# AN INVESTIGATION ON EMPLOYEE CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR: AN INTERNAL BRAND MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

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BY

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# PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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# ABSTRACT

One of the most researched concepts in business studies in recent years is internal branding (INB). The effects on the perceptions and behaviours of business employees have been revealed in different studies. In addition to its direct effect, many studies have shown that it also plays a role as a tool. One of the contributions of the study to the literature is that INB plays a mediating role in the effect of brand orientation of the company on employee brand identification (EBI). Another contribution of the study to the literature is that it reveals the moderating role of employer brand image (EIMAGE) in the impact of employee brand identification (EBI) on employee brand citizenship behaviour (EBCB). The moderator effect of the sub-dimensions of the employer brand image (EIMAGE), which is understood to play a partial moderator role, was also tested. It has been seen that sincerity and competence sub-dimensions play a moderating role. In the model created in the study, the effect of Brand orientation of the company (BOC), employee brand identification (EBI), internal branding (INB), and employer brand image (EIMAGE), which affect Employee brand citizenship behaviour (EBCB), was tested. At the end of the analysis with the AMOS Process, it was revealed that the model was significant.


*Key words: internal branding, employer brand image, brand citizenship behaviour, brand orientation*

# ÖZET

İşletme çalışmalarında son yıllarda en çok araştırılan kavramlardan birisi içsel markalaşma. İşletme çalışanlarının algıları ve davranışları üzerindeki etkileri farklı çalışmalarla ortaya konmuştur. Doğrudan etkisinin yanında pek çok çalışma aracı olarak da rol oynadığını göstermiştir. Çalışmanın literatüre katkılarından birisi şirket marka yöneliminin çalışan marka kimliği üzerindeki etkisinde içsel markalaşmanın aracılık rolü üstlendiğini ortaya koymasıdır. Çalışmanın literatüre bir diğer katkısı ise çalışan marka kimliğinin çalışan marka vatandaşlığı davranışı üzerindeki etkisinde işveren marka imajının düzenleyici rolünü ortaya çıkarmasıdır. Tam düzenleyici rolü oynadığı anlaşılan işveren marka imajının alt boyutlarının da düzenleyici etkisi test edilmiştir. İçtenlik ve yeterlilik alt boyutlarının düzenleyici rolü oynadığı görülmüştür. Çalışmada oluşturulan modelde ise çalışan marka vatandaşlığı davranışını etkileyen şirket marka yönelimi, çalışan marka kimliği, içsel markalaşma ve işveren marka imajının etkisi test edilmiştir. AMOS Process ile yapılan analiz sonunda modelin anlamlı çıktığı ortaya konmuştur.

*Anahtar kelimeler: içsel markalaşma, işveren marka imajı, marka vatandaşlığı davranışı, marka yönelimi.*

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| | |
|---|---|
| AMA | : The American Marketing Association |
| BC | : Before Christ |
| BOC | : Brand orientation of the company |
| EBCB | : Employee brand citizenship behaviour |
| EBI | : Employee brand identification |
| EIMAGE | : Employer brand image |
| HR | : Human relations |
| INB | : Internal branding |
| WOM | : Word of mouth communication |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

While the competitive conditions brought by the information age cause information to be a valuable resource, the changing environmental conditions necessitate the implementation of management approaches in strategic dimensions for businesses. Since the element that uses knowledge and produces valuable new knowledge is human resources, human resources come to the fore as the most valuable resource that cannot be imitated in business. In terms of management, the survival of enterprises in tough competitive conditions and their superiority over their competitors depend on qualified human resources, which is the most important competitive tool. Having qualified human resources for businesses depends on their ability to direct potential human resources and existing human resources in line with their own goals and objectives. It considers human resources activities in enterprises not only as the activities of a department, but as a system that is compatible with the goals and objectives of the enterprise. Therefore, considering that all management levels are responsible for the determination, implementation, and supervision of the business's strategies, every manager can also be qualified as a human resources manager.

As mentioned above, human resources are the most important factor that gives companies a competitive advantage. Therefore, the employees, who are the interest groups in the internal environment of the enterprises, are one of the stakeholders with the greatest expectations in the business environment. Therefore, employees are referred to as "internal customers" by businesses. It is of great importance that human resources are sufficient in terms of quality as well as quantity to achieve the goals of enterprises. This situation imposes a great responsibility on the human resources management in enterprises in terms of recruiting qualified employees to the enterprise and ensuring their loyalty and retention to the enterprise. While businesses hope to realize their goals and objectives, they should provide business attractiveness to include the desired employees in their organizational structure. It will be able to provide this with the employer brand it will create. Employer branding is also expressed as a new and important approach in determining organizational identity. Therefore, the employer brand, which shapes the employer's behaviour, has an important role in building the corporate brand and corporate product (goods, services, marketing, etc.) brand and meeting the need for existing and potential human resources. The main purpose of employer branding and management is to attract external customers (potential employees) to the business while keeping internal customers (employees) in the business. Therefore, as in all other brand activities, the aim of employer branding is to reveal the benefits that will create a positive perception of the business offered to customers (current/potential employees).

Internal Branding, on the other hand, focuses on improving, strengthening, and maintaining the brand. Equal importance is given to the employees at the customer interface, as the information provided by the customers is an important source in creating the company's strategy. One of the important stakeholder groups is the employees of the organization, who are considered "customers." Therefore, in addition to selling the brand to external customers, the brand must also be "sold" to internal customers. Not only for external customers, as brands can be defined in terms of personality, character, attitude, motivation, and even emotions; they also make sense for internal customers who deal with the brand on a daily basis and therefore represent it to the public. Internal branding enables employees to understand brand values and makes them adopt a living brand reality. It is one of the tools that will shape the behaviour of the employees to influence their attitudes and harmonize them with the brand. Internal branding can be summarized as a harmonious and versatile internal communication effort between departments to create and maintain the internal brand. Internal branding changes the focus of a particular stakeholder group, i.e., existing employees. Its purpose is to teach and communicate brand values to employees to enable them to deliver on the promises the brand must deliver to external components.

The purpose of this research is to discover the relationship between internal and employer branding, as well as their sub-dimensions. Employee brand identification and Employee brand citizenship behaviour are subdimensions of internal branding, while brand orientation and image are subdimensions of employer branding. The ideas of brand and branding are described in the study's second section. Following that, brand management and its sub-titles are discussed. The ideas of employer branding and internal branding, which are the study's focus, and their sub-titles, are discussed in the third chapter after this conceptual framework is explained. In the fourth part of the study, the research part is included. The results of the questionnaire, which measured all these dimensions and sub-dimensions in the study's emphasis, were evaluated. The findings were analysed in the conclusion section by comparing them to other studies in the literature.

# 2. BRANDS AND BRANDING

## 2.1. Definition

The word brand is derived from the old Norse word “brandr", which means "to burn" and refers to the act of identifying the animals by technically branding them to distinguish the goods of the villagers who have been farming since then (Keller, 2003: 5). "Brand" was a noun that indicated a piece of metal heated by fire, such as a sword or poker, and was derived from Old German and Icelandic words (Bastos and Levy, 2012: 351). The term "branding" was coined to describe the process of lighting a manufacturer's mark on a wine barrel or cork with this equipment.

Besides the name itself, the economic practice of marking animals or other commodities dates back roughly 4,500 years (Bastos and Levy, 2012), with archaeological evidence indicating that it originated in the ancient Middle East. Apart from this oldest known date, it is said that the history of the brand extends from the Roman Empire to this time. It is stated that the use of the brand is at its highest point in this period. It is stated that in the 3500s BC, it was distinguished by the cylinder-like seal on Mesopotamian wares, and thanks to these stone seals, it was possible to prove which manufacturer the goods belonged to. Today, it is the case that the brand names used in packaging are stamped. It is known that in 3000 BC, signs were used in pottery and on stones used for hunting. It has been recorded that pottery seals were found in the vicinity of Corinth, a Greek city, around 2000 BC. B.C. The 6th and 3rd centuries are the periods when stamped ceramics were used in Greek pottery (Kaptanoğlu vd., 2019: 250). Another well-known example is the standard markings used by guild employees in medieval Europe. Branding first became a standard corporate technique in major Western economies in the mid-nineteenth century (Cochran, 1977: 124). The strategic motivation of its spread has been the necessity to address the mass-market-oriented producer-consumer divide through suitable information signals.

The term "brand" first appears in the scientific literature in Butler (1914: 189), and it has also appeared in the Journal of Marketing since its first issue (Nixon, 1936 as cited in Gaski, 2020: 518). A brand is described as a trade symbol as a noun, a particularly created commodity: an identification mark made with a hot iron, an iron used for this: a piece of burned or charred wood, and as a verb: a hot iron marking or trademark labeling in the New Oxford American Dictionary (Stevenson and Lindberg, 2010). The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as *"a name, word, indicator, symbol, design, or a combination of these that is used to identify and differentiate the products and services of one or more vendors from the competition"* (Keller, 2003: 5).

Brand is formally defined as "a name, term, design, or symbol [...] that identifies a seller's good or service differently from other sellers" (Armstrong and Kotler, 2011: 215). According to Deheshti et al. (2016: 28) a brand is an identity that distinguishes one company from others, but also the mental image of consumers about companies, known as "brand image." A brand is an integral part of a business that delivers on promises about the value and performance of goods and services. At the same time, brands serve as a catalyst for the formation of consumer associations. Brands are symbols or names used to distinguish and differentiate goods and services produced by businesses from other goods and services. From this point of view, the brand protects manufacturers and consumers against counterfeit products by specifying the sources of the products (Aaker, 1991: 21).

Branding, in its most general terms, is a method of ensuring that the goods or services offered by a company are distinctive from those of other companies. The oldest known written source in history regarding the importance of the concept of branding is in the works of the clergyman, Saint Augustine, who lived in the 5th century. In his works, he revealed the concept of the brand as a value, as well as its functional benefit, psychological benefit, and differentiation from current product features (Bilgesel, 2016: 278).

Branding is the differentiation of a firm's products and services in the market by establishing loyalties using intangible psychological elements as well as tangible ones. This differentiation provides the company with the opportunity to realize various objectives that it will implement (Ayvaz, 2005: 15). According to Kotler, branding is not just about having a brand name. First of all, a brand name is chosen, then a brand identity study is carried out, and various meanings and promises are built on this brand name (Kotler, 2000: 21). According to another definition, branding is a process that includes the creation, communication, and promotion stages of a brand, and the success of any marketing program depends on it (Cocoran, 2007: 35). Branding is also defined as a process in which the marketing mix is handled as a whole and gives an identity to the business (or product) (De Chernatony, 1999: 163).

### 2.2. Brand Management

Today, competition conditions in the markets continue to be fierce. In this case, businesses are on a great quest to survive and to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Businesses that try to make a difference by creating new products in the first place show a development focused on customer service and customer relations with low-cost product production and total quality management practices over time. In the minds of the consumers, who constitute the marketing target, the effort to leave the competitors behind by giving special place to the products with the least obvious and tangible differences has also highlighted the brand management. Brand management is a process of organization, execution, coordination, control, and continuous planning in order to create the brand, reveal the characteristics of the brand, and reach the level of efficiency and effectiveness of these features (Schmitt and Simonson, 1997: 21).

Brand management encompasses all efforts made to take the desired path in the market, to have the best position, and to continue on that path in the most beneficial way for the company, beginning on the day the brand was founded. The decisions taken by the businesses, the strategies they apply, and all the efforts they make are the subject of brand management in order to bring the value of the brand to the highest place, spread it over wide areas, be remembered for many years, and get high efficiency from the products. When we look at the effects of today's intense competition environment, we can say that the obvious and tangible differences between products have decreased to almost non-existence. For this reason, the fact that the features related to the products are no longer important, brings brand and branding activities to the fore. The concept of brand management emerges in connection with increasing productivity and profitability studies. In the simplest definition, brand management is the process of creating a brand and managing the brand. However, branding consists of actions that are quite complex and require a lot of care. The concept, also called branding, which means brand management today, is a broad concept that includes applications such as creating a brand, expanding the brand, repositioning the brand, re-launching or renewing the brand, prolonging the life of a brand, or expanding the brand (Leventoğlu, 2014).

The first step in brand management is to establish the brand's perception among consumers. In order to survive or maintain their existence in the conditions of increasing competition, companies need to make changes or keep their positions in the markets strong for new products (Erdil and Uzun, 2009: 59).

### 2.2.1. Brand vision

The expression of how a brand can benefit its stakeholders in the long run is called brand vision. It's all about determining how a brand will improve the environment. In other words, the brand vision is what the company wants to be in the future, and it includes the basic principles that explain why the company exists. The brand vision is at the heart of brand identification, but its culture (the beliefs and assumptions that influence employee behaviour) is as crucial. Organizational leaders must effectively convey the vision to employees, ensuring that it is consistent with the organization's brand vision, and guarantee that it is aligned with the organizational culture (de Chernatony and Harris, 2001: 445).

A brand vision is made up of three parts: the ideal future environment, the purpose (how the brand will improve the environment), and the company's values. These three interrelated components are not defined in any particular order. One of the advantages of brand vision is that it allows the company to attain extraordinary objectives. Managers are more concerned with whether the vision is desired, motivating, expansive, and communicable than with whether vision is "better." (Cooper, 2015: 1).

Employees that have participated in brand vision seminars are more dedicated. Brand vision is about expressing personal visions and is founded on analytical thinking and imagining; otherwise, it is more likely to be alignment than commitment. A brand vision should ideally emerge from a cyclical exchange of ideas among various departments and levels of a company. As a result, you should have a statement that is simple to comprehend and explain (Kotter 1996: 36).

