

Beyond corporate images: a bibliometric analysis of employer branding's dimensions

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INTRODUCTION

Employer branding is the collection of practical, financial, and emotional advantages that set a company apart from its rivals, aiming to allure, inspire, and keep employees by highlighting a distinct work environment (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Edwards, 2010). In this sense, employer branding is related to attracting the best talent from the external labor market (Kucherov et al., 2022).

Among its benefits, employer branding positively impacts an organization's corporate reputation, increasing an individual's intention to apply for an employment offer (Junça Silva & Dias, 2022). Candidate experience is also a significant aspect in terms of employer branding. Creating a positive experience, for example, strengthens employer branding and the organization's ability to attract and employ the best talent efficiently (Miles & McCamey, 2018). It can even increase talent retention and aid with employee engagement (Chopra et al., 2024). Finally, enhancing employer branding standards allows businesses to establish themselves as preferred employers, boosting organizational performance (Azhar et al., 2024).

Given its advantages, it is worth noting that some practices can be adopted to increase and perfect employer branding's effectiveness, such as the creation of social networking sites (Nayak & Budhwar, 2024), which can foster employer branding strategies. Moreover, specifically in the context of the recruitment process, attributing responsibilities to one specific person, establishing goals for each stage of the process, and ensuring that the content reflects the employer brand can also be good fostering practices (Miles & McCamey, 2018).

Nevertheless, some precautions should be taken, given that not always what seems like a good practice is reflected positively in the organization. For instance, contrary to the belief that corporate social responsibility attributes universally appeal, applicants' social and personal identities significantly shape their responses to different employer attributes (Buzzao & Rizzi, 2024). This implicates the need for crafting recruiting strategies tailored to diverse career backgrounds. However, in a broader sense, it also reflects the need to understand employer branding processes.

The growing relevance of employer branding as a strategic differentiator in human resources management practices (Azhar et al., 2024) underlines the need for a deep and up-to-date understanding of this phenomenon (Kucherov et al., 2022). The large number of recent articles published on the subject (Saini et al., 2022; Špoljarić & Ozretić, 2023; Tran et al., 2023) is a reflection of its importance, especially when the benefits of employer branding are taken into consideration. Employer branding has grown increasingly vital for organizations striving to attract, nurture, and retain the best talent (Singh, 2021). Table 1 provides an overview of the primary facets and areas of emphasis that researchers have investigated regarding the concept of employer branding.

Table 1 - Main aspects in the discussion of Employer Branding

Dimensions	Description	Key focus areas	Main authors
Employer Brand Equity	An intangible asset that creates awareness among potential employees, generating competitive advantage and adding attractiveness power to the brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recruitment capabilitiesJob market awareness creationPositive employer brand image associations	(Alshathry et al., 2017; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Biswas & Suar, 2016; Theurer et al., 2018; Wilden et al., 2010)

Employer Value Proposition	Set of rewards offered by an organization in exchange for its employees' abilities, to attract and retain them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work environment • Rewards, benefits, and recognition • Work-life balance 	(Deepa & Baral, 2019, 2020; Pattnaik & Misra, 2016)
Organizational Culture and Values	Group of accepted and shared behaviors, norms, rituals, ideologies, values, and beliefs of an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational climate • Employees' interactions and relations 	(Al-Alawi et al., 2007; Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010; Tambur & Vadi, 2012)
Talent Attraction and Retention Strategies	Strategies developed to attract and retain talent, essential for long-term organizational sustainability and success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized benefits • Flexible work environments • Professional development and retention 	(Comunian et al., 2015; Jauhari & Singh, 2013; Schlechter et al., 2015; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016)
Metrics	Indicators used to measure the effectiveness of employer branding strategies and their impact on organizational performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analytics in recruitment • Employee satisfaction metrics • ROI of branding initiatives 	(Abuladze & Hasimi, 2023; Brosi & Welp, 2015; P. Harris, 2008; Moroko & Uncles, 2008; Ratra & Neelam, 2018)
Corporate Branding	The practice of aligning corporate branding with employer branding to reinforce internal cohesion and external image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding alignment and engagement • Brand communication and public perception • Sustainable branding 	(Cuomo & Foroudi, 2023; Genovino, 2023; F. Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Jo Hatch & Schultz, 2003)

