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## A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF CAREER PROGRESSION, LEARNING, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYEES ON EMPLOYER BRANDING IN SELECT IT COMPANIES IN CHENNAI CITY

Dr S Rukmani

**ABSTRACT**

In today's workplace shaped by advanced technology, shifting demographics, uncertain business conditions and geopolitical unrest, the war for talent remains a constant. Organisations are now cognizant of shortage of talented employees and look for strategies which will help them to retain the talent. Employer branding is one such strategy which helps the organisation with a plethora of benefits. Among the various dimensions of employer branding, career progression, learning, training and development have emerged as a critical factor influencing employee perceptions towards their organisations. This study examines IT employees' perceptions of career progression, learning, training and development as a construct of employer branding and analyses the relationship between employees' demographic profiles and their perceptions of career progression, learning, training and development. Primary data were collected from 600 employees working in the top 20 IT companies ranked by NASSCOM using a structured questionnaire. Judgement sampling was adopted, and statistical tools such as percentage analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA were employed for data analysis. The findings reveal that IT employees exhibit a moderate level of satisfaction with career progression, learning, training and development in their organisation. While no significant differences were found across age groups, educational qualification, designation, job type, years of experience in the industry and within the organisation and monthly income, significant variations in perceptions of career progression, learning, training and development were observed across gender and marital status. The study concludes that career progression, learning, training and development practices of an organisation plays a vital role in strengthening employer branding by enhancing employee engagement, fostering innovation, and positioning organisations as inclusive employers of choice.

**KEYWORDS:** Employer Branding, Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development, IT Companies

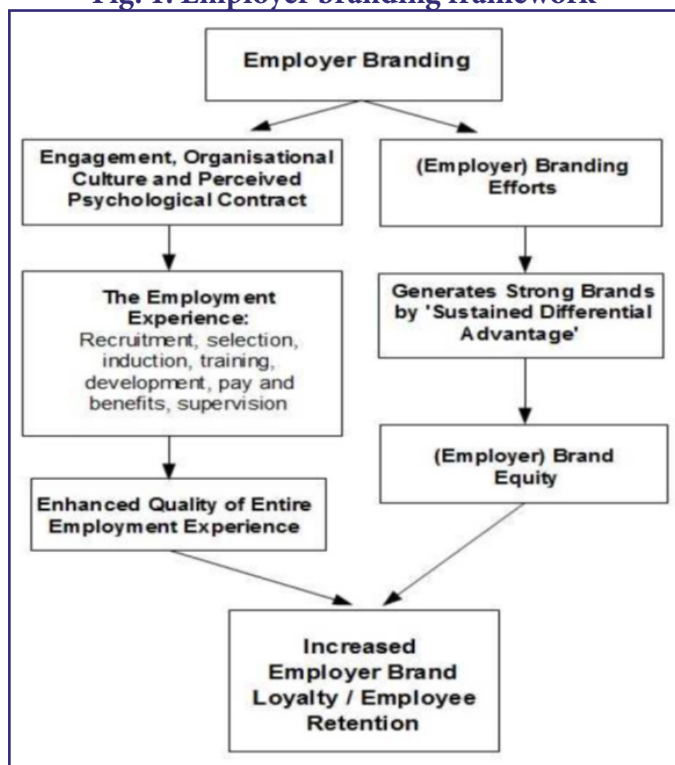
**INTRODUCTION**

In today's workplace shaped by advanced technology, shifting demographics, uncertain business conditions and geopolitical unrest, the war for talent remains a constant. Organisations are now cognizant of shortage of talented employees and look for strategies which will help them to retain the talent. Employer branding is one such strategy which helps the organisation with a plethora of benefits. According to the

Conference Board Report on Employer Branding (Conference Board, 2001), employer branding brings competitive advantage to the organisation, assists employees to internalise organisational values and helps in retention of employees. "The employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm's value system, policies and behaviours towards the objective of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm's current and

potential employees”. According to Martin et al (2011), employer brand is defined as “a generalised recognition for being known among key stakeholders for providing a high-quality employment experience, and a distinctive organisational identity which employees value, engage with and feel confident and happy to promote to others”. According to the model developed by Suikkanen (2010), employer branding positively influences employee retention by enhancing and enriching the entire employment experience and by creating value for employees, thus leading to retention. The employment experience can be leveraged in the minds of employees by providing both tangible and intangible benefits such as training, career development and flexible working and communicating the same so that the employer brand promise is fulfilled. If the employees are given realistic job previews and is provided with benefits that are superior to competitors, it would have increase employer brand loyalty paving the way for employee retention.