There are benefits to involving a diverse group of employees in the development of a brand concept. Some of these goals include eliciting a broader range of thoughts, allowing employees to understand more about issues and possibilities, and strengthening the cultural bond. According to Kakabadse et al. (2005), four elements determine the outcome of the brand vision formulation process. If ideas are to rise and develop through dialogue, personal beliefs are required. Teams working on the brand vision must be focused and energized. Ideas must be disseminated internally as soon as they develop, and their viability must be assessed through rapid feedback. Finally, a culture that values constructive criticism and encourages a collaborative approach to issue resolution is required. When employees are given the proper support mechanisms, training, and authorisation to make changes that support the brand goal, significant influence can be made. Employees get more trust in the brand vision when they are informed about the impact of their adjustments on brand performance (Kakabadse et al., 2005: 240).

### 2.2.2. Brand culture

The way a company behaves when it comes to keeping its commitments to its clients is referred to as brand culture. This habit includes ensuring that clients are surprised as often as possible. Whether it's a product or a service brand, brand culture is vital at every point when the organization providing the brand meets the customer (Pringle and Gordon, 2001: 25).

Brand culture is the collection of characteristics that define and distinguish brands or services. These aspects include names, symbols, logos, designs, all cultural traits and events, as well as cognitive, emotional qualities, cultural traditions, and individual images represented by these cultural traits and events. A brand's culture is its essence;

it is a refined core of the company's culture that demonstrates the brand's key value. At every touch point, brand culture is described as the brand's natural DNA and the values that enable every brand experience, brand expression, interaction with consumers, workers, and all other stakeholders (Maden, 2013: 10).

### 2.2.3. Brand positioning

The fact that businesses try to differentiate their products or services from others through their brands is often not sufficient in the conditions of the modern age, where competition is very intense. When this is the case, the company that distinguishes itself with its brand, needs to distinguish its brand from others, firstly in the minds of consumers, and then in the market for it to gain a special place. The number of alterations and differentiations that can be made to a product or service is limited. Furthermore, the likelihood of altering the attitude of the buyer who buys it is substantially lower. However, it is possible to turn to, shape, or guide the consumer's perception in order to bring the product or service together with the consumer. At work, positioning is viewed as a means of achieving compliance with this perception. Brand positioning, on the other hand, refers to the image of a company's brand in the eyes of consumers and in comparison, to other brands.

Consumers characterize a product based on its essential qualities, which is known as positioning. In other words, it is a product's position in the consumer's consciousness in relation to its competitors (Kotler, 2003: 309). Positioning is the process of locating and opening a window in people's minds, and communication carried out at the appropriate time and under the correct conditions plays a significant role in this process. More important than what is done to the product is what is done to the thoughts of the consumers. To be effective with positioning, it is critical to be the first to enter the consumer's mind by utilizing a distinguishing trait before competitors. (Tosun, 2010: 33).

### 2.2.4. Brand personality

Brands have personalities and stances just like people. Brands are not just products and services that provide benefits, they are also entities with personality and soul. Aaker (1997) defined brand personality not as part of the identity system, but as a whole "set of human characteristics attached to a brand". According to Milas and Mlacic (2007: 620), studies on brand personality are examined within the scope of two main elements: brand characteristics and personality traits. Aaker's five-factor personality classification addressed the traits that characterize the brand personality in five dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and robustness, and was based on the personality of the individual. (Kim et al., 2001: 197). Brand identity, according to Aaker, is a set of traits that distinguishes a brand from its competitors in terms of human-specific social, demographic, emotional, cultural, and informational aspects. It allows customers to express themselves while also meeting their identity requirements. The building of a link between the brand and the consumer is facilitated by this formation. In other words, brand personality refers to the brand's intangible and tangible characteristics that are associated to humans and contribute significantly to the brand. There are three models that enable the creation of brand personality. These are respectively; self-expression model, relationship-based model, and functional benefit representation model (Tosun, 2010: 68)

### 2.2.5. Brand reputation

Reputation is the evaluation of how consistent and stable the characteristics of an asset (brand, company, people) are. This assessment is based on the entity's willingness and ability to do the same activity over and over. The properties of this entity are often interrelated. For example, the characteristics of the brand can be the price, quality, or value of the brand. A brand's price reputation and quality reputation go together in both positive and negative directions. A brand's reputation is the whole of the transactions that a brand has made since its existence. Reputation starts with the help of information flow between the entity and the human being and is created with the help of marketing signals. It is a marketing activity consisting of information that conveys the company's vision, mission, and further promises to the consumer as well as to its competitors (Herbig and Milewic, 1993: 18).

A brand's reputation is when consumers share their opinion that the brand is good and reliable. Although brand reputation is increased by giving reliable messages to consumers with the help of advertisements and public relations, product quality and product performance are also of great importance in this regard. If the expectations of the consumer, who trusts the positive comments of others about a brand and tries the brand, are met, brand trust and reputation become stronger; On the contrary, if the brand does not meet consumer expectations, the consumer's trust in it is shaken. In the establishment of brand reputation, company reputation is also very important. If the consumer's thoughts about the company standing behind the brand are positive, then the consumer feels safe buying this brand. In short, a strong company reputation has a positive effect on the brand it produces (Lau and Lee, 1999: 347).

According to De Chernatony (2010:.419), a company that wants to gain the reputation of consumers should first focus on its brand portfolio and convey consistent messages to everyone. Any problem within the company that will shake the trust of consumers also damages the image of the products produced by that company.

Brand reputation and corporate image become a source of information for potential and current consumers. Consumers' thoughts about brand reputation and brand image consist of communication and experience. If the consumer is satisfied after this experience, positive thoughts are formed in the consumer towards this brand and company. This information affects the consumer when the time of purchase is undecided (Andreassen and Lindestad, 1998: 11).

### 2.2.6. Brand identity

The set of reasons clients have for choosing a firm is referred to as brand identity. On the other hand, it is defined as how an enterprise's goods and services generate a perception in the minds of its clients (Çifci and Cop, 2007: 72). Brand identity, according to another definition, relates to the company's internal image that it delivers to customers and has a distinct set of brand connotations (Yuan et al., 2016: 3070). Aaker (1996) defines brand identity as *"a distinct set of brand associations that the brand strategist tries to build or maintain."* These affiliations represent the meaning of the brand and act as a pledge from the organization's members to its customers (Andersson and Otterheim, 2003: 2).

Identity is viewed as the brand's unique fingerprint that distinguishes it. In other words, it can be expressed as an integrated product composition depending on how a product's performance is regarded. This combination includes the strategy that determines how the product will be sold as well as the strategic personality that humanizes it, as well as how these two elements are blended together and all of the tangible and intangible execution elements that ideally flow from their combination, such as the brand name, logo, and graphic system. Apart from this, one of the important points is that it is known only as the state of identity in the eye of the beholder. This situation is not seen as a situation created by the marketer, on the contrary, it is seen as a matter related to the perception of the customer (Upshaw, 1995). In this context, brand identity expresses the way vehicles must follow to reach their goals, that is, the perception of the customer (Mindrut et al., 2015: 395).

### 2.3. Product Versus Corporate/Organizational Brands

Product brands, which are distinct attributes connected with a specific element of a company's product portfolio, have been the focus of branding efforts. Corporate branding has become a strategic marketing tool as a result of today's markets' rapid innovation, improved service standards, and dwindling brand loyalty (Morsing and Kristensen, 2001: 26). According to Ward and Lee (2000: 9), companies have changed their focus from product brands to corporate and service brands. As a result, business brands are becoming increasingly important.

The sum of an organization's marketing efforts aimed at providing a controlled picture of its value system and identity can be thought of as a corporate brand. It differs from a product brand in that it includes corporate strategy, corporate communication, and culture in addition to strategic emphasis and corporate strategy (Balmer, 2001: 3). In some respects, corporate branding differs from product branding. First, the focus turns away from the product and onto the organization. As a result, corporate branding increases the visibility of the organization and its employees. Second, the marketing function in middle management is often in charge of corporate brands, while the marketing function at the executive level is in charge of product brands. Third, product brands are often linked to all of the company's stakeholders, goods, and services, whereas corporate brands are linked to all of the company's stakeholders, products, and services. Fourth, product branding is usually entrusted to marketing, whereas corporate branding necessitates cross-functional collaboration and coordination. Fifth, in comparison to corporate brands, which have a history and a strategic direction, product brands are frequently short-lived. As a result, corporate branding frequently trumps product branding (Xie and Boggs, 2006: 350).

Ind (1997: 24), on the other hand, sees three important discrepancies. To begin, corporate branding emerges as a result of the company's communications and interactions with various stakeholders. Second, corporate branding is much more complex due to the variety of messages and interactions, as well as the possibility for misinterpretation. Third, it tends to place a higher emphasis on problems of ethics and social responsibility. A product brand is concerned with its customers, but a corporate brand is concerned with its stakeholders. As a result, corporate brands can help a company develop a product line or diversify its product lines by instilling a sense of confidence and quality (Balmer and Gray, 2003: 975).

Corporate branding is frequently employed to offer new items to new markets. It frequently uses the full range of corporate communications to reach target audiences who appraise and perceive the company and its products or services. As a result, corporate brand value is believed to be generated by the company's total image (Keller, 2000: 15). The image that a company should project is greatly impacted by its basic values and history. Furthermore, the strategic vision enhances the organization's image by encouraging stakeholders to seek out and use non-public information about the company. According to Hatch and Schultz (2003: 1043), "*companies that succeed in developing a corporate brand in fragmented marketplaces caused by globalization are more competitive than companies that rely primarily on product branding. Corporate branding, on the other hand, is more challenging than product branding because it* *requires the simultaneous interaction of strategic vision, organizational culture, and visuals."* It increases clients' desire to learn more about the brand and analyze the firm's essence, according to De Chernatony (1999: 160). Customers' assertions about other items and services are more likely to be accepted if they have faith in the firm's products and brand.

# 3. EMPLOYER BRANDING AND INTERNAL BRANDING

## 3.1. Employer Branding

Product and business brands, as defined in the second section, are the distinguishing characteristics that identify items and businesses from one another based on the industry and product groupings in which they operate. Businesses' most important economic goals (especially and primarily) are to improve the image of their product and business brand in the minds of their customers and target groups, to increase their reputation, to activate the dynamics that will ensure brand loyalty, and, as the ultimate goal, to increase their market share, competitive power, and profitability. These are challenges relating to the company's external environment. The employer brand is one facet of the company's internal environment. Employer branding was initially conceptualized in the literature by Ambler and Barrow (1996). Ambler and Barrow (1996) define the employer brand as "the whole of the opportunities and factors that are presented to the personnel in an enterprise and that create the idea that the enterprise is a unique company in the minds of current and potential personnel candidates, that creates its image, and that encourages these human resources to stay in the enterprise and to work in this enterprise" (Kahveci, 2018:23). The recognition of the value of human resources and brands in enterprises is at the heart of this shift in company strategy.

Employer branding is all of the efforts of businesses to be more attractive to their employees and potential employees, to motivate them, to increase their qualifications, and to make it sustainable. In other words, the application of the brand in human resources management in an enterprise can be defined as the employer brand, and the employer brand appears as an important area of human resources management (Öster and Jonze, 2013). It is the process of creating a perception that it is a desirable place to work to attract the attention of employees in an enterprise, increase their organizational commitment, motivate them, and thus differentiate from competitors (Hendricks, 2016). It is the sum of an organization's efforts to communicate with current and future employees and its efforts to communicate that the business is a good and desirable place to work (Moroko and Uncles, 2008).

According to Moroko and Uncles (2008), a successful employer brand has two basic dimensions: attractiveness and certainty. Features such as awareness, making an impact, and being different from competitors are included in the attractiveness dimension. The psychological contract must be fulfilled, and brand promises must be carried out, according to the certainty dimension.

Berthon et al. (2005) sought an answer to the question of the ideal employer most wanted to work with, and the five-factor value structure (interest, social, economic, development, and practice) revealed by Ambler and Barrow (1996)'s three-dimensional (functional, economic, and psychological) benefit definition was improved, and they stated that it is an improved version. The psychological benefit dimension includes factors such as interest and social value, while the functional benefit dimension includes factors such as development and implementation. While functional and economic dimensions draw attention to concrete features, psychological benefit, on the other hand, refers mostly to abstract features and answers that meet the spiritual needs of individuals. While functional and economic benefits include things like pay, bonuses, physical working conditions, and social opportunities, psychological benefits include things like the importance placed on the business's value and quality, positive internal communication, self-preservation, self-expression, prestige, and personal image development.

The characteristics of employer brand image and brand orientation will be examined in this study.

### 3.1.1. Brand orientation

Urde (1999), who first explored the concept of brand orientation, defined brand orientation as an approach in which organizational activities move around the processes of creating, developing, and maintaining brand identity by constantly interacting with consumers to gain an infinite competitive advantage (Urde, 1999: 117).

Today, brands are considered a resource and strategic centre for businesses. Brand orientation seems to be quite meaningful for companies that have an understanding of attaching strategic importance to their brands beyond meeting customer demands and needs. Brand orientation is exemplified by the three-stage continuous interaction between values and identity (Urde et al., 2013). The brand, the company, and the customer/non-customer stakeholders are the three stages, respectively.

Organizational values become the firm's core values in brand orientation, and these values become enlarged consumer values. In this sense, brand orientation refers to a view from the inside out. Because of this feature, brand orientation can be defined as a knowledge that guides the market. Brand orientation can be viewed as a business culture or understanding in a cultural sense. A brand-oriented culture brings with it a commitment and dedication throughout the organization and ensures that the entire organization is a supporter of the brand (De Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003). At the core of brand orientation is the understanding that satisfying customers within the boundaries of brand identity is an art form. Reid et al. (2005) state that while brand orientation ensures consistency of consumer-brand communication, it also gives companies a distinctive feature.

There are three factors of brand orientation. These are, respectively, (i) reducing differences between products, (ii) increasing promotional activities and (iii) integrating markets (Urde, 1994). At this point, some threats and opportunities arise. For example, although businesses focus on differentiation on a product basis, on the other hand, they may want to reduce the differences between their own products and competing products to target the same consumer group as their competitors. In this case, while there is a possibility of falling to the level of their competitors in a possible negativity, they also get the opportunity to differentiate in the market with the effect of the brand. Therefore, just because a product is superior to others does not guarantee success (King, 1991).