Source: own elaboration

Despite the growing volume of research on the subject (Reis et al., 2021), there is a significant gap in terms of bibliometric analyses that synthesize the existing body of knowledge, identify prevailing trends, and highlight emerging areas that require further research (Vieira et al., 2024). While there is extensive literature on employer branding in general, such as internal branding (Saini et al., 2022), international employer branding (Špoljarić & Ozretić, 2023), overall benefits (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021; Kucherov et al., 2022; Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018) and links to sustainability (Buzzao & Rizzi, 2024), literature covering the whole employer branding landscape is still lacking, as appointed by Tran et al. (2023). It is significant to explore this theoretical gap on account of the benefits that comprehending the whole employer branding picture can provide to several fields, including, for instance, brand communication.

Studying employer branding enriches brand communication theory by providing insights into how brands communicate and are perceived by various stakeholders, including employees, potential hires, and consumers (Tkalac Verčič, 2021). It offers a holistic perspective on brand image, emphasizing the importance of consistency in messaging across all touchpoints (Kucherov et al., 2022; Špoljarić & Tkalac Verčič, 2021). Understanding how a company's reputation as an employer influences its overall brand credibility contributes to a deeper comprehension of brand communication dynamics (Santos et al., 2023; Tkalac Verčič & Špoljarić, 2023). Moreover, the link between employer branding and talent attraction and

retention emphasizes the interconnectedness of internal and external brand communication strategies (Itam et al., 2020; Pološki Vokić et al., 2023).

Given the context above, this article aims to address the following research question: *what are the research fields on employer branding?* To address this query, a bibliometric approach was employed to scrutinize the existing literature on employer branding. This study aims to discern its evolution, prevailing trends, and potential research gaps. Additionally, the objectives include identifying the main research areas, outlining the key benefits and challenges in employer branding, elucidating its primary contributions to human resource management theory and brand communication theory, and highlighting the core studies in this field. Therefore, this study responds to the recent call of Tran et al. (2023) for more holistic-approaching research on the employer branding landscape. Using a bibliometric approach and visualization tools, our research complements the existing literature by uncovering four clusters on employer branding and its benefits, offering valuable insights into the evolution of the field, thus contributing to theoretical and practical advances in brand management and talent attraction.

By synthesizing existing literature and conducting a bibliometric analysis, this research contributes to both theoretical advancements and practical applications in employer brand management. The identification of key focus areas and trends in employer branding, as well as the delineation of effective practices and potential research lacunae, offers valuable insights for HR practitioners and scholars alike. Through an understanding of employer branding's nature and its evolving dynamics, this study provides a roadmap for organizations to enhance their recruitment, retention, and engagement strategies, ultimately fostering a more competitive and sustainable workforce. Furthermore, by shedding light on the theoretical foundations and empirical findings in employer branding research, this study paves the way for future scholarly inquiry and practical interventions aimed at maximizing organizational success in today's complex and dynamic business environment.

This article is structured as follows. The next section details the bibliometric approach used to analyze the existing literature on employer branding, presenting both data collection and data analysis strategies. Additionally, an integrative review methodology is employed to synthesize the findings from core studies, offering a comprehensive perspective on the topic. The core findings and discussions are then presented, which delves into the evolution, prevailing trends, and research gaps in the field. Subsequently, we developed a theoretical framework serving as a roadmap for the arguments and findings presented throughout the study. Finally, the article concludes by summarizing the key insights, implications, limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

2 METHOD

This study is based on a bibliometric analysis of the literature conducted using the co-occurrence of terms technique to achieve the results. Additionally, the integrative review methodology was applied to combine various research findings, enhancing the depth and breadth of the analysis. Subsections 2.1 and .2 provide more details on how the data collection and data analysis were conducted.

