

# A Study on Employer Branding and Job Choice among MBA Students in Kalyani

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## Abstract

Employer branding has emerged as a crucial factor influencing job seekers' perceptions and career decisions in today's competitive employment market. This study examines the impact of employer branding on job choice among MBA students, focusing on their awareness of employer branding and preference for branded organizations. The research was conducted using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. A total of 43 respondents participated in the study using a convenience sampling method. The collected data were analyzed using percentage analysis, mean score analysis, ranking analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis. The findings reveal that a significant majority of MBA students are aware of employer branding and prefer well-known organizations due to factors such as company reputation, career growth opportunities, salary packages, and work culture. The study concludes that employer branding significantly influences students' job application intentions and job preferences, highlighting its importance in talent attraction and recruitment strategies.

**Keywords:** *Employer Branding, Job Choice, MBA Students, Company Reputation, Career Growth, Work Culture, Recruitment, Organizational Attractiveness*

## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary employment environment, organizations face intense competition in attracting and retaining talented individuals. As a result, employer branding has become a strategic tool that helps organizations create a positive image in the minds of potential employees. Employer branding encompasses various aspects such as organizational reputation, work culture, compensation and benefits, career growth opportunities, job security, and work-life balance.

MBA students represent a highly competitive talent pool for organizations. Their perceptions regarding potential employers are often influenced by organizational image, employer reputation, and expected career prospects. Consequently, students tend to compare organizations based on both tangible and intangible benefits before making employment decisions.

A strong employer brand can positively influence job seekers' perceptions and increase their intention to apply for positions within an organization. Conversely, organizations with weaker employer brands may face challenges in attracting qualified candidates. Therefore, understanding how employer branding affects job choice among MBA students is important for both academic research and practical recruitment strategies. This study investigates the role of employer branding in shaping the job preferences and application intentions of MBA students.

## 2. Literature Review

Employer branding has received significant attention in human resource management and recruitment literature. Berthon, Ewing, and Hah (2005) identified various dimensions of employer attractiveness and suggested that job seekers are attracted to organizations that provide both economic and psychological benefits. However, their study did not specifically examine the relative importance of these factors among MBA students. The present study addresses this gap by identifying and ranking factors influencing job choice.

Tanwar and Prasad (2016) reported that a positive employer image contributes to employee satisfaction and enhances recruitment effectiveness. Their work primarily focused on existing employees, whereas the present study investigates employer branding from the perspective of prospective employees before entering the workforce.

Sivertzen, Nilsen, and Olafsen (2013) highlighted the influence of social media and company reputation on employer attractiveness. Their findings demonstrated that organizational reputation significantly shapes job seekers' perceptions. Building upon this perspective, the current study examines the combined influence of company reputation, employer branding, work culture, and career growth opportunities on job choice.

Roy (2008) emphasized that employer branding fosters trust and emotional connections between employees and organizations. The present study extends this understanding by exploring how employer branding influences students' trust and job selection decisions before joining an organization.

Cable and Turban (2003) found that organizational reputation significantly affects job seekers' expectations and application intentions. The present study incorporates additional variables such as salary, career growth opportunities, and work culture to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of job choice behaviour.

Collins and Stevens (2002) argued that recruitment activities and company reputation positively influence job seekers' decisions. Their study focused on recruitment outcomes, while the current research investigates how employer branding awareness shapes MBA students' perceptions and preferences prior to participation in recruitment processes.

The existing literature establishes employer branding as a critical determinant of employer attractiveness and job application intentions. However, limited research has specifically examined the perceptions of MBA students regarding employer branding and their willingness to make trade-offs between brand reputation and salary. The present study contributes to this area by investigating these relationships in detail.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

- I. To study awareness of employer branding among MBA students.
- II. To identify the factors affecting job choice decisions.
- III. To examine the effect of company image on job preference.
- IV. To understand how employer branding influences students' career decisions.
- V. To compare preferences for branded and non-branded organizations.
- VI. To study students' expectations from potential employers.

## **4. Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Research Design**

The study adopts a quantitative and descriptive research design to examine the relationship between employer branding, job choice intention, and applicant decision-making.

### **4.2 Source of Data**

The study primarily relies on primary data collected directly from respondents. Secondary data were obtained from relevant books, journals, research articles, and previous studies on employer branding and recruitment.