Increasing the promotional activities of a multi-product business may put brand awareness at risk because prioritization is not done. Instead, there is an opportunity to position strategic business units by focusing on core products or brands. The integration of markets is the fact that companies operate in different geographies with the effect of globalization. This gives businesses the opportunity to use their brands as a strategic element. For example, the establishment of the European Union or the making of free trade agreements are changes that integrate markets. At this point, businesses face the threat of marginalization by performing poorly because they cannot adapt to local markets or an opportunity to create an international brand arises. The threats and opportunities brought by these factors play an important role in the decision of companies to adopt brand orientation.

### 3.1.2. Employer brand image (EIMAGE)

One of the aspects that should be addressed in the context of employer branding is employer brand image. The image of a brand in the minds of customers and other stakeholders is known as brand image (Laidler-Kylander et al., 2007: 258). Assael

(1987: 46) defines brand image as "information and past experience about the brand, as well as a set of beliefs that shape the overall picture of the brand."Yoo and Donthu (2001: 1-2) argue that brand image can affect the future profitability and long-term cash flow of the business, consumers' willingness to pay high wages, merger and acquisition decisions, stock prices, sustainable competitive advantage, and marketing success.

"The set of interrelated views that the firm develops as an employer in the minds of the target audience" (Baş, 2011: 63) is how Baş defines employer brand image. The factors of brand image are brand associations (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004: 505). There are two forms of brand associations: symbolic and functional. Functional associations are linked to product features and functional benefits of brands. Symbolic associations are abstract cognitions that transform an organization's values into personal characteristics and feelings about a brand (Michel and Rieunier, 2011: 2). In this context, employer brand image is based on employer brand associations.

Employer affiliations, employer image: a good employer image is important. Employee productivity is enhanced by employer brand loyalty, which is established as a result of company identity and culture. In this way, the employer branding model can be examined in two dimensions. Employer branding gives employer attractiveness in the first dimension; the second dimension, which is internal to the firm, results in loyalty and efficiency. Employer brand associations shape employer image, which leads to employer appeal (Öksüz, 2012: 20).

### 3.2. Internal Branding (INB)

This section explains the internal brand, which is an important component of the study and a mediator variable in the research model. The internal brand is defined first, followed by a process explanation. After that, the various internal brand models that have been discussed in the literature are examined. Employee brand identification is examined at the end of the chapter, as it is one of the research model's variables and has a close relationship with the internal brand. Finally, the dependent variable of the research model, employee brand citizenship behaviour, is discussed.

According to (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001: 100) internal branding is one of the most critical strategic objectives for a company seeking to align its employees' behaviours and attitudes with its brand values. Internal branding is created through collaboration with HR, marketing, and strategic planning. Internal branding's purpose is to boost customer satisfaction and loyalty by fully engaging employees in order to create the best possible experience and deliver on the company's brand promise. Employees who become brand ambassadors have a better chance of changing citizens' opinions about the company (Whelan et al., 2010: 1164).

Internal branding is regarded as a method of developing powerful corporate brands. It aids in the alignment of the company's internal processes and corporate culture with the brand's (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017: 3-4). According to another definition, internal branding is the process of bringing the personnel in the business to the necessary and sufficient level of knowledge, both technically and emotionally, in order to create a certain brand identity as an extension of the corporate culture and the business (Mahnert and Torres, 2007: 55). Goom et al. (2008: 4) gave the following definition: *"Internal branding is a set of strategic processes that empower employees in line with the brand* *to deliver the appropriate customer experience"*. According to Heding et al. (2008: 16), *"Internal branding is the process of internalizing and motivating employees to adopt the desired brand image in order to convey the brand image to customers and other important elements of the organization."*

According to Begstrom et al. (2002), "*internal branding refers to three things: effectively communicating the brand to workers, convincing them of its relevance and value, and successfully linking every position in the company to the delivery of brand essence*." It's a subset of "operationalizing" the brand, which refers to the brand's integration throughout the organization. internal branding is a particularly valuable technique for unifying multiple enterprises working within the same portfolio at the corporate level. When used effectively, it can assist employees in these firms understand their role in the "big picture" and contribute more productively to it (Begstrom et al., 2002: 135).

One of the goals of internal branding is to align employee behaviour with the brand identity/values so that customers and other external stakeholders may anticipate continuous fulfilment of brand commitments (Bergstrom et al., 2002; Mahnert and Torres, 2007). It also aims to include workers in the living brand reality in order to build and sustain strong brands (De Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2001; Burmann et al., 2009).

Employees can create brand differentiation when they become advocates and supporters of the brand. Businesses must implement internal branding for this reason, as well as the fact that it is beneficial to business. The following are the key reasons why companies use internal branding (Jacobs, 2003: 23):

- As a result of internal branding, employee loyalty to the firm rises, and they desire to stay with the company for a longer amount of time.
- Employees deliver superior quality service to clients as a result of internal branding because they accept the brand promise.
- Because they believe in the brand, employees are motivated to work more and better.

Internal branding programs focus on employees' brand knowledge, attitudes, and behavior relating to the brand (Burmann et al., 2009: 265). All staff should be trained on what brand identity and brand values are, as well as what the company offers to customers, in order for brand knowledge to be spread within the organization and internal and external brand messages to be compatible. It's critical to make sure that employees believe in and are loyal to the brand. Internal branding strategies must also make it easier for employees to align their understanding, loyalty, and conduct with the brand, allowing the company to communicate its promises to customers on a consistent basis (Zhu, 2014: 39).

One of the most important approaches for managing the internal brand is internal brand communication and training (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005: 285). Other HR tasks such as recruiting, promotion, rewarding, and recognition, in addition to training, have been mentioned in certain studies but are not widely recognized by researchers. In their study, Punjaisri et al. (2008) discovered that training is the sole HR practice associated to employee brand understanding in the branding process (Punjaisri et al., 2008: 420).

### 3.2.1. The process of internal branding

Internal branding efforts have a favourable impact on businesses. Internal branding, on the other hand, is a more complicated process. Many additional elements, influence the process's impacts and outcomes. According to Punjaisri and Wilson (2017), the marketing and HR teams must work together to give consistent and consistent brand messaging to employees. When employees hear consistent brand messaging, their brand comprehension improves, allowing them to provide a consistent brand promise. (Punjaisri and Wilson 2017).

One of the earliest studies on the internal branding process was undertaken by Miles and Mangold (2005). Internal branding, according to the authors, allows a firm to clearly place its brand in the minds of its employees and leads to employee internalization of brand values. A well-defined brand identity, which encompasses the brand vision, values, and promises, is the core of the process. This business brand, as well as desired employee attitudes and behaviors, should be effectively communicated through internal messages. Messages should be sent on a regular basis and in the same format across all channels. The authors' model is shown in the figure below (Figure 1).

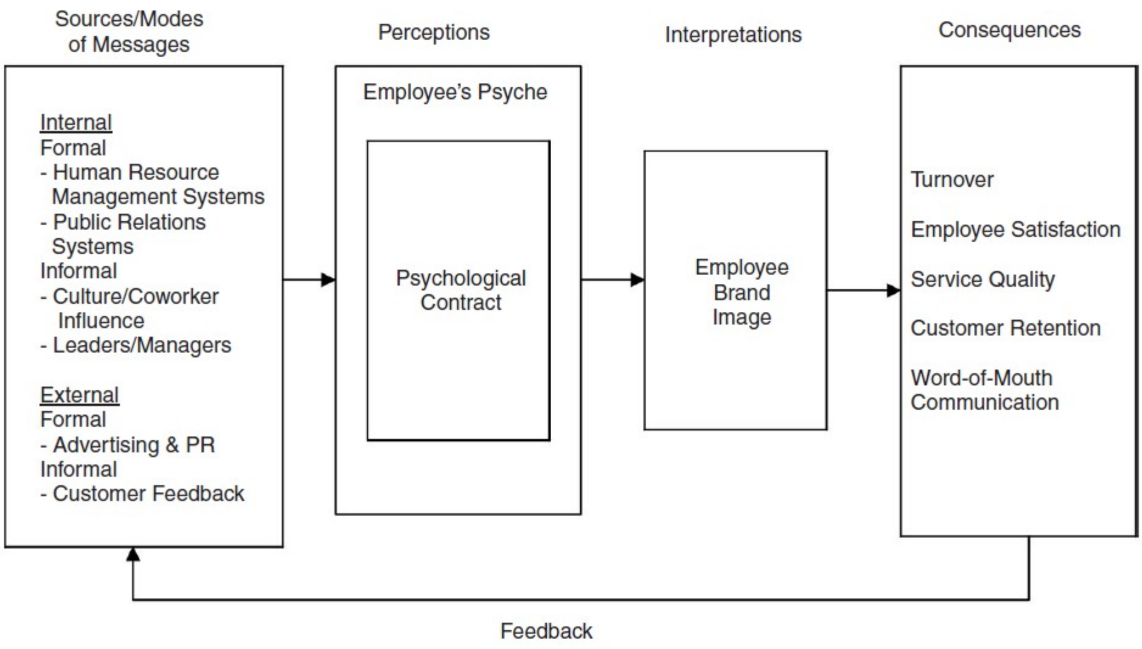


**Figure 1 Internal Branding Process (Miles and Mangold, 2004)**

According to Tosti and Stotz (2001), the internal branding process consists of seven stages. These are: analysis, mid-management involvement, senior management orientation, enrolling the employees, brand camps, tactical planning sessions, and support, assessment, and review.

a) Analysis: The internal branding process starts with the research and evaluation phase in order to analyse the brand internally. The main objectives of this analysis process are (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 30):

- The brand proposal should be clarified, and the brand promise to be presented to the customers should be determined.
- Brand characters that can best convey the values should be determined.
- Brand characters must be transformed into behavioural practices and values, both for company leaders and for the company.
- Existing practices, including the human resources system, should be analysed to determine whether they are consistent with the brand promise.

The underlying values on which the brand is founded are analyzed during the analysis phase, which is the first and possibly most crucial step in the internal branding process for determining the course to be taken. Following the determination of the brand's fundamental principles, the objective of brand activities and the developments that will trigger brand activities are investigated. In addition, at this stage, harmonization and communication barriers between employees and stakeholders are eliminated. In short, this stage is an important stage for the healthy progress of the next processes as it is the initial stage of the internal branding process (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 30).

b) Senior Management Orientation: At this stage, all the studies conducted in the analysis stage, which is the first stage, are conveyed to the top management so that they can be involved in the process. With senior management informed, managers understand the internal branding process. Thus, they support the process and feel an active commitment and responsibility for it. The impact of a leader's vision on the performance and attitudes of followers and followers is significant. As a result, involving the upper level in the process from the start is critical to the success of the internal branding strategy (Leberecht, 2004: 13).

Leaders in the organization must understand and support the internal branding process, as well as demonstrate that they are actively involved in it. Due to time constraints and other factors, senior management has delegated the internal branding process to lower-level managers and staff. Low levels of participation and delegation of practice are the beginning of the mistakes in this process (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 30).

c) Mid-management Involvement: At this stage, middle managers are included in the process. Middle-level managers involved in the process are informed about the results of the previous stage. Middle managers are the group that is the main element in the process. The reason why middle-level managers are the main element is that in the branding process, mostly middle-level managers lead the employees (Leberecht, 2004: 13). The application preparation process for middle managers consists of reading, feedback, and self-teaching exercises. These applications are designed as study sessions or business meetings, not as a training program. These sessions and business meetings focus middle managers on issues related to their own responsibilities and what needs to be done to deliver the brand promise (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 31).

These sessions cover the fundamentals of the brand, internal branding, and aspects of the company's own brand. Feedback is very important at this stage. The feedback process provides important contributions to see the strengths and weaknesses of all participants during the implementation phase. There is no comparison or comparison at this stage. Feedback is administered for the personal development of the recipients, and this stage is certainly not used for their evaluation. At this stage, everyone is provided with the opportunity to focus on the issues related to their field of duty, and the infrastructure is prepared for them to make evaluations without any career or competition concerns. This stage ends with each participant preparing a brand plan for their field of duty. Participants often stay in touch afterwards to both support and advise each other (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 32).

After middle management is included in the process, it is now time to involve all employees in internal branding initiatives. In large organizations, these two stages are often seen together. In some organizations, employee meetings are initiated after a sufficient number of managers complete the session. At this stage, all the management staff now have detailed information about the actions to be taken regarding internal branding and how to direct the employees. All preparations are now complete for the inclusion of employees in the process (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 32).

d) Enrolling The Employees: At this stage, all employees other than top and middle management are included in the process. At this stage, employees are given the opportunity to experience the brand (Leberecht, 2004: 13). Involving employees in the internal branding process is a planned process. It is not enough to train and involve employees in the process alone. Apart from training, employees must also fully place this process in their minds and be connected to the process with a willingness to succeed. During the internal branding launch, employees usually attend all-day sessions. These sessions provide employees with information, explanations, and multiple experiences that will enable them to represent their core brand values. Thanks to this process, employees will both have an idea of the brand experience and gain a sense of the brand. However, when employees have direct experience with the brand, they can be fully involved in the process (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 32).

For many employees, the combination of brand experience, brand promise, and connection increases employee motivation. This is the first time some employees feel like they're a part of the company's success and that they can help customers understand the company's promise. Employee participation should be ensured throughout the implementation process, beginning with the creation of the internal branding process. The support of the employees should not be neglected. While deciding to participate in the process, the extent to which employees will be supported, strengthened and their attitudes towards adapting to the internal branding process should be determined. For the success of the internal branding process, it is important to support and strengthen the personnel, as well as to establish multi-dimensional communication and team spirit. The effectiveness of internal communication should be increased, and hierarchical boundaries should be reduced as much as possible for this purpose. In addition, non-monetary and work-related rewards will increase the motivation of employees in the internal branding process (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 32).

