



The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to find out the impact of employer brand on retaining the knowledge employees in the telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. By using the primary data, the researcher tends to find the factors which make the knowledge employees more attractive and to identify the impact of employer brand on retaining the knowledge employees with identifying the mediating effect of Job satisfaction. Based on this findings telecommunication sector's brand has significant impact on knowledge employee retention. Also it was found that there is a mediating effect of job satisfaction in between employer brand and employee retention. Multiple regression revealed that dimensions of employer brand such as economic value, social value, interest value and reputation value significantly affect the knowledge employee retention but the dimensions of development value, application value and personal value are not significant. Furthermore, a simple regression analysis showed that there is a significant impact employer brand on job satisfaction and knowledge employee retention.

KEYWORDS: Employer Brand, Job Satisfaction, Employee Retention, Knowledge.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As the present economy is most focusing on intellectual base (Barber, 1998; Rynes, 1991), human resource is considered as the most valuable resource and it is becoming and more decisive for success of any organization. Human resources are the only lively and active resources of a firm. The success of a firm is entirely dependent upon the way managers are utilizing the capabilities of their human resources (Hosain, 2011). Most successful firms are investing much in retaining employees even though they are able to get replacement at less cost. Yusof (1998) reported that the era of industrialization and information age had made the telecommunication sector expand into diversified functions to support the growth of technological advancement for better services demanded by any nation. The shifting winds of change in today's business environment where the marketplace is increasingly competitive and the rate of innovation is rising, together with the pressure of the emergence of global knowledge-based economy (Snyman & Kruger, 2004, p.6), knowledge has become a crucial asset in reducing these uncertainties and the only sustainable source of competitive advantage (Gorelik, 2002). As such, the management of knowledge has been recognized as a competitive weapon for the telecommunication sector to move forward and to chart more successes in the uncertain future (Chong, C. W., Chong, S. C., & Heng, 2006). Nonaka

(1994) has demonstrated that a company's individual and organizational knowledge serves as one of the cornerstones for its sustainable competitive advantages (p.14). To be successful, firms must be able to learn continually and apply their knowledge, anticipating market changes (Alvesson, 2000, p.1102). Through superior knowledge companies can accomplish their results faster, cheaper and with higher quality than their competitors. Knowledge about customers, markets and other relevant factors of influence allows faster utilization of opportunities and more flexible reaction to threats (Gebert, Geib, Kolbe, & Riempp, 2002).

When an employee departs from an organization, he/she carries out with him/her all the information about the company, clients, projects and past history, very often to competitors. It is imperative for an organization to develop an environment within the organization to motivate employees to stay in the organization. Moreover, the hiring of new employees is associated with additional expenses. These expenses are incurred in the form of advertising, screening, verifying credentials, interviewing and training of new employees. Employee retention consists of procedures through which employees are boosted to become part of the organization for a longer period of time until he/she retires or until the project gets completed. For achieving individual as well as organizational goals, it is very much essential to retain talented employees. As per this definitions people can

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

understand that employee retention is a strategic tool for the success of the firm.

Sokro (2012) suggests that brand names of organisations may significantly influence the decision of employees to join and stay in the organization and employers need to create conducive working environment with conditions to enable employees to feel comfortable and remain in the organization. Employment brand reflects the image of the company in the eyes of existing and prospective employees about working for the company (Bowes, 2008; Ewing et al., 2002; Lloyd 2002; Love & Singh, 2011). Job satisfaction is a job related attitude which leads the employees towards pleasurable emotional state (Bartolo & Furlonger, 1999), positive reaction with the organization (Feinstein, 2002; Oshagbemi, 2000). The significance of job satisfaction can be assessed from the fact that it not only influences the efficiency of workers but also impacts job behaviour such as absenteeism, accidents, work stress and employee turnover (Rajendran & Chandramohan, 2010). A satisfied employee means better quality of service or production for the firm which in turn reduces the turnover cost and increase goodwill through quality products or services. The final result is higher profit for the organization (Hosain, 2011). This study focuses on employee retention in particularly knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Having the best and the most talented employees, is not only important but it is equally important to be able to retain them for long term benefits to both the organisation and its people (Haider et al., 2015). But the retention of employees has become the major problem facing today’s organizations (Haider et al., 2015). One company cannot retain all the best employees but organizations can reduce loss when it retains employees, because employee turnover creates additional costs such as separation benefits to the employee, lost productivity, recruitment costs, training costs, and

diminished services as new employees get up to speed (Nair, 2009; Self & Dewald, 2011). So it is assumed that retaining employees is very important for organizations. As per this it is right that every organization need to start implementing retention strategies when recruiting the employees.

Organizations that maximize productivity of knowledge workers will have the competitive advantage over others (Cohen, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to keep knowledge employees for enjoying competitive advantage over rivals. Knowledge employees will remain in the same company once they are attracted by that company (Pingle & Sodhi, 2011). Maxwell (2009) stated every organization has to identify their unique attributes that are most attractive to employees in connection with employer brand strategy with the identity of employees’ interest. Wayne (2014) stated that with the help of performance management and human resource development, employer branding enhance employee retention. However, there were studies in relation with the impact of employer brand towards the talent attraction and retention, but most of the studies are done in a qualitative manner. Few studies looked employer brand towards talent attraction and retention in other countries but it cannot be applied to the Sri Lankan context because of the cultural differences. Also it should be noted that the researches are done on employer brand and employee retention without considering the knowledge employee retention (Ambler, 2000; Berthon et al., 2005; Collins & Stevens, 2002; Ewing et al., 2002; Knox & Bickerton, 2008; Knox & Maxwell, 2009; Lloyd, 2002; Ritson, 2002; Sherry, 2000). Therefore this study is important for identifying the impact of employer brand on knowledge employee retention.