### **4.3 Data Collection Tool**

Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of both categorical questions and five-point Likert scale items ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

### **4.4 Sampling Method**

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study.

### **4.5 Sample Size**

The study was conducted using a sample of 43 respondents.

### **4.6 Area of Study**

The study focused on MBA students and their perceptions regarding employer branding and job choice preferences.

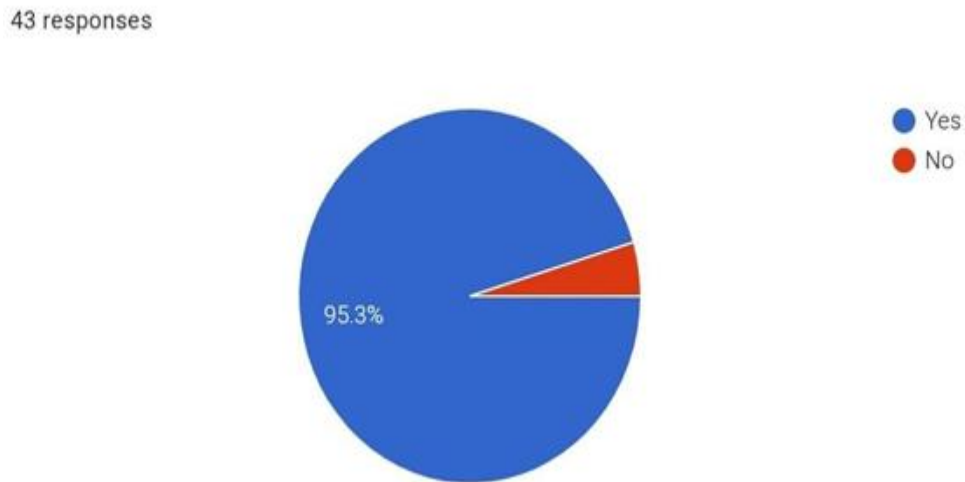
### **4.7 Tools for Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using the following techniques:

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean Score Analysis (Weighted Average)
- Ranking Analysis
- Pearson Correlation Analysis

## 5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

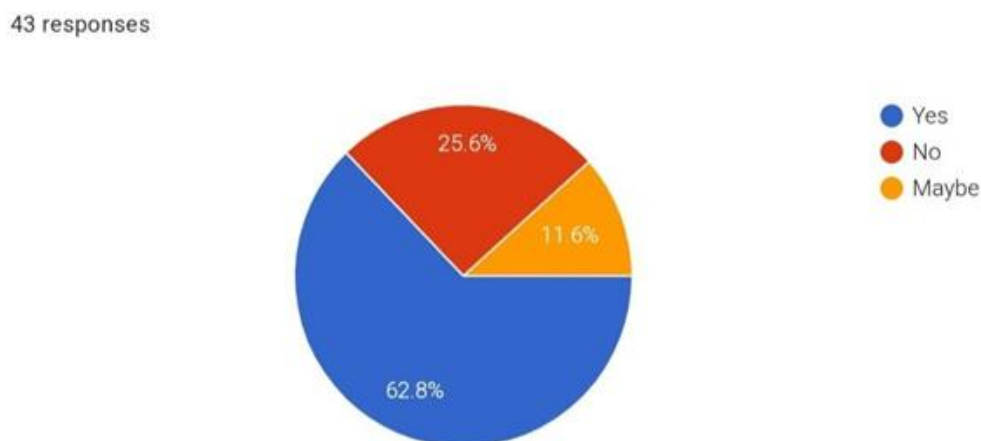
### 5.1 Awareness of Employer Branding



**Figure 1:** Awareness of Employer Branding

Out of 43 respondents, 95.3% of MBA students reported awareness of employer branding. The result indicates a high level of awareness regarding employer branding among MBA students, suggesting that students are familiar with employer image and reputation when evaluating job opportunities.

### 5.2 Preference for Branded Companies



**Figure 2:** Preference for Branded Organizations

Approximately 62.8% of respondents indicated a preference for branded or well-known organizations. MBA students are generally attracted to reputed organizations because of perceived career growth opportunities, credibility, and organizational prestige.

