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The antecedents of employer attractiveness in local government in South Africa

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The antecedents of employer attractiveness in local government in South Africa.

By

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A research report submitted to Wits Business School, Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

Degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Orientation: Human capital has become one of the key sources of competitive advantage in the market, according to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) organisations are investing considerable amounts of resources on employer branding initiatives. Organisations are forced to consistently differentiate themselves from competitors as the most plausible employer of choice. To effectively compete in this continuous 'war of talent' the Local Government, City of Johannesburg in particular, needs to understand the effect that the fundamental antecedents of employer attractiveness have on the municipality as they endeavour to become an employer of choice to skilled and qualified professionals; as well as establish who in the organisation is the custodian of the employer brand management function.

Research purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine some of the antecedents that have an effect on employer attractiveness, as well as establish who in an organisation is responsible for the employer brand management function.

Research design: A qualitative research design was followed and data collected through face to face interviews with 14 employees of the City of Johannesburg from across the various clusters within the organisation. The data was analysed using the thematic analysis method.

Main findings: All three research objectives are supported with results indicating that the identified antecedents do have an effect on an organisation's employer attractiveness and their absence results in unfavourable consequences.

Implications: This study has implications for City of Johannesburg and Local Government as a whole, employees of City of Johannesburg, prospective and former employees of the City of Johannesburg.

Contribution/value-add: This study shows the importance of employer brand management of an organisation and confirms its place within the organisational structure.

Key words: Employer branding, employer attractiveness, employer value proposition, organisational communication, organisational factors.

DECLARATION

I, **Neo Mahlaba**, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

(Type your name in full here, and sign in the space above)

Signed at ……

On the …….. day of …… 2018…..

DEDICATION

Mthimkhulu, Radebe

Mashwbada owashwabadela inkomo neempondo zayo

Ndlebentle zombini

MaHlubi amahle! Mangelengele amahle! MaHlubi amhlope!

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition of acronym
CoJ	City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
EVP	Employer Value Proposition
DA	Democratic Alliance
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
NQF	National Qualification Framework
IDP	Integrated Development Plan

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose of the study

Hiring and retaining quality human capital has become increasingly important in the constant growth of any organisation. To individuals seeking employment, job search is a decision making process where the actual job and organisational attributes affect the final choice of an employer. Employee-based brand equity is progressively recognised by financial markets, and human capital constitutes a part of the market-value of an organisation (Cairncross, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to examine factors that have an effect on employer attractiveness, as well as establish who in an organisation is responsible for the employer brand management function. An organisation's attractiveness must be continuously worked on, so that it becomes a recognised, reputable and attractive employer brand in the labour market; this will, in turn, ease the recruitment process (Reis & Braga, 2016). The study also seeks to understand current trends in employer attractiveness from a South African perspective where the focus will be predominantly on the local government.

1.2. Context of the study

Human capital has become one of the key sources of competitive advantage in the market, according to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) organisations are investing considerable amounts of resources on employer branding initiatives. This is intended to set them apart from competitors and further increase their chances of attracting reputable employees. The Public and Private Sector compete extensively when it comes to attracting skilled and qualified human capital, it is imperative that leaders from both spheres show a keen interest in recruiting qualified people to create successful businesses; that being said, the Private Sector is better positioned to attract talent because they have comprehensive recruitment strategies in place, and thus increasing their chances of being the employer of choice, whereas the Public Sector

is perceived to be lagging because they are not investing as much in their talent acquisition strategies (Chunping & Xib, 2011).