The telecom sector in Sri Lanka is one of the country's most dynamic sectors, contributing significantly both directly and indirectly to investment, employment, productivity, innovation, and overall economic growth (Kumarasinghe Sirisena, 2016)

Table 1: Employee Details of sample organizations

		Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017
Total number of employees	ABC	5777	6884	6811	6537
	XYZ	3800	3645	3625	3537
Total number of new employees joining firm	ABC	147	132	211	124
	XYZ	310	312	233	211
Total number of experienced employees leaving organization	ABC	102	101	134	107
	XYZ	211	264	247	284
Percentage of employee turnover		3.26%	3.46%	3.65%	3.8%
Employer Brand Ranking as per LMD (Rank)	ABC	8	7	10	28
	XYZ	7	6	5	3

As per Table 1 it would be identified that the telecommunication sector face gradual increase on employee turnover rate over the period of time. The main scenario

behind this trend may be that employees may have feel that their service not being valued in the organization properly or less appreciation being divulged for their specific skills.

When an employee leaves, the relationships that employee had built for the company are severed, which could lead to potential customer loss. When an employee terminates, the remaining staff may negatively behave because of the additional burden for them. In order to overcome this problem the sector needs to identify the retention strategies to keep the best talent. This study is conducted to find out to what extent employee retention can be influenced through effective employer brand strategy in the telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. The problem of employee retention is not only relevant to two firms, but common to all telecommunication sector organizations operating in the country. Chipunza and Samuel (2009) highlight that it is not only for the private sector, but government organizations are also facing difficulty in retaining skilled employees. So, the researcher was motivated to identify the knowledge employee retention with combining public and private sector.

To date less number of studies have been conducted to examine the impact of employer brand on knowledge employee retention through the job satisfaction, which focuses on factors that might encourage employees to stay in their organization and community (Mitchell et al., 2001). Organizations should maintain the retention approach that amalgamate the organization's distinct culture, pay, and total rewards, and value key talent by making them feel important (Zingheim et al., 2009).

This research is to investigate the following identified problem.

Why Telecommunication sector related organizations in Sri Lanka are are facing low employee retention?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The researcher has identified the following research questions needed to be addressed in this study.

RQ I: - Does employer brand effect on knowledge employee retention in telecommunication sector companies in Sri Lanka?

RQ II: - Is the relationship between employer brand and knowledge employee retention is mediated by job satisfaction in Telecommunication sector of Sri Lanka?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Overall aim of the research is to understand how knowledge employee retention can be influenced through employer brand strategy. The researcher has expected to achieve the following objectives in this study.

- To identify impact of employer brand on knowledge employee retention in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka.
- To identify the mediating effect of job satisfaction on employer brand and retention of knowledge

employees in Telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka.

LITERATURE REVIEW

RETAINING THE KNOWLEDGE EMPLOYEE

Employees are the most valuable assets of an organization. Their significance to organizations calls for not only the need to attract the best talents but also the necessity to retain them for a long term. Employer brand is becoming the key factor in talent acquisition and talent retention program in most organization. Due to increasing job mobility on the labour market, approaching, acquiring and retaining talented employees has become a tricky challenge to the Human Resource Management. Drucker (1994) referred to an individual who works primarily with information or one who develops and uses knowledge in the workplace as the knowledge worker. Davies et al. (2005) proposed that the knowledge worker is coming with the increment of knowledge capital and bringing high added value. Xu and Zhu (2009) stated the knowledge worker is similar to the occupational brainworker, who makes creative contribution, brings a strong value-added growth of knowledge capital and monetary capital. Accenture (2008) defined knowledge workers as the staff who complete tasks with intellectual input, creativity, authority, including the professional, the paraprofessional with depth skills, and the senior manager.

KNOWLEDGE EMPLOYEE RETENTION FACTORS

Stéphane et al. (2015) stated that organisations through their HRM practices, can foster the functional retention of experts. Martins et al. (2012) stated knowledge behavior, strategy implementation, Leadership, people knowledge loss risks, knowledge attitudes and emotions, Power play, knowledge growth and development, Performance management and Organizational support are the nine factors which are affecting the employees' behavior of knowledge retention. George (2015) suggests that eight broad factors which are important for the retention of professional workers such as management style, pleasant working experience, adequate resources, degree of flexibility, degree of autonomy, flexibility in workload decisions, pay decisions and work life balance. Sutherland and Jordaan (2004) identified seven variables that underlie the retention cognitions of knowledge workers. These factors are Independence, Career development support by organization, Egocentricity and challenge within the organization, Organisational setting, Performance related rewards, Desire for a career change and Personal comfort. Each main factors include the sub variables described below.