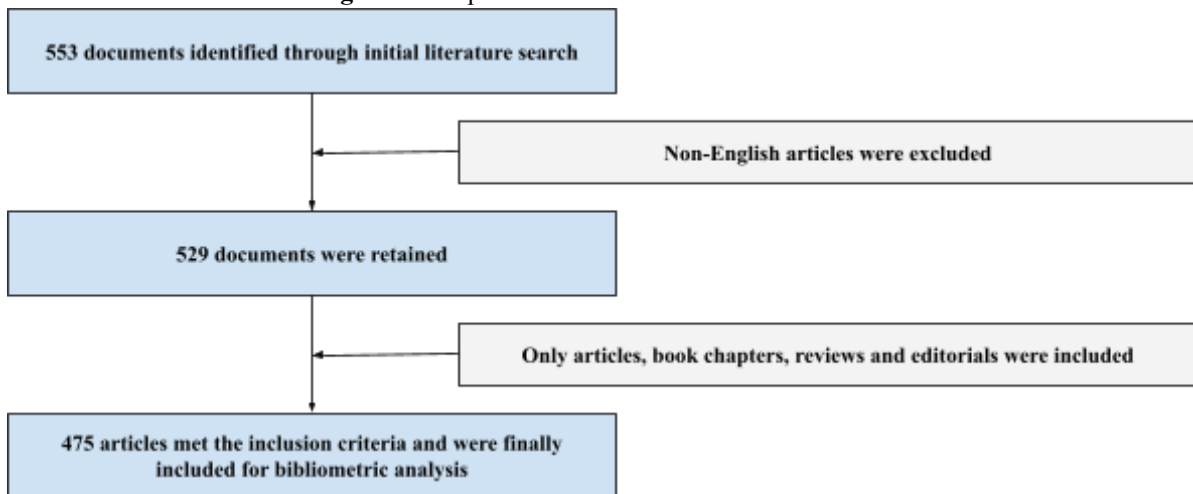
2.1 Data collection

Data collection was carried out using the Scopus database (DB). We chose the Scopus DB since, alongside Web of Science (WoS), it is the most used (Pranckutė, 2021) DB for bibliometric analysis. In addition, it also has more journals than WoS, while still being more selective than the Dimensions DB (Singh et al., 2021).

To identify the main studies on the subject, the following search string was used: *TITLE (("employer branding" OR "employer brand" OR "brand employer" OR "workplace branding" OR "employer image" OR "employer reputation" OR "recruitment branding" OR "employer identity" OR "employer promotion" OR "employment branding" OR "branding to recruit") OR ("brand" AND "recruitment"))*. The search string is directly related to branding aspects and human resources. Therefore, it was validated with two brand and human resource specialists before being used. Moreover, we restricted the search string to title only to include just documents that strictly involved those subjects.

With these conditions, a total of 553 documents were found. Considering these studies, we applied a series of different filters to achieve a more precise selection. Firstly, a filter regarding language was applied, aiming to select only articles published in English. This reduced the sample to 529 documents. After this, another filter was added concerning the document type, including only articles (383), book chapters (65), reviews (25), and editorials (2), which further reduced the sample size for the VOSviewer analysis to a final total of 475 documents. Figure 1 illustrates the steps of literature collection and selection.

Figure 1 - Steps of Literature Collection and Selection



Source: own elaboration.

As for the selection of the core studies, the same search string was used on Scopus, and the same criteria were applied, except for document types, since, for the core studies, only articles were considered (383). Once the results were found, they were filtered by the Scopus Relevance Index, which is determined by number of hits, significance, location of certain words within the document (title, abstract, keywords), position, proximity to other query terms, and completeness of word placement within the same field. Having sorted out the results by relevance, the last selection criterion was the number of citations, as only articles with 10 or more citations were chosen to represent the limited sample of core studies.

2.2 Data analysis

This bibliometric analysis technique was chosen to better understand the relationships between research constituents, opting for the science mapping category instead of performance analysis. In essence, science mapping employs various techniques like citation analysis, cocitation analysis, bibliographic coupling, co-word analysis, and coauthorship analysis, while performance analysis examines the contributions of research constituents to a given field (Donthu et al., 2021), considering mainly citation and publication related metrics. Since this study aims to shed light on both the bibliometric and intellectual structures within

the employer branding research field, science mapping was integrated with network analysis - more specifically, visualization (Donthu et al., 2021).

