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Employer Branding and Employee Engagement

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Abstract:

Employer branding is considered a new strategy and solution in talent attraction and retention. Previous studies have mostly focused on studying the impact of employer branding on potential candidates. Therefore, this study will explore a new direction: the impact of employer branding on current employees to the organization. Mixed methods were used to solve the research problems in this study. The samples of 937 employees working at 37 enterprises and organizations in Vietnam were collected through a questionnaire sent directly to the respondents. The data analysis was performed by SPSS and PLS-SEM. Research results have shown that employer branding positively impacts employee engagement with a strong degree (with an effective coefficient of 0.759). This result implies that employer branding affects current employees as well. This study will help researchers and managers identify the important factors and methods to build employer branding strategies systematically and effectively to improve employee engagement. With this result, this study has contributed to the theory of employer branding as a new research direction related to the current employee.

Keywords: employer branding, employee engagement, employee retention.

雇主品牌和员工参与

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摘要:

雇主品牌被认为是吸引和留住人才的新战略和解决方案。以前的研究主要集中在研究雇主品牌对潜在候选人的影响。因此，本研究将探索一个新的方向：雇主品牌对组织现有员工的影响。本研究采用混合方法解决研究问题。通过直接发送给受访者的问卷，收集了在越南 37 家企业和组织工作的 937 名员工的样本。数据分析采用SPSS和扫描电镜进行。研究结果表明，雇主品牌对员工敬业度有很强的积极影响（有效系数为 0.759）。这一结果意味着雇主品牌也会影响现有员工。本研究将帮助研究人员和管理人员确定系统有效地建立雇主品牌战略以提高员工敬业度的重要因素和方法。有了这个结果，本研究为雇主品牌理论作为与在员工相关的新研究方向做出了贡献。

关键词: 雇主品牌、员工敬业度、员工保留率。

1. Introduction

Employer branding theory is considered a combination of two fields, marketing and human resources (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Employer branding is defined as a package of economic and psychological benefits that the employer provides to the employee to create unique and different employer characteristics (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). This theory has not been fully developed because it has only been formed recently. The content of this theory has been focused on research in recent years, including:

- Firstly, the concepts of employer branding such as the package of economic and psychological benefits of the employer (Ambler & Barrow, 1996), organizational culture or inner spirit (Fombrun & Wally, 1989), organization's reputation for all stakeholders (Hlavsa et al., 2015); employer attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005; Ha et al., 2021b), etc.
- Secondly, studies on employer branding related contents such as human capital (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), characteristics of company resources (Barney, 1991) and competitive advantages of the organization (Priem & Butler, 2001), etc.;
- Thirdly, employer branding focuses on studying the impact on potential candidates (Berthon et al., 2005; Elving et al., 2013).
- Finally, employer branding studies brand equity (Aaker & Equity, 1991).

Therefore, although the definition of employer branding is considered for both potential candidates and current employees (Ha & Luan, 2018), the current research direction on the impact of employer branding on current employees is very limited. Therefore, this is also a new direction that this research exploits and specifically studies the impact of employer branding on employee engagement. The results of this study will be meaningful to open a new research direction in employer branding theory.

Besides, employee engagement theory has been studied and developed by Kahn (1990) for a long time. Sange (2015) studied the external dimensions of employee engagement, including attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes, whereas others have focused on

measuring and improving employee engagement in companies (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013). Many other studies focus on consequences of employee engagement (labor productivity, product loss rate, inconsistency level, absenteeism rate, job fatigue level) (Sange, 2015), work motivation (Arrowsmith & Parker, 2013; Shuck & Herd, 2012), etc. For studies on employees, engagement antecedents include organizational communication satisfaction (Iyer & Israel, 2012), safety culture (Biddison et al., 2016), perceived organization support (Arasanmi & Krishna, 2019), etc. Employer branding is considered an effective solution and strategy to build a working environment for employees; however, very few current studies are being conducted on the impact of this factor on employee engagement. From the above analysis, it can be seen that studying the impact of employer branding on employee engagement is necessary and will make a valuable contribution in developing the employer branding theory.

Therefore, with the current theory of employer branding, there is a lack of studies on the impact of employer branding on factors belonging to current employees, such as employee engagement. Therefore, this is the gap research that this study explores to further contribute to the employer branding theory system.

