.03 ^{ns} [-.47, .54]	Dropped	Dropped	Dropped	0.16 ^{ns} [-.30, .62]	0.03 ^{ns} [-.03, .09]	Dropped

Notes: Two separate meta-regressions (one for personal viz. 'a' and other for job characteristics viz. 'b') are run for each Internal branding operationalization; [1] Cells in these top rows present the model fit for the test of included moderators: R^2 = Amount of heterogeneity accounted for and F-value; [2] Variables entered as dummies; Values in a cell = estimate with 90% confidence intervals in square parenthesis based on Cluster-robust inference; Dropped = redundant predictor dropped by the model for no common cases (minimum K = 5 for each model run); Value of K is smaller for each model owing to smaller concurrent samples including all moderators; [φ] Various operationalizations of internal branding are presented in Table 1. ^{ns} $p > 0.10$; * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.00$

Table 4: Study characteristics - findings

	Effect (90% CI)
Intercept	**0.88*** [.51, 1.26]**
Internal branding operationalizations	
[vs –Holistic organization-level practices]	
Brand communication	**-0.07** [-.13, -.003]**
Brand-centered HRM	-0.10 ^{ns} [-.23, .03]
Brand-centered leadership	-0.02 ^{ns} [-.09, .05]
Training and development	**-0.10** [-.17, -.03]**
Organizational support and culture	0.01 [-.09, .12]
Rewards	**-0.10* [-.19, -.001]**
Industry [vs Utilitarian]	
Hedonic	**0.13*** [.06, .19]**
Industry [vs Public]	
Private	**-0.12** [-.21, -.04]**
Internal branding scales [vs mixed scales]	
Punjaisri and Wilson (2007)	0.15 ^{ns} [.08, .23]
Burmann et al. (2009)	**-0.46** [-.77, -.16]**
Foreman & Mooney (1995)	**-0.30* [-.58, -.02]**
Employee commitment scales [vs mixed scales]	
Allen & Meyer (1990)	0.13 ^{ns} [.03, .22]
Burmann et al. (2009)	0.48** [.14, .81]
Mowday et al (1979)	0.48* [.14, .82]
Reported effect size type [vs p-value]	
Correlation	-0.04 ns [-.1, .02]
t-value	**-0.37** [-.61, -.13]**
Standardized regression coefficient	*Dropped*
Time period of study [vs Before 2006]	
2006 - 2015	**-0.39** [-.53, -.24]**
2016 and later	**-0.31* [-.47, -.15]**
Continents [vs Africa]	
Asia	**0.18** [.03, .34]**
Europe	-0.22 ^{ns} [-.51, .08]
Middle East	**0.27* [.02, .52]**
America	0.10 ^{ns} [-.16, .36]
Number of samples (clusters)	157 (44)
R^2	73.63%
Test of moderators (F)^b	**F (df1 = 22, df2 = 21) = 9.43****

*Notes: All study characteristics are entered as dummy variables; R^2: Amount of heterogeneity accounted for by the model; Value in cells = estimate with 90% confidence intervals in square parenthesis based on Cluster-robust inference; ^{b} F-value for the model; Dropped = redundant predictor dropped by the model for no common cases (minimum K = 5 for each model run); ^{ns} p ≥ 0.10 * p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.001.*
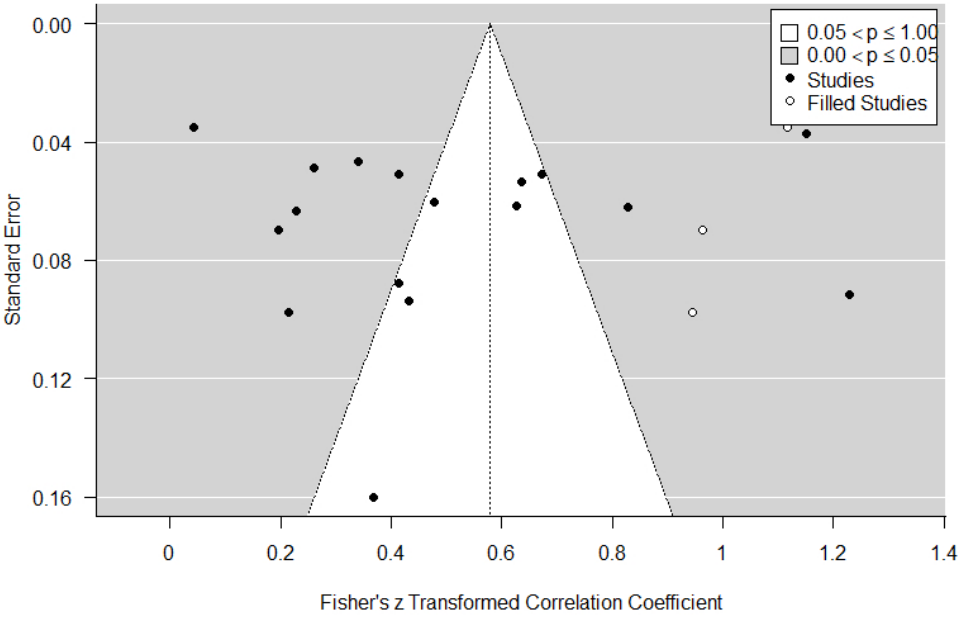
Figure 3

