

Exploring the Mediating Role of Psychological Ownership in the Relationship Between Employer Branding and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The IT industry today faces intense competition for talent which leads the organizations to focus on developing Employer Branding(EB) strategies in order to appeal to and retain top talent. However, the impact of EB on employees' discretionary behaviors, such as Organisational Citizenship Behaviour(OCB), remains underexplored. This empirical study aims to fill that gap by examining how PO(Psychological Ownership)—employees' sense of possessiveness and responsibility toward their organization—mediates the effect of EB on OCB. Data was collected from a sample of 410 IT professionals working in IT companies of Delhi NCR through a structured survey, and the relationships were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings reveal that EB positively influences PO, which in turn significantly enhances OCB. Moreover, PO was found to partially mediate the association of EB and OCB. The study concludes with practical implications for IT companies to enhance employee engagement and OCB through effective EB strategies that nurture PO. These findings enhance the literature by providing a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms that link EB to employee behaviour, offering actionable insights for IT companies in their talent management and branding efforts.

Keywords : *IT companies ,employee engagement , talent management , branding effort, Structural equation modelling ,mediation analysis*

1. Introduction

The business environment today is extremely competitive and ever changing, particularly within the Information Technology (IT) industry. Organizations are increasingly recognising the strategic importance of EB as a means to appeal to, engage, and not let go of top talent. Employer branding(EB) defined as the perception of an organization in the minds of current and prospective employees as an attractive place to work (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), significantly shapes employees' attitudes and behaviors. A well-crafted employer brand helps create a positive organizational identity, which resonates with both current and potential employees, leading to enhanced psychological ownership, organizational commitment, and performance.

While previous research has extensively researched the direct impact of EB on outcomes such as employee retention and psychological ownership (PO), its impact on discretionary behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) remains underexplored (Theurer et al., 2018). OCB refers to a behaviour voluntarily exhibited by employees which is not a part of their formal job responsibilities and contribute to organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988). In industries like IT, where innovation, collaboration, and adaptability are crucial, fostering organizational citizenship behavior can provide a competitive advantage. However, understanding how employer branding might encourage such behaviors requires deeper exploration, particularly in light of PO.

PO refers to the sense of possession and belonging that employees cultivate towards their organization (Pierce et al., 2001). Research indicates that PO positively affects employee attitudes and behaviours, such as commitment and OCB (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). Employees with a sense of ownership are more inclined to participate in organizational citizenship behaviour, as they perceive themselves as accountable for the success of the organization. Despite its relevance, the role of PO in linking EB with OCB has been largely overlooked in previous research. This represents a critical gap, particularly within the IT sector, where the nature of work often involves complex, team-based projects that may influence experiences of psychological ownership and extra-role behaviors differently compared to other industries.

Addressing this gap, the current study intends to investigate how PO functions as a mediator in the relation of OCB and EB in IT businesses. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature by investigating how EB efforts translate into voluntary, extra-role behaviors through the mechanism of PO. This is especially relevant in the IT industry, where human capital plays a pivotal role in driving organizational performance. The following objectives are pursued by this study:

1. To examine the relationship among employer branding, psychological ownership, and organizational citizenship behavior.
2. To investigate the impact of employer branding on employees' organizational citizenship behavior.
3. To investigate how employer branding influences employees' sense of psychological ownership within the organization.
4. To evaluate the effect that Psychological ownership has on employees' organizational citizenship behaviors.
5. To analyse the role of psychological ownership as a mediator in the relationship between employer branding and organizational citizenship behavior.

By virtue of these objectives, this study aims to offer IT managers who want to improve their organisational performance and employee engagement through strategic employer branding both theoretical understanding and useful suggestions.

2. Literature review

The concept of employer branding (EB), psychological ownership (PO), and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) have gained a lot of interest in the fields of organizational behavior and human resources. However, few studies have looked at how these concepts are related, especially in the IT industry, where employees are crucial to success. This literature review brings together current research on these topics and examines how psychological ownership might play a role in connecting employer branding with OCB, highlighting the potential impact of employees' sense of ownership on their willingness to go above and beyond at work.

2.1 Employer Branding

Employer branding(EB) is about promoting an organization as a place to work that is appealing, both inside and outside the company, by creating a strong and appealing image (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). This approach helps companies stand out from their competitors and attract skilled employees. Studies show that having a strong EB helps in recruiting, engaging, and keeping employees by aligning the company's values with what employees expect (Theurer et al., 2018). This alignment creates a positive workplace, leading to higher Psychological Ownership(PO) and stronger commitment to the organization (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). In the IT industry, where there is tough competition for skilled workers, EB is crucial for building a strong reputation. Companies that are seen as innovative, supportive, and focused on growth tend to appeal to the best talent (Wilden et al., 2010). A strong employer brand also leads to positive outcomes like employee loyalty, better performance, and stronger organizational identity (Lievens, 2007). However, its impact on behaviors that are not part of the usual job duties, like organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), hasn't been fully explored, leaving room for further study on how it influences employee attitudes and actions.

2.2 Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) refers to actions that employees voluntarily take, beyond their regular job duties, which help improve the overall effectiveness of an organization (Organ, 1988). These behaviors are not directly rewarded through formal organizational channels, but they are essential for the organization's success. Podsakoff et al. (2000) in his study identified five key categories of OCB: altruism (helping others), conscientiousness (being diligent), sportsmanship (maintaining a positive attitude), courtesy (respecting others), and civic virtue (participating in organizational life). Research has identified several factors that encourage OCB, such as Psychological Ownership(PO), commitment to the organization, and a sense of organizational support (Chiaburu & Lim, 2008). While these factors are known to influence employees' willingness to go beyond their basic job duties, newer studies suggest that employer

branding could also be a contributing factor. However, how employer branding specifically affects OCB, possibly through PO, has not been thoroughly studied in the existing research.

2.3 Psychological Ownership

Psychological ownership (PO) is the sense people have when they feel that something, whether it's a physical object, an idea, or the organization they work for, belongs to them personally (Pierce et al., 2001). When employees develop this sense of ownership towards their company, they become deeply invested in its success. This emotional connection drives them to take proactive steps, protect the company's assets, and show strong dedication to their work (Avey et al., 2009). Research has shown that PO is a key factor in driving positive workplace outcomes, such as increased PO, stronger organizational commitment, and greater engagement in Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCB) (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004). When employees feel a sense of personal ownership toward the organization, they are more inclined to perform beyond their job responsibilities in order to help the company. This often includes engaging in OCB, which are voluntary actions that support the organization and its members but are not part of the employees' formal duties. This dynamic is particularly relevant in the IT industry, where innovation, teamwork, and flexibility are vital for success. However, there is limited research exploring how psychological ownership might act as a bridge between employer branding and OCB, making this a valuable area for future study.