The bibliometric analysis employed the co-occurrence method, a commonly used quantitative approach, to streamline complex research fields and identify emerging patterns by establishing links between terms in academic literature (Mejia et al., 2021). This examination generates a visual representation known as a co-occurrence map, where node size corresponds to term frequency within a section, and connection width signifies the strength of associations between terms. Terms located closer together on the map tend to co-occur more frequently, forming thematic groupings (Van Eck & Waltman, 2017).

In this sense, to build the co-occurrence map, we used the VOSviewer software, as it was specifically developed to handle bibliometric analyses, giving a particular emphasis on graphical representation (Van Eck & Waltman, 2017). More than that, VOSviewer also separates terms into different clusters, which not only facilitates the results' visualization but also enriches the analysis process (Donthu et al., 2021).

To perform the analysis, all 475 documents were combined into one Excel file, which was subsequently imported into the VOSviewer. It is worth noting that, before producing the final graph, we had data going through procedures of cleaning and standardization with the aid of a Thesaurus file. This file is used specifically to deal with words that do not make sense for the analysis (*e.g.* country names) and words, terms, or abbreviations that are different but have nearly or the same meaning (*e.g.* HRM and human resource management).

In addition to the bibliometric analysis, a systematic review was conducted to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the employer branding literature. Systematic reviews are structured approaches that synthesize research findings from multiple studies to answer specific research questions, ensuring a high level of rigor and reproducibility (Oermann & Knafl, 2021; Dhollande et al., 2021). For this review, only the 383 articles, filtered through the Scopus relevance index, were considered. This integrative approach allowed for a detailed examination of both quantitative and qualitative studies, ensuring a holistic perspective on the research topic (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005; Torraco, 2005).

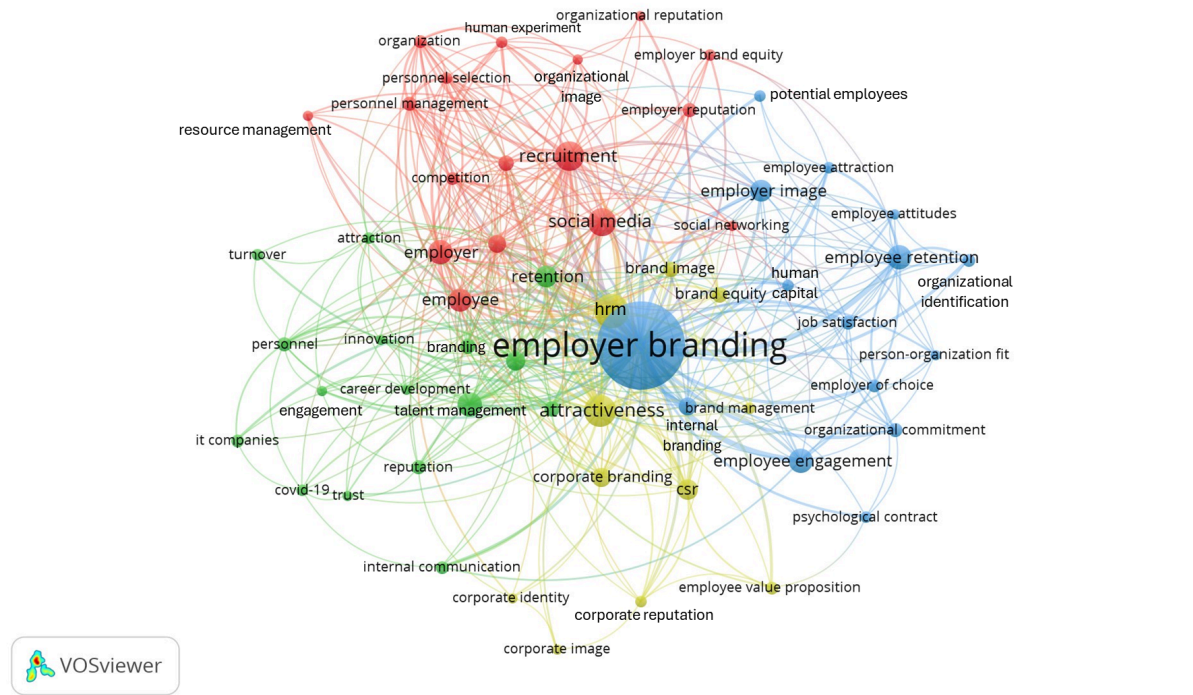
3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the upcoming sections, we will present the findings of our analysis, highlighting important data points. Afterward, we will engage in a thorough discussion to interpret these results and explore their implications.