Rewards should be fair, and reward systems should make positive contributions to employee motivation. Training programs are one of the important elements of the implementation phase and contribute to the development of behaviors compatible with the brand values of the employees. Employees who are committed to the goals through training activities but lack information about the brand can become brand advocates. Employees become loyal to the brand at the end of the implementation process (Mahnert and Torres, 2007: 59).

e) Tactical Planning Sessions: The tactical planning phase begins at this point. Middle managers, supervisors, and all employees assemble during this time to learn about the connection between internal and external branding efforts (Leberecht, 2004: 13). The participants first learn about the company's operations and marketing strategy at this stage. Following that, the participants analyse their group's feedback on brand attitudes and behaviours in order to create a structure that is suitable with the brand's character. Learning how to improve existing workgroup cultural norms can be a fruitful endeavour, as these behaviours are often ingrained in the group's routine. To begin with, comparing these habits to the ideal brand behaviour, publicly discussing them, and resisting the practice is regarded undesirable.

Another significant issue is the extent to which cultural norms within their groupings obstruct brand value transmission. For example, members of a marketing firm's marketing and operations teams were asked to explain their own attitudes and behaviours, as well as those of the other group. Employees in the operations staff stressed the following in relation to employees in the marketing staff: employees in the sales staff make promises that are well above the capacity of the operations team. Employees in the sales department also claim that those in the operations department are unable to fully match client expectations. To bridge the gap between operations and marketing, communication channels should be established. Increase and build interdepartmental solidarity and cooperation as one of the most effective and efficient strategies to reduce negative aspects of the branding process (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 33).

f) Brand Camps: It is the implementation phase of the developed brand plan. Managers work with their employees to develop the brand promise. These applications are valid for each department manager and team in the institution. Managers work with their own teams, who are ready to support brand recommendations on a local level and link their efforts to the company's goals. The phases of analysis, learning, and procedure are thus transformed into a structure that enables employees to act quickly. Employees who have direct touch with customers determine which practices should be developed and which should be abolished, and then put their plans into action. Employees' direct involvement in the brand experience, in addition to regular feedback and planning activities, is a key part of the process. Because service sector employees have direct contact with customers, have direct experience, and make direct presentations, it is critical for them to be aligned with the brand promise (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 33).

g) Support, Assessment, And Review: Internal marking is not a "quick fix" or "repair" procedure. In any company, this process necessitates strategy, commitment, time, and resources. In other words, any organization's existing valued assets are required for this process. However, with the threat of competitors' implementing successful internal branding, it is also a worthwhile investment to consider building a brand promise. internal branding efforts must be kept fresh in people's minds and on the agenda to guarantee that the results are long-lasting. Managers and employees will identify those that oppose change in the workplace when people begin to execute brand values and behaviours. Removing these barriers typically needs both resource allocation and managerial approval. If management is careless in such situations, the process will begin to stutter. It's also vital to regularly create an internal branding effort and analyze the actions and programs that emerge when the brand plan is implemented (Tosti and Stotz, 2001: 33).

The internal branding process necessitates a comprehensive awareness that all stages are complementary to one another and that no stage is more or less significant than the others. It's important to keep in mind that the success of each stage of the procedure is dependent on the previous.

### 3.2.2. Internal branding models

For internal branding, certain models have been developed. internal branding techniques and their influence on employees are included in these models. internal branding models that have been established are covered in this section.

#### 3.2.2.1. Integrated Internal branding model

Burman and Zeplin provide an integrated model for internal branding (2005). This paradigm is built on the identity-based brand approach. Employees have two key influences in building a consistent brand identity: brand loyalty and corporate brand citizenship. The success of a brand depends on the development of brand citizenship. This involves the establishment of customer loyalty to the brand. internal branding is investigated in three areas: brand-oriented human resource management, communication, and leadership, all of which help to build brand loyalty. Apart from that, there are four conditional variables to consider: cultural fit, structure fit, personnel knowledge, and accessible resources (Figure 2). When the three parts of internal branding and the four condition criteria are compatible, brand loyalty and citizenship are accomplished (Burman and Zeplin, 2005: 286).

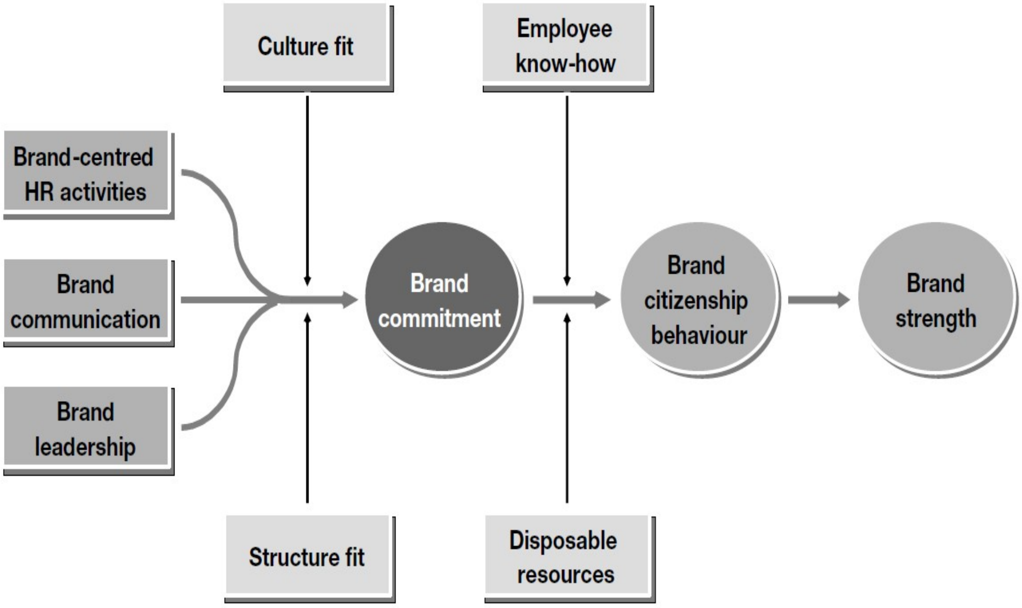


**Figure 2 Integrated Internal Branding Model**

Source: Burman and Zeplin, 2005: 286.

#### 3.2.2.2. Internal branding conceptual model

In the methodology they offered in their study, Punjaisri et al., (2009) analysed internal branding as internal communication and human resources activities and explored them in four essential aspects. Training, orientation, group meetings, and daily briefings are examples of these features. According to this quantitative study, internal branding affects employee attitudes and behaviours, which has a positive impact on brand performance. Furthermore, while brand identification has a positive impact on brand loyalty, which in turn has an impact on brand loyalty, it was discovered that there was no clear link between employee performance and brand loyalty (Punjaisri et al., 2009: 12-17).

#### 3.2.2.3. Leadership-based brand building model

According to Vallaster and De Chernatony, employees are crucial in communicating the brand promise (2005). Furthermore, it is critical for employees to understand and share the brand's value. As a result, employees demonstrate brand loyalty and identification by engaging in actions that support the brand.

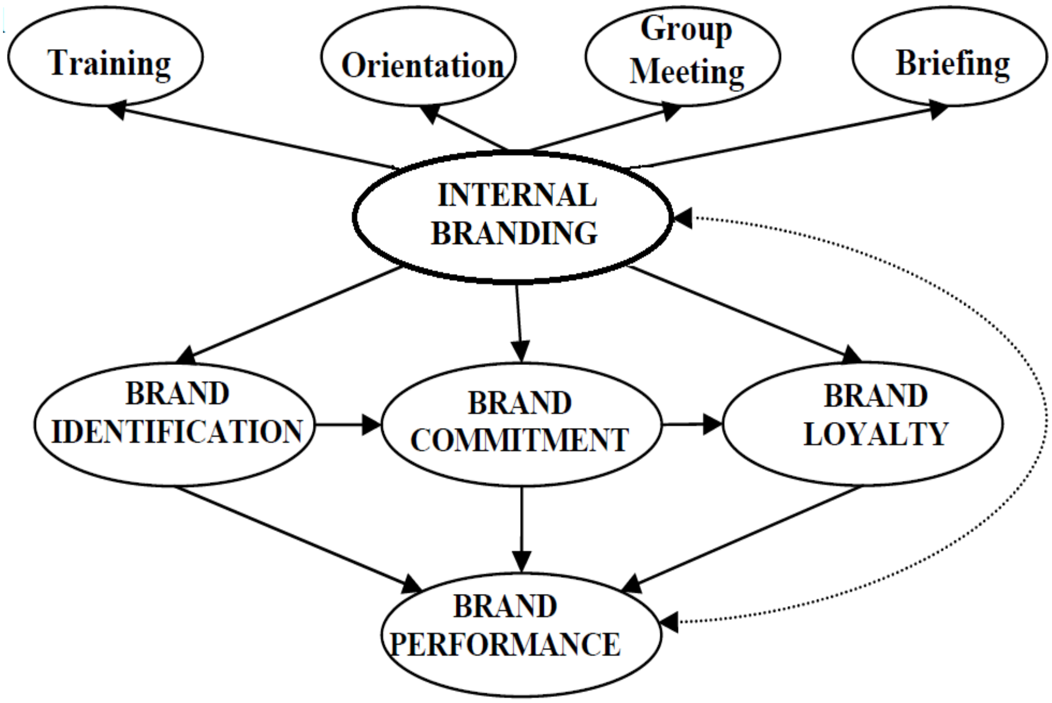


**Figure 3 Internal Branding Conceptual Model**

Source: Punjaisri, Evanschitzky and Wilson, 2009: 27.

Using the method of in-depth interviews with managers, the effect of leadership on internal branding was underlined in this study. It is vital to eliminate cognitive, emotional, and communication disparities among employees with cultural diversity in order for internal branding to be successful. This necessitates ensuring the organization's brand vision and social engagement, both of which are critical components. Employees develop loyalty, trust, and brand habits as a result of social contact (Vallaster and De Chernatony, 2005).

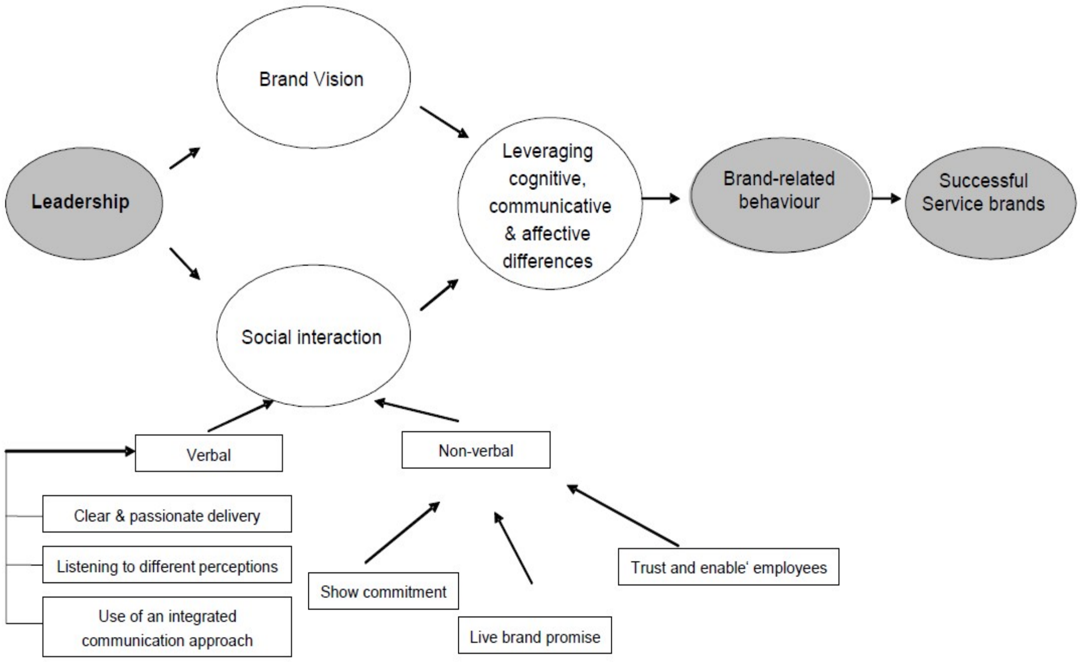


**Figure 4 Leadership-based Brand Building Model**

Source: Vallaster and De Chernatony, 2005: 187.

#### 3.2.2.4. Employee-based brand equity –EBBE- model

Employees' good attitudes toward work, socialization, job involvement, and management support, according to King and Grace (2010), enable clear communication. The generation and dissemination of information benefit from openness. In the same way, the human element contributes to information distribution. The favourable dissemination of the material produced will have a good impact on the employees' job descriptions and their brand loyalty. As a result, employee-based brand equity is established. EBBE; employees that practice corporate citizenship have a favourable impact on employee happiness, intention to stay with the company, and good word of mouth communication (WOM) (King and Grace, 2010).

#### 3.2.2.5. Brand-consistent employee behaviour management model

Henkel et al. (2007) interviewed marketing top managers and general managers from a number of well-known companies in Germany and Sweden in order to determine the impact of brand-consistent employee behaviour on brand success. The model's most central variable is behavioural branding quality, which is one of the study's important factors. The contribution of brands to success, according to the model, is determined by the quality of behavioural branding, the performance of staff, and the brand's compatibility with mass media. According to Henkel et al. (2007), the model depends on three primary elements to determine behavioural branding quality and staff performance (Figure 5). Formal management control, informal management control, and empowerment are the three variables. Employees are motivated and trained via these techniques, which include formal and informal interviews (Henkel et al., 2007: 316).