2.4 Employer Branding, Psychological Ownership, and OCB

Numerous studies have demonstrated that Employer Branding (EB) can impact employees' Psychological Ownership (PO) by strengthening their identification with the organization (Davies, 2008). A well-established EB that portrays an appealing organizational identity can cultivate a sense of belonging and ownership among employees (King & Grace, 2010). The earlier researches even though have explored the direct relationships between EB and PO, as well as between PO and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), the mediating role of PO in this framework remains largely unexplored. PO could be the crucial link that explains how EB drives OCB by instilling a sense of personal investment and responsibility in employees. Understanding this potential mediation effect could offer valuable insights for IT companies, showing how they can utilize EB not only to improve employee retention but also to encourage discretionary behaviors that contribute to enhanced organizational performance.

2.5 Research Hypotheses :

Based on the above literature review, the following hypotheses followed by the sub hypotheses were proposed :

H1: Employer Branding significantly influences Employee's Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

H1_{a1}: Career Development Opportunities significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{a2}: Career Development Opportunities significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{a3}: Career Development Opportunities significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{a4}: Career Development Opportunities significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{a5}: Career Development Opportunities significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H1_{b1}: Compensation and Benefits significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{b2}: Compensation and Benefits significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{b3}: Compensation and Benefits significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{b4}: Compensation and Benefits significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{b5}: Compensation and Benefits significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H1_{c1}: Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{c2}: Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{c3}: Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{c4}: Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{c5}: Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H1_{a1}: Training and Development significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{a2}: Training and Development significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{a3}: Training and Development significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{a4}: Training and Development significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{a5}: Training and Development significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H1_{e1}: Healthy Work Atmosphere significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{e2}: Healthy Work Atmosphere significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{e3}: Healthy Work Atmosphere significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{e4}: Healthy Work Atmosphere significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{e5}: Healthy Work Atmosphere significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H1_{f1}: Organisational Culture significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{f2}: Organisational Culture significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{f3}: Organisational Culture significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{f4}: Organisational Culture significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{f5}: Organisational Culture significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H1_{g1}: Work Life Balance significantly influences Altruism.

H1_{g2}: Work Life Balance significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H1_{g3}: Work Life Balance significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H1_{g4}: Work Life Balance significantly influences Courtesy.

H1_{g5}: Work Life Balance significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H2: Employer Branding significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_a: Career Development Opportunities significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_b: Compensation and Benefits significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_c: Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_d: Training and Development significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_e: Healthy Work Atmosphere significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_f: Organisational Culture significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H2_g: Work Life Balance significantly influences Psychological Ownership.

H3: Psychological Ownership significantly influences Organisational Citizenship Behaviour.

H3_a: Psychological Ownership significantly Influences Altruism.

H3_b: Psychological Ownership significantly influences Conscientiousness.

H3_c: Psychological Ownership significantly influences Sportsmanship.

H3_d: Psychological Ownership significantly influences Courtesy.

H3_e: Psychological Ownership significantly influences Civic Virtue.

H4: Psychological ownership significantly mediates the association between employer branding and organisational citizenship behaviour.

H4_{a1-a5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking career development opportunities with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

H4_{b1-b5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking compensation and benefits with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

H4_{c1-c5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking ethics and corporate social responsibility with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

H4_{d1-d5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking training and development with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

H4_{e1-e5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking healthy work atmosphere with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

H4_{f1-f5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking organisational culture with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

H4_{g1-g5}: Psychological ownership plays a mediating role in linking work life balance with dimensions of OCB, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue.

2.6 Research model for the study

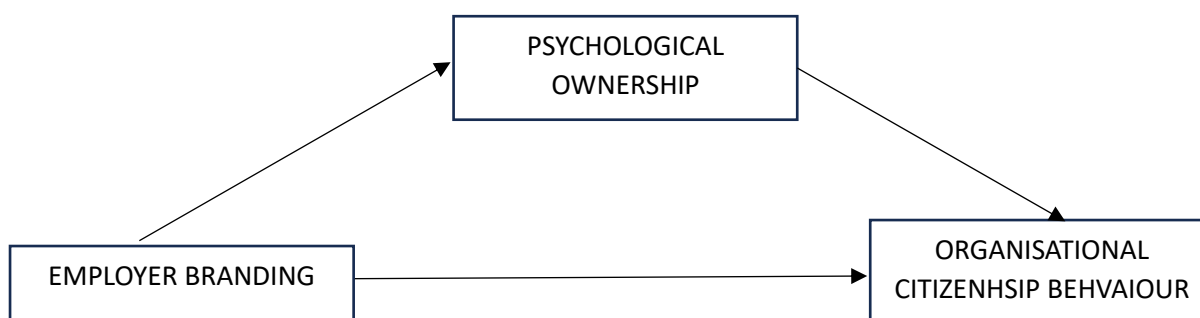


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

A cross-section design was adopted for the present study and data was collected from full time employees working in 11 IT organisations that were selected randomly from the IT organisations in Delhi NCR .A stratified random sampling method was utilised for the study. The respondents were contacted through the HR department and were briefed about the study. Self-reported questionnaires with items measuring Employer Branding , Psychological Ownership and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour were distributed among 520 respondents. Among these 449 questionnaires were returned thus

indicating response rate of 86.35 % . 39 questionnaires had to be discarded due to incomplete data which brought the sample size to 401.

3.2 Instruments

The questionnaires utilised for collection of data incorporates scales from various authors. The scale created by Nanjundeswaraswamy et al., 2022 was utilized to measure employer branding. The scale developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) was used to measure organizational citizenship behaviour. The measures of Psychological Ownership were derived from the instrument created by Pierce et al. (2001).

3.3 Demographic profile of respondents

Table 1 : Demographic profile of respondents

Gender	Male	213
	Female	197
Age	21-30 years	159
	31-40 years	167
	41-50 years	74
	Above 50 years	10
Highest educational qualification	Bachelors' Degree or Equivalent	201
	Masters' Degree	206
	MPhil /Ph.D.	3
Level of experience	Less than 6 years	186
	6-12 years	117
	13-19 years	57
	Above 19 years	50
Income	Less than Rs. 40,000	98
	Rs. 40,000 - Rs. 80,000	154
	Rs. 81,000 - Rs. 1,25,000	72
	Above Rs. 1,25,000	86

3.4 Data Analysis

Second Order Confirmatory analysis was performed using SmartPLS 4 to confirm that the theorised higher order construct in the study loads into the underlying sub constructs. The reason for using SmartPLS is its ability to handle complex models, small sample sizes leading to its popularity in fields of marketing, management and social science. Guidelines proposed by Byrne (2013) and Hair et al. (2006) were followed for performing the second order confirmatory analysis of Employer Branding and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour. They stated that the reliability of each construct must be above 0.70 for composite reliability, and AVE should be above 0.50 to ensure convergent validity. Factor loadings should be above 0.7.