3.1. Bibliometric analysis

A bibliometric analysis consists of a method to analyze a huge volume of scientific data (Donthu et al., 2021). When used correctly, this approach can provide a wide view of a certain research field, unveiling possible future trends and identifying knowledge gaps in the literature (Donthu et al., 2021). Therefore, taking into consideration the goals of this study, we adopted bibliometric analysis to build and analyze the knowledge map of the study field. As mentioned in the method section, we used the VOSviewer software for this. The map can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Clusters from the Co-Occurrence Analysis



Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Recruitment and Social Media	Retention and Talent Management	Employer Image and Brand Management	Attractiveness and Corporate Branding

Source: VOSviewer output.

The Figure is a co-occurrence map, which is one of the main tools for a bibliometric analysis (Zhang et al., 2024). In this type of analysis, the higher the relevance of the terms, the larger they appear on the map. Furthermore, terms are put together into clusters, which are identified in different colors. For this analysis, we used an attraction of 2 and a repulsion of 0, which are the standard VOSviewer settings for layout. On the clustering options, we set a resolution of 0.7 and the minimum cluster size was 1. The minimum occurrence of keywords was 4. This resulted in four distinct clusters, which will be individually approached in the subsequent topics.

- Red Cluster: Recruitment and Social Media (17 items)

The red cluster has the highest number of items, with 17. It focuses mainly on the recruitment phase and social media while also highlighting both the employer and the employee. Recruitment is one of the core HRM attributions (Alansaari et al., 2019) since it plays a pivotal role in fulfilling organizational roles (Goswami et al., 2023), and, if done incorrectly, can generate unnecessary costs to the business (Koch et al., 2018). The cluster shows that, in modern times, a lot of this process is done using technology, especially social media (van Esch & Mente, 2018; Zhong et al., 2024). Because of this, there is a growing importance on that matter for employers and employees (Joglekar & Tan, 2022), mostly on LinkedIn (Koch et al., 2018).

- **Green Cluster: Retention and Talent Management (16 items)**

The green cluster is the second largest one, with 16 nodes in total, and sheds light on retention and talent management. Therefore, it explores one of the key strategic sources of HRM for competitive advantage (Silzer & Dowell, 2010). Beyond that, the cluster also draws attention to retention, which is a rather complex subject, as it involves many different HRM practices (Tej et al., 2021). Both of the concepts are directly related to some other terms of the cluster, such as career development, engagement, and internal communication, emphasizing the importance of paying attention to employee's needs (Jungert et al., 2018), person-organization fit (Jin et al., 2018) and feedback (Gong et al., 2017).

- **Blue Cluster: Employer Image and Brand Management (15 items)**

The blue cluster has 15 items. It focuses mainly on employer image and brand management. These two concepts are intrinsically linked, since brand management is responsible for building awareness and recognition (Rauschnabel et al., 2016) and employer image is how a company is perceived by the job market (Younis & Hammad, 2021). Thus, HRM and brand management need to be integrated (Anselmsson et al., 2016) to achieve a more desirable employer image. This can lead to better investment outcomes, and stronger job pursuit intentions towards the company (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016) and influence employee engagement (Davies et al., 2018).

- **Yellow Cluster: Attractiveness and Corporate Branding (11 items)**

Being the smallest group, the yellow cluster comprises only 11 items. It contributes to the discussion by addressing not only attractiveness but also corporate branding and some other aspects of it, referred to as the 6 Cs (Balmer & Greyser, 2006), namely corporate identity, reputation, and image. Although not a part of those Cs, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is also included in the cluster, which is consistent with the literature, as it can influence the corporate branding spectrum (Arendt & Brettel, 2010).