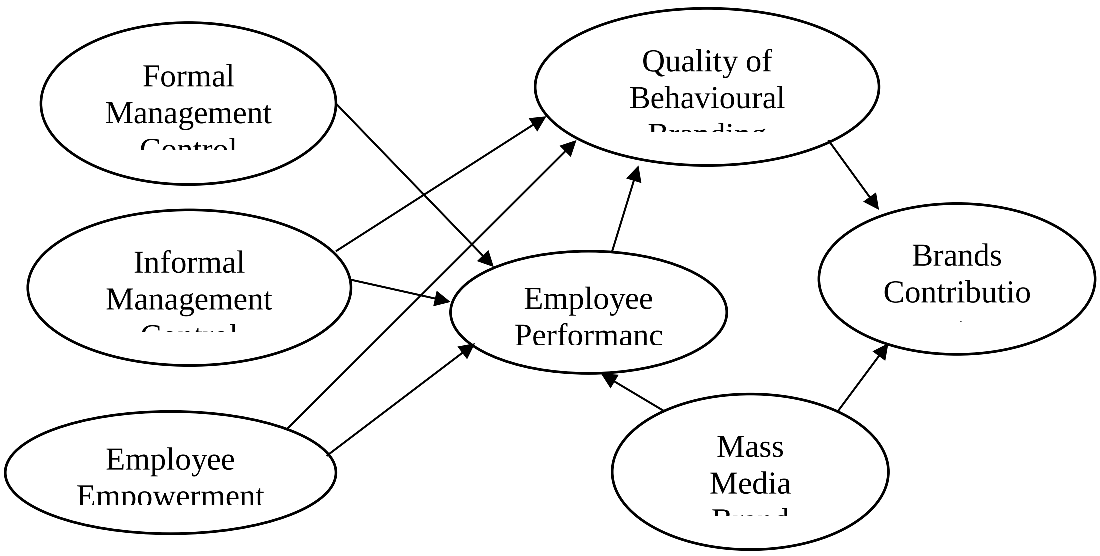


**Figure 5 Brand-consistent Employee Behaviour Management Model**

Source: Henkel et al., 2007: 315.

#### 3.2.2.6. Harmonizing human capital and brand strategy model

Internal branding, according to Khan (2009), is the alignment of human capital and brand strategies. According to Khan, internal branding necessitates the integration of corporate marketing, corporate governance, and corporate human resource management (2009). In brand management, the employee's role in completing the service and brand promise, as well as transferring the brand promise, is crucial. The greater the value and contentment of a company's customers, the larger the company's loyal customer base. Employees will be encouraged and motivated if they are treated with compassion, valued, and seen as strategic human resources. Internal brand management should be organized in conjunction with human resources management to make it appealing to employees and to give possibilities for them to be happy and retained. Employee loyalty leads to consumer satisfaction and loyalty, which leads to employee pleasure and loyalty (Figure 6).

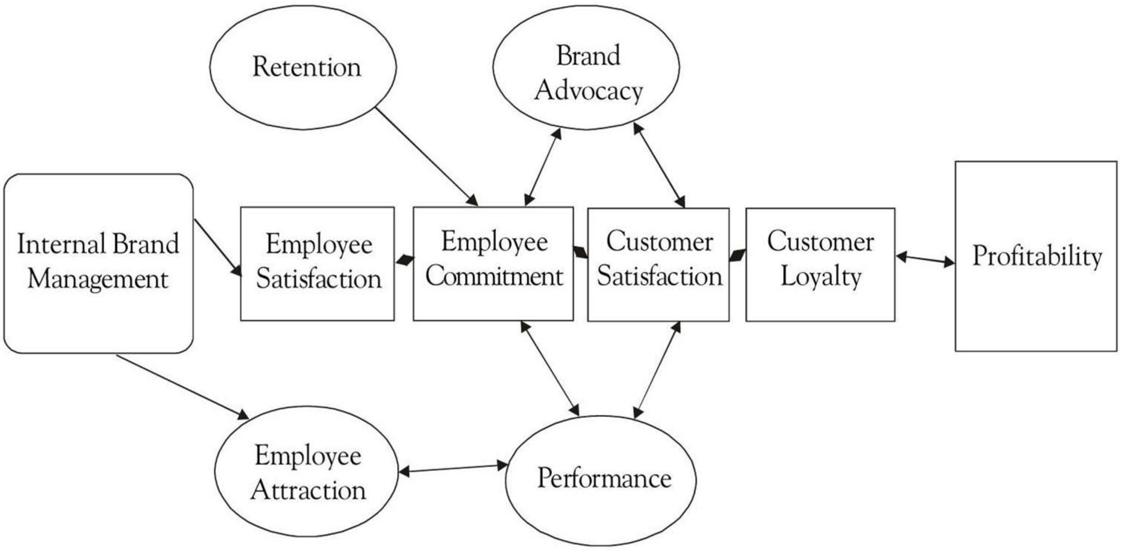


**Figure 6 Harmonizing Human Capital and Brand Strategy Model**

Source: Khan, 2009: 26.

Employee and customer happiness should be high enough to turn them into brand ambassadors, ensuring the business's long-term prosperity (Khan, 2009: 26).

### 3.2.3. Outputs of the internal branding

Internal branding practices have positive effects on the brand and the company. The main outputs of internal branding are employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour.

#### 3.2.3.1. Employee brand citizenship behaviour (EBCB)

Burmann and Zeplin (2005) created employee brand citizenship behaviour based on the concept of organizational citizenship. Although it shares certain characteristics with organizational citizenship, it is distinguished by its focus on the brand and inclusion of non-organizational aspects. The creators of the concept of brand citizenship, Burmann and Zeplin (2005: 280), defined it as "strengthening the company's brand identity through the voluntary behaviour of its employees." Similarly, Shaari et al. (2015: 87) described employee brand citizenship behaviour as "workers going above and beyond their fundamental functions to reflect consistent behaviours towards the brand." Employee brand citizenship behaviour, as defined by Nyadzayo et al. (2016: 164), is the proactive behaviour of employees outside of their profession. These proactive actions contribute to the brand's vitality and authenticity. In a nutshell, this concept frames employee voluntary behaviours that contribute to the creation of brand identity. Employee brand citizenship behaviours include concern for the brand's identity and development, enthusiasm for the brand, openness to self-improvement, helping deeds, and sportsmanship (Düğer and Taşkın, 2017: 84). The good outcomes of this voluntary interaction between employees, employers, and the institution are unavoidable. Internal branding, according to recent studies, can result in favourable outcomes in terms of employees adopting brand identities and supporting brands, as well as assuring employee brand loyalty (Yu et al., 2018: 39).

Employee brand citizenship behaviours can also help to protect the brand. While the employee actions match with the brand identity and brand promise, they also establish the atmosphere for the brand's strengthening (Piehler et al., 2016: 3). As a result, all employees inside the company should establish similar behavioural habits. The link between clients and employees is also strengthened in this way. Brand citizenship is built on collaborative efforts to boost the brand's value in marketing and human resources. They can be observed in the way people behave when it comes to their brands (Nirmali et al., 2017: 267). The financial and social needs of employees can be better handled, the internal service quality can be improved, and it helps to create a better working environment in general as a result of the information collected from within the company and used in communication channels regarding internal communication, which is one of the internal branding elements in the studies. As a result, employees' perceptions toward the company's brand will start to change, and their brand loyalty will increase (Güdük et al., 2021).

Internal motivation is projected to rise as a result of internal branding activities, and this situation could benefit employee brand citizenship behaviour. Employee brand citizenship behaviour and internal branding are tightly related. Internal branding refers to activities aimed at assisting businesspeople in developing behaviours that are compatible with brand promises, in order to meet customers' expectations. As employees' levels of brand citizenship improve as a result of internal branding initiatives, they begin to put more effort toward the company's goals (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005: 281).

#### 3.2.3.2. Employee brand identification (EBI)

Employee brand identification (EBI), according to organizational identification definitions, is the sense of a link with the brand in which employees identify themselves with the attributes they believe define the brand. Employee branding is a self-branding link that employees form with the brand of their company. The notion of how much an individual believes he belongs to a brand and how much he agrees with the brand is known as brand identification. The person who identifies with the brand has an emotional attachment to it and is responsible for its success and failures (Sauer et al., 2012: 407). Employees may represent brand identity qualities in their conduct without adopting them as their own yet acting in ways that reflect the brand's identity features might lead to internalization of the brand identity. Employee-brand identification is established when employees internalize the brand identity by adopting the brand's features to build their own identity (Harquail, 2007: 13).

Internal branding is important for improving brand perception because it ensures that internal and external brand message is consistent (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017: 94). Employees who have been trained and have a deep understanding of the brand's values are more inclined to interact with the brand intellectually and emotionally and put those principles into effect. As a result, companies strive to internalize the brand in the workplace, tie employees' perceptions and attitudes to core brand values, and build a sense of belonging (Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos, 2014: 315). Internal branding techniques aid in the communication and training of brand messaging as well as the development of the correct brand mindset among employees. Through the socialization process, employees' perspectives are linked with job needs and expectations, encouraging them to take on relevant job duties and become effective organizational citizens. Employees are believed to act best and be attitudinally tied to the brand if they are aware of the brand, feel like they are a part of the organization, and are active in the business process (Liu et al., 2017: 3). In other words, internal branding initiatives help employees develop a strong social identity toward the corporate brand by fostering a sense of belonging. Internal branding efforts, in other words, tend to build employee identification with the brand (Dechawatanapaisal, 2019: 5).

## 4. THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS

The theoretical background of the research is based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the resource theory of social exchange (Foa and Foa, 1974, 1980). Three main studies were used while creating the research model. The first of these is the model developed by Hoppe (2018). In his model, he demonstrated the relationship between employer branding, internal branding, and employer brand image and employee brand attitudes and behaviours. Secondly, the study of Iyer et al. (2019), in which they examined the relationship between brand orientation, strategic brand management, internal branding, and brand performance, was used. Finally, the study of Ngo et al. (2019), which examined the relationship between employee brand knowledge, employee brand identification, employee-related brand and customer-focused behaviours, and employee performance, was utilized.

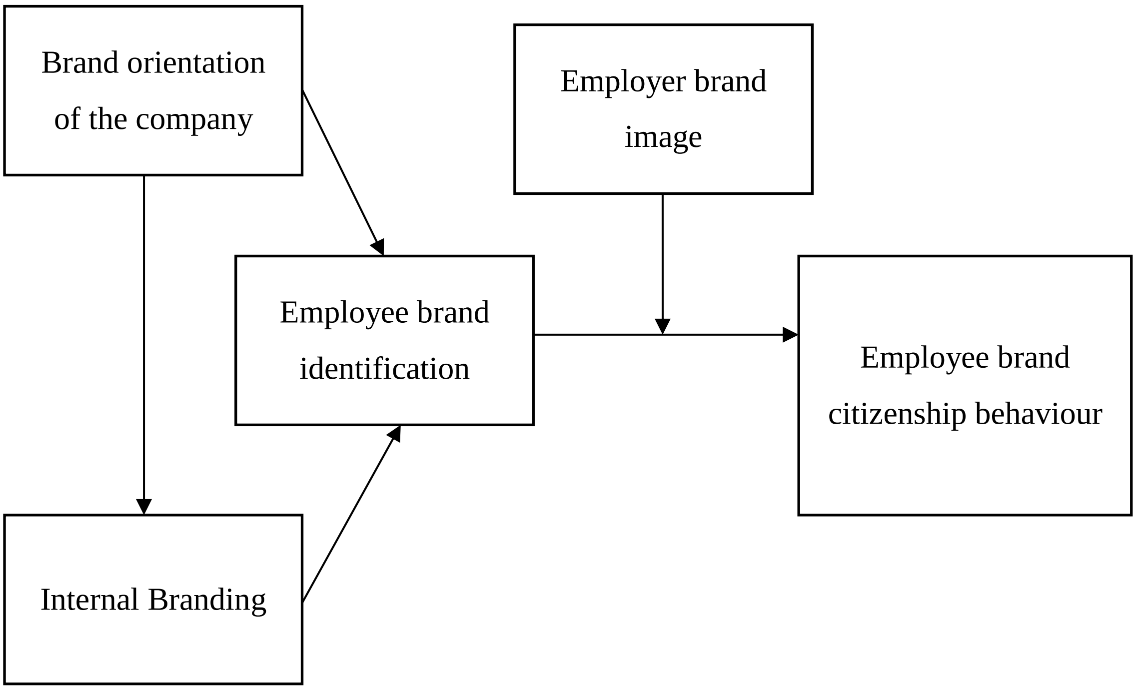


**Figure 7 Research Model**

Brand orientation of the company is an inside-out approach to value creation that identifies brands at the hub of an organization's value development strategy (Baumgarth et al., 2013). It is critical in the execution of a business plan because it demonstrates to all employees the level of organizational traits that promote the brand mindset. According to Mitchell (2002), in order to revitalize the brand and align employees' mindsets with brand values, culture, and business goals, companies must develop an attitudinal connection with their employees. It is said that attempts to establish the value of a corporate brand among an organization's employees tend to promote employee identification and loyalty to the brand. There are only a few empirical research that look at the impact of brand orientation on brand identification (Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010). Dechawatanapaisal (2018) showed in his study that the brand orientation of the company had a significant effect on employee brand identification. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed in this study:

$H_1$: Brand orientation of the company has a significant effect on employee brand identification.

One of the first steps in identifying procedures that lead to an improvement in overall brand performance is brand orientation. The value of developing and sustaining a strong brand identity is recognized by a brand-focused attitude. As a result, brand orientation helps brand management from the inside out (Urde et al., 2013). In other words, internal branding is preceded by brand orientation (Iyer et al., 2019). In addition, studies demonstrate that brand orientation has a favourable impact on internal branding. Gromark and Melin (2013) and Lee et al. (2016) found similar results. Hence, it is hypothesized that

$H_2$: Brand orientation of the company has a significant effect on internal branding.