3.5 Second order confirmatory analysis of Employer Branding



Figure 2 : Second order CFA Model for Employer Branding

Table 2 : Construct Reliability and Validity for the Second-Order Construct

Employer Branding and its Dimensions

Construct	Item	Factor Loading (above 0.708)	CR (above 0.7)	AVE (above 0.5)
EMPLOYER BRANDING	1) Career Development Opportunities	0.822	0.973	0.611
	2) Compensation and Benefits	0.829		
	3) Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility	0.892		
	4) Training and Development	0.865		
	5) Healthy Work Atmosphere	0.856		
	6) Organisational Culture	0.849		

	7) Work Life Balance	0.890		
1) Career Development Opportunities	CDO1	0.982	0.946	0.903
	CDO2	0.940		
	CDO3	0.927		
2) Compensation and Benefits	CB1	0.819	0.930	0.782
	CB2	0.926		
	CB3	0.877		
	CB4	0.914		
	CB5	0.883		
3) Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility	CSR1	0.929	0.910	0.848
	CSR2	0.901		
	CSR3	0.932		
4) Training and Development	TD1	0.904	0.901	0.835
	TD2	0.945		
	TD3	0.891		
5) Healthy Work Atmosphere	WRKATM1	0.909	0.936	0.839
	WRKATM2	0.936		
	WRKATM3	0.905		
	WRKATM4	0.914		
6) Organisational Culture	OC1	0.908	0.922	0.866
	OC2	0.967		
	OC3	0.916		
7) Work Life Balance	WLB1	0.906	0.919	0.806
	WLB2	0.934		
	WLB3	0.897		
	WLB4	0.851		

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note: CDO -Career and Development Opportunities, CB-Compensation and Benefits, CSR -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, TD-Training and Development, WRKATM-Healthy Work Atmosphere, OC-Organisational Culture, WLB-Work Life Balance

3.6 Second Order Confirmatory Analysis of Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

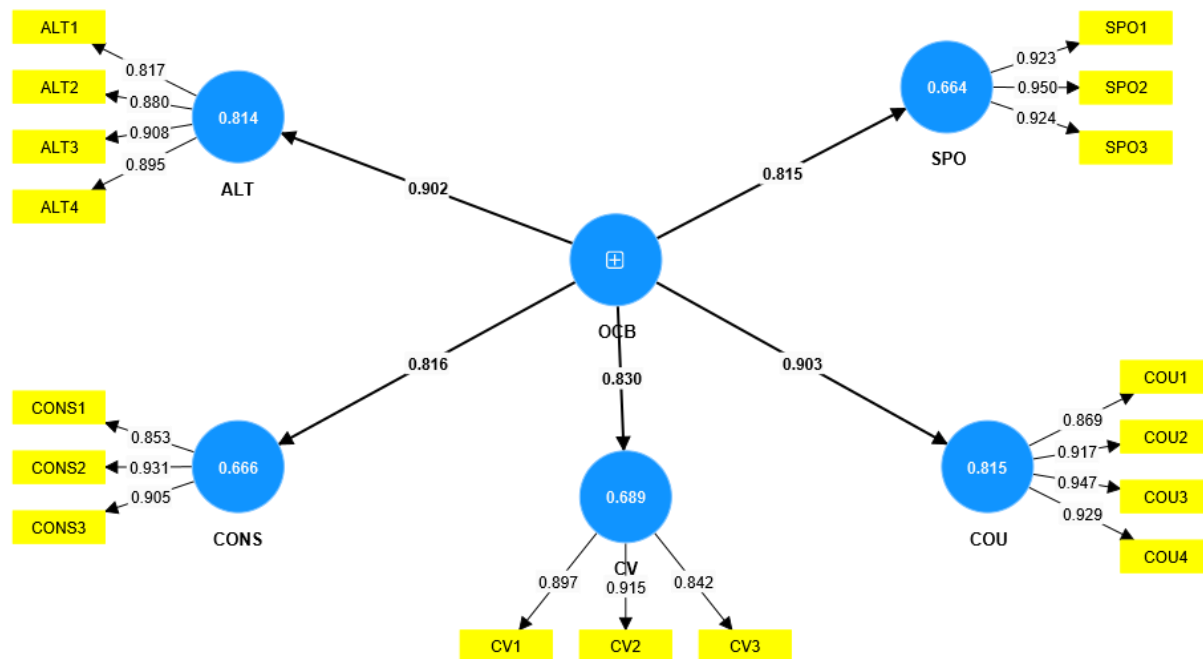


Figure 3 : Second order CFA Model for Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 3 : Construct Reliability and Validity for the Second-Order Construct

Organisational Citizenship Behaviour and its Dimensions

Construct	Item	Factor Loading (above	CR (above	AVE (above
ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR	1)Altruism	0.902	0.957	0.598
	2) Conscientiousness	0.816		
	3) Sportsmanship	0.815		
	4) Courtesy	0.903		

	5) Civic Virtue	0.830		
1) Altruism	ALT1	0.817	0.898	0.767
	ALT2	0.880		
	ALT3	0.908		
	ALT4	0.895		
2) Conscientiousness	CONS1	0.853	0.878	0.805
	CONS1	0.931		
	CONS3	0.905		
3) Sportsmanship	SPO1	0.923	0.925	0.869
	SPO2	0.950		
	SPO3	0.924		
4) Courtesy	COU1	0.869	0.936	0.839
	COU2	0.917		
	COU3	0.947		
	COU4	0.929		
5)Civic Virtue	CV1	0.897	0.862	0.783
	CV2	0.915		
	CV3	0.842		

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note: ALT-Altruism, CONS-Conscientiousness, SPO-Sportsmanship, COU-Courtesy, CV-Civic Virtue

As is clear from Table 2 and Table 3 , all the values are above the threshold limit ,thus confirming that the second-order factor adequately explains the variance in the first-order factors.

Both the measurement and structural model were then evaluated using SmartPLS.