### 5.3 Preference for MNCs

43 responses

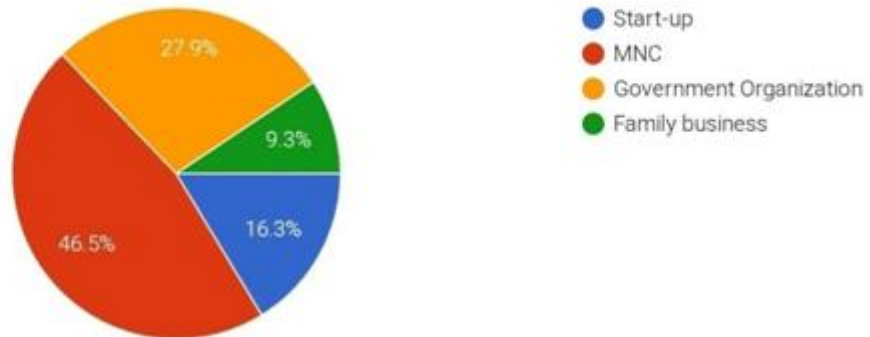


Figure 3: Preference for MNCs

About 46.5% of respondents expressed a preference for multinational companies. The finding suggests that students associate multinational organizations with superior career opportunities, global exposure, and enhanced employer reputation.

### 5.4 Importance of Work Culture Research

43 responses

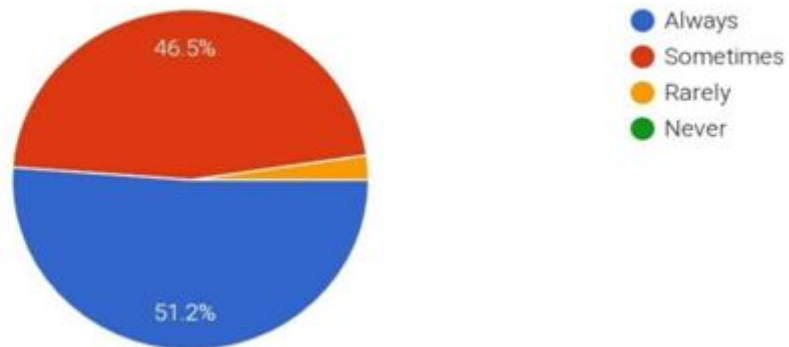
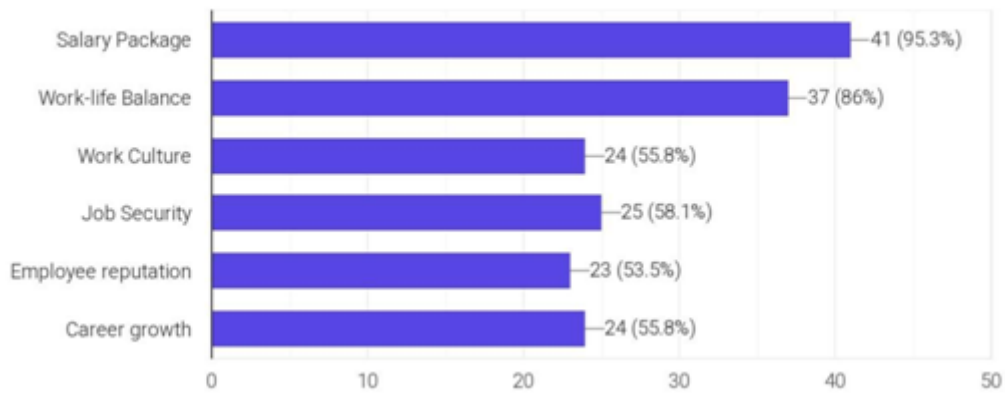


Figure 4: Work Culture Consideration

More than half of the respondents always investigate a company's work culture before applying, while a significant proportion do so occasionally. This indicates that organizational culture is a critical factor influencing students' employment decisions.