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

Table 2. Knowledge Employee Retention Factors

Variables	Sub Variables
1. Independence	<input type="checkbox"/> Freedom to work independently
	<input type="checkbox"/> Incentive/Bonus/Variable pay
2. Career development support by organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Career planning by the organization
	<input type="checkbox"/> Training provided by the organization
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of career development Opportunities
	<input type="checkbox"/> Your level of trust in management
	<input type="checkbox"/> Issues you raised being unattended
	<input type="checkbox"/> Job not being designed around your needs
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of challenging work
3. Egocentricity and challenge within the organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual recognition and praise being given
	<input type="checkbox"/> Your ideas being ignored
	<input type="checkbox"/> Your level of commitment to the Organization
	<input type="checkbox"/> Company structure problems
	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication problems internally
	<input type="checkbox"/> Company strategy problems
	<input type="checkbox"/> Company reputation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisations general culture
	<input type="checkbox"/> The performance appraisal process
	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication problems internally
4. Organisational setting	<input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with boss
	<input type="checkbox"/> The salary increase system
	<input type="checkbox"/> Short term promotion opportunities
	<input type="checkbox"/> Incentives/Bonus/Variable pay
	<input type="checkbox"/> Base Pay
	<input type="checkbox"/> The performance appraisal process
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being offered a job by another organization
5. Performance related rewards	<input type="checkbox"/> To change your field of work
	<input type="checkbox"/> Your need to work in a different type of company
	<input type="checkbox"/> Distance between work and home
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ease of staying versus difficulty of going
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing stress at work
6. Desire for a career change	<input type="checkbox"/> Work versus personal life balance
	<input type="checkbox"/> Job security at present organization
	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical office environment
	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical aid benefits
	<input type="checkbox"/> Fitting into the culture
7. Personal comfort	

EMPLOYER BRAND

According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), “Employer brand is the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (p.187). Heilmann (2010) explains Employer brand as a means of attracting new employees and retaining existing employees is gaining popularity, particularly in employment contexts where the unique talents and contributions of employees represent a distinctive

competitive advantage for organizations. Wilden, Gudergan and Lings (2010) define Employer brand in the context of recruitment is the package of psychological, economic, and functional benefits that potential employees associate with employment with a particular company. Mandhanya and Maitri (2010) define employer branding as a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004)

argued that, “Employer brand is a differentiation of a firm’s characteristics as an employer from those of its competitors, the employment brand highlights the unique aspects of the firm’s employment offerings or environment” (p. 502).

According to Martin and Beaumont (2003), employer branding involves managing a company’s image as seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires. As Dell and Ainspan (2001) explained that employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. Hence, a strong Employer branding generates favourable attitudes in potential employees. Companies with a strong Employer branding can reduce costs for acquiring employees by enhancing favourable attitudes among current employees, and, in doing so, also increase employee retention. Similarly, companies can decrease compensation for equally qualified and skilled employees compared to companies with a weaker Employer branding (Ritson, 2002). The Employer branding becomes especially relevant in today’s business setting due to the fact that high potential and at the same time loyal employees are difficult to find (Berthon et al., 2005). Schlager, Mareike, Peter and Cachelin (2011), seek to focus on how to create favourable employee attitudes that are relevant for the creation of the service brand and also found that dimensions of Employer branding which are Economic value, Development Value, Social Value, Diversity value and Reputation Value leads to the creation of job related attitudes such as Job satisfaction and organizational identification.

The key role of HR in employer branding is to raise awareness of the employer brand from the company reputation to the routine experience in the workplace.

EMPLOYER BRAND RESULTS IN JOB SATISFACTION

Irena and Matuska (2013) linked theoretical consideration and research results addressed to employer branding as a recommended strategy for the modern human resource management. The employer brand aims to influence every touch point of the employment experience by promoting a beneficial employment package in form of pay and benefits, working environment, career management, balanced work life, mental and social satisfaction (Gaddam, 2008). From the employees’ point of view, being a member of an organization having a strong employer brand enhances their self-esteem and strengthens their organizational identification (Lievens et al., 2007). It attracts the right kind of candidates with the culture fit and at the same time gives the prospective employees an assurance of the work experience as expected by them (Bhatnagar & Srivastava, 2008). If organizations succeed in doing this, they increase the likelihood of retaining employees through affective mechanisms. Drenzo and Greenhaus (2011) in their studies stated that Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to possess less turnover intentions and vice versa. The same study also viewed job satisfaction is a prominent indicator of the desirability of

movement, a key integral driver of individuals’ inclination to leave or to stay with an employer in nearly all turnover theories.

Furthermore, job satisfaction improves retention and enables them to cope with change in the work environment (Guest, 2002). Job satisfaction, together with perceived alternatives, is seen as proximate causes of decisions to stay, whereas pay, promotional opportunities, constituent attachments, kinship, and organizational commitment as distal ones (Hausknecht et al. 2009). Tanwar and Prasad (2016) found that employer brand acts as a critical predictor of job satisfaction. Dimensions of employer brand such as training and development, reputation, organisation culture and ethics and corporate social responsibility, work-life balance and diversity were found to be critical predictors of job satisfaction. Also, gender is found to have moderating effect on the relationship between employer brand dimensions and job satisfaction.

Empirical evidence that these two aspects of job satisfaction are indeed distinct predictors of employee turnover was provided by Hausknecht et al. (2009) in their extensive study based on nearly 25,000 employees. In particular, they found that three main forms of job-related satisfaction influence employees’ decisions whether to stay with or leave their organizations. In the order of their importance these are: core job-related characteristics satisfaction (i.e. the degree to which employees like their jobs and find it interesting), extrinsic rewards (i.e. the amount of pay and financial benefits) and constituent attachment (i.e. the quality of employees’ relations with supervisors and co-workers). The compensation system that an organisation offers to its employees plays an important role in determining the commitment levels of employees and their retention. According to Willis (2001), compensation is one of the crucial issues as far as attracting and keeping talent in organisations is concerned. The fundamental hypothesis is that money influences employee behaviour through shaping their attitudes (Parker & Wright, 2001). According to them wages influence the attraction and retention of the workforce. Therefore, an organization’s compensation strategy should be able to attract the right quality of employees, retain suitable employees and also to maintain equity amongst the employees.