2. Literature Review

The social exchange theory combined sociology and social psychology theories and was developed by Emerson (1976). This theory was further extended by Homans (1969), Thibaut and Kelley (1959), and Blau (1964). Homans (1969) developed and created the content 'Social behavior as exchange', which focuses on analyzing behavioral psychology tools. Meanwhile, Thibaut and Kelley (1959) have developed "The Social Psychology of Groups", which deeply studies psychology concepts. The other author, Blau (1964), studied the term 'Exchange and Power'. Accordingly, Blau (1964) followed a separate research direction, analyzing technical and economic factors. All three research directions above have supported and contributed to building the social exchange theory. The main content of this theory is that every action taken by

an individual will depend on the reward received from another person (Homans, 1969). This is a process of exchanging social values between two parties. Therefore, this theory will include two main elements: contingent and getting values, including 'transactions' or 'exchange'. This theory suggests that behavioral psychology can be applied to social behavior in human resource management (Homans, 1969).

Employee engagement theory, developed by Kahn (1990), assumes that employees use their resources: perceptions in work and strengths at different levels at work. Depending on each organization's working environment and conditions, employees have different levels of engagement and contribution to the organization. According to this theory, three levels of employee engagement in work and organizations are cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioral engagement. Cognitive engagement is an individual's sense of meaning at work. When cognitive coherence is achieved, employees will feel fully resourced psychologically and emotionally to complete their tasks. When employees have cognitive engagement, it helps them have confidence that they always have many opportunities at work and, of course, increases the level of engagement (Kahn, 1990; Shuck & Reio, 2014). The next level in employee engagement theory is emotional engagement. This degree will focus on human resources (pride, trust, and knowledge). Emotional engagement will improve the critical thinking process to directly affect the individual's energy to complete the assigned task (Shuck & Reio, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2020). Engagement levels or behavioral engagement increases efforts directly through the organization's goals and the employee's available resources (Shuck & Reio, 2014).

3. Hypothesis and Research Model

3.1. Hypothesis

Based on social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), there is a reciprocal and harmonious relationship between employer and employee through mutual values. In particular, the employer will provide the employee with the values that the employee needs (salary, bonus, training program and career development, work-life balance, travel opportunities, experience test and comparison). These values include both economic and social factors (Shore et al., 2009). On the employee side, they can provide the employer with their values, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes; the most important one is engagement in work and organization. This shows that employer branding (including the values that the employer can bring to the employee) impacts the level of employee engagement. In addition, because the foundation of employer branding theory is the psychological contract, the approach to the relationship between employer and employee is similar. Under the psychological contract,

the employer and employee will commit that the employer will ensure the safety of the employee's work in return for the promise of loyalty from the employee (Hendry & Jenkins, 1997). If employee engagement is reduced, the employer can use employer branding strategy to communicate and provide values and benefits to motivate and enhance this level of engagement. Besides, the person-organization fit theory (Kristof, 1996), which mentioned the harmonious relationship between employer and employee, also has a similar explanation in this relationship. Person-organization fit theory demonstrates that this relationship harmony is a long-term and effective strategy in influencing employee-related factors, such as turnovers (Schneider, 1987), work attitudes (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984), and work performance (Tziner, 1987). According to this theory, if the employer wishes to receive values from the employee (knowledge, experience, and skills), it must provide the employee with equivalent benefits, including value, energy, and awareness. When the employer provides all the benefits that the employee needs, the employee will reciprocate by working hard to have the skills and abilities required by the employer (Jex & Britt, 2008). Between organization and person in this theory will reach fit state. In this state, the employee will have peace of mind to work and be more engaged with the employer. Employer branding with activities that bring employees economic and psychological benefit packages will help maintain and enhance the harmonious state between employer and employee (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). This will have a positive impact on employee engagement.