**Fig. 1: Employer branding framework**



Source: E. Suikkanen (2010)

Career progression refers to the potential for advancement within an organisation (Jans, 1989). Career progression, training and development is a human resource management activity aimed

at improving and enhancing the effectiveness of job performance by employees, enabling them to contribute their best to achieve the goals of the organization or company (Nawabi, 2005). Career progression is an individual's personal growth in pursuing a career plan and an improvement by the personnel department to achieve a work plan in accordance with a career path or progression (Ardana, 2012). The advancement of career goals, development of professional abilities, and rewards (bonuses, appreciations) are the aspects of career growth opportunities (i.e., promotion speed and remuneration growth). However, it comprises of employees' attempts to progress in their career goals and upskill their knowledge. Moreover, career growth opportunities are also referred to as a “career ladder,” and it pertains to employees' perceptions of their opportunities for growth and progress within an organization (Biswakarma, 2016). Employee training and development (T&D) consists of systematic initiatives to improve employee performance, knowledge, and skills. Training is job-focused and short-term (improving current role efficiency), whereas development is long-term, focusing on employee potential and career growth. Together, they boost productivity, employee retention, and competitiveness (Association for Training and Development).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Schulte (2010) examines how learning and development activities are leveraged in organisations having strong reputations of the workplace to discharge the employer brand expectations of the employer and employee. Accordingly, learning and development increases engagement by providing opportunities for growth, it builds the required workplace behaviour and reinforces the identity and values of the organisational culture. Of the fifteen employer branding attributes, learning and development was the most prevalent attribute of an employer brand. Learning and development includes on boarding, on brand training and manager training. Learning and development can have a positive impact on workplace reputation and performance by increasing the firm's ability to attract and retain employees. An important employer branding factor across all demographic categories is training and career progression of employees (Employer

Branding Survey Report, 2011, Sutherland et al 2002, Srivatsava & Bhatnagar 2010, Chhabra & Mishra, 2008, Kucherov & Zavyalova 2010, Sarabdeen et al 2011, Hillebrandt & Ivens 2012, Wahba & Elmanadily 2015, Survey Report on Employment and Workplace Relations 2008). Chawla & Lenka (2015) propose that employer branding is a probable cause of learning organisation. A learning organisation which commits itself to continuous learning by providing supportive learning environment, enquiry and dialogue, empower employees, ensure collaboration, team learning and has systems to capture learning can emerge as a strong employer brand. The study reveals that organisations emanate as strong employer brands by offering certain functional, economic and psychological benefits. This urges the existing employees to stay with the organisation with a sense of loyalty and commitment. An organisation's investment in learning and development improves the employer brand and places the organisation as an employer of choice (Van Dam, 2006). According to Chang (1999), it is imperative for an organization to give priority to internal growth and provide sufficient opportunities for training. The aspect of career advancement and assistance is of utmost importance in employer branding as it impacts the relationship between the organization and its employees (Weng & McElroy, 2012).

Employer Branding has been linked to professional advancement. This also relates to training, development, and career growth aspects (Yaqab and Khan, 2011). The scope of the instruments created by Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2010) identified one of the most crucial aspects through factor analysis of Employer Branding and career advancement dimensions. Roper & Davies (2010) highlight the importance of employer branding to organisations involved in business-to-business markets and conclude that training offered to employees result in higher satisfied and motivated employees with stronger affective brand association who are willing to stay with the organisation. Heilmann, Saarenketo & Liikkanen (2013) study the employer branding process in Finnish power industry and find that training and development are an essential part of employer branding towards current employees. Further, they opine that employer branding initiatives targeting current employees are visible through