EMPLOYER BRAND RESULT IN EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Sivertzen, Nilsen and Olafsen (2013) stated that all organisations try their best for a sustainable competitive edge in order to gain good profits and survive in a highly competitive marketplace. Good and valuable talent is crucial for competitive advantage because they regularly represent capital knowledge within the organisation. Gaining competitive advantage requires an organisation to use its resources fully and have high level of competent staff who

are willing to produce good results which will, then, lead to profits. Employer branding is a relatively new approach to how people should be recruited and retained in the organisation by providing exclusive employment experience that could possibly lead to competitive advantage. Employer branding has a serious potential to be a priceless concept for both employers and managers. HR practitioners can make use of the employer brand as a guide for employee recruitment and talent retention activities into a well-coordinated human resource strategy, integrating career management activities, recruitment, staffing as well as keeping training and development of talent.

According to Nair (2009) retention refers to the ability of management to retain employees. Retention policies are those put in place by employers to entice employees to remain in the organization. Research in service marketing reflects the importance of employees and employee-interactions (Palmer, 2010). Particularly in a service-centred context, employees are able to build brand equity (King & Grace, 2005). Consequently, researchers agree that, in a service-centred approach, customers' experiences with the company are primarily gathered through interactions with its employees (Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1995). Therefore, one of the company's tasks is to manage employee attitudes and behaviours appropriately, because they become visible in the employee-customer interaction (Pugh, 2001). A strong Employer Brand generates favourable attitudes in potential employees. Berthon et al. (2005) state that there is a high similarity between the employer brand and other concepts such as the internal marketing concept and employer branding. Thus, the main objective of the Employer Brand concept is to positively influence current and prospective employees in order to attract high-potential employees. In his studies he also stated that the Employer Brand becomes especially relevant in today's business setting due to the fact that high potential and at the same time loyal employees are difficult to find. Companies with a strong Employer Branding can reduce costs for acquiring employees by enhancing favourable attitudes among current employees, and, in doing so, also increase employee retention.

Ritson (2002) supports this by emphasising the importance of employer brand in reducing costs of recruitment, enhancing employee relations and retention and in the ability to offer lower salaries, compared to the companies with weaker brands. The attractiveness of an organization is an important factor in recruiting and retaining employees (Edwards, 2010). In a past study, Allen, Shore and Griffeth (2003) reported that employees have to differentiate themselves from others through their compensation strategy in order to attract and retain quality employees. Sokro (2012) suggests that brand names of organisations may significantly influence the decision of employees to join and stay in the organization and employers need to create conducive work environment with conditions to enable employees feel

comfortable and remain in the organisation. Wayne (2014) stated that with the help of performance management and human resource development employer brand enhance employee retention.

EMPLOYER BRAND, EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND JOB SATISFACTION

According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), “employer brand is the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (p.187). Sivertzen et al. (2013) stated that all organisations try their best for a sustainable competitive edge in order to gain good profits and survive in a highly competitive marketplace. Good and valuable talent is crucial for competitive advantage because they regularly represent capital knowledge within the organisation. Berthon et al. (2005) state that strong employer branding can reduce costs for acquiring employees by enhancing favourable attitudes among current employees, and, in doing so, also increase employee retention (p.151). Ritson (2002) supports this by emphasising the importance of employer brand in reducing costs of recruitment, enhancing employee relations and retention and in the ability to offer lower salaries, compared to the companies with weaker brands. The attractiveness of an organization is an important factor in recruiting and retaining employees (Edwards, 2010). Sokro (2012) suggests that brand names of organisations may significantly influence the decision of employees to join and stay in the organization and employers need to create conducive work environment with conditions to enable employees feel comfortable and remain in the organisation. Wayne (2014) stated that with the help of performance management and human resource development employer brand enhances employee retention. So that the researcher formulates the following hypothesis.

H1: Employer brand is positively related to employee retention

H1a:- Economic Value is positively related to employee retention

H1b:- Development Value is positively related to employee retention

H1c:- Social Value is positively related to employee retention

H1d:- Interest Value is positively related to employee retention

H1e:- Application Value is positively related to employee retention

H1f:- Reputation Value is positively related to employee retention

H1g:- Personal Value is positively related to employee retention

Fundamental assumption of social exchange theory is that the relationship between employees and their employer is built on the trade of effort and loyalty for benefits such as pay, support, and recognition (Blau, 1964; Levinson, 1965; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Rousseau & Parks, 1993). As per this, employees' evaluation of the quality of their exchange relationship with the organization and is predictive of their attitudes and behavior (Levinson, 1965). Job satisfaction occurs when an employee's general affective evaluation of the job suggests that the employer is meeting his/her job needs and expectations (Locke, 1976; Weiss, 2002). The studies done by Tanwar and Prasad (2016) proved that employer brand acts as a critical predictor of job satisfaction. Vasantha (2018) found that the formation of an employer brand leads to better level of employee approaches include job satisfaction of employees.

H2:- Employer brand is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

Under this main hypothesis the researcher has identified the following sub hypothesis with the support of the literature of Schlager et al. (2011).