3.7 Evaluation of Measurement Model

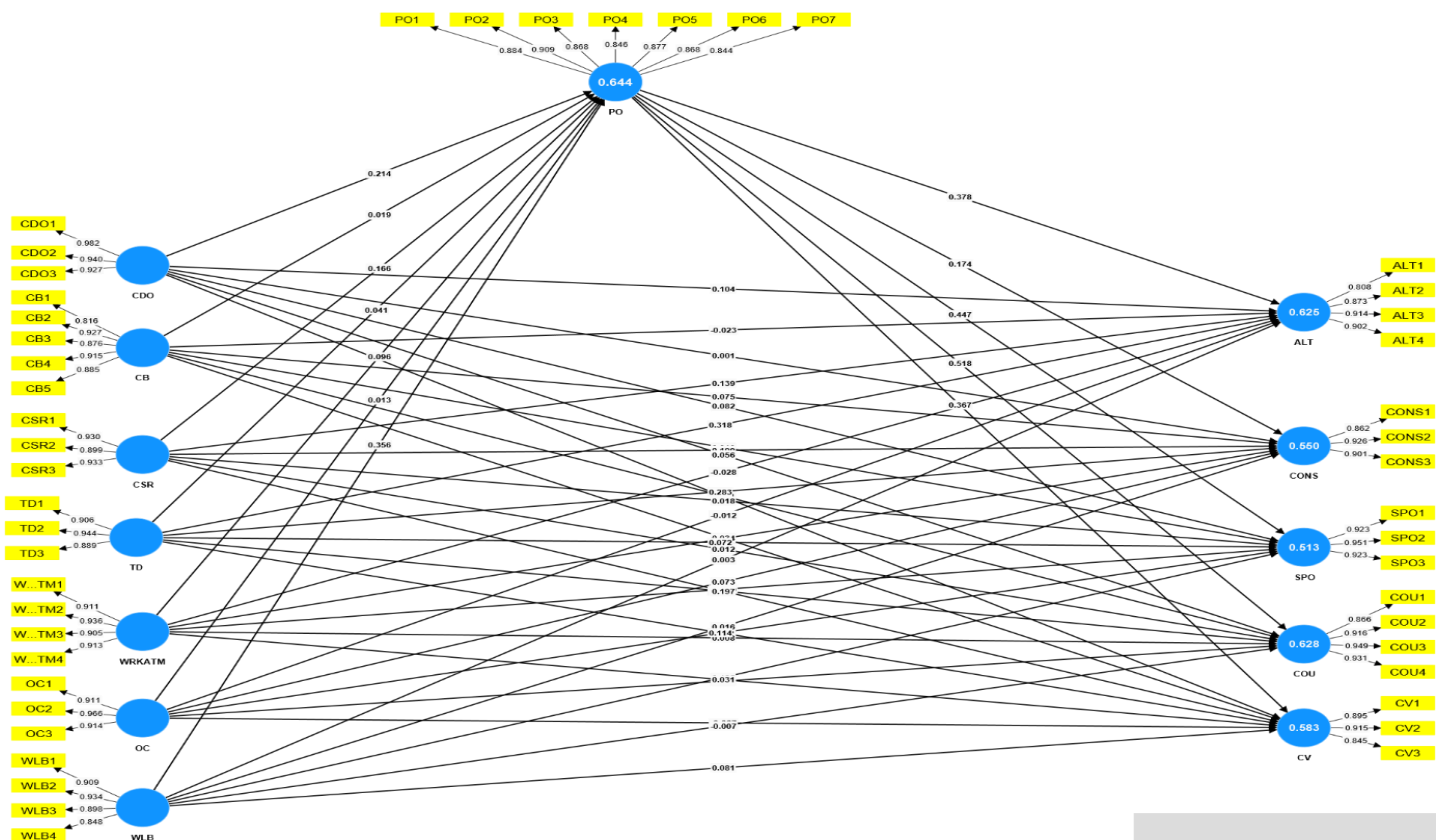


Fig 4: Measurement model

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note: *CDO* -Career and Development Opportunities , *CB*-Compensation and Benefits , *CSR* -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, *TD*-Training and Development ,*WRKATM*-Healthy Work Atmosphere ,*OC*-Organisational Culture, *WLB*-Work Life Balance, *PO* – Psychological Ownership, *ALT*-Altruism, *CONS*-Conscientiousness, *SPO*-Sportsmanship ,*COU*-Courtesy, *CV*-Civic Virtue

Table 4: Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency Reliability

	Items	Factor Loadings	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
1)Career Development Opportunities	CDO1	0.982	0.965	0.903
	CDO2	0.940		
	CDO3	0.927		
2)Compensation and Benefits	CB1	0.816	0.947	0.782
	CB2	0.927		
	CB3	0.876		
	CB4	0.915		

	CB5	0.885		
3) Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility	CSR1 CSR2 CSR3	0.930 0.899 0.933	0.944	0.848
4) Training and Development	TD1 TD2 TD3	0.906 0.944 0.889	0.938	0.835
5) Healthy Work Atmosphere	WRKATM1 WRKATM2 WRKATM3 WRKATM4	0.911 0.936 0.905 0.913	0.954	0.839
6) Organisational Culture	OC1 OC2 OC3	0.911 0.966 0.914	0.951	0.866
7) Work Life Balance	WLB1 WLB2 WLB3 WLB4	0.909 0.934 0.896 0.848	0.943	0.806
8) Psychological Ownership	PO1 PO2 PO3 PO4 PO5 PO6 PO7	0.884 0.909 0.868 0.846 0.877 0.868 0.844	0.956	0.759
9) Altruism	ALT1 ALT2 ALT3 ALT4	0.808 0.873 0.914 0.902	0.929	0.766
10) Conscientiousness	CONS1 CONS2 CONS3	0.862 0.926 0.901	0.925	0.804
11) Sportsmanship	SPO1 SPO2 SPO3	0.923 0.951 0.923	0.952	0.869
12) Courtesy	COU1 COU2 COU3 COU4	0.866 0.916 0.949 0.931	0.954	0.839
13) Civic Virtue	CV1 CV2 CV3	0.895 0.915 0.845	0.916	0.784

Table 5: Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) –Matrix

	AL T	CB	CD O	CON S	CO U	CSR	CV	OC	PO	SPO	TD	WL B	WRKAT M
ALT													
CB	0.59 9												
CDO	0.69 6	0.62 9											
CONS	0.76 8	0.64 6	0.62 8										
COU	0.83 1	0.58 0	0.66 4	0.747									
CSR	0.73 1	0.81 0	0.72 1	0.749	0.68 4								
CV	0.77 4	0.63 0	0.68 7	0.684	0.75 0	0.75 2							
OC	0.64 0	0.68 7	0.67 2	0.670	0.64 2	0.79 2	0.61 9						
PO	0.77 4	0.63 8	0.72 9	0.682	0.80 3	0.75 9	0.78 1	0.68 0					
SPO	0.72 5	0.53 6	0.61 4	0.637	0.70 2	0.62 6	0.69 3	0.58 4	0.73 6				
TD	0.77 4	0.70 1	0.77 4	0.759	0.72 3	0.81 7	0.71 2	0.76 1	0.71 8	0.61 8			
WLB	0.71 4	0.72 9	0.76 6	0.693	0.70 0	0.83 7	0.73 7	0.78 7	0.80 8	0.67 5	0.78 9		
WRKAT M	0.64 9	0.64 0	0.69 3	0.659	0.64 2	0.77 4	0.65 5	0.77 1	0.69 9	0.57 4	0.79 0	0.76 6	

Note : *CDO* -Career and Development Opportunities , *CB*-Compensation and Benefits , *CSR* -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility , *TD*-Training and Development , *WRKATM*-Healthy Work Atmosphere , *OC*-Organisational Culture , *WLB*-Work Life Balance , *PO*-Psychological Ownership, *ALT*-Altruism , *CONS*-Conscientiousness , *SPO*-Sportsmanship , *COU*-Courtesy, *CV*-Civic Virtue.