intranet and newsletters. A positive employer brand, performance management strategies which help employees enhance their potential and innovative methods in drafting and delivering HRD initiatives such as 'technology-delivered instruction' and 'social learning tools' are the three key elements that have great prospects of accelerating employee learning, development and employee retention (Wayne, 2014). Employer branding brings under its purview, organisational career management by communicating the expectations of the organisation in terms of advancement, variety of work, relationship among employees and the desired behaviours for success. It also provides a link between organisation and employees to share information about opportunities and to pursue the same. It promotes the individual career development within an organisation as, without career advancement, both the individual and the organisation lose out on their competitive advantage (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Research supports positive and moderate relationship between career development and training and employer branding (Conference Board, 2001; Chung, 2010) and Indian organisations strive to enrich the capability of employees throughout their life cycle by competency mapping, training and counselling (Bhutani, 2010). Companies with employer brands secured numerous economic advantages due to higher training and development activities of employees (Garavan et al, 2012). In a study published by the Harvard Business Review it was found that employers who invested more in their employees' training and development outperformed the stock markets by up to 35% (www.kellyservices.com.my). Even during the downturn in 2001, a 4.6% increase in stock value was recorded among companies with strong training and development budgets versus the declining markets (Figurska & Matuska, 2013). Career progression appears to be a crucial factor for current employees in a study to validate employer branding attractiveness (Santiago, 2019). Sokro (2012), while studying the relationship between employer branding and employee retention, ranks opportunities for growth as the top most reason for employees to stay with the organisation. Cascio & Graham (2016) opine that organisations should consider HR processes such as training as a set to promote positive employer brand. According to Dabirian et al. (2017), employees assign importance to the opportunity to grow both

professionally and inside the organization. Mishra & Kumar (2019) highlight training comprehensiveness as an untapped antecedent to employer branding which might enhance the employer brand of an organisation.

Employees prefer to work for supportive, compassionate companies that promote work life balance, professional growth, career advancement opportunities, recognition, the most outstanding possible pay and benefits, and financial security and stability. Studies indicate that career development opportunities are widely identified as vital employment resources that create favourable organizational outcomes, such as more substantial organizational commitment and lower turnover intention. (Srivastava, Tripathi, & Rajlaxmi, 2021).

Goyal & Kaur (2023) study the effect of employer branding on employee retention using social identity theory among 628 nurses and find a positive mediating effect of organisational culture and career development on the relationship between employer branding and employee retention. Findings of study from Indian IT employees reveal that the employer branding dimension training and development influences employee retention (Bharadwaj, 2023). Francis & Rangasamy (2024) present a conceptual framework emphasising the symbiotic relationship between career progression and employer branding with employer branding fundamentally serving as the compass, outlining an organisation's purpose and fundamental principles. Results of study using multicriteria decision making technique fuzzy analytical hierarchy process to identify antecedents of employer branding indicate that potential applicants consider career advancement opportunities as the most important enabler that persuades them to join a particular employer (Chopra et al, 2024). Nanjundeswaraswamy et al (2025) developed and designed a scale to measure the employer branding on the perception of existing employees and identify training and development to be one of the factors of employer branding. Alias et al (2025) substantiate that training and development apart from other factors significantly enhance the perception of employer branding and examine the relationship between training and development, employer branding and employee retention with

employee engagement mediating the relationship in Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector and find that there is a significant positive relationship between training and development, employer branding, employee retention. Sher et al (2025) study the effect of aspects of employer branding including career growth prospects in the nursing industry of Peshawar and highlight the significance of career development as a crucial aspect of employer branding. Rita et al (2026) suggest that employees appreciate development opportunities within the organisation which reflects positive internal perceptions about employer branding.

### **Research Objective:**

The following research objectives will be addressed in this paper:

1. To analyse the perceptions of IT employees towards career progression, learning, training and development as a construct of employer branding.
2. To find out the relationship between demographic profile of IT employees and their perceptions towards career progression, learning, training and development.