When it comes to the corporate construct, it is important to highlight that there is a difference between all those concepts. Corporate branding is a multi-actor umbrella concept (Maon et al., 2021), which includes all of the other 6 Cs. Inside of it, there is corporate identity, showing who the organization wants to be (how they see themselves). Furthermore, there is also corporate reputation and image. Although they seem similar at first, the first pays respect to what stakeholders think of the organization (Brown et al., 2006), while the second approaches the mental picture of the public about a brand, which can change more quickly than the reputation (Gray & Balmer, 1998).

3.2. Core studies

The 10 articles highlighted below were selected from a representative set of 383 papers. Published between 2018 and 2024, these articles were extracted from highly relevant journals, significantly contributing to the discussion on how employer branding influences corporate reputation, talent attraction and retention, and organizational success. These studies elucidate the practical impact of these strategies and how they intersect with contemporary challenges in people management within organizations, and they were chosen to shed light on possible future research topic ideas.

Table 2 – Summary: Core Studies on Employer Branding

Study	Title of the Core Study	Brief Description	Implications
1	Linking Employer Branding and Internal Branding	The study explores the relationship between perceived employer brand image (PEBI) and brand-related employee attitudes and behaviors, such as brand citizenship behavior (BCB), through the lens of social exchange and identity theories.	Demonstrates how internal branding significantly impact employee behavior; a strong alignment with corporate goals enhanced employer brand perception, vital for cultivating a committed and workforce.
2	Employer Attractiveness: Two Instruments to Measure Employer Branding and Reputation	The study proposes and validates two measurement tools for assessing employer attractiveness and reputation—the Employer Attractiveness scale and a new tool for evaluating employer reputation. Utilizing exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the study demonstrates the reliability and validity of these scales on a sample of 407 individuals.	Offers valuable tools for organizations to systematically assess and enhance their branding and reputation, which are crucial for attracting top talent and maintaining a competitive edge in the market.
3	The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Practices on Employer Branding	The research assesses the effectiveness of CSR and sustainable practices within an international corporation in Poland. It finds that CSR activities, especially those addressing environmental issues, are highly effective and are viewed differently by white-collar and blue-collar employees.	Underscores the strategic importance of integrating CSR and sustainable practices with employer branding efforts, particularly in enhancing company image and attracting top talent pools, while fostering long-term organizational sustainability.
4	Impact of Employer Branding on Employee Commitment	The study examines the influence of employer brand on employee engagement and its subsequent impact on organizational commitment. Employing a sample of 485 employees from two banks, the research utilizes structural equation modeling to reveal that all dimensions of employer brand significantly affect employee engagement, which in turn, positively associates with organizational commitment.	Emphasizes the transformative power of employer branding in enhancing employee engagement and commitment, highlighting its role as a key driver for improving organizational retention and performance, especially in service-oriented industries like banking.
5	Does Employer Branding Facilitate the Retention of Healthcare	Investigates the healthcare sector, demonstrating that employer branding positively influences organizational identification and retention, mediated	Sheds light on the complex dynamics of employer branding in the healthcare sector, showing how employer branding can improve retention and performance in healthcare, offering strategies to enhance

	Employees?	by organizational identification and moderated by psychological involvement and employee loyalty.	employee loyalty and involvement for retention outcomes.
6	Exploring the Relationship Between Employer Branding and Talent Retention	Focusing on IT professionals, this study assesses how employer branding influences talent retention, with employee engagement acting as a mediator. Findings indicate that employee engagement significantly mediates the relationship, enhancing retention.	Provides key insights into the mechanisms by which effective employer branding can significantly enhance retention through increased employee engagement, particularly crucial for industries experiencing high turnover rates like technology.
7	The Effects of Employer Branding on Value Congruence and Brand Love	Analyzing employees of prominent hotel brands in South Korea, this study reveals that employer brand dimensions such as economic, social, and development values significantly influence brand love, mediated by value congruence perceptions.	Offers a nuanced understanding of how aligning employer brand values with employee expectations can foster deeper emotional connections and brand loyalty, crucial for service industries.
8	Assessing the Impacts of Internal Communication: Employer Branding and Human Resources	The study examines the impact of digital communication on employer branding using a qualitative approach involving interviews with managers from three companies. It concludes that while digital communication enhances the employer brand image, it does not significantly boost emotional connections with employees.	Highlights the critical need for an effectively executed digital communication strategy to enhance employer branding and foster stronger emotional connections with employees. It notes that while digital tools can improve reach, they must be leveraged thoughtfully to ensure meaningful employee engagement.
9	How the Interplay of Social Media Usage and Online Reviews Generate Intention to Apply for a Job Vacancy	The study investigates how employer branding, social media, and online reviews influence job application intentions among management graduates. It finds that dimensions such as corporate social responsibility, healthy work atmosphere, and training and development predict the intention to apply.	Reinforces the critical role of social media and online reviews in molding employer brand perception and significantly influencing job seekers' decisions to apply, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in online reputation management for attracting potential candidates.
10	Management Accountants' Image, Role, and Identity: Employer Branding and Identity Conflict	The qualitative study explores the perceptions of management accountants regarding their role and identity, and how these are influenced by employer branding and external role expectations. It highlights the conflicts arising from discrepancies between employer image and personal identity.	Provides valuable insights into the challenges of aligning employer branding with employee identity perceptions, particularly in professional roles like management accounting, suggesting a need for careful management of employer communication to mitigate identity conflicts.