The reliability and validity of the constructs were examined during the assessment of the measurement model. Several key indicators were used for this evaluation, including factor loadings, composite reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was also assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. For factor loadings, a minimum threshold of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019). Similarly, composite reliability required a value of 0.70 or above (Hair et al., 2017), and the Average Variance Extracted needed to be at least 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). As shown in Table 4, all the constructs in the model demonstrate acceptable levels of internal consistency and convergent validity. The composite reliability (CR) values are above the recommended threshold of 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceed the minimum limit of 0.50. This confirms that the measurement model is both reliable and valid. Additionally, a threshold of 0.90 or lower was used for the HTMT values (Henseler et al., 2015). As shown in Table 5, all HTMT values are below the recommended cut-off of 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity.

3.8 Evaluation of Structural Model

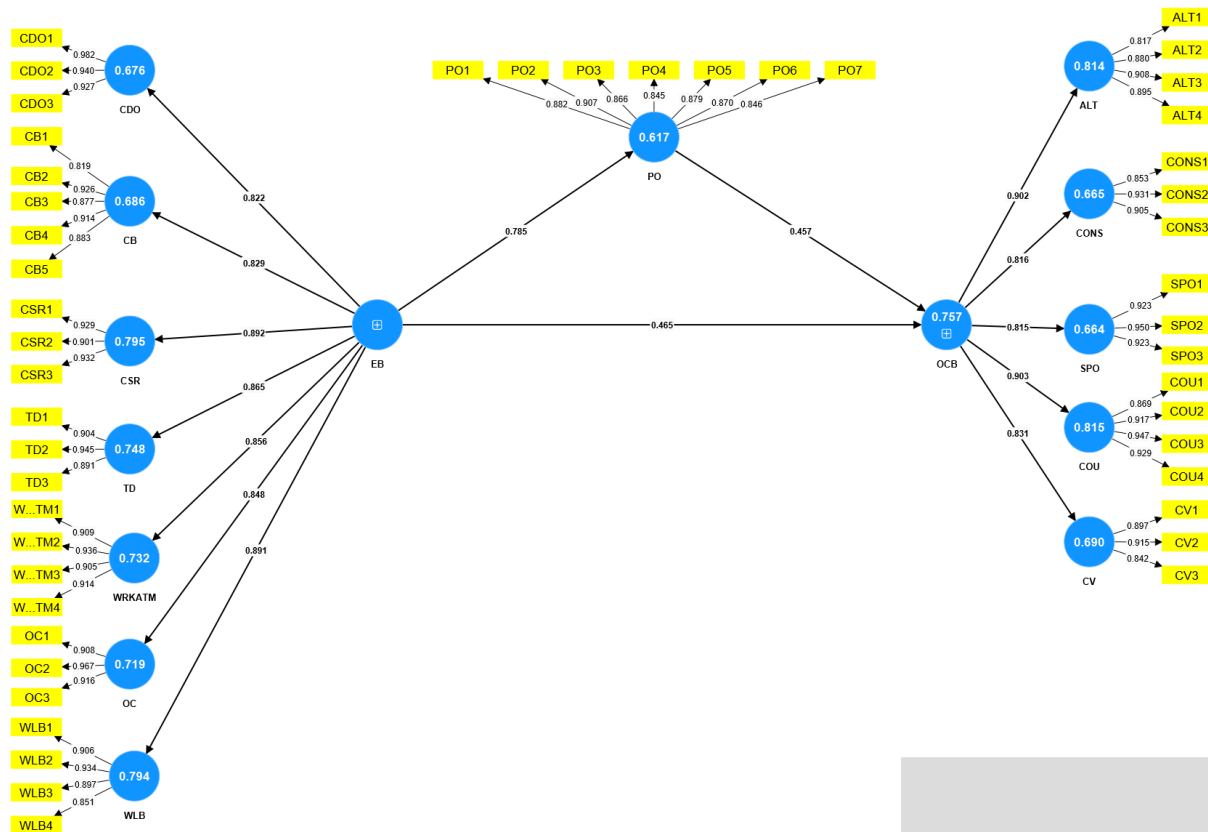


Fig 5: Structural model

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note: *CDO* -Career and Development Opportunities , *CB*-Compensation and Benefits , *CSR* -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, *TD*-Training and Development ,*WRKATM*-Healthy Work Atmosphere ,*OC*-Organisational Culture, *WLB*-Work Life Balance, *PO* – Psychological Ownership, *ALT*-Altruism, *CONS*-Conscientiousness, *SPO*-Sportsmanship ,*COU*-Courtesy, *CV*-Civic Virtue

Table 6: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF
EB -> CB	1.000
EB -> CDO	1.000
EB -> CSR	1.000
EB -> OC	1.000
EB -> OCB	2.608
EB -> PO	1.000
EB -> TD	1.000
EB -> WLB	1.000

EB -> WRKATM	1.000
OCB -> ALT	1.000
OCB -> CONS	1.000
OCB -> COU	1.000
OCB -> CV	1.000
OCB -> SPO	1.000
PO -> OCB	2.608

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note : **CDO** -Career and Development Opportunities , **CB**-Compensation and Benefits , **CSR** -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility , **TD**-Training and Development , **WRKATM**-Healthy Work Atmosphere , **OC**-Organisational Culture , **WLB**-Work Life Balance , **PO**-Psychological Ownership, **ALT**-Altruism , **CONS**-Conscientiousness , **SPO**-Sportsmanship , **COU**-Courtesy, **CV**-Civic Virtue.

Table 7: Model's Explanatory power

	R-square	R-square adjusted
ALT	0.814	0.814
CONS	0.665	0.664
COU	0.815	0.815
CV	0.690	0.689
OCB	0.757	0.756
PO	0.617	0.616

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note : **PO**-Psychological Ownership, **ALT**-Altruism , **CONS**-Conscientiousness , **SPO**-Sportsmanship , **COU**-Courtesy, **CV**-Civic Virtue.

Once the reliability and validity of the measurement model have been established, attention shifts to evaluating the structural model. Using the variance inflation factor (VIF), possible multicollinearity was examined. Ideally, VIF values should be below or around 3, according to Hair et al. (2019). Path coefficients are then analysed, as they indicate both the strength and direction of the relationships between variables. Additionally, R² values are assessed. For dependent variables, Hair et al. (2014) classify R² values of 0.75 as considerable, 0.50 as moderate, and 0.25 as weak. To determine whether the relationships between constructs were significant, bootstrapping methods in SmartPLS 4 were used, allowing for the confirmation or rejection of hypotheses (Sarstedt et al., 2019). As shown in Table 6, all Inner VIF values are below 3, indicating that there are no multicollinearity concerns. Furthermore, the model's explanatory power is demonstrated in Table 8, where 61.7% of the variance in psychological ownership and 75.7% of the variance in organisational citizenship behaviour are accounted for by the predictor variables.