### **Sampling design**

The present study has been conducted using a structured questionnaire to capture the views of the respondents with regard to the career progression, learning, training and development dimension of employer branding. Employees of top 20 IT companies ranked by NASSCOM were selected as sampling population. Judgement sampling was adopted. T test, ANOVA and percentage analysis was employed to obtain the desired results. Data was collected from 600 respondents. Reliability score was measured using Cronbach's Alpha which showed a score of 0.87 for the construct career progression, learning, training and development.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In order to understand the perceptions of IT employees towards career progression, learning, training and development, mean and standard deviation were calculated.

**Table 1: Mean and SD of Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development of IT Employees**

Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development	Mean	SD
Good career advancement opportunities.	4.43	0.74
Mould careers in line with aspirations and areas of interest.	4.00	1.19
Opportunities to learn new/latest developments in the field.	4.44	0.75
Opportunity to teach others what is learnt.	4.43	0.91
Opportunity to apply what is learnt.	4.38	0.85
Training opportunities on a continuous basis.	4.37	0.61
Enriching capability through competency mapping, training and counselling.	4.48	0.80
Continuous skill development.	4.37	0.62
Builds competencies and creates value.	4.43	0.81

Source: Primary data

Mean score and SD of Career Progression, Training and Development of IT employees presented in the above table reveals that the variable “Enriching capability through competency mapping, training and counselling” has the highest mean score of 4.48 (SD 0.80) followed by “Opportunities to learn new/latest developments in the field” with a mean score of 4.44 and SD of 0.75. The variable “Mould careers in line with aspirations and areas of interest” has the least mean score of 4.00. This implies that IT employees are highly satisfied with their career progression, learning and training offered to them by their organisation.

Generally, employees desire to acquire new skills and continuous development opportunities. IT companies map the skillset of employees to the job and need based training is offered based on the outcome of competency mapping. Moreover, training is mandatory and linked to performance management system in IT companies. Effectiveness of such training is evaluated to enable the companies to build employee competences. Knowledge sharing happens on a continuous basis and employees are encouraged to learn emerging technologies which help them to manage challenging assignments. There is a plethora of opportunities available and individual growth is tremendous which is purely dependent upon the competence and skills of the employees rather than on age or on seniority. Employees’ perception about

not being able to mould their careers in line with their aspirations and interests may be due to the long incubation time for using emerging technologies in current projects or the lack of availability of projects in their areas of interest due to the nature of business of their organisation.

**Table 2: Frequency distribution of Level of Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development**

Level of Values and Culture	Frequency	Percent
Low	175	29.2
Moderate	292	48.7
High	133	22.2
Total	600	100.0

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals the levels of satisfaction of IT employees on Career Progression, Training and Development. 48.7% of the sample respondents are moderately satisfied with the level of values and culture whereas 22.2% of the sample respondents are highly satisfied with the level of Career Progression, Training and Development.

To find out the relation between demographic profile of IT employees and their perception towards Career Progression, Training and Development, t test and ANOVA were calculated.

H0: There is no significant difference between demographic variables and Career Progression, Training and Development

**Table 3: t test for significant differences between demographic variables and Career Progression, Training and Development**

Demographic variable	t value	p value
Gender	3.561	<0.001
Marital status	2.754	0.006

Source: Primary data

Since P value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development. Hence, there is significant difference between male and female employees and marital status of employees with regard to Career Progression, Learning, Training & Development.

**Table 4: ANOVA for significant differences between demographic variables and Values and Culture**

Demographic variable	F value	P value
Age in years	0.855	0.426
Educational qualification	1.955	0.142
Designation	1.111	0.330
Job type	2.281	0.103
Years of experience in the industry	2.478	0.085
Years of experience in the organisation	0.106	0.899
Monthly income	2.307	0.076

Source: Primary data

There is no significant difference between age groups, educational qualification, designation, job type, years of experience in the industry and within the organisation and monthly income with regard to dimension of Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is apparent that employees, regardless of the above variables, have the same expectations about career development.

## CONCLUSION

This study analyses the effect of Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development on employer branding. It adds to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development and employer branding. Organisations can draw practical implications from this study to enhance their employer brand through strengthening their Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development practices. The survey results indicate that various demographic factors have significant effect on Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development practices of IT organisations. The results can be generalised across industries to understand the effect of Career Progression, Learning, Training and Development on employer branding.

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