3.3. Theoretical framework

Figure 4 outlines a framework that emphasizes the main benefits, challenges, and future research directions for each of the theoretical clusters identified in the co-occurrence analysis related to employer branding. This framework is intended to aid researchers in expanding the field of knowledge and to provide managers with insights to guide their strategies and practices in managing employer branding and talent attraction.

Figure 4 - Employer Branding Benefits, Challenges, and Further Studies by Cluster

	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES	FURTHER STUDIES	TRENDS
Cluster 1: Recruitment and Social Media	Enhances talent attraction via social media. Builds employer brand awareness. Expands reach to passive candidates.	Maintaining brand authenticity across platforms. Navigating social media algorithms.	Optimizing social media use. Impact of social media dynamics. Sentiment analysis in candidate feedback online.	Integration of AI-driven recruitment tools. Use of data analytics to refine targeting. Enhancing personalization in candidate interactions.
Cluster 2: Retention and Talent Management	Strengthens employee retention. Increases engagement and loyalty. Encourages internal career development.	Tailoring branding to diverse needs. Maintaining engagement in a dynamic workplace.	Branding's role in talent management. Impact of personalized benefits on retention. Effectiveness of mentoring initiatives.	Implementing flexible work arrangements. Enhancing employee wellness programs. Fostering a positive organizational culture.
Cluster 3: Employer Image and Brand Management	Strengthens corporate brand through internal ambassadors. Increases attractiveness in competitive markets.	Aligning internal and external messaging during M&As. Measuring the impact of brand perception on financial performance.	Effects of branding campaigns on long-term engagement. Role of corporate transparency in building brand image.	Integrating CSR in branding. Enhancing diversity and inclusion in brand messaging. Utilizing employee-generated content to build authenticity.
Cluster 4: Attractiveness and Corporate Branding	Enhances perception of stability and innovation. Boosts customer loyalty through a strong brand identity.	Measuring the impact of branding initiatives on talent attraction. Integrating sustainable practices without compromising brand identity.	Comparing branding strategy effectiveness across industries. Developing metrics to measure brand attractiveness.	Highlighting innovation as a core brand attribute. Balancing short-term gains with long-term brand building. Addressing brand perception in emerging markets.

Source: own elaboration.

Moreover, for elucidation purposes, Table 3 presents a summary of this article's contributions to both human resource management and brand communication theory for each of the clusters found.

Table 3 – Summary: Contributions of the Clusters

Cluster	Brief Description	Contributions to the Human Resource Management Theory	Contributions to the Brand Communication Theory
1: Recruitment and Social Media	This cluster examines how employer branding influences recruitment processes, particularly through the use of social	Explores the integration of employer branding strategies with social media recruitment practices (Goswami et al., 2023).	Investigates the impact of social media on employer brand perception and its role in candidate attraction and engagement (Špoljarić