528x387mm (38 x 38 DPI)

Annexure A: List of studies (K) & sample (N)

Study	Author	Journal code	Title	N
1	Abzari et al, 2011	IJMS	The Effect of Internal Marketing on Organizational Commitment from Market-Orientation Viewpoint in Hotel Industry in Iran	100
2	Alves et al, 2015	TRZ	Influence of internal marketing on organizational commitment - evidence from care institutions for the elderly	188
3	Amina et al, 2015	HMF	The Influence of the Internal Marketing on the Behavior of the Expatriate Employee and on the Determination of the External Customer Satisfaction	378
4	Asiamah et al, 2018	IJHM	The nexus between internal marketing in hospitals and organizational commitment: Incorporating the mediation roles of key job characteristics	717
5	Bailey et al, 2016	IJBM	The roles of employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the internal marketing-employee bank identification relationship	235
6	Barzoki and Ghujali, 2005	IJARBS	Study the Relationship of Internal Marketing with Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior	165
7	Bennett and Berkensjo, 2005	IJVNO	Internal Marketing, Negative Experiences, and Volunteers' Commitment to Providing High-Quality Services in a UK Helping and Caring Charitable Organization	91
8	Bermudez-Gonzalez, 2017	JSTP	Understanding the impact of internal marketing practices on both employees and managers organizational commitment in elderly care homes	209
9	Braimah, 2016	AJHTL	Internal marketing and employee commitment in the hospitality industry	180
10	Burmann et al, 2009	BM	Key determinants of internal brand management success: An exploratory empirical analysis	1783
11	Chang and Chang, 2009	JAN	Perceptions of internal marketing and organizational commitment by nurses	300
12	Chiu et al, 2019	SLS	Internal marketing, organizational commitment, and job performance in sport and leisure services	254
13	Dechawatanapaisal, 2018	PR	Employee retention: the effects of internal branding and brand attitudes in sales organizations	702
14	Du Preez et al, 2017	JPBM	The behavioral consequences of internal brand management among frontline employees	154
14	Du Preez et al, 2017	JPBM	The behavioral consequences of internal brand management among frontline employees	96
14	Du Preez et al, 2017	JPBM	The behavioral consequences of internal brand management among frontline employees	241
15	Du-Preez and Bendixen, 2015	IJBM	The impact of internal brand management on employee job satisfaction, brand commitment and intention to stay	156
16	Edo et al, 2014	JSTP	Internal Marketing, Negative Experiences, and Volunteers' Commitment to Providing High-Quality Services in a UK Helping and Caring Charitable Organization	244
17	Erkmen, 2018	AS	Managing Your Brand for Employees: Understanding the Role of Organizational Processes in Cultivating Employee Brand	374