## 5.5 Factors Influencing Job Choice

43 responses

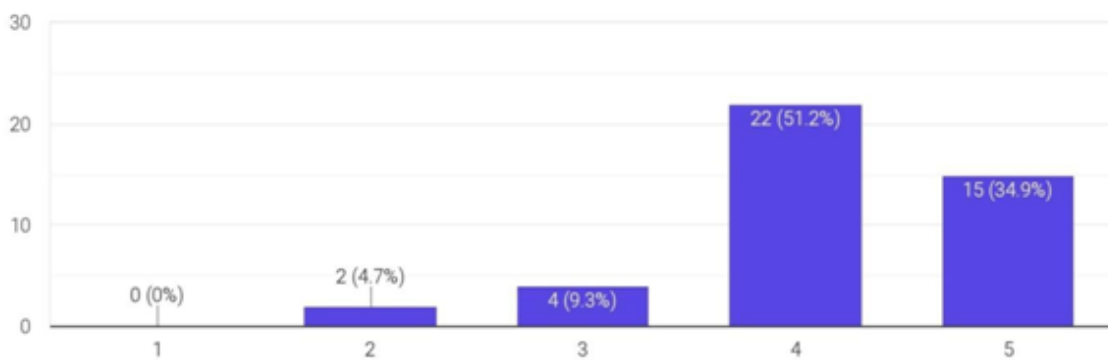


**Figure 5:** Important Job Choice Factors

Salary package and work-life balance emerged as the most influential factors in job choice decisions. Students prioritize financial benefits and personal well-being while evaluating employment opportunities.

## 5.6 Employer Branding and Job Application Decisions

43 responses

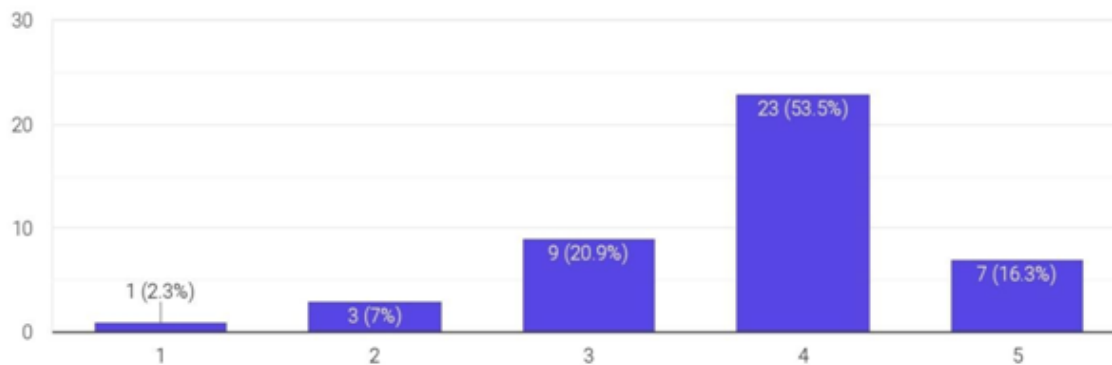


**Figure 6:** Influence of Employer Branding on Job Application Decisions

Most respondents agreed that strong employer branding positively influences their job application decisions. A positive employer image increases organizational attractiveness and encourages students to apply for job opportunities.

### 5.7 Preference for Branded Companies Despite Lower Salary

43 responses

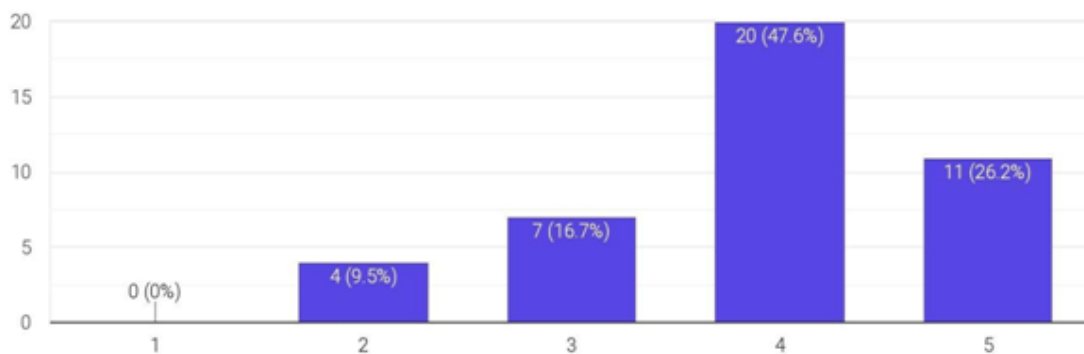


**Figure 7:** Salary Trade-off for Employer Brand

A majority of respondents indicated their willingness to accept a slightly lower salary in exchange for employment with a branded organization. Students perceive employer reputation and future growth opportunities as valuable benefits that may compensate for lower initial compensation.