According to Burke et al. (2007), interesting experiences in employment will help attract potential candidates and retain current employees. Organizations will try to provide employees with the most favorable benefits and conditions to improve the effectiveness of employer branding activities. These employer branding solutions are often creatively executed (Whitener, 1997). Employer branding will help reduce employee absenteeism and increase job performance (Eisenberger et al., 1997; Ha et al., 2021a; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Therefore, employer branding plays a very important role in human resource management activities in organizations (retaining talent) (Kashyap & Verma, 2018). This is evidenced by numerous studies that have shown that employer branding has a positive impact on factors related to current employees such as satisfaction and loyalty (Davies, 2008), employee satisfaction and commitment (Priyadarshini et al., 2016), satisfaction and identification (Schlager et al., 2011), satisfaction, commitment and retention (Ito et al., 2013) and engagement (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011). Moreover, according to Taylor (2002), employer branding of an enterprise is considered an effective solution to improve employee retention through commitments to implementing many interesting human resource

management activities and compete with other companies. One element of employer branding helping fulfill this mission is corporate culture. According to Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008), an organization with a strong corporate culture will help increase the level of retention and create employee satisfaction. Therefore, if businesses develop a suitable corporate culture, it will create a better level of employee engagement (Sinha et al., 2015). Similarly, according to Nguyen et al. (2019), another component of the employer branding strategy, job crafting, also positively impacts employee engagement. In addition, in another indirect approach, Singh and Jain (2013) have developed a research model in which the employer branding factor will directly and positively impact employee motivation. This factor has a positive impact on the employee's decision to engage with the company. Employee motivation is shown to be the mediating variable of the relationship between employer branding and employee engagement. It can be affirmed that there is a statistically significant relationship between employer branding and employee engagement (Ende, 2016). In other words, employer branding positively impacts employee engagement (Biswas & Suar, 2016; Maxwell & Knox, 2009).

Based on the above reasons, the first hypothesis is proposed as follows:

Hypothesis: Employer branding has a positive impact on employee engagement.

3.2. The Research Model

The research model is built based on the concepts and scales of employer branding factor developed by Tanwar and Prasad (2017) and employee engagement developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002). This model is built as a result model (Reflective Model A) and is shown in Figure 1, in which employer branding is expected to have a statistically significant relationship and have a positive impact on employee engagement.

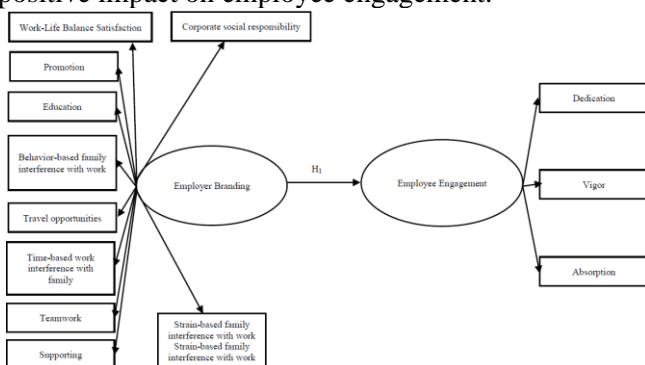


Figure 1. The research model

4. Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed method, which combines qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the data. First, the qualitative method is used to adjust and develop the scales of the factors in the research model. Methods used in this phase include in-depth interviews with four experts who are lecturers with doctoral

degrees and research experience and conduct group discussions with two groups of senior staff working three or more years (each group is 10 employees). Next, the study uses quantitative methods to test the reliability of the scale and research hypotheses in the model. This study used the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the Partial Least Squares and Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for the data analysis. The data collection method used is the convenient method. The survey questionnaires were sent directly to the respondents. After screening, the total number of samples satisfying the research requirements was 937 samples from 37 enterprises and organizations in Vietnam.

4.1. Measurement

In this study, the scales of these two factors (employer branding and employee engagement) are measured by relying on the scales of previous authors and through qualitative research to confirm and further develop to suit the research context in Vietnam. The employer branding scale is based on the original scale of Tanwar and Prasad (2017), Chauhan and Mahajan (2013), Lievens (2007), Lorys (2017), Carlson et al. (2000), developed by Ha and Luan (2021), includes 10 dimensions with 58 items: Corporate social responsibility dimensions (CSR), Work-Life Balance Satisfaction (WLSA), Promotion (PRO), Education (EDU), Behavior-based family interference with work (WLBE), Travel opportunities (TRA), Time-based work interference with family (WLTi), Teamwork (GRO), Supporting (SUP) and Strain-based family interference with work (WLST). The employee engagement scale is based on the original scale of Schaufeli et al. (2002) includes three dimensions with 18 items: Dedication (DED), Vigor (VIG), and Absorption (ABS). The scale type used is a 5-point Likert scale, in which (1) stands for "completely disagree" and (5) - "completely agree".