Because internal branding is focused with expressing to employees the brand values that separate one brand from another, it can expose the brand identity that represents the employees' sentiments of 'unity' (Bergstrom et al., 2002). When employees have different opinions regarding the brand than their managers, de Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001) claim that they will endeavour to rebalance the system. Employees will match their brand attitudes with their management as internal branding provides a shared knowledge of brand principles. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis was formed

$H_3$: Internal branding has a significant effect on employee brand identification.

As previously stated, the brand orientation of the company is an inside-out approach that acknowledges brands as the focal point of an organization's value generation strategy. Employee identification and loyalty to a company's brand improves as a result of corporate brand equity efforts. Internal branding assists employees in exhibiting brand-accepted behaviours (Punjaisri et al., 2009). Employees internalize the brand identity in this way by linking their personal values with the organization's principles (Terglav et al., 2016). The role of internal branding as a mediator in the interaction between the brand orientation of the company and the employee brand identification cannot be overstated. In order to reveal this relationship, the following hypothesis proposed:

$H_4$: Internal branding mediates the relationship between brand orientation of the company and employee brand identification.

To "bring a brand to life," employee brand citizenship behaviour develops as a function of brand knowledge and employee brand identification and includes outwardly oriented behaviours that go beyond organizational citizenship behaviour's internal focus (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). In order to accomplish their tasks and responsibilities in accordance with the brand commitment, employees must have access to brand knowledge and brand identification (King and Grace, 2008). According to studies, employee brand identification is closely linked to employee brand citizenship behaviour. According to Ngo et al., highly knowledgeable employees who identify positively with the brand indicate favourable employee brand citizenship behaviour (2019). Therefore, it is hypothesized that

$H_5$: Employee brand identification has a significant impact on employee brand citizenship behaviour.

The origins and background of employee brand citizenship behaviour have been extensively researched (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; King and Grace, 2008; Punjaisri et al., 2009; Porricelli et al., 2014). Findings in the literature indicate that employees only engage in employee brand citizenship behaviour when they see that top management aligns their behaviour with the core values and corporate brand of the organization (Shaari et al., 2015; Bravo et al., 2017). While the impact of employer brand identification on employee brand citizenship behaviour is known, the moderating role of employer brand image in this relationship has not been explored much. In order to contribute to the literature, the following hypotheses have been formed:

$H_6$: The higher the employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour.

$H_{6a}$: The higher the sincerity dimension of the employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour.

$H_{6b}$: The higher the prestige dimension of the employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour.

$H_{6c}$: The higher the innovativeness dimension of employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour.

$H_{6d}$: The higher the competence dimension of employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour.

# 5. RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, the procedures and methods used in the study will be defined and explained. It also includes the results of the pre-test study with translated questionnaires, the strategy of the study, and the methods used to collect data on the research questionnaire.

## 5.1. Research Design

The research design employed a questionnaire which was developed to measure the constructs in the study.

## 5.2. Measurement Instruments and Questionnaire Design

Multi-item measures from previous studies at acceptable levels of validity and reliability were used to measure the constructs in the study and necessary adaptations were made to adopt them to the study context. The questionnaire was distributed to different demographic groups with various backgrounds.

**Table 1 Scales and Sources Used in The Study**

| Scales | | Sources | Item |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brand orientation of the company | | Iyer et al., 2019 | 5 |
| Internal branding | | Iyer et al., 2019 | 5 |
| Employee brand identification | | Ngo et al., 2019 | 12 |
| Employer brand image | Sincerity | Hoppe, 2018 | 3 |
| | Innovativeness | | 3 |
| | Competence | | 2 |
| | Prestige | | 3 |
| Employee brand citizenship behaviour | | Ngo et al., 2019 | 7 |

### 5.3. Data Collection, Sampling and Analyses

First of all, the participants were asked questions about the brand orientation of the company. Afterwards, questions were asked about the branding approach of the company's employees. Then, questions were asked about how employees define and internalize company identity. After this section, the employer's image in terms of employees was asked under four headings. These titles are sincerity, innovativeness, competence, and prestige. Then, questions were asked about the level of brand citizenship of the employees. At the end of the study, questions about demographic variables were included. The questionnaire featured 5-point Likert-type scales, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The pre-test of the research was conducted with 50 participants to find out to what extent the questions were understandable, consistent and reliable. Then, the main data collection of the study was made by distributing the questionnaires online to 327 people from different provinces of Turkey. 325 valid survey data were analysed.

### 5.4. Findings

This section, which is divided into three parts, contains the analyses' primary outputs. First, the sample is summarized, followed by descriptive statistics. Second, for each dimension, the results of factor and reliability studies are described. Finally, the path analysis findings are presented to investigate the hypotheses.

#### 5.4.1. Descriptive analysis

The survey was conducted in various provinces of Turkey with 327 male and female participants from different backgrounds and demographics. Two of the questionnaires were excluded because of missing data. The data of 325 participants was analysed. The descriptive statistics of the participants are given below.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Participants**

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 121 | 37.2 |
| | Female | 204 | 62.8 |
| Age | Under 20 years old | 22 | 6.8 |
| | 21-30 years old | 96 | 29.5 |
| | 31-40 years old | 103 | 31.7 |
| | 41-50 years old | 82 | 25.2 |
| | Above 50 years old | 22 | 6.8 |
| Years of employment in the company | Less than 1 year | 66 | 20.3 |
| | 1-3 years | 88 | 27.1 |
| | 4-6 years | 50 | 15.4 |
| | 7-10 years | 51 | 15.7 |
| | 11 years and more | 70 | 21.5 |
| Sectors They Work | Banking, Finance and Insurance | 25 | 7.7 |
| | Commerce | 46 | 14.2 |

| | | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Construction | 10 | 3.1 |
| | Education | 41 | 12.6 |
| | Health | 16 | 4.9 |
| | Industry | 16 | 4.9 |
| | Public | 31 | 9.5 |
| | Software | 11 | 3.4 |
| | Other | 129 | 39.7 |
| Income Levels | Under 1200 TL | 19 | 5.8 |
| | 1201-2900 TL | 29 | 8.9 |
| | 2901-5000 TL | 138 | 42.5 |
| | 5001-10000 TL | 102 | 31.4 |
| | 10001 TL and above | 37 | 11.4 |
| Education Levels | Primary school | 17 | 5.2 |
| | Middle School | 15 | 4.6 |
| | High school | 91 | 28.0 |
| | University | 158 | 48.6 |
| | Master's | 40 | 12.3 |

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Doctorate | 4 | 1.2 |
| Total | 325 | 100.0 |

Men made up 37.2 percent (121 persons) of those who decided to take part in the survey, while women made up 62.8 percent (204 people).

The smallest groups of participants are those aged under 20 (6.8%) and over 50 (6.8%). Approximately two-thirds of the participants are between the ages of 21 and 40 (199 people, 61.2%).

When asked how long they have been with the company, the largest group (27.1%) is made up of employees who have been there for 1-3 years. The smallest group is composed of those who have worked between 4-6 years (15.4%).

Despite the fact that various question possibilities were provided, it was discovered that 1/3 of the participants were not included in the offered areas. As a result, the other sector produced the largest group. Aside from that, the commerce sector has the most participants (46 people, 14.2%). The Education sector is ranked second (41 people, 12.6%). The Construction industry has the smallest number of players (10 people, 3.1%).

People with the highest incomes constitute 11.4% of the participants. People with medium incomes (2901-5000 TL) constitute the largest group (138 people, 42.5%). In second place are those with an income of 5001-10000 TL (102 people, 31%).

Nearly half of the participants are university graduates (158 people, 48.6%). High school graduates come second (91 people, 28.0%). The number of participants taking postgraduate education is also quite high. The number of master's graduates is 40 (12.3%), and there are four (1.2%) participants who have completed their doctorate.

### 5.4.2. Data analysis

Explanatory factor analysis was performed first, followed by reliability analysis using SPSS 23. Finally, CFA and path analyses was performed to test the relationships.

### 5.4.3. Test of Normality

Before the analysis of the data, a normality test was applied to all scales. Most statistical tests that are considered powerful operate under the assumption that the data set is normally distributed. Therefore, before starting the statistical analysis, it should be investigated whether the data set is normally distributed. In the univariate normality assumption, there is an assumption that the measurements of each continuous variable in the sample come from a normal distribution (Pituch and Stevens, 2015).

**Table 3 Test of Normality**

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scales | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| BOC | 0.212 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.852 | 325 | 0.000 |
| INB | 0.131 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.930 | 325 | 0.000 |
| EBI | 0.127 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.935 | 325 | 0.000 |
| ESIN | 0.209 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.894 | 325 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EINN | 0.248 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.869 | 325 | 0.000 |
| ECOM | 0.272 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.865 | 325 | 0.000 |
| EPRE | 0.242 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.867 | 325 | 0.000 |
| EBCB | 0.194 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.878 | 325 | 0.000 |
| EIMAGE | 0.172 | 325 | 0.000 | 0.892 | 325 | 0.000 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

When the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests are examined, it is seen that they are significant ($p<0.05$). Accordingly, the data is not normally distributed.

**Table 4 Skewness/Kurtosis Normality Test**

| **Scales** | | **Statistic** | **Std. Error** | **Scales** | | **Statistic** | **Std. Error** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | 3.2055 | 0.07912 | | Mean | 3.2349 | 0.07295 |
| BOC | Skewness | -0.473 | 0.135 | ESIN | Skewness | -0.417 | 0.135 |
| | Kurtosis | -1.349 | 0.270 | | Kurtosis | -1.108 | 0.270 |
| | Mean | 3.0086 | 0.06960 | | Mean | 3.3251 | 0.07369 |
| INB | Skewness | -0.208 | 0.135 | EINN | Skewness | -0.578 | 0.135 |
| | Kurtosis | -1.175 | 0.270 | | Kurtosis | -0.983 | 0.270 |
| | Mean | 3.3582 | 0.07065 | | Mean | 3.3108 | 0.07185 |
| EBCB | Skewness | -0.659 | 0.135 | ECOM | Skewness | -0.517 | 0.135 |
| | Kurtosis | -0.849 | 0.270 | | Kurtosis | -0.912 | 0.270 |
| | Mean | 3.3077 | 0.07055 | | Mean | 3.3621 | 0.07353 |
| EIMAGE | Skewness | -0.564 | 0.135 | EPRE | Skewness | -0.591 | 0.135 |
| | Kurtosis | -0.931 | 0.270 | | Kurtosis | -0.974 | 0.270 |
| | Mean | 3.1041 | 0.06608 | | | | |
| EBI | Skewness | -0.373 | 0.135 | | | | |
| | Kurtosis | -0.967 | 0.270 | | | | |

When the table is examined, it is understood that the values are between -1.5 and +1.5 according to the Skewness-Kurtosis normality test result for all scales and its sub-dimensions, so it is suitable for normal distribution. When Kurtosis and Skewness values are between -1.5 and +1.5, it is considered to be a normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

#### 5.4.3.1. Exploratory factor and reliability analyses

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to all scales. All scales gave significant results except for the employer brand image scale. A question (successful-ECOM1) was removed from the Competence sub-dimension of the employer brand image scale. Next reliability analysis was performed on all scales. The results of the exploratory factor and reliability analyses are given below.

**Table 5 KMO and Bartlett's Test Results of The Scales**

| Scales | KMO | Chi-Square | P value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brand orientation of the company | 0.909 | 2099.504 | 0.000 |
| Internal branding | 0.907 | 1623.591 | 0.000 |
| Employee brand identification | 0.953 | 4226.369 | 0.000 |
| Employer brand image | 0.952 | 6435.945 | 0.000 |
| Employee brand citizenship behaviour | 0.940 | 3008.774 | 0.000 |

When the p value is 0.50 and above, it can be said that it is not appropriate to perform factor analysis with these datas. In the table, p values are smaller than 0.50. It can be said that it is appropriate to perform factor analysis.

**Table 6 Results of Factor and Reliability Analyses**

| Scale | Questions | Factor Loadings | Factor % | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brand orientation of the company | Building strong brands is one of the main objectives. | 0.946 | 88.771 | 0.968 |
| | An effective brand management is considered to be essential for achieving competitive advantage. | 0.944 | | |
| | Brand decisions are considered to be important elements of the firm's strategy. | 0.945 | | |
| | Brand advertising is regarded as an investment. | 0.948 | | |
| | Importance given to brands is higher than competitor firms. | 0.929 | | |
| Internal branding | Employees attend workshops about objectives and characteristics of brands | 0.903 | 83.558 | 0.951 |
| | Employees periodically receive information about brands and brand management | 0.935 | | |
| | Employees sufficiently understand brand(s) objectives | 0.917 | | |
| | Brand(s) image among employees is periodically assessed | 0.931 | | |
| | Different departments freely share information about brand(s) | 0.883 | | |

| Scale | Questions | Factor Loadings | Factor % | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee brand identification | When someone praises my company's brand, it feels like a personal accomplishment | 0.804 | 72.795 | 0.967 |
| | When I talk about my company's brand, I usually say "we" rather than "they" | 0.872 | | |
| | I am very interested in what others think about my company's brand | 0.871 | | |
| | My company's brand's success is my success | 0.869 | | |
| | When someone criticises my company's brand, it feels like a personal insult | 0.751 | | |
| | If the media criticises my company's brand, I would feel embarrassed | 0.700 | | |
| | I believe that my company cultivates the values that I hold in esteem | 0.903 | | |
| | I believe that consuming products/ services of my company leads others to view me in a manner that I wish | 0.897 | | |
| | I recognize myself in my company | 0.908 | | |
| | The decision to choose this company is based on values that I judge to be important in my personal life | 0.900 | | |
| | I can see similarities between my identity and that of the company | 0.878 | | |
| | People who are important in my life identify with the values of the company | 0.859 | | |
| | In my perception, the employer is | | | |

| Scale | Questions | | Factor Loadings | Factor % | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer brand image | Sincerity | Honest | 0.799 | 27.460 | 0.957 |
| | | Sincere | 0.784 | | |
| | | down-to-earth | 0.510 | | |
| | Innovativeness | Modern | 0.646 | 23.236 | 0.972 |
| | | up to date | 0.656 | | |
| | | Contemporary | 0.622 | | |
| | Competence | Successful | 0.365 | 13.966 | 0.943 |
| | | a leading company in the industry | 0.655 | | |
| | Prestige | Esteemed | 0.744 | 30.698 | 0.971 |
| | | a company that has high standards | 0.718 | | |
| | | a highly respected organization | 0.772 | | |
| Employee brand citizenship behaviour | I demonstrate behaviours that are consistent with the brand promise of my company | | 0929 | 85.477 | 0.972 |
| | I consider the impact on the company's brand before communicating or taking action in any situation | | 0.921 | | |

| Scale | Questions | Factor Loadings | Factor % | Cronbach's alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | If given the opportunity, I pass on my knowledge about the company's brand to new employees | 0.946 | | |
| | I take responsibility for tasks outside of my own area if necessary | 0.910 | | |
| | I show extra initiative to maintain my company's brand behaviour | 0.931 | | |
| | I regularly recommend the company I work for to family and friends i.e., non-job-related acquaintances | 0.898 | | |
| | I am always interested to learn about my company's brand and what it means for me in my role | 0.935 | | |

### 5.4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The research model was analysed with Confirmatory Factor Analysis in the AMOS package program. The purpose of Confirmatory Factor Analysis is to determine how well the measurement model fits the data and to evaluate the factor scale for the measurement model (Bollen, 1989).