Study	Author	Journal code	Title	N
			Equity	
18	Farzad et al, 2008	AJAS	The Effect of Internal Marketing on Organizational Commitment in Iranian Banks	118
19	Garas et al, 2018	JPBM	Internal corporate branding impact on employees' brand supporting behaviour	400
20	Gull and Ashraf, 2012	IJBS	Impact of Internal Branding on Service Employees' Quality Commitment – Study on Education Sector of Pakistan	259
21	Huang and Chen, 2013	PR	Internal marketing, customer orientation, and organizational commitment: moderating effects of work status	119
22	Ismail and Sheriff, 2017	PJMS	The effect of internal marketing on organizational commitment: an empirical study in banking sector in Yemen	407
23	Javanmard and Nia, 2011	IJBM	Effect of Internal Branding on Brand Supporting Behaviors of Employees Regarding Customer Attraction in Islamic Banking	220
24	Joung et al, 2015	IJCHM	Investigating relationships between internal marketing practices and employee organizational commitment in the foodservice industry.	447
25	Joung et al, 2018	IJCHM	Investigating differences in job-related attitudes between full-time and part-time employees in the foodservice industry	269
25	Joung et al, 2018	IJCHM	Investigating differences in job-related attitudes between full-time and part-time employees in the foodservice industry	136
26	Karuana and Calleya, 1998	IJBM	The effect of internal marketing on organizational commitment among retail bank managers	171
27	Kashive and Khanna, 2017	IJHRS	Impact of internal branding, Brand Commitment and brand supportive behaviours on organizational effectiveness and firm performance.	244
28	Kaur et al, 2020	APJBA	Moderation-mediation framework connecting internal branding, affective commitment, employee engagement and job satisfaction: an empirical study of BPO employees in Indian context	215
29	Keelson, 2014	RBFS	The moderating role of organizational capabilities and internal marketing in market orientation and business success	43
30	Kim et al, 2016	IJHM	Effects of corporate social responsibility and internal marketing on organizational commitment and turnover intentions	310
31	Koo and Curtis, 2019	JHMM	An examination of the role of internal brand management: impact of contractual models	342
32	Lombard and Burin, 2017	SAJBM	Strengthening graduate employee commitment through internal marketing in the South African retail banking industry	164
33	Mac and Shirley, 2015	EAJM	The impact of internal marketing on organizational commitment: the mediating roles of customer orientation and internal communication	105
34	Martinez et al, 2011	IJIIA	Internal Marketing Perceptions in Intercollegiate Athletics and Their Influence on Organizational Commitment	248
35	Mero et al, 2020	SAGE	Influence of Internal Marketing Dimensions on Organizational Commitment: An Empirical Application in Ecuadorian Co-Operativism	2499

Study	Author	Journal code	Title	N
36	Narteh, 2012	JFSM	Internal marketing and employee commitment: Evidence from Ghanaian banking industry.	410
37	Natarajan et al, 2017	IJBM	Relationship between Internal Branding, Employee Brand and Brand Endorsement	274
38	Nikbin et al, 2010	MISO	The Relationship between Internal Marketing and Implementation of Strategic Orientations in Malaysian Service Industry	112
39	Porricelli et al., 2014	JRCS	Antecedents of brand citizenship behavior in retailing	241
40	Punjaisri et al, 2009	JSM	Internal branding to influence employees' brand promise delivery: a case study in Thailand	699
41	Ramos, 2018	RIBER	Internal Marketing Dimensions and Organizational Commitment of Universal Banks' Employees	41
42	Schulz et al, 2017	JMD	Factors influencing organization commitment Internal marketing orientation, external marketing orientation, and subjective well-being	108
43	Sihombing and Gustam, 2007	PPM	The Effect of Internal Marketing on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment: An Empirical Study in a University Setting	129
44	Suprihanto et al, 2018	IJHM	The relationship between internal marketing and the organizational commitment of doctors and nurses at Mardi Waluyo Hospital, Metro Lampung Indonesia	105
45	Terglav et al, 2016	IJHM	Internal branding process: Exploring the role of mediators in top management's leadership – commitment relationship	226
46	Tibebe et al, 2018	IJIRP	The Effects of Internal Branding on Employee Brand Commitment: In Case of University of Gondar, Ethiopia	377
47	Ting, 2011	EAQ	The Effect of Internal Marketing on Organizational Commitment: Job Involvement and Job Satisfaction as Mediators	275
48	Tsai and Wu, 2011	JAN	Using internal marketing to improve organizational commitment and service quality	288
49	Tsai, 2014	BHSR	Learning organizations, internal marketing, and organizational commitment in hospitals	114
50	Tuominen et al, 2016	JBM	The internal branding process and financial performance in service companies: An examination of the required steps	487
51	Vazifehdoost et al, 2012	IJBC	The Effects of Internal Marketing and Organizational Commitment on Bank's Success	600
52	Warraich et al, 2016	JBS	impact of internal Marketing on Organizational commitment: a case of Lucky cement Employees	130
53	Yang et al, 2015	THR	Effect of internal branding on employee brand commitment and behavior in hospitality	661
54	Yu et al, 2017	IJHRM	Enhancing firm performance through internal market orientation and employee organizational commitment	275
55	Ahlberg et al, 2012	UNPUB	Internal Branding: An Empirical Study within the Swedish Bank Industry, an Employees Perspective	149