3.9 Hypothesis Testing

H1: Employer branding significantly influences employee's Organisational Citizenship behaviour

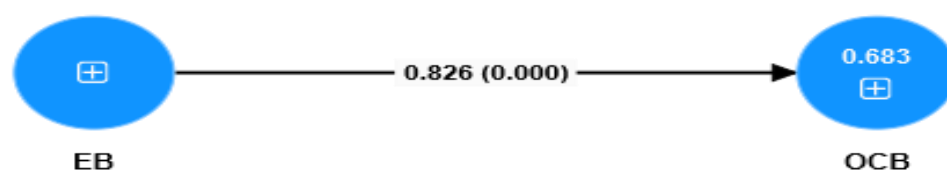


Figure 6 : Path coefficient of Employer Branding on Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 8 : Result of Hypothesis 1 and its sub - hypotheses

Paths	Path coefficient (β VALUE)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
Employer Branding-> Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	0.826	27.083	0.000	Supported
CDO-> ALT	0.651	14.701	0.000	Supported
CDO-> CONS	0.582	12.102	0.000	Supported
CDO-> SPO	0.578	11.714	0.000	Supported
CDO-> COU	0.629	13.295	0.000	Supported
CDO-> CV	0.627	12.776	0.000	Supported
CB-> ALT	0.552	11.058	0.000	Supported
CB-> CONS	0.585	12.671	0.000	Supported
CB-> SPO	0.499	10.544	0.000	Supported
CB-> COU	0.545	11.630	0.000	Supported
CB-> CV	0.568	9.325	0.000	Supported
CSR-> ALT	0.669	14.934	0.000	Supported
CSR-> CONS	0.674	17.571	0.000	Supported
CSR-> SPO	0.575	11.874	0.000	Supported
CSR-> COU	0.633	13.122	0.000	Supported
CSR-> CV	0.669	15.246	0.000	Supported
TD-> ALT	0.707	17.639	0.000	Supported
TD-> CONS	0.677	16.610	0.000	Supported
TD-> SPO	0.567	11.186	0.000	Supported
TD-> COU	0.668	14.989	0.000	Supported
TD-> CV	0.635	13.019	0.000	Supported
WRKATM-> ALT	0.600	12.552	0.000	Supported
WRKATM-> CONS	0.600	12.900	0.000	Supported
WRKATM-> SPO	0.537	10.329	0.000	Supported

WRKATM-> SPO	0.602	12.472	0.000	Supported
WRKATM-> SPO	0.593	12.033	0.000	Supported
OC-> ALT	0.584	11.741	0.000	Supported
OC-> CONS	0.605	12.943	0.000	Supported
OC-> SPO	0.541	10.740	0.000	Supported
OC-> COU	0.598	12.431	0.000	Supported
OC-> CV	0.556	10.659	0.000	Supported
WLB-> ALT	0.656	15.221	0.000	Supported
WLB-> CONS	0.629	13.868	0.000	Supported
WLB-> SPO	0.625	13.644	0.000	Supported
WLB-> COU	0.653	14.093	0.000	Supported
WLB-> CV	0.661	14.445	0.000	Supported

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note : CDO -Career and Development Opportunities , CB-Compensation and Benefits , CSR -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility , TD-Training and Development , WRKATM-Healthy Work Atmosphere , OC-Organisational Culture , WLB-Work Life Balance , PO-Psychological Ownership, ALT-Altruism , CONS-Conscientiousness , SPO-Sportsmanship , COU-Courtesy, CV-Civic Virtue.

The first hypothesis, which proposes that employee's organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is significantly influenced by employer branding has been confirmed, as shown in Table 8. The results reveal EB significantly affects OCB with $\beta = 0.826$ significant at <0.0001 confidence level. This means that effective EB strategies result in higher levels of OCB among employees. Specifically, each aspect of EB—such as Career Development Opportunities(CDO), Compensation and Benefits(CB), Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), Training and Development(TD), Healthy Work Atmosphere(WRKATM), Organizational Culture(OC), and Work-Life Balance(WLB)—has a significant positive effect on the various dimensions of OCB, including Altruism(ALT), Conscientiousness(CONS), Sportsmanship(SPO), Courtesy(COU), And Civic Virtue(CV). Therefore, the hypothesis is fully supported across all dimensions, confirming the positive relationship between EB and employees' OCB.

H2 : Employer branding significantly influences psychological ownership

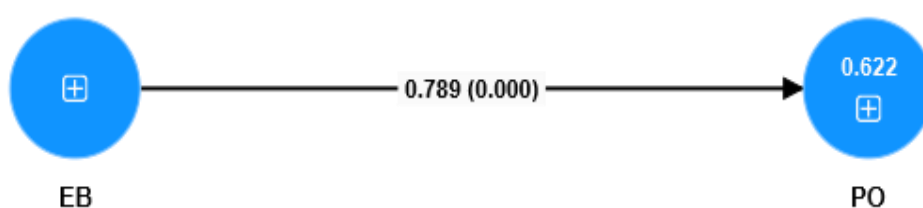


Figure 7 : Path coefficient of Employer Branding on Psychological Ownership

Table 9 : Result of Hypothesis 2 and its sub – hypotheses

Paths	Path coefficient (β VALUE)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
Employer Branding-> Psychological Ownership	0.789	22.825	0.000	Supported
CDO-> PO	0.696	15.867	0.000	Supported
CB-> PO	0.604	12.988	0.000	Supported
CSR-> PO	0.707	16.243	0.000	Supported
TD-> PO	0.667	13.788	0.000	Supported
WRKATM-> PO	0.661	14.709	0.000	Supported
OC-> PO	0.638	13.411	0.000	Supported
WLB-> PO	0.758	20.314	0.000	Supported

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note : *CDO* -Career and Development Opportunities , *CB*-Compensation and Benefits , *CSR* -Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility , *TD*-Training and Development , *WRKATM*-Healthy Work Atmosphere , *OC*-Organisational Culture , *WLB*-Work Life Balance , *PO*-Psychological Ownership

The second hypothesis, which proposes that employer branding (EB) significantly affects psychological ownership (PO) has been confirmed, as evident in Table 9. The results reveal that there is a significant impact of EB on PO with $\beta = 0.789$ significant at <0.001 confidence level. Each dimension of EB has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on PO. Specifically, CDO,CB,CSR,TD,WRKATM,OC and WLB all significantly contribute to enhancing employee's PO.