**Table 7 Default Model Fit Indices**

| Statistical Test | Critical Values | Results |
|---|---|---|
| CMIN/DF | CMIN/DF≤3 | 2.502 |
| TLI | 0.9 < TLI < 1 | 0.94 |
| NFI | 0.9 < NFI < 1 | 0.912 |
| CFI | 0.9 < CFI < 1 | 0.945 |
| RMSEA | 0.00 < RMSEA < 0.08 | 0.068 |

(MacCallum et al, 1996)

The factor loadings of the default version of the research model were examined again. The results are given below.

**Table 8 CFA Factor Loadings**

| Scales | Items | Factor Loading |
|---|---|---|
| Employer Brand Image | Innovativeness | 0.986 |
| | Competence | 0.991 |
| | Prestige | 0.955 |
| | Sincerity | 0.988 |
| Brand Orientation | BO1 | 0.923 |
| | BO2 | 0.915 |
| | B03 | 0.936 |

| Scales | Items | Factor Loading |
|---|---|---|
| | BO4 | 0.935 |
| | BO5 | 0.916 |
| Employee Brand Identification | EBI5 | 0.675 |
| | EBI8 | 0.882 |
| | EBI6 | 0.621 |
| | EBI9 | 0.911 |
| | EBI1 | 0.753 |
| | EBI4 | 0.831 |
| | EBI12 | 0.839 |
| | EBI3 | 0.859 |
| | EBI10 | 0.909 |
| | EBI11 | 0.876 |
| | EBI7 | 0.917 |
| | EBI2 | 0.872 |
| Employee Brand Citizenship Behaviour | EBCB7 | 0.922 |
| | EBCB4 | 0.877 |
| | EBCB3 | 0.938 |
| | EBCB5 | 0.905 |
| | EBCB6 | 0.876 |
| | EBCB1 | 0.929 |
| | EBCB2 | 0.918 |
| Internal Branding | IB2 | 0.921 |
| | IB1 | 0.874 |
| | IB4 | 0.916 |
| | IB3 | 0.904 |
| | IB5 | 0.843 |
| Innovativeness | I1 | 0.959 |
| | I2 | 0.952 |
| | I3 | 0.967 |
| Competence | C1 | 0.967 |

| Scales | Items | Factor Loading |
|---|---|---|
| | C2 | 0.925 |
| Prestige | P1 | 0.958 |
| | P2 | 0.949 |
| | P3 | 0.967 |
| Sincerity | S2 | 0.905 |
| | S1 | 0.884 |
| | S3 | 0.963 |

All values obtained in the default model are in the desired ranges. Validity and Reliability analysis was performed for the scales used later.

Based on Fornell and Larcker's (1981) validity determination criteria,

1) For convergent validity, CR for the construct should exceed 0.70 and AVE > 0.50

2) For discriminant validity, AVE > MSV, the AVE of a latent variable should be higher than the squared correlations between the latent variable and all other variables.

**Table 9 Validity and Reliability Results**

| | **CR** | **AVE** | **MSV** | **MaxR(H)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employer Brand Image | 0.990 | 0.961 | 0.724 | 0.993 |
| Brand Orientation | 0.967 | 0.856 | 0.701 | 0.968 |
| Employee Brand Identification | 0.964 | 0.695 | 0.689 | 0.972 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Employee Brand Citizenship Behaviour | 0.971 | 0.827 | 0.724 | 0.973 |
| Internal Branding | 0.951 | 0.796 | 0.701 | 0.954 |

**Table 10 Discriminant Validity Results**

| | EIMAGE | BOC | EBI | EBCB | INB |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EIMAGE | **0.980** | | | | |
| BOC | 0.770 | **0.925** | | | |
| EBI | 0.810 | 0.761 | **0.834** | | |
| EBCB | 0.851 | 0.772 | 0.830 | **0.910** | |
| INB | 0.793 | 0.837 | 0.795 | 0.769 | **0.892** |

EIMAGE: Employer brand image
INB: Internal branding
BOC: Brand orientation of the company
EBI: Employee brand identification
EBCB: Employee brand citizenship behaviour

It has been understood that the obtained values are in the desired and valid range.

#### 5.4.5. Path Analysis

The model was arranged according to the connections and relationships in the research model. Then, the relationships created in the model were examined. The relationships between the variables are given below.

**Table 11 Research Model Fit Indices**

| Statistical Test | Critical Values | Results |
|---|---|---|
| CMIN/DF | CMIN/DF $\leq 3$ | 2.674 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| TLI | 0.9 < TLI < 1 | 0.945 |
| IFI | 0.9 < IFI < 1 | 0.950 |
| CFI | 0.9 < CFI < 1 | 0.950 |
| RMSEA | 0.00 < RMSEA < 0.08 | 0.072 |

(MacCallum et al, 1996)

The fit values of the model are given below.

**Table 12 Regression Values Between Variables**

| **Scales** | **Scales** | **β coef.** | **t-value** | **p-value** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internal Branding | Brand Orientation | 0.836 | 19.646 | <0.001 |
| Employee Brand Identification | Brand Orientation | 0.330 | 4.618 | <0.001 |
| Employee Brand Identification | Internal Branding | 0.527 | 6.881 | <0.001 |
| Employee Brand Citizenship Behaviour | Employee Brand Identification | 0.839 | 13.165 | <0.001 |

The relationships between the variables appear to be statistically significant.

### 5.4.6. Moderation analysis

A model was created specifically in the SPSS Process program to measure the moderator effect of employer brand image on the effect of employee brand identification on employee brand citizenship behaviour. First of all, the following model was tested in AMOS Process by averaging the employer brand image scale.

**Table 13 Employer Brand Image Model Summary**

| R | R-sq. | MSE | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0.8594 | 0.7386 | 0.4281 | 303.3237 | 3 | 322 | 0.001 |
| **Model** | **coeff** | **Se** | **t** | **p** | **LLCI** | **ULCI** |
| Constant | 3.4914 | 0.0466 | 74.8541 | 0.000 | 3.3997 | 3.5832 |
| EBI | 0.4595 | 0.0469 | 9.8067 | 0.000 | 0.3673 | 0.5517 |
| Sincerity | 0.3976 | 0.0432 | 9.2105 | 0.000 | 0.3127 | 0.4826 |
| Moderator | -0.1168 | 0.25 | -4.6774 | 0.000 | 0.1659 | -0.0677 |

The constant term was statistically significant ($\beta$=3.4919, S.E.=0.0466, p=0.000)

The EBI term was statistically significant ($\beta$=0.4595, S.E.=0.0469, p=0.000)

The sincerity term was statistically significant ($\beta$=0.3976, S.E.=0.0432, p=0.000)

The interaction (moderator) term was statistically significant ($\beta$=-0,1168, S.E.=0.25, p=0.000)

Brand Image was found to be significant moderator of the effect of brand identification on employee brand citizenship behaviour (EBCB).

**Table 14 Test of Highest Order Unconditional Interaction**

| $R^2$ Change | F | df1 | df2 | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **0.0178** | **21.8781** | **1** | **322** | **0.000** |

Adding the moderator (interaction term) into the model increased $R^2$ (r-square) by 0.0178 indicating the interaction effect accounted for 1.78% added variation in EBCB.

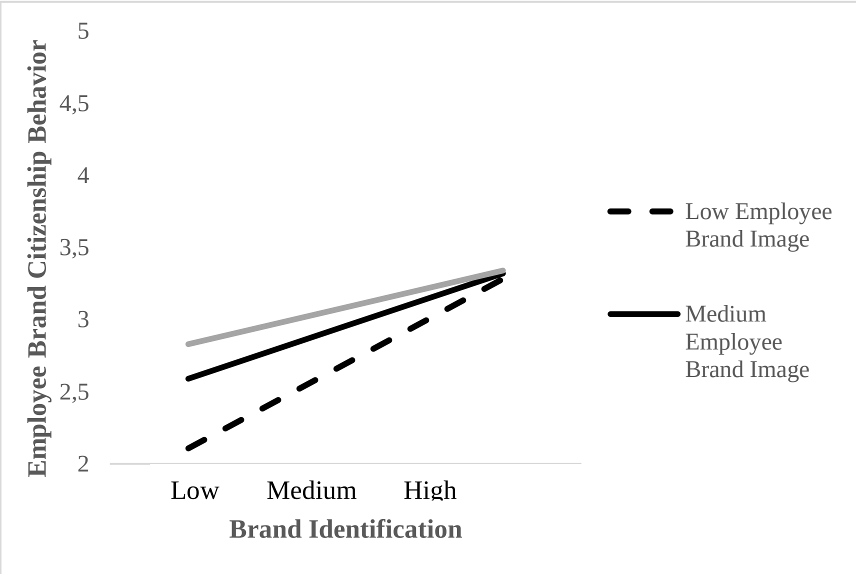


**Figure 8 Moderator Effect Model**

When the model is run by adding the moderator, ESIN still has a moderator effect on the model. What is noteworthy here is that like employer brand image, ESIN has also a higher effect when it has a low value. It is seen that the direction of the ESIN effect is negative (-0,0356). Sincerity Employee has a negative moderator effect on employee brand citizenship behaviour.

### 5.4.7. Mediation analysis

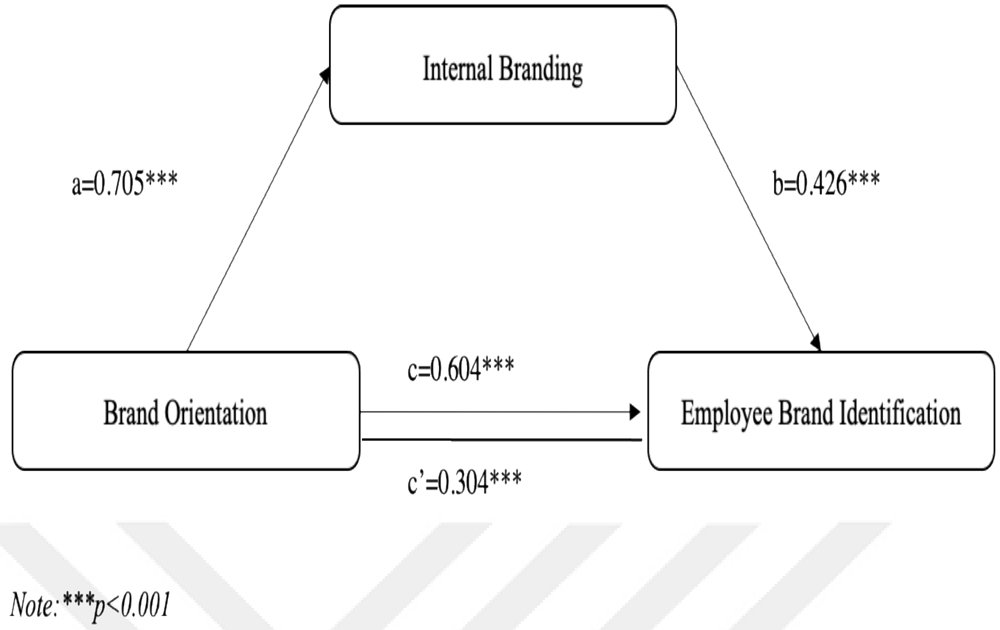


**Figure 9 Mediator Effect Model**

Internal branding mediates the positive effect of brand orientation on employee brand identification. At 95 % CI brand orientation has a significant indirect effect (ab=0.30, SE=0.048, [0.205, 0.395], $p<0.001$). After controlling the mediating effect of internal branding, brand orientation still have a significant direct effect (c'=0.304, SE=0.049, $p<0.001$) on employee brand identification, supporting partial mediation.