H2a:- Economic value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

H2b:- Development Value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

H2c:- Social Value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

H2d:- Interest Value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

H2e:- Application value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

H2r:- Reputation value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

H2g:- Personal value is positively related to job satisfaction of knowledge employees

Direnzo and Greenhaus (2011) state that employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to possess less turnover intentions and vice versa. The same study also viewed job satisfaction is a prominent indicator of the desirability of movement, a key integral driver of individuals' inclination to leave or to stay with an employer in nearly all turnover theories. Furthermore, job satisfaction improves retention and enables them to cope with change in the work environment (Guest, 2002). Job satisfaction, together with perceived alternatives, is seen as proximate causes of decisions to stay, whereas pay, promotional opportunities, constituent attachments, kinship, and organizational

commitment as distal ones (Hausknecht et al. 2009). Sharon and Hlanganipai (2014) reported that high levels of job satisfaction often results in improved employee retention. Similarly, Kabungaidze et al. (2013) also reported a statistical significant relationship between job satisfaction turnover intentions based on a study of 150 administrators. Rust and Stewart (1995) identified that Job satisfaction is one of the most researched antecedents used to explain voluntary employee turnover. These findings are supported for that intention to remain employed was strongly influenced by the level of job satisfaction. Vlosky and Aguilar (2009) found that autonomy and influence, challenge, performance, feedback, instrumentality, stability and security, and satisfaction were all "highly significant in positively influencing" job satisfaction among employees. Based on these arguments the researcher formulates the following hypothesis.

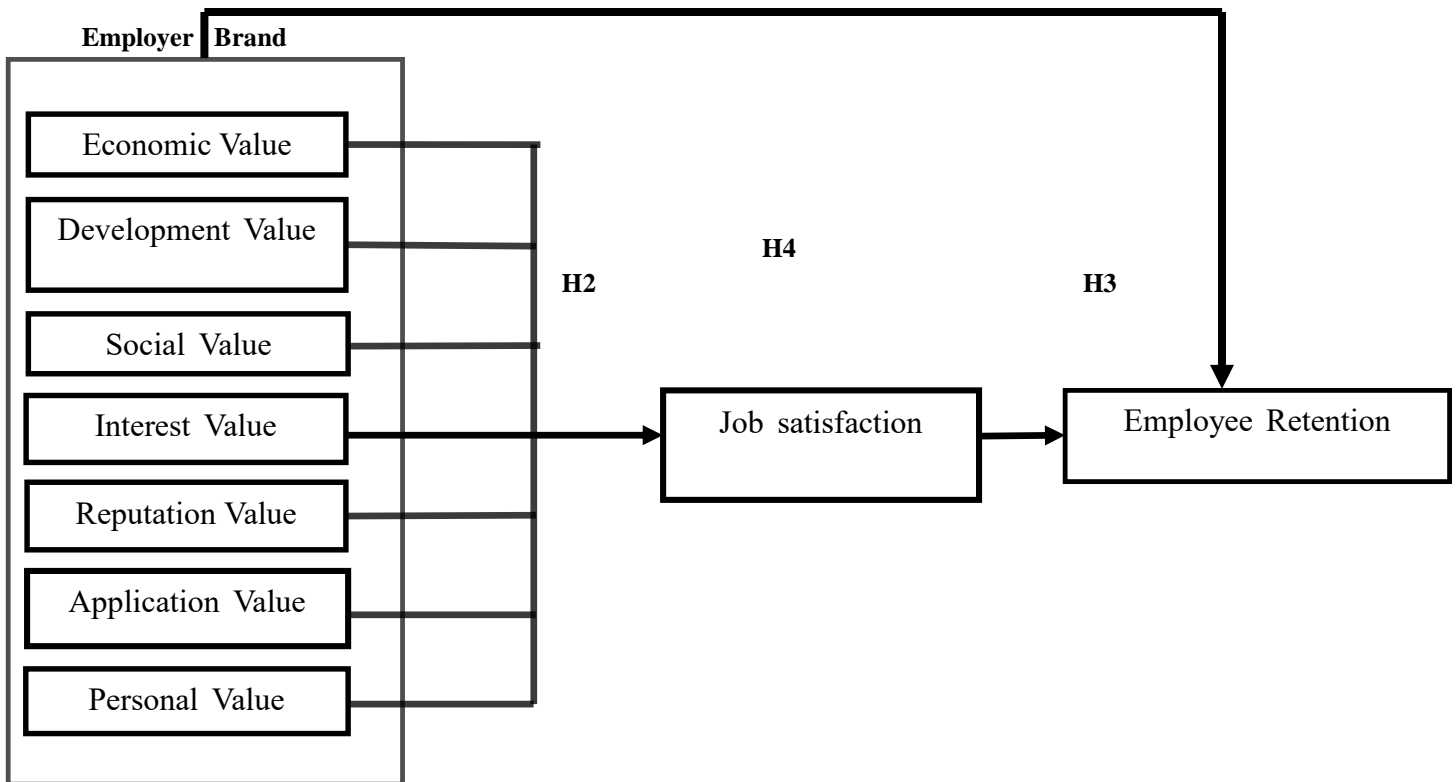
H3:- Job satisfaction positively relate on knowledge employee retention

The broader social exchange literature supports that employees' perceptions of the extent to which their organization values their contributions and is concerned about their well-being are significantly related to withdrawal behaviors (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Allen, Bryant and Vardaman (2010) support the model by recognising that employer brand increases employee morale and satisfaction, which in turn improves retention. Employer brand increases employees' satisfaction and likelihood of remaining employed with the organisation (Cable & Graham, 2000; Jain & Bhatt, 2015). Mansoure, Ali Hamidizadeh and Jabbar (2016) found that the employer brand led to job satisfaction and organizational commitment and consequently to the retention of the faculty members of Tehran University. Employee job satisfaction has been shown to be an important outcome for organizations. As per the attribution theory it is related to variables such as performance on the job (Judge et al., 2001; Riketta, 2008) and employee turnover intentions (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Social exchange says that outcomes of exchange can be turnover intentions and job satisfaction. But as per the attribution theory it says humans are motivated to assign causes to their actions and behaviors. So the researcher formulated the following hypothesis.