4.2. Descriptive Statistics Analysis

The total number of variables observed in this study is 937. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the sample.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics results

No.	Content	Frequency	Percent (%)
I Gender			
1	Male	471	50.3
2	Female	466	49.7
	Total	937	100.0
II Age			
1	From 18 to 30	491	52.4
2	From 31 to 40	349	37.2
3	From 40 to 50	83	8.9
4	From 50 to 60	14	1.5
	Total	937	100.0
III Qualification			
1	Unskilled	27	2.9
2	Intermediate	180	19.2
3	Colleges	160	17.1

No.	Content	Frequency	Percent (%)
4	University	464	49.5
5	Graduate	106	11.3
	Total	937	100.0
IV	Job		
1	Production/Technical/RD	347	37.0
2	Business	229	24.4
3	Back Office	361	38.5
	Total	937	100.0
V	Company		
1	Private enterprise	42	4.5
2	One member limited liability companies (100% government)	115	12.3
3	One member limited liability companies (100% private)	20	2.1
4	Joint venture company	46	4.9
5	Multinational company	3	0.3
6	A limited liability company	105	11.2
7	Shareholding companies	484	51.7
8	Education	55	5.9
9	Healthcare	54	5.8
10	Others	13	1.4
	Total	937	100.0

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Scale Reliability and Measurement Model Validity Assessment

Scale reliability of employer branding and employee engagement tested by Cronbach Alpha. In addition, the internal consistency standard is evaluated through exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results of these analyzes are detailed in Table 2. Accordingly, Cronbach's alpha value of all dimensions of employer branding and employee engagement factors has values greater than 0.8 (meeting the minimum Cronbach's

alpha requirement of 0.6), and no item, if deleted, produces the Cronbach's alpha higher than the original value. This result shows that the employer branding and employee engagement scales have a very good level, and no items of these two factors have to be removed from the original scale. Next, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) shows that the KMO values of employer branding and employee engagement are 0.963 and 0.953, respectively. This proves that these two scales are satisfactory according to the KMO standard (the values must be in the range 0.5-1.0). Furthermore, the significant value of Bartlett's test is 0.000 (< 0.05), demonstrating that these scales meet the requirements of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) criteria (Hair et al., 2016). In addition, the Total Variance Explained index of employer branding is 65.946%, and employee engagement is 67.043%. Compared with EFA standards, this indicator needs to be more than 50%. It can be concluded that this indicator of the scales is appropriate (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The final criterion of the EFA is eigenvalues. The results show that the eigenvalue of employer branding is 1.097. The employer branding includes 10 dimensions: Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Work-Life Balance Satisfaction (WLSA), Promotion (PRO), Education (EDU), Behavior-based family Interference with work (WLBE), Travel opportunities (TRA), Time-based work interference with family (WLTI), Teamwork (GRO), Supporting (SUP) and Strain-based family interference with work (WLST). Similarly, the eigenvalues of employee engagement is 1.085 comprising the following three dimensions: Dedication (DED), Vigour (VIG), and Absorption (ABS). With this result, the above two scales are satisfactory because the standard of eigenvalues is greater than 1.

Table 2. Results of scale reliability

No.	Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha (> 0.6)	Explored Factor Analysis (EFA)				Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
			KMO (> 0.5)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: (sig < 0.05)	Cumulative % (> 50%)	Eigenvalues (> 1.0)		
I	Employer branding (Outer loading: 0.701 – 0.859)							
1	Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	0.904					0.905	0.568
2	Work-Life Balance Satisfaction (WLSA)	0.921					0.935	0.645
3	Promotion (PRO)	0.917					0.933	0.635
4	Education (EDU)	0.908					0.927	0.647
5	Behavior-based family interference with work (WLBE)	0.903					0.923	0.633
6	Travel opportunities (TRA)	0.810	0.963	0.000	65.946%	1.097	0.889	0.727
7	Time-based work interference with family (WLTI)	0.855					0.898	0.639
8	Teamwork (GRO)	0.836					0.891	0.671
9	Supporting (SUP)	0.843					0.895	0.680
10	Strain-based family interference with work (WLST)	0.796					0.881	0.712
II	Employee engagement (Outer loading: 0.757 – 0.871)							