### 5.8 Trust Created by Positive Company Image

42 responses

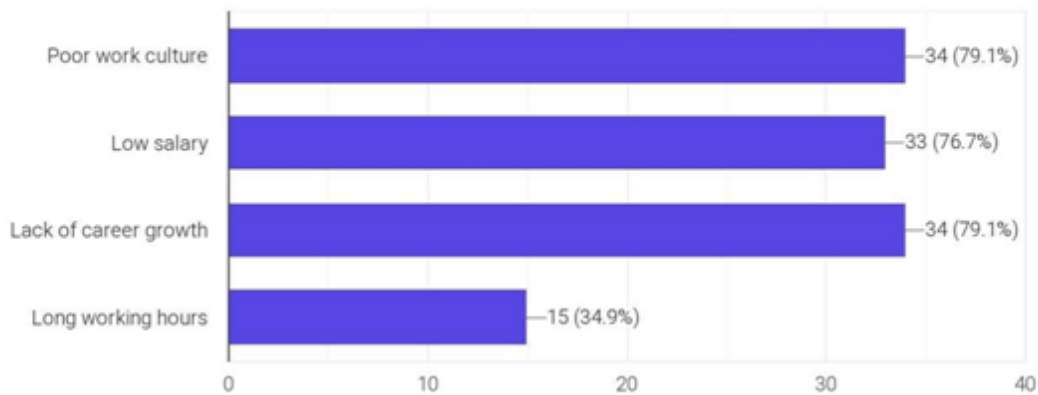


**Figure 8:** Positive Company Image and Trust

Most respondents agreed that a positive company image increases their trust in an employer. Employer reputation contributes significantly to trust-building and influences job selection decisions.

## 5.9 Reasons for Rejecting Job Offers

43 responses



**Figure 9:** Factors Leading to Job Offer Rejection

Poor work culture, inadequate salary, and limited career growth opportunities were identified as the primary reasons for rejecting job offers. Students seek organizations that provide both professional growth and favorable working conditions.

## 5.10 Mean Score Analysis

Total Score

$$= (1 \times 0) + (2 \times 2) + (3 \times 4) + (4 \times 22) + (5 \times 15)$$

$$= 0 + 4 + 12 + 88 + 75$$

$$= 179/43$$

$$= 4.16$$

The highest mean score (4.16) was recorded for the statement that strong employer branding increases application intention. Students generally agree that employer branding significantly influences their intention to apply for jobs.

**Table 1:** Analysis of companies with strong employer branding

Statement	Mean Score	Rank
Strong employer branding increases application intent	4.16	1
Positive company image increases trust	3.90	2
Prefer branded company even if salary is lower	3.74	3

Students generally agree that strong employer branding increases their intention to apply.

### 5.11 Ranking Analysis

Table 2: Ranking Analysis

Statement (Variable)	Mean Score	Rank (R)
Q5: Strong employer branding increases application intent.	4.16	1
Q7: Positive company image increase trust.	3.90	2
Q6: Prefer branded company even if salary is lower.	3.74	3

### 5.12 Preference Ranking of Job Choice

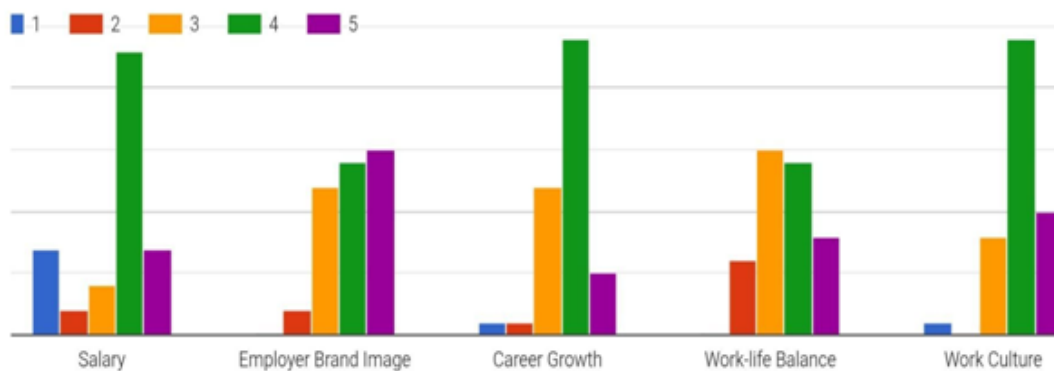


Figure 10: Preference Ranking of Job Choice Factors Among MBA Students

Employer branding received the highest rank, followed by company image and salary trade-offs. Students prioritize employer branding as the primary factor influencing job application intentions.