**Table 15 Hypothesis Results**

| | |
|---|---|
| $H_1$: Brand orientation of the company has a significant effect on employee brand identification. | Supported |
| $H_2$: Brand orientation of the company has a significant effect on internal branding. | Supported |
| $H_3$: Internal branding has a significant effect on employee brand identification. | Supported |
| $H_4$: Internal branding mediates the relationship between brand orientation of the company and employee brand identification. | Partially Supported |
| $H_5$: Employee brand identification has a significant impact on employee brand citizenship behaviour. | Supported |

| | |
|---|---|
| $H_6$: The higher the employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour. | Partially Supported |
| $H_{6a}$: The higher the sincerity dimension of the employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour. | Supported |
| $H_{6b}$: The higher the prestige dimension of the employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour. | Not Supported |
| $H_{6c}$: The higher the innovativeness dimension of employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour. | Not Supported |
| $H_{6d}$: The higher the competence dimension of employer brand image the stronger will be the relationship between employee brand identification and employee brand citizenship behaviour. | Not Supported |

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Employees are clearly one of the resources that organizations require to survive. Furthermore, in terms of management, the survival of businesses in difficult competitive environments, as well as their supremacy over competitors, are dependent on qualified human resources, which are the most essential competitive tool. Businesses' ability to direct potential and existing human resources in accordance with their own goals and objectives is dependent on their ability to direct competent people resources. Human resources activities in enterprises should be viewed as a system that is compatible with the company's aims and objectives, rather than as the activities of a department. Employees, as interest groups in a company's internal environment, are one of the stakeholders with the highest expectations in the workplace. As a result, firms refer to staff as "internal customers." In order for enterprises to fulfil their objectives, human resources must be sufficient in terms of both quality and quantity. This circumstance places a significant deal of responsibility on human resource management in businesses in terms of finding competent employees and assuring their loyalty and retention. This will be accomplished through the development of a strong employer brand by the organization. Employer branding is often referred to be a novel and crucial method of determining a company's identity. As a result, the employer brand, which shapes the employer's behaviour, plays a critical role in the development of the corporate brand and corporate product (goods, services, marketing, etc.) brands, as well as satisfying present and future human resource needs. The objective of the employer brand is to highlight the benefits that will provide customers (current/potential employees) a favourable impression of the company. Employees may comprehend company values and embrace a living brand reality thanks to internal branding. Employer branding is often referred to be a novel and crucial method of determining a company's identity. As a result, the employer brand, which shapes the employer's behaviour, plays a critical role in the development of the corporate brand and corporate product (goods, services, marketing, etc.) brands, as well as satisfying present and future human resource needs. The objective of the employer brand is to highlight the benefits that will provide customers (current/potential employees) a favourable impression of the company. Employees may comprehend company values and embrace a living brand reality thanks to internal branding.

According to Mitchell (2002), in order to renew the brand and align employees' mindsets with brand culture, values, and business goals, firms must build an attitudinal connection with employees. It is claimed that attempts to build corporate brand equity among an organization's employees result in increased employee identification and commitment to the brand. Before the mediation effect in the study, a regression analysis revealed that business brand orientation had a positive and substantial link with employee brand identification.

Although there are few studies that empirically describe the effect of brand orientation on brand identity, the findings show that brand orientation of the company has a significant impact on employee brand identification. Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010) conducted a survey on senior management and employees working in 93 German companies operating from business to business. Their findings were in parallel with the findings of this study.

One of the first steps in identifying procedures that lead to an improvement in overall brand performance is brand orientation. The value of developing and sustaining a strong brand identity is recognized by a brand-focused attitude. As a result, brand orientation helps brand management from the inside out (Urde et al., 2013). In the regression analysis performed before the mediation, it was seen that brand orientation had a significant and positive effect on internal branding. In the table, H1, H2, H3 and H5 was supported. However, H4 was partially supported.

According to Iyer et al. (2019), brand orientation is the antecedent of internal branding (Iyer et al., 2019). Studies in the literature also show that brand orientation positively affects internal branding. Studies by Gromark and Melin (2013) and Lee et al. (2016) also support the research findings.

Since internal branding is concerned with communicating to employees the brand values that are unique to a particular brand and distinguish it from others, it can reveal the brand identity that reflects the employees' feelings of "unity" (Bergstrom et al., 2002). In the final regression analysis before the mediation analysis, the effect of internal branding on employee brand identification was tested. According to the findings, internal branding has a significant and positive effect on employee brand identification. Brand orientation still have a significant direct effect on employee brand identification, supporting partial mediation.

According to De Chernatony and Segal-Horn (2001), when employees have different opinions regarding the brand than their managers, they will endeavour to rebalance the system. Employees will align brand attitudes with their management as internal branding provides a shared knowledge of brand principles. The findings of the study are compatible with the information in the literature.

Since all 3 steps required for the mediation analysis were verified, the mediating role of internal branding in the relationship between brand orientation of the company and employee brand identification was then analysed. As previously stated, the brand orientation of the company is an inside-out approach that sees brands as critical to a company's value generation strategy. Corporate brand equity efforts among an organization's employees increase employee identification and brand loyalty. internal branding encourages employees to act in ways that the brand approves of (Punjaisri et al., 2009). Employees internalize the brand identity in this way by linking their personal values with the organization's principles (Terglav et al., 2016). Studies addressing the mediating role of internal branding on various factors have been discovered in the literature (Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010; Iyer et al., 2018). However, the role of internal branding as a mediator in the connection between brand orientation of the company and employee brand identification has received little attention. It was determined that internal branding played a partial mediation role in the mediation analysis conducted to uncover this association.

One of the most studied subjects in the literature is how employee brand citizenship behaviour is formed and what is effective in its formation. employee brand citizenship behaviour develops as the function of "giving life to a brand" of brand knowledge and employee brand identification and includes externally targeted behaviours that go beyond the internal focus of organizational citizenship behaviours (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). In order to complete their jobs and responsibilities in accordance with the brand commitment, employees must have brand knowledge and identification (King and Grace, 2008). According to the findings of the study, employee brand identification has a large and positive influence on employee brand citizenship behaviour. Employee brand identification is also highly linked to employee brand citizenship behaviour, according to studies in the literature. Highly conscientious employees that identify favourably with the brand experience positive employee brand citizenship behaviour, according to Ngo et al. (2019).

Several research on the origins and history of employee brand citizenship behaviour have been performed (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; King and Grace, 2008; Punjaisri et al., 2009; Porricelli et al., 2014). The findings in the literature show that employees engage in employee brand citizenship behaviour only when they see that the top management aligns their behaviour with the core values of the organization and its corporate brand (Shaari et al., 2015; Bravo et al., 2017). While the impact of employer branding on employee brand citizenship behaviour is well understood, the moderating influence of employer brand image in this connection has received less attention. The moderation role of employer brand image in this association is one of the study's most important additions to the literature. In the table hypothesis table, The model was statistically significant even without the mediating role of internal branding. When the intermediary role of internal branding was added to the model, it became statistically significant once more. The employer brand image turns out to be moderating body.

Then, the regulatory role of sub-dimensions of employer brand image was investigated. When the model was run in the AMOS Process, only sincerity was significant. The Sincerity sub-dimension turned out to have a partial regulatory role. In the hypothesis table, H6a (sincerity) was supported. However, H6b,H6c and H6d was not supported.

The model was reworked with innovativeness and competence, the other two dimensions of the employer brand image. It was observed that the competence sub-dimension was significant. Afterwards, the model was restarted only with competence. It turns out that the competence sub-dimension has a partial regulatory role.

As a result, the research findings are consistent with those found in the literature. The detrimental employer brand image regulating effect on employee brand citizenship behaviour should be retested with new trials, and our understanding of the subject should grow. Although the mediating influence of internal branding on employee brand identification is not well documented, it is one of the interactions that merits more investigation. With the novel model we've presented in employee brand citizenship behaviour formation, it's clear that internal branding and employer brand image have quite distinct effects on employee brand citizenship behaviour creation than previously thought. In this regard, the study is expected to make a significant contribution to the employee brand citizenship behaviour literature as a novel approach.

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**Appendix**

**Online Questionaire**

Saygıdeğer Katılımcı,

Bu anket formu, Yeditepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı'nda Gizmen Tural tarafından hazırlanan yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında hazırlanmıştır.

Ankete katılım tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Ankete devam etmek istemezseniz, istediğiniz zaman anketi bırakabilirsiniz. Vereceğiniz yanıtlar sadece bilimsel amaçlar için kullanılacak olup başka bir amaç için kullanılmayacaktır. Araştırmada gizlilik ve güven ilkelerine bağlı kalınacak, yapılacak olan yayınlarda kurum adı veya katılımcıların adına yer verilmeyecektir. Bunun yanında araştırmayı yürütenler Kişisel Verilerin Korunması Kanunu kapsamında anketi cevaplayanların bireysel bilgilerinin hiçbir kurum ve kişiyle de paylaşılmayacağını taahhüt ederler.

Soruları samimi ve gerçekçi bir şekilde cevaplamanız araştırmanın başarısı için büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Gizmen Tural

Tez danışmanı: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslı Tolunay

**Anket Formu**

| | | Kesinlikle Katılıyorum | Katılıyorum | Kararsızım | Katılmıyorum | Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Güçlü markalar oluşturmak ana hedeflerden biridir.* | | | | | |
| 2 | *Etkili bir marka yönetiminin rekabet avantajı elde etmek için gerekli olduğu düşünülmektedir.* | | | | | |
| 3 | *Marka kararları, şirket stratejisinin önemli unsurları olarak 91kabul91 edilir.* | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | *Marka reklamı bir yatırım olarak 92kabul edilir.* | | | | | |
| 5 | *Markalara verilen önem rakip şirketlere kıyasla daha fazladır.* | | | | | |
| 6 | *Çalışanlar, markaların hedefleri ve özellikleri ile ilgili çalıştaylara katılır* | | | | | |
| 7 | *Çalışanlar periyodik olarak markalar ve marka yönetimi hakkında bilgi alırlar.* | | | | | |
| 8 | *Çalışanlar marka(lar)ın hedeflerini yeterince anlıyor* | | | | | |
| 9 | *Çalışanlar arasındaki marka(lar) imajı periyodik olarak değerlendirilir* | | | | | |
| 10 | *Farklı departmanlar marka(lar) hakkındaki bilgileri özgürce paylaşır* | | | | | |
| 11 | *Birisi şirketimin markasını övdüğünde, bu kişisel bir başarı gibi hissettirir* | | | | | |
| 12 | *Şirketimin markası hakkında konuşurken genellikle "onlar" yerine "biz" derim.* | | | | | |
| 13 | *Başkalarının şirketimin markası hakkında ne düşündüğüyle çok ilgileniyorum* | | | | | |
| 14 | *Şirketimin markasının başarısı benim başarımdır* | | | | | |
| 15 | *Birisi şirketimin markasını eleştirdiğinde, kişisel bir hakaret gibi geliyor* | | | | | |
| 16 | *Medya şirketimin markasını eleştirirse, utanırım* | | | | | |
| 17 | *Şirketimin saygı duyduğum değerleri geliştirdiğine inanıyorum.* | | | | | |
| 18 | *Çalıştığım firmaya ait ürün/hizmetleri tüketmenin başkalarının beni istediğim şekilde görmelerine yol açtığına inanıyorum.* | | | | | |
| 19 | *Kendimi şirketimde tanımlıyorum* | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | *Bu şirketi seçme kararı, kişisel hayatımda önemli olduğuna inandığım değerlere dayanmaktadır.* | | | | | |
| 21 | *Kendi kimliğim ile şirketin kimliği arasında benzerlikler görebiliyorum.* | | | | | |
| 22 | *Hayatımda önemli olan insanlar şirketin değerleriyle özdeşleşir* | | | | | |
| | *Benim algıma göre, işverenim [işveren adı] …* | | | | | |
| 23 | *dürüsttür* | | | | | |
| 24 | *samimidir* | | | | | |
| 25 | *ayakları yere basar* | | | | | |
| 26 | *moderndir* | | | | | |
| 27 | *günün koşullarına uyumludur* | | | | | |
| 28 | *çağdaştır* | | | | | |
| 29 | *başarılıdır* | | | | | |
| 30 | *sektörde lider bir firmadır* | | | | | |
| 31 | *saygıdeğerdir* | | | | | |
| 32 | *yüksek standartlara sahip bir şirkettir* | | | | | |
| 33 | *çok saygın bir kuruluştur* | | | | | |
| 34 | *Şirketimin marka vaadi ile tutarlı davranışlar sergilerim.* | | | | | |
| 35 | *Herhangi bir durumda iletişim kurmadan veya harekete geçmeden önce şirketin markası üzerindeki etkisini düşünürüm.* | | | | | |
| 36 | *Fırsat verilirse, şirketin markası hakkındaki bilgilerimi yeni çalışanlara aktarırım.* | | | | | |
| 37 | *Gerekirse kendi alanım dışındaki görevlerin sorumluluğunu alıyorum.* | | | | | |
| 38 | *Şirketimin marka davranışını sürdürmek için ekstra inisiyatif gösteriyorum* | | | | | |
| 39 | *Çalıştığım şirketi düzenli olarak* aileme ve *arkadaşlarıma, yani* 93sle ilgili olmayan *tanıdıklarıma tavsiye ederim.* | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | *Her zaman şirketimin markası ve bunun benim görevimde benim için ne anlama geldiği hakkında bilgi edinmek isterim.* | | | | | |
| Kişisel Bilgiler | | | | | | |
| 41 | Cinsiyet | Kadın (1) | Erkek (2) | | | |
| 42 | *Yaş* | <20 (1) | 21-30 (2) | 31-40 (2) | 41-50 (4) | >50 (5) |
| 43 | Şirkette çalışma yılınız | 1 yıldan az (1) | 1-3 yıl (2) | 4-6 yıl (3) | 7-10 yıl (4) | 11+ yıl (5) |
| 44 | Şirketinizin bulunduğu sektör? | Kamu (1) | Ticaret (2) | Sanayi (3) | İnşaat (4) | Yazılım (5) |
| | | Sağlık (6) | Eğitim (7) | Bankacılık, Finans ve Sigorta (8) | Diğer (9) | |
| 45 | Gelir düzeyiniz | 1200 TL ve altı (1) | | 1201-2900 TL (2) | | |
| | | 2901- 5000 TL (3) | | 5001-10000 TL (4) | | |
| | | 10001 TL ve üstü (5) | | | | |
| 46 | Eğitim düzeyiniz | Doktora (1) | Yüksek Lisans (2) | Üniversite (3) | Lise (4) | İlkokul (5) |