1	Dedication (DED)	0.917					0.934	0.668
2	Vigor (VIG)	0.900	0.953	0.000	67.043%	1.085	0.924	0.669
3	Absorption (ABS)	0.864					0.902	0.649

The results of KMO, the significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, Total Variance Explained index, and eigenvalues presented above show that employer branding and employee engagement scales meet the internal consistency standard. In another criterion, discriminant value standard, the outer loading value of all employer branding items is in the range [0.701 - 0.859], and employee engagement is [0.757 - 0.871]. These outer loading values are all higher than 0.5, so it can be concluded that these scales meet the discriminant value. Besides, Composite Reliability (CR) of employer branding has values higher than 0.881, and employee engagement has values higher than 0.902 (> 0.7); consequently, it can be seen that these values are satisfactory. Finally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of both scales is greater than

0.5 and meets the standard's requirements. Based on the results of CR and AVE presented above, it can be concluded that these scales achieve the internal consistency reliability.

The next indicator to be evaluated is the discriminant value, measured against the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion. The analysis results show that the HTMT values of the observed variables are all less than 0.85 (Table 3). It can be concluded that the observed variables of employer branding satisfy the discrimination value. In addition, Table 4 shows that column 25% (corresponding to the low of 95% confidence interval) and column 95% (corresponding to the high of 95% confidence interval) do not contain the value 1. Combining these two results can determine that employer branding has discriminative validity.

Table 3. HTMT of employer branding

	CSR	WLSA	PRO	EDU	WLBE	TRA	WLTl	GRO	SUP	WLST
CSR										
WLSA	0.598									
PRO	0.582	0.613								
EDU	0.570	0.461	0.751							
WLBE	0.575	0.707	0.617	0.490						
TRA	0.432	0.513	0.694	0.643	0.462					
WLTl	0.533	0.701	0.573	0.431	0.601	0.491				
GRO	0.606	0.597	0.710	0.586	0.566	0.506	0.528			
SUP	0.489	0.482	0.608	0.438	0.458	0.389	0.508	0.677		
WLST	0.609	0.609	0.538	0.451	0.612	0.416	0.639	0.521	0.473	

Table 4. HTMT ratio of employer branding

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	2,5%	97,5%
EB → CSR	0.772	0.772	0.000	0.746	0.801
EB →WLSA	0.809	0.809	0.000	0.782	0.834
EB →PRO	0.842	0.842	0.000	0.813	0.862
EB →EDU	0.732	0.733	0.001	0.694	0.763
EB →WLBE	0.770	0.769	-0.001	0.725	0.803
EB →TRA	0.637	0.638	0.001	0.591	0.677
EB →WLTl	0.722	0.721	0.000	0.674	0.758
EB →GRO	0.737	0.737	0.000	0.697	0.771
EB →SUP	0.633	0.633	0.000	0.585	0.671
EB → WLST	0.658	0.658	0.000	0.613	0.696

Similar to employer branding, HTMT (heterotrait – monotrait) values of employee engagement are also higher than 0.85 and meet the criteria of discriminatory value (Table 5). According to Table 6, no value 1 in the confidence interval shows that the observed variables of employee engagement are discriminative validity.

HTMT (heterotrait–monotrait) values of employee engagement also share similar outcomes compared to employer branding without any HTMT values less than 0.85 (Table 5), and 25% and 95% columns do not carry value 1 (Table 6). Therefore, it can be concluded that employee engagement reaches discriminative validity.