	media platforms for attracting candidates.		& Tkalac Verčič, 2021).
2: Retention and Talent Management	This cluster focuses on employer branding's role in fostering employee retention and enhancing talent management strategies within organizations.	Explores how employer branding contributes to employee retention and engagement initiatives (Tej et al., 2021).	Examines the relationship between employer branding and employee loyalty, as well as its impact on brand reputation internally (Tkalac Verčič, 2021).
3: Employer Image and Brand Management	This cluster delves into the management of employer brand image and reputation, emphasizing the importance of brand consistency and perception.	Investigates strategies for managing employer brand image and reputation to attract and retain talent (Davies et al., 2018).	Explores the alignment between employer brand identity and external brand image, influencing overall brand credibility and perception (Itam et al., 2020).
4: Attractiveness and Corporate Branding	This cluster explores strategies for enhancing corporate attractiveness and aligning branding efforts with employer branding initiatives.	Examines the relationship between employer branding and corporate attractiveness for talent acquisition (Maon et al., 2021).	Investigates how employer branding contributes to overall brand perception and corporate branding efforts, reinforcing organizational identity (Santos et al., 2023).

Source: own elaboration.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The study has revealed valuable insights into the field of employer branding through a bibliometric analysis. It has elucidated the evolution, trends, and research gaps in the field, identified the main research areas, outlined the key benefits and challenges of employer branding, highlighted its primary contributions to human resource management theory and brand communication theory, and identified ten core studies in this area.

The findings shed light on the nature of employer branding and its significance in attracting, retaining, and engaging talent in organizations. Key findings include the identification of four distinct clusters: (i) Recruitment and Social Media, (ii) Retention and Talent Management, (iii) Employer Image and Brand Management, and (iv) Attractiveness and Corporate Branding.

Apart from identifying these four clusters, another significant finding of the study is the chronological evolution of employer branding research. Initially centered on talent attraction, the focus has broadened to encompass wider aspects such as sustainability, employee engagement, and the fusion of corporate social responsibility with brand identity. Additionally, the study highlights the criticality of effective practices in boosting employer branding, including leveraging social media, fostering positive candidate experiences, and comprehending diverse candidate backgrounds. Furthermore, the analysis of core studies underscores the geographical diversity within employer branding research, providing valuable insights into strategies tailored to various cultural and economic contexts.

Hence, this study offers substantial contributions to both the theoretical and practical realms of employer branding. Theoretically, it presents a structured framework on the nature of employer branding, while also identifying key areas of focus and emerging trends. From a practical standpoint, the study provides actionable insights for organizations aiming to improve their recruitment, retention, and engagement strategies. These insights are derived from a

thorough examination and analysis of existing literature, offering tangible guidance for implementation. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, this research serves as a valuable tool for HR practitioners and scholars navigating the intricate landscape of employer branding, facilitating organizational success amidst today's competitive environment.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the bibliometric analysis relies on data from the Scopus database, which may not cover all relevant literature on employer branding. Additionally, the selection criteria for core studies, while rigorous, may have excluded some valuable contributions to the field. Furthermore, the study primarily focuses on English-language articles, potentially overlooking insights from non-English literature. Finally, the analysis is limited to articles published up to the present date, and future research may uncover new trends and developments in employer branding.

Building on the findings of this study, future research in employer branding could explore several avenues for further investigation. Firstly, there is a need for more comprehensive bibliometric analyses that incorporate a broader range of databases and languages to capture a more diverse array of literature on employer branding. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide insights into the long-term effects of employer branding strategies on organizational performance and talent management outcomes. Furthermore, comparative studies across different industries and regions could offer valuable insights into the contextual factors shaping employer branding practices, thereby enriching our understanding of this specific field.

Moreover, given the increasing importance of sustainability and corporate social responsibility in employer branding, future research could explore the impact of these factors on employee perceptions, organizational culture, and talent attraction and retention. Additionally, with the growing use of digital technologies in recruitment and employer branding, there is a need for research on the ethical implications and best practices for leveraging these technologies effectively.

Finally, as employer branding continues to evolve in response to changing workforce demographics and global trends, ongoing research is needed to keep pace with these developments and ensure that organizations can effectively leverage employer branding strategies to attract, retain, and engage top talent in an increasingly competitive labor market. Thus, the journey of unraveling the complexities of employer branding is far from over, promising opportunities for scholarly inquiry and practical application in the years ahead.

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