Study	Author	Journal code	Title	N
56	Almgren et al, 2012	UNPUB	The Relationship between Internal Branding and Affective Commitment	204
57	Blazevic et al., 2012	UNPUB	Internal Branding - Understanding Brand Values	129
58	Zhu, 2013	UNPUB	The Roles of internal branding practices and transformational leadership In Internal Brand Management	794
59	Axelsson and Akesson, 2014	UNPUB	The internal brand implementation: A study about which factors that affect the internal brand within organizations	150
60	Sriyothin, 2016	UNPUB	Influence Of Internal Communication on Employees' Brand Outcomes	1212
61	Vrielink, 2019	UNPUB	Internal branding: In search for employee commitment and brand supportive behavior	125
62	Kumar and Rao, 2022	UNPUB	Interrelation Between Employee Engagement and Internal Branding and Its Outcomes	108

Note: Sixty-five (65) studies (from 62 published works), yield 226 effect sizes (coded into 82 composite effect sizes) over an aggregated sample of 21,706 respondents.

[β] *JSM - Journal of Service Management; BM - Brand Management; IJBM - The IUP Journal of Brand Management; PR - Psychological Reports; JRCS - Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services; TRZ - Trziste; IJCHM - International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; THR - Tourism and Hospitality Research; IJBM - International Journal of Bank Marketing; JMD - Journal of Management Development; JPBM - Journal of Product & Brand Management; JPBM - Journal of Product & Brand Management; JPBM - Journal of Product & Brand Management; IJHM - International Journal of Healthcare Management; IJCHM - International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; IJCHM - International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; JPBM - Journal of Product & Brand Management; PR - Personnel Review; AS - Administrative Sciences; SAJBM - South African Journal of Business Management; JFSM - Journal of Financial Services Marketing; SLS - Sport and Leisure Services; JBM - Journal of Brand Management; RIBER - Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research; IJVNO - International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations; JSTP - Journal of Service Theory and Practice; BHSR - BMC Health Services Research; JBS - Journal of Business Strategies; IJBM - International Journal of Bank Marketing; JAN - Journal of Advanced Nursing; IJHRM - The International Journal of Human Resource Management; EAJM - Euro Asia Journal of Management; JHMM - Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management; PJMS - Polish Journal of Management Studies; MISO - Marketing and Implementation of Strategic Orientations; IJBM - International Journal of Business and Management; IJBS - International Journal of Business and Social Science; IJHRS - International Journal of Human Resource Studies; APJBA - Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration; IJIRP - International Journal of Innovative Research and Practices; IJHM - International Journal of Hospitality Management; HMF - Humanistic Management Network; RBFS - Review of Business and Finance Studies; IJHM - International Journal of Healthcare Management; JSTP - Journal of Service Theory and Practice; IJIIA - Journal of issues in Intercollegiate Athletics; JAN - Journal of Advanced Nursing; PPM - The 1st PPM National Conference on Management Research; AJHTL - African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure; SAGE - SAGE open; IJBC - International Journal of Business and Commerce; IJARBS - International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences; IJHM - International Journal of Hospitality Management; EAQ - Educational Administration Quarterly; IJMS - International Journal of Marketing Studies; AJAS - American Journal of Applied Sciences; IJBM - International Journal of Bank Marketing; UNPUB – Unpublished research.*