H3:Psychological ownership influences organisational citizenship behaviour

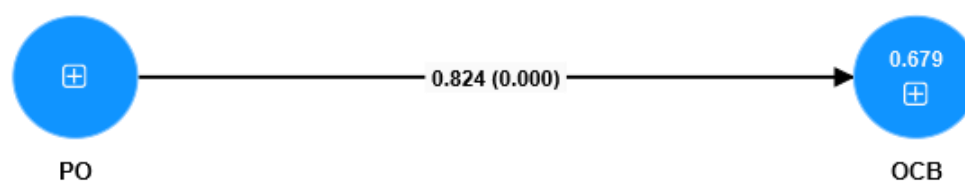


Figure 8 : Path coefficient of Psychological Ownership on Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 10 : Result of Hypothesis 3 and its sub – hypotheses

Paths	Path coefficient (β VALUE)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
Psychological Ownership-> Organisational Citizenship Behaviour	0.825	29.970	0.000	Supported
PO-> ALT	0.723	17.645	0.000	Supported
PO-> CONS	0.626	13.022	0.000	Supported
PO-> SPO	0.692	17.114	0.000	Supported
PO-> COU	0.759	19.973	0.000	Supported
PO-> CV	0.713	16.276	0.000	Supported

Source: SMART-PLS 3 Output

Note : *PO*-Psychological Ownership, *ALT*-Altruism, *CONS*-Conscientiousness, *SPO*-Sportsmanship, *COU*-Courtesy, *CV*-Civic Virtue.

The third hypothesis stating that psychological ownership (PO) significantly influences organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is confirmed as is clear from Table 10. The results reveal that there is a significant positive impact of PO on OCB with $\beta = 0.825$ significant at <0.001 confidence level. Specifically, PO exerts a significant positive influence on each dimension of OCB – ALT, CONS, SPO, COU and CV.

Mediation Analysis

In order to confirm the hypotheses stating that the relationship between employer branding (EB) and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is significantly mediated by psychological ownership (PO), mediation analysis was executed following the guidelines of Zhao et al. (2010).

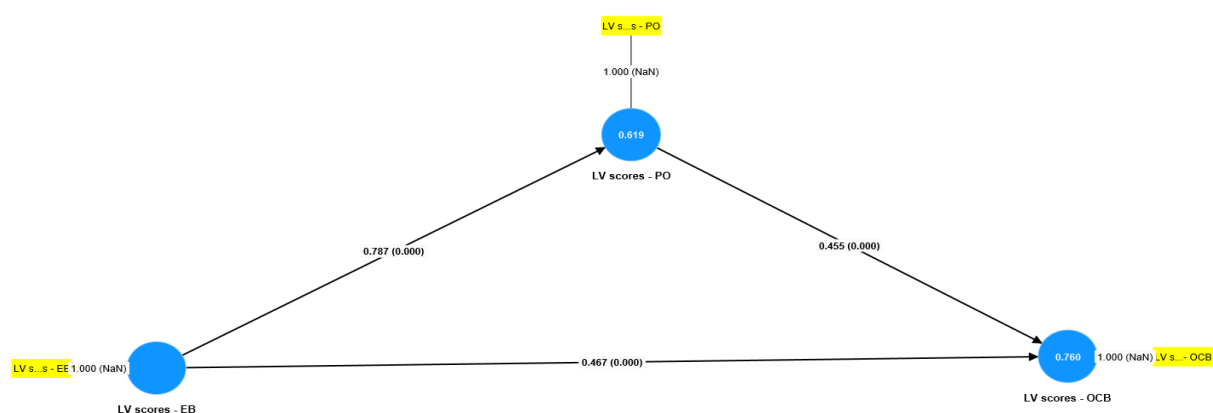


Fig 9: Mediation analysis with Psychological Ownership as a mediator between Employer Branding and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

Table 11: Result of Hypothesis 4(Mediation analysis)

Hypotheses	Relationship	Direct effect β value	T-value	P values	Indirect effect β value	T-value	P values	Total effect β value	T-value	P values	Decision
H4	LV scores - EB -> LV scores - PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP -> LV scores – OCB	0.467	6.131	0.000	0.358	5.650	0.000	0.825	30.915	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4a1	LV scores - CDO -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - ALT	0.289	3.384	0.000	0.362	5.528	0.000	0.651	14.397	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4a2	LV scores - CDO -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CONS	0.282	3.544	0.000	0.299	4.879	0.000	0.581	11.641	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4a3	LV scores - CDO -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - SPO	0.189	2.903	0.000	0.388	7.565	0.000	0.577	11.602	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4a4	LV scores - CDO -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - COU	0.197	2.959	0.000	0.431	7.857	0.000	0.629	13.118	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4a5	LV scores - CDO -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CV	0.257	3.201	0.000	0.370	6.002	0.000	0.627	12.530	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation

H4b1	LV scores - CB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - ALT	0.185	2.893	0.000	0.368	7.372	0.000	0.553	10.895	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4b2	LV scores - CB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CONS	0.328	4.769	0.000	0.257	5.049	0.000	0.585	12.570	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4b3	LV scores - CB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - SPO	0.130	2.158	0.000	0.369	8.287	0.000	0.499	9.273	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4b4	LV scores - CB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - COU	0.138	2.222	0.000	0.407	8.148	0.000	0.545	10.363	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4b5	LV scores - CB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CV	0.216	3.429	0.000	0.350	7.066	0.000	0.566	11.389	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4c1	LV scores - CSR -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - ALT	0.315	3.741	0.000	0.325	5.059	0.000	0.64	13.718	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4c2	LV scores - CSR -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CONS	0.463	6.264	0.000	0.211	3.565	0.000	0.674	16.974	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation

H4c3	LV scores - CSR -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – SPO	0.174	2.782	0.000	0.400	8.117	0.000	0.574	11.786	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4c4	LV scores - CSR -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – COU	0.194	2.454	0.000	0.439	6.835	0.000	0.633	12.997	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4c5	LV scores - CSR -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CV	0.333	3.906	0.000	0.336	5.034	0.000	0.669	14.982	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4d1	LV scores - TD -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – ALT	0.405	5.160	0.000	0.301	5.045	0.000	0.706	17.215	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4d2	LV scores - TD -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CONS	0.470	6.506	0.000	0.208	3.862	0.000	0.678	16.387	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4d3	LV scores - TD -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – SPO	0.192	3.090	0.000	0.375	7.878	0.000	0.567	11.084	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4d4	LV scores - TD -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – COU	0.293	3.912	0.000	0.375	6.222	0.000	0.668	14.799	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation

H4d5	LV scores - TD -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CV	0.287	3.790	0.000	0.347	5.990	0.000	0.634	12.750	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4e1	LV scores - WRKATM -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - ALT	0.220	3.058	0.000	0.380	6.626	0.000	0.6	12.418	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4e2	LV scores - WRKATM -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CONS	0.333	4.149	0.000	0.268	4.467	0.000	0.601	12.673	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4e3	LV scores - WRKATM -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – SPO	0.142	2.279	0.000	0.393	8.317	0.000	0.535	10.220	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4e4	LV scores - WRKATM -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – COU	0.181	2.572	0.000	0.421	7.319	0.000	0.602	12.409	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4e5	LV scores - WRKATM -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CV	0.220	2.943	0.000	0.374	6.419	0.000	0.594	11.876	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4f1	LV scores - OC -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – ALT	0.210	3.163	0.000	0.374	7.155	0.000	0.584	11.649	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation

H4f2	LV scores - OC -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores - CONS	0.348	4.520	0.000	0.257	4.577	0.000	0.605	12.758	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4f3	LV scores - OC -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – SPO	0.170	2.822	0.000	0.371	7.616	0.000	0.541	10.632	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4f4	LV scores - OC -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – COU	0.194	2.905	0.000	0.404	7.516	0.000	0.598	12.295	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4f5	LV scores - OC -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CV	0.173	2.498	0.000	0.383	7.244	0.000	0.556	10.473	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4g1	LV scores -WLB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – ALT	0.256	3.062	0.000	0.400	5.764	0.000	0.656	15.033	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4g2	LV scores -WLB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CONS	0.365	4.065	0.000	0.265	3.641	0.000	0.63	13.574	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4g3	LV scores -WLB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – SPO	0.239	3.412	0.000	0.386	7.073	0.000	0.625	13.587	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation

H4g4	LV scores -WLB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – COU	0.239	3.412	0.000	0.386	7.073	0.000	0.625	13.587	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation
H4g5	LV scores -WLB -> LV scores - PO -> LV scores – CV	0.288	3.045	0.000	0.374	4.945	0.000	0.662	14.304	0.000	Complementary Partial Mediation

As is clear from Table 11, that EB has a significant direct effect on OCB and significant indirect effect through PO, thus implying partial mediation of PO between EB and OCB. Further, both the direct and indirect effect point in the same direction, thereby demonstrating complementary partial mediation (Zhao et al., 2010). Therefore, the association between EB and the employee's OCB can only be partially explained by PO.

Additionally, the direct and indirect effect of the seven dimensions of EB have significant positive impact on OCB as indicated in Table 10, thus indicating the occurrence of partial mediation. Since both the direct and indirect effect are positive, therefore the mediation can be classified as complimentary partial mediation.

4. Discussion

The IT sector currently faces numerous challenges due to a shortage of skilled employees. As a result, this study aims to explore whether Employer Branding(EB) affects employees' Organizational Citizenship Behaviour(OCB) and whether Psychological Ownership(PO) mediates the relationship between these two variables. The first hypothesis stating that EB significantly influences employee's OCB was confirmed and the results showcased that EB and its dimensions have a significant positive impact on employee's OCB and its dimensions. This suggests that organisations that build strong and attractive employer brands are more likely to have employees that showcase behaviour that goes beyond their formal job descriptions. Employer branding provides a favourable picture of the employer in the eyes of the workers therefore making employees pleased to be affiliated with their employer and hence enhancing the motivation to contribute to organisational success. The findings are in alignment with the prior studies of Tatar & Ergun (2018) and Gupta et al. (2021).

Secondly, the second hypotheses stating that EB significantly influences PO was also confirmed with the results showing that PO is positively significantly impacted by EB and its components.

These findings are comparable to those of earlier research of Liu et al. (2020). These results indicate that effective EB strategies increase the feeling of attachment and ownership in employees thus enhancing their commitment to organisational goals.

The third hypotheses stating that PO significantly influences OCB was confirmed as well and PO was found to exert a positive and statistically significant influence on OCB and its dimensions. These results are in alignment with existing research of Avey et al. (2009) who ascertained that PO is a key predictor of proactive behaviours like OCB. These findings indicate that PO raises a sense of accountability in employees which motivates them to perform more than what their formal job description prescribes them to do in order to support their organisation.

Lastly, the fourth hypotheses stating that the relationship between EB and OCB is significantly mediated by PO was also confirmed. The results indicated PO mediates the relationship between EB and employee's OCB with both direct and indirect effects being significant and positive, thus indicating the presence of complementary partial mediation. This shows that a well-crafted EB strategy first enhances PO which in turn motivates employees to exhibit OCB. These results are in accordance with the previous studies of Wang et al. (2005) who in their study found that PO mediates organisational

practices such as branding with employee behaviours like OCB. These findings emphasize that organisations that aim to foster OCB in their employees should focus on building a robust employer brand that will not only appeal to talent but foster a deep sense of ownership among employees.

5. Conclusion

The current study highlights the positive relation between employer branding and organisational citizenship behaviour within the IT sector with psychological ownership playing a mediating role between the two variables. The results are proof that an effective employer branding strategy strengthens an employee's connection to the organisation emotionally thus fostering a sense of psychological ownership which in turn motivates employees to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour eventually contributing to organisational success. The findings highlight the strategic importance of employer branding in the IT sector as means to enhance employee commitment and promote behaviour among employee that goes beyond the formal job requirements.

6. Implications

6.1 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the emerging body of literature on employer branding, psychological ownership and organisational citizenship behaviour particularly in the IT sector. It reinforces the understanding of how employer branding has an influence on organisational citizenship behaviour not only directly but also via a mediator which is psychological ownership. The findings strengthen the existing theories on employer branding by showing that a well-crafted and strong employer branding strategy creates a sense of psychological ownership which in turn encourages employee to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour. This study also bridges the gap between literature on branding and organisational behaviour by highlighting the physical mechanism through which employer branding enhances employee engagement beyond formal job roles.

6.2 Practical Implications

For the IT companies this study showcases the importance of investing in employer branding strategies in order to improve the employee's sense of belonging and ownership which will eventually increase positive discretionary behaviour in employees like organisational citizenship behaviour. Organisations should try to instil psychological ownership in employees which will encourage employees to go above and beyond their formal job requirements, enhance team work and boost overall performance. All of this can be achieved by developing a compelling employer brand. HR professionals need to focus on employer branding initiatives that will promote emotional connection and ownership among employees.

6.3 Policymaker Implications

The findings of the current study highlight the importance of creating a supportive framework that will encourage organisations to invest in employer branding initiatives particularly for the IT sector policymakers. Employer branding needs to be identified as an important component of corporate culture- one that encourages creativity, teamwork and employee loyalty particularly in a dynamic sector like IT. Policymakers should consider incentivizing organisations in order to bring strong employer brands through policies that will enhance employee engagement programmes, talent attraction and retention strategies and long-term development of workforce. These efforts in the long run can improve the productivity and competitiveness of the IT sector.

7. Limitations and future Research Directions

This study also suffers from certain limitations. This study focuses primarily on the IT sector which limits its generalisability to other industries. This limitation can be addressed in the future by extending the scope of the study to other industries and geographical regions which would enhance the generalizability of the findings. This study is cross sectional in nature which only focuses the relations between these variables at a point of time. This limitation could be addressed in the future by conducting longitudinal studies to establish casual relationships. Self-reported measures may introduce response bias as employees might overestimate their answers due to social desirability. This limitation could be addresses in the future by making use of qualitative methods like interviews and case studies that can provide a deeper

insight into the study. This study focusses on PO as mediator between EB and OCB. In the future potential mediator or moderators like organisational culture or leadership styles can be utilised.

Conflict of Interest : All authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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