H4:-Job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between employer branding and knowledge employee retention in telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Figure 1 Conceptual Model H1



Source: Developed for the research purpose

METHODOLOGY

The present study tends to identify the relationship between employer brand and knowledge employee retention through a quantitative approach. For this purpose the researcher selected ABC Company and XYZ Company. These two companies are listed in Colombo Stock exchange and this is a kind of brand for those who are seeking careers in telecommunication Sectors. The researcher has selected the senior level and middle level managers of each company. Out of 137 senior level employees of ABC Company 100 were selected as sample. Out of 468 middle level managers 200 were selected as sample at the same company. The researcher selected 10 senior level managers out of 10 at XYZ Company and 275 middle level managers at the same company.

The present study the researcher used the questionnaire to collect data from the knowledge employees in the telecommunication sector. The scales are already developed by several researchers after the careful analysis of reliability and validity. The questionnaire was designed to have four major parts. Out of these four first part consist the questions regarding personal and demographical information. Part two was designed to test employees’ perception about the employer’s branding using the seven dimensions of employer branding such as economic value, development value, social value, interest value, reputation value, application value and personal Value. Out of these seven

dimensions of employer branding five were taken from the studies of Berthon, et al.,(2005) which are economic value, development value, social value, interest value and application value and reputation value taken from the studies of Cable and Turban (2001 as cited by Schlager et al., 2011). As they have identified some variables under each element which is suitable for all kind of employees in organization the researcher searched the literature to identify the factors which are most suitable for the knowledge employee retention. The researcher has finally identified some factors which are influencing on knowledge employee retention and then the researcher categorized those factors into the dimensions which found by Berthon et al. (2005) and Cable and Turban (2001 as cited by Schlager et al. 2011). The researcher creates new dimension called personal value. This new dimension to include the factors which are influencing on knowledge employee retention and also can’t be able to categorize into above mentioned dimensions. Part three consist of questions about the employees’ turnover intentions of the company were taken from the studies of Olusegun (2013). Part four of the questionnaire consists of the scale for measuring the job satisfaction is taken from the researches of Klassen et al. (2010) and Hackman and Oldham (1975) with adding one question which indicates overall satisfaction about the job. This study attempts to identify the relationship between variables using descriptive and inferential statistics with the

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

help of SPSS 16.0 version. Baron and Kenny’s (1986) three-step mediation analysis and chi-square (χ^2) difference test has been used to identify the mediating effect on the direct path between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

DATA ANALYSIS

RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

The reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the goodness of a measure (Sekaran, 2007). To measure the inter-item consistency, Cronbach’s alpha was selected. The Cronbach alpha for employer brand are shown in Table 2 .

Table 2: Reliability of variables

Variable		Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Employer Brand	Economic value	0.854	08
	Development value	0.760	08
	Social value	0.923	13
	Interest value	0.749	14
	Application value	0.753	05
	Reputation value	0.745	05
	Personal value	0.844	07
	Employer brand	0.835	60
	Employee retention	0.867	07
	Job satisfaction	0.827	08

Source: Survey Data

Cronbach alpha is a measure for the internal consistency of the items that also cover the specific factor. According to if the Cronbach’s alpha is more than 0.7, it shows the internal

consistency of the measures is high. Therefore, the internal consistency of the variables are high in this study as per the studies of (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994)

CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES

The correlations among the variables are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation analysis of variables

Independent variable	Dependent Variable 1	Correlation Value	Dependent Variable 2	Correlation Value
Economic Value	Job Satisfaction	0.520**	Employee retention	0.806**
Development Value	Job Satisfaction	0.758**	Employee retention	0.492**
Social Value	Job Satisfaction	0.258**	Employee retention	0.577**
Interest value	Job Satisfaction	0.663**	Employee retention	0.297**
Application Value	Job Satisfaction	0.051	Employee retention	0.040
Reputation Value	Job Satisfaction	0.707**	Employee retention	0.315**
Personal value	Job Satisfaction	0.339**	Employee retention	0.337**
Employer Brand	Job Satisfaction	0.792**	Employee retention	0.615**
Job Satisfaction			Employee retention	0.460**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey data)

Table 3 shows that there is a strong positive relationship between employer brand and knowledge employee retention of employees of Telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between employer brand and knowledge

employee retention of Telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka 1% level of significant. All the dimensions of employer brand except application value are positively associated with knowledge employee retention. The results also shows the correlation value of application value and

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

knowledge employee retention is .040 indicates that there is no relationship between application value and knowledge employee retention. Also the table 3 shows the inter-relationships among the dimensions of employer brand and Job satisfaction. All the dimensions of employer brand except application value are positively associated with job satisfaction and significant at 1% level. Pearson correlation for application value and job Satisfaction shows that there is no relationship between application value and job satisfaction

and the result shows that these two variables are insignificant at 1% level. Overall results exposed that employer brand have very strong positive association between job satisfaction and significant at 1% level. Pearson correlation between job satisfaction and employee retention is .460, which indicate that there is a moderate positive relationship between Job satisfaction and knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka with 1% level of significant.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 4: Regression results of employer brand and knowledge employee retention

Method	Beta	Sig
Constant	0.181	
Employer brand	0.953	0.000
R ²	0.615	
Adjusted R ²	0.377	
Standard Error	0.410	

(Source: Survey data)

Table 4 shows the impact of employer brand on employee retention. It indicates that employer brand has 37.7% impact on knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. It also found that the employer brand has the significant impact on knowledge employee retention. The p value for beta coefficient.000

indicates that this is significance at 1% level. From the above analysis H1 is supported.