### 5.13 Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables Paired	Sample Size	Pearson Correlation (r)	Relationship Strength	Result
Employer Branding Score – Job Choice Intention	42	+0.555	Moderate to Strong	H <sub>10</sub> Rejected
Brand Reputation – Application Intention	43	+0.413	Moderate	H <sub>20</sub> Rejected

The study found a moderate-to-strong positive correlation ( $r = +0.555$ ) between employer branding and job choice intention. A moderate positive correlation ( $r = +0.413$ ) was also observed between brand reputation and willingness to accept lower compensation. The results confirm that employer branding significantly influences students' job preferences and

application intentions. Strong employer brands increase organizational attractiveness, although competitive salary remains an important consideration.

## **6. Major Findings of the Study**

- I. 95.3% of respondents are aware of employer branding.
- II. 62.8% prefer working in branded or well-known organizations.
- III. 46.5% prefer employment in multinational companies.
- IV. 51.2% always research company work culture before applying.
- V. Salary package (95.3%) and work-life balance (86%) are the most influential job choice factors.
- VI. Most respondents agree that employer branding influences job application decisions.
- VII. 53.5% are willing to choose branded companies despite slightly lower salaries.
- VIII. Positive company image significantly increases trust in employers.
- IX. Poor work culture, low salary, and lack of career growth are major reasons for rejecting job offers.
- X. Employer branding demonstrates a significant positive relationship with job choice intention ( $r = +0.555$ ).

## **7. Discussion**

The findings highlight the growing importance of employer branding in influencing job preferences among MBA students. Students increasingly evaluate organizations based on reputation, work culture, career advancement opportunities, and employer image. The high awareness of employer branding indicates that students actively engage in information gathering before making career decisions.

The preference for branded organizations suggests that employer reputation serves as a signal of organizational quality and future career prospects. The correlation analysis further confirms that employer branding positively influences job application intentions and enhances organizational attractiveness. However, while employer reputation is important, students continue to prioritize salary and career growth opportunities, demonstrating a balanced approach to employment decisions.

These findings support previous studies emphasizing the strategic role of employer branding in recruitment and talent acquisition.

## **8. Conclusion**

The study concludes that employer branding significantly influences job choice among MBA students. Students demonstrate high awareness of employer branding and show strong preferences for organizations with positive reputations, attractive work cultures, and promising career opportunities. The results indicate that employer branding enhances trust, increases application intentions, and contributes to organizational attractiveness. Nevertheless, salary and career growth opportunities remain critical determinants of employment decisions. Therefore, organizations seeking to attract talented MBA graduates should focus on developing strong employer brands while maintaining competitive compensation and growth opportunities.

## 9. Recommendations

- I. Organizations should strengthen employer branding initiatives to improve attractiveness among prospective employees.
- II. Companies should communicate their work culture, career development opportunities, and employee benefits effectively.
- III. Employers should maintain a strong online presence and positive reputation through social media and recruitment platforms.
- IV. Organizations should offer competitive salary packages alongside strong employer branding.
- V. Human resource departments should focus on building trust and transparency during recruitment processes.
- VI. Educational institutions can organize employer branding awareness programs to help students make informed career decisions.

## 10. Limitations of the Study

- I. The study was conducted with a relatively small sample size of 43 respondents.
- II. Convenience sampling was used, limiting the generalizability of the findings.
- III. The study focused only on MBA students.
- IV. Geographical coverage was limited.
- V. The research relied on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by respondent bias.
- VI. Only selected employer branding variables were examined.
- VII. The study primarily used descriptive and correlation analysis techniques.

## 11. Future Scope of the Study

- I. Future studies may include larger sample sizes involving students from multiple institutions and regions.
- II. Comparative studies may be conducted between MBA students and students from other academic disciplines.
- III. Research can be extended to different industries such as healthcare, banking, information technology, and manufacturing.
- IV. Advanced statistical techniques such as regression analysis and structural equation modeling may be employed.
- V. Additional variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, diversity initiatives, and employee value propositions may be incorporated.
- VI. Longitudinal studies may examine how employer branding perceptions evolve over time.

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