Table 5. HTMT of employee engagement (EE)

	DED	VIG	ABS
Dedication (DED)			

	DED	VIG	ABS
Vigor (VIG)	0.805		
Absorption (ABS)	0.816	0.737	

Table 6. HTMT ratio of employee engagement (EE)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	2,5%	97,5%
EE → DED	0.933	0.933	0.000	0.917	0.943
EE → VIG	0.889	0.889	0.000	0.864	0.907
EE → ABS	0.861	0.861	0.000	0.837	0.883

In summary, combining the results presented in Tables 2-6 shows that all observed variables of employer branding scale (including 10 latent variables: CSR, WLSA, PRO, EDU, WLBE, TRA, WLTl, GRO, SUP, and WLST) and employee engagement (including three latent variables: DED, VIG, and ABS) meet

model-related measurement standards including internal consistency reliable values, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

5.2. Structural Model Assessment

When evaluating research models, one important criterion to consider is whether multicollinearity occurs or not. This phenomenon occurs when there is a high correlation between the independent variables in the

linear model; of course, this will negatively affect the research results. Therefore, researchers often use the variance inflation factor (VIF) to measure the phenomenon of multicollinearity (Akinwande et al., 2015). According to the standard, multicollinearity does not occur if the VIF values are less than 5 (Hair et al., 2016). According to Table 7 below, the VIF values are less than 5, showing no multicollinearity phenomenon in this research model.

Table 7. VIF value in the research model

	ABS	CSR	DED	EDU	EE	EB	GRO	PRO	SUP	TRA	VIG	WLBE	WLSA	WLST	WLTI
EE	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
EB	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1

When evaluating the predictive power of the research model, the studies will use the R2 index. In particular, the higher the R2 index, the better the predictive ability of the research model, or it can be said, the higher the model's fit becomes. The range of values of R2 will run from 0.0 to 1.0. In the analysis results, there are usually two values, R and R2 adjusted. In multiple regression models, the R2 adjusted value is often used to measure this to avoid biases due to model complexity. According to the standard, when R2 has values of 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25, respectively, it will show high, medium, and low predictive power. In special cases (customer behavior studies), an R2 value of 0.20 is considered high (Hair et al., 2016). For this study, the R2 adjusted value was 0.576 (Table 8). This proves that the predicted level of employer branding for employee engagement is at a moderate - good level.

Table 8. Determination coefficient R² adjusted

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Engagement	0.576	0.576

Next, it is necessary to evaluate whether the exogenous variables omitted in the model have any impact on the endogenous variables in the model. The index to evaluate this problem is the value of f2. According to PLS-SEM standards, the f2 value is 0.02, 0.15, or 0.35, respectively, showing the weak, medium, and strong impact of the omitted exogenous variables (Cohen, 1988). In addition, if the f2 value is less than 0.02, it will show no effect. According to the results presented in Table 9, the f2 value of 1.36 shows that the impact of employer branding on employee engagement is strong.

Table 9. Impact coefficient f²

	ABS	CSR	DED	EDU	EE	EB	GRO	PRO	SUP	TRA	VIG	WLBE	WLSA	WLST	WLTI
EE	2.87	0.00	6.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
EB	0.00	1.46	0.00	1.16	1.36	0.00	1.19	2.43	0.67	0.68	0.00	1.46	1.90	0.77	1.09

Besides measuring the model's predictive power, it is necessary to further analyze it by the value of Q² (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974) - a measure of the out-of-sample predictive power. This comes from the ability of PLS-SEM to accurately predict data not used in the estimation model. The evaluation criteria of this index are as follows: an endogenous latent variable with a Q² index value greater than 0 indicates that there is a predictive relevance of the path model for this dependent variable. Table 10 shows that the Q² value of the employee engagement's endogenous variable is 0.306, much higher than that of 0. This result indicates that this relation is to predict the model to the endogenous latent variables.

Last but not least, in the analysis process of the structural model, it is to evaluate the relationship between the factors in the research model based on the research hypotheses. Table 11 and Figure 2 show that employer branding has a strong positive effect on employee engagement with a value of β = 0.759 and 99% confidence. This can be concluded that hypothesis H₁ is supported. For research in the field of social

sciences, this impact coefficient is considered to be quite strong. This proves that employer branding activities greatly influence the employee's decision to work long-term with the company.