From Table 4, the regression model can be retrieved as follows.

$$\text{Knowledge Employee Retention} = .181 + .953 \times (\text{Eb}) + e$$

Table 5: Regression results of dimensions of employer brand and knowledge employee retention

Method	Beta	Sig
Constant	-0.380	
economic value	0.854	0.000
development value	0.018	0.697
social value	0.155	0.018
interest value	0.266	0.000
application value	0.002	0.962
reputation value	-0.133	0.001
personal value	-0.039	0.300
R ²	0.685	
Adjusted R ²	0.680	
Standard Error	0.294	

(Source: Survey data)

Table 5 shows the impact of independent variables on dependent variable. It indicates that employer brand has 68% impact on knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. It also found that the employer brand has the significant impact on knowledge

employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka .The p value for beta coefficient of economic value and Interest Value are .000 indicates which are significance at 1% level. But the p value for beta coefficient development value, application value, and personal are 0.697, .962, and .300,

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

which are not significance. Therefore it can be concluded that the independent variables such as economic value, social value, interest value and reputation value are significantly affect the knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka and other independent variables are not significance. From the above analysis H1_a, H1_c, H1_d, H1_f, are supported and hypothesis H1_b,

H1_e and H1_g not supported. Therefore the researcher reject the hypothesis H1_b, H1_e and H1_g.

From Table 4.8, the regression model can be retrieved as follows.

$$\text{Knowledge Employee Retention} = -.380 + .854 \times (\text{Ev}) + .155 \times (\text{Sv}) + .266 \times (\text{Iv}) + (-.133) \times (\text{Rv}) + e$$

Table 6: Regression results of employer Brand & Job Satisfaction

Method	Beta	Sig
Constant	-.532	
Employer brand	1.130	.000
R ²	0.792	
Adjusted R ²	0.627	
Standard Error	0.292	

(Source: Survey data)

Table 6 shows the impact of employer brand on job satisfaction. It indicates that employer brand has 62.7% impact on job satisfaction of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. It also found that the employer brand has the

significant impact on job satisfaction. From the above analysis H2 is supported.

From Table 6, the regression model can be retrieved as follows.

$$\text{Knowledge Employee Retention} = -.532 + 1.13 \times (\text{Eb}) + e$$

Table 7: Regression results of dimensions of employer Brand & Job Satisfaction

Method	Beta	Sig
Constant	0.761	
economic value	0.385	0.000
development value	0.092	0.034
social value	-0.236	0.000
interest value	0.230	0.000
application value	0.023	0.525
reputation value	0.253	0.000
personal value	0.073	0.039
R ²	0.679	
Adjusted R ²	0.673	
Standard Error	0.273	

Source: Survey data

Table 7, shows the Adjusted R square is 0.673. It indicates that employer brand has 67.3% impact on Job Satisfaction of knowledge employees of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. The p value for beta coefficient economic value, Social value, interest value and reputation value are .000, each indicates that these variables are significance at 1% level. The values development value and personal value are .034 and .039 indicates that these dimensions are

significant at 5% level. But the p value for beta coefficient of application value is .525 which is not significant. Therefore, hypothesis H2_a, H2_b, H2_c, H2_d, H2_f, H2_g, are supported and H2_e is not supported,

From Table 7, the regression model can be retrieved as follows.

$$\text{Job satisfaction} = .761 + .385 \times (\text{Ev}) + .092 \times (\text{Dv}) + (-.236) \times (\text{Sv}) + .230 \times (\text{Iv}) + .253 \times (\text{Rv}) + .073 \times (\text{Pv}) + e$$

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

Table 8: Regression results of Job Satisfaction and knowledge employee retention

Method	Beta	Sig
Constant	1.903	
Job satisfaction	0.5	0.000
R ²	0.212	
Adjusted R ²	0.21	
Standard Error	0.461	

Source: Survey data

Table 8, indicates that job satisfaction has 21% impact on knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. The p value for beta coefficient job satisfaction is 0.000 which is significance at 1% level. Therefore, it can be concluded that job satisfaction has significant impact on Knowledge Employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. So hypothesis H3 supported.

From the Table 8, the regression model can be retrieved as follows.

$$\text{Knowledge Employee Retention} = 1.903 + .500 \times (\text{Js}) + e$$

MEDIATION ANALYSIS

This analysis was carried out to test the Hypothesis 4. Table 4.12 shows the coefficients values for the mediation analysis. To analyse the mediating effect of job satisfaction between employer brand and employee retention the researcher used the analysis provided by Baron and Kenny (1986) and Sobel (1982).

Table 9. Coefficients for mediation analysis

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Path	Beta	Standard error
			Employer brand	Employee retention
Employer brand	Job satisfaction	A	1.13	0.044
Job satisfaction	Employee retention	B	0.5	0.048

(Source: Survey data)

Table 9 shows $C^* < C$. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), if $C^* < C$ there will be a partial mediation between employer brand and employee retention by job satisfaction. So the researcher continues the Sobel test to identify the partial mediation of job satisfaction between employer brand and employee retention.

$$\text{Sobel Test: } - \frac{ab}{\sqrt{b^2sa^2 + a^2sb^2}}$$

After applying the figures in the Sobel's mediating effect equation the researcher gets the value of 9.65. As Sobel's test statistics is 9.65 and it is exceeding 1.96, the researcher concluded that there is a partial mediating effect of job satisfaction in between the independent variable of employer brand and dependent variable of knowledge employee retention in Telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. As per the above mentioned studies the present study found there is a partial mediation among the variables employer brand and employee retention through job satisfaction. The hypothesis H4 is not supported. So the researcher reject the hypothesis 4 as it is not a full mediation.