Table 10. Q² value

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (= 1 - SSE/SSO)
ABS	4685	2450.733	0.477
CSR	8433	5663.217	0.328
DED	6559	2774.14	0.577
EDU	6559	4324.166	0.341
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	16866	11704.36	0.306
EMPLOYER BRANDING	54346	54346	
GRO	3748	2395.366	0.361
PRO	7496	4146.985	0.447
SUP	3748	2744.062	0.268
TRA	2811	1994.338	0.291
VIG	5622	2675.469	0.524
WLBE	6559	4136.416	0.369
WLSA	7496	4354.097	0.419
WLST	2811	1949.926	0.306
WLTI	4685	3140.862	0.330

Table 11. Hypothesis testing result

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P-Values	Comment
Employer Branding -> Employee Engagement	0.759	0.759	0.017	44.232	0.000	Supported

6. Discussion

According to the analysis results, employer branding positively impacts employee engagement with an impact coefficient $\beta = 0.759$ (significance level p-value = 0.000). This means that hypothesis H₁ is accepted. An impact factor of 0.759 shows that Employer branding has a strong and significant impact on employer-employee engagement. At the same time, this impact is significant to 1% (p-value = 0.000 < 0.001). This can be proven that Employer branding and Employee Engagement are positively related and statistically significant. This accepted hypothesis adds to the general theory of employer branding as the second new point of the dissertation. When researching employer branding, researchers focused heavily on the relationship between employer branding affecting potential candidates (Berthon et al., 2005). Researches on internal employees focus on such aspects as satisfaction and loyalty (Davies, 2008; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017), motivation (Prasilowati et al., 2021). Little research is performed on the relationship between employer branding and employee engagement. Therefore, this research result will make an important contribution to the overall theoretical framework of employer branding.

responsibility, Work-Life Balance, Promotion, Education, Travel opportunities, Teamwork, Supporting), which is engagement. Therefore, when compared to social exchange theory, the research results of this relationship are completely appropriate. On the other hand, employer branding has a positive impact on employee engagement in accordance with some previous research findings. Numerous studies have demonstrated that employer branding factors (training, development, reputation, organization culture, ethics, corporate social responsibility, work-life balance, and diversity) impact job satisfaction (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). An employee satisfaction job will help them increase engagement in a company. Similarly, Burawat (2015) showed a positive impact of employer brand awareness on employee engagement, the positive impact of employer brand awareness on employee expectations, and the positive impact of employee expectations on their engagement. In addition, the research shows that employers' brands have an indirect impact on employee engagement through expectations. In the same opinion, many researchers have pointed out that factors like organization communication, support, and trust positively impact employee engagement (Davies, 2008; Iyer & Israel, 2012). The previous research results support the results of the positive relationship between employer branding and employee engagement. For practical activities, this result is appropriate. Employee engagement depends on employer branding activities at every business. If businesses perform well and effectively, this activity will help employees feel the benefits and values that they are receiving and stick to the organization for the long term. For example, if a business always creates conditions for employees to develop and promote in their careers, they will feel respected and concerned. From there, there will be more motivation for working and sticking in the organization. Some businesses like Unilever (Vietnam) always focus on training and coaching for employees to reduce the rate of job vacancies at their company. On the other hand, some state-owned enterprises give employees plenty of time to balance work and life and take care of their families and children despite not-high income. This has a positive impact on employee engagement at the enterprise. Like other businesses, organizations choose the solution creating many opportunities for employees to travel to many places by increasing annual leave, organizing team-building, meetings, workshops at remote places for the employees to have many experiments contributing to improving their

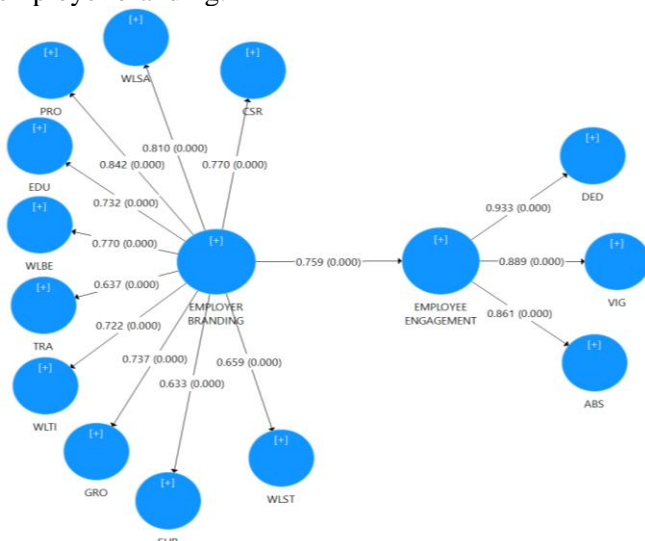


Figure 2. Research results

Theoretically, this result is consistent with the theory concerned. According to social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), there is a social exchange between the company and employees. If the company provides employees with appropriate values and benefits, the employee will also provide the employee with his or her values. As a result of this relationship, the employee responds to the company's values (Corporate social