CONCLUSION

Employees intend to stay with their employers if their expectations are met. In conclusion, it may be suggested that

while deciding to stay in an organization, the telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka need to consider their brand. The findings of the relationship between employer brand dimensions and employee retention and job satisfaction has important implications. Although previous research has studied the importance of employer brand in attracting potential recruits, empirical research on how employer brand can assist an organisation in developing the most favourable attitude towards job satisfaction among current employees remains low. The influence of various employer brand dimensions on employee retention and job satisfaction varied, and it can, therefore, be inferred that employer brand dimensions explain variations in employee retention and job satisfaction.

It also found that the Employer Brand has the significant impact on knowledge employee retention and job satisfaction of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka. Development value, application value, and personal are not significantly impact on knowledge retention in Sri Lankan telecommunication sector. Also it was noted that application value is not significantly affect the job Satisfaction of knowledge Employees of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka and development and personal values are significant at

“The Impact of Employer Brand on Retaining the Knowledge Employees in the Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka”

5% level. It points that, Development opportunities, Career development support by organization, application of the knowledge gained from the organization, Work life balance and Personal comfort (fit with the employing organization) need to improve for retaining the knowledge employees of telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. Also it can be found that the job satisfaction has the significant impact on knowledge employee retention of Telecommunication Sector in Sri Lanka in overall, it can be concluded that employer brand has significant impact on knowledge employee retention directly and through the mediation of job satisfaction. It was found that there is a partial mediation by job satisfaction between employer brand and employee retention. Therefore, for strengthening the firms in the telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka as great places to work for and stay with, the employers must improve progressive approaches in developing the employees, encourage them to apply the knowledge gained from the organization to the outside or inside people and also make them personally comfort with the work and organization with managing the personal and work life. Such considerations would contribute toward successful retention of talent in telecommunication sector firms in Sri Lanka. Ultimately, it will add to long-term business success in telecommunication sector firms in Sri Lanka. The findings of this study indicate that employee retention and job satisfaction mostly depends on certain key Factors including employee development opportunities, knowledge application, work life balance and personal comfort. Thus, by working on these dimensions, an organisation can enhance the levels of knowledge retention and job satisfaction among its employees. Therefore, one of the significant contributions of this study lies in the initiation of knowledge retention through employer brand strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study attempts to identify the impact of employer brand on knowledge employee retention with the purpose of parallel identification of the mediating effect of job satisfaction in the telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. Knowledge Management is basically a set of behaviors, processes and technologies that are designed for managing information more efficiently to improve learning, decision-making, innovation and other keys to business success. The senior level management of the telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka can benefit by using the output which gathered by this study.

Basically knowledge management focus is on community outcomes, and the knowledge needed to meet those outcomes. In order to achieve this benefit organizations need to keep the knowledge employees in their organizations. To retain the knowledge employees the organizations should clearly brand their names under the economic, development, social, interest, application, reputation and personal perspectives.

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. A country's Telecommunication sector is essential key component to the successful journey of a country. It is the effectiveness of the public and private sector firms belongs to the Telecommunication sector that enables the citizens to carry on with their lives irrespective of the degree that take place politically either internally and externally. The management practices followed by the employers will improve the morale within the employee community and will increase their productivity and the willingness to stay in the organization. Hence, the relationship between employer brand and knowledge Employee Retention is important.
2. Improving the brand name is crucial to every public and private sector organizations to improve the performance of the employees and compete the talent war with in the high competitive labour market and for their success and sustainability of the organization. Therefore organizations should invest their scared resources to improve the brand name and as well as the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the organization. Employers understanding of their own brand and their application and apply toward those of their employees will help them to retain knowledge employees thereby to create a more harmonious working environment in the Telecommunication Sector.
3. According to the findings of this study, Application value of the Telecommunication Sector has not a significant impact on Job satisfaction of Knowledge employees in this sector. Even though Sector has this result, individually in public sector social value has not a significant impact and in private sector Development value, Social Value, Interest Value, Application Value, and Personal Value have not a significant impact on job satisfaction of knowledge employees. Further study needs to be conducted to determine if this result is consistent with other groups in other industries as well.
4. This research has implications for the way knowledge workers manage their careers. They need to understand that this is the age of self-determination. They must create their own futures by continuously developing their employability through further education and developing new, labour-market related competences.
5. Policy makers of public sector organisations need to design and develop human resource systems based on social interaction of employer brand and the policy makers of the private sector organizations

need to design the brand based on employees career development, social interaction, creating interest to the work, applying knowledge to the outside environment and respect the personal issues of knowledge employees that effectively retain high performers.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to investigating the impact of employer brand on knowledge employee retention. Since there are more factors affecting the retention of employees the research only identified the employer brand concept. Also this study limited to only knowledge employees since there are many other skill workers are available the study did not consider these employees. That is the major limitation of the study. The study conducted by taking the sample from telecommunication sector firms in Sri Lanka even though there are twenty sectors listed in Colombo stock exchange. Retaining the knowledge employees is a problem not only for the telecommunication sector, but common to all sectors performing in Sri Lanka. Since the problem is common to all sectors the study can move to other sectors as well.

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