engagement with the organization. In summary, the research results of this relationship are completely consistent with the reality and current trends in businesses not only in Vietnam but also in the world.

7. Conclusion and Managerial Suggestions

In summary, these findings open up a new direction in employer branding relationships affecting current employees and expand the various employer branding factors that impact employee engagement. This result shows that employer branding has a strong positive effect on employee engagement both directly. This shows that managers need to pay much attention to building employer branding effectively and strategically to retain talent and improve employee engagement. In particular, the manager should focus on activities related to salary and benefits and other factors that make up employer branding. Firstly, it is necessary to create conditions for employees to balance work and life in terms of time, behavior, and stress management. This implies that managers need to have activities in which the employee's activities at home are affected by work at the company. Limiting the frequent overtime and creating too much pressure for employees affect the general activities of the family after work. At the same time, the company should organize some activities with the participation of the employee's family to create understanding and sympathy. Secondly, an indispensable requirement for employees is training and development activities. In particular, the company needs to build many training programs rich in content and diverse in training forms so that employees can access and improve knowledge. At the same time, it is necessary to build a clear, transparent, and attractive career path for employees to see their development opportunities at the company. Thirdly, it is necessary to build a corporate culture that supports and helps each other. In which, employees always receive help from colleagues and superiors when facing difficulties. Fourthly, the company needs to pay attention to implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities to create a good impression on employees about their company's responsibility to the community. Last but not least, the employee's need to experience and travel is quite necessary and a component of the employer branding strategy. Therefore, managers need to pay attention to providing employees with opportunities to experience working in remote places. In addition, periodically organize trips or picnics so that employees can relax and learn new lands. This will create mental excitement as well as increase employee happiness at work. From there, it will help improve the level of employee engagement in the company.

In addition, the results of this study have also contributed the scientific novelty as follows. Research has discovered a new relationship between employer branding and employee engagement. Accordingly,

employer branding has had a strong and positive impact on employee engagement. This result has helped to theoretically reinforce that employer branding not only plays a role in attracting potential candidates but can also influence current employees. This result has opened a new research stream of employer branding theory: the impact of employer branding on factors related to current employees, such as engagement, performance, satisfaction, loyalty, motivation, etc. With this result, it will help other researchers to exploit more factors related to current employees. On the other hand, the new scale of employer branding with many new factors added and adjusted based on theory and qualitative research will also help researchers have more reference sources to measure the employer branding factor in further studies.

8. Limitations and Future Research

The scope of this article's results will only focus on the impact of employer branding on employee engagement at businesses operating in Vietnam. Therefore, this study has limitations that need to be improved in the future as follows. Firstly, because this study uses the sampling method as a convenience method (probability sampling method), the accuracy of the data will have many limitations. Secondly, with the data collection object of employees in enterprises, the generalization of the research results is not high because many other types of organizations have not been surveyed. Thirdly, the geographical area of this study is mainly concentrated in the southern provinces of Vietnam, so it does not fully represent the views of the candidates from other regions. This will affect the research results because each region will have different customs and practices, leading to different views and perceptions. Fourthly, the study only focuses on the direct relationship between employer branding and employee engagement. However, some intermediate variables that have not been included in the model also influence the research results. Therefore, in the future, other authors can study some intermediate variables in this model (employer attractiveness, employer brand equity) more deeply or expand the relationship of employees to other factors (employee performance). In addition, the survey can be expanded to other types of organizations (socio-political, educational, medical, non-profit) and across provinces and cities in Vietnam to increase the generalization of the research results. Finally, the sampling method should use probabilistic sampling methods to increase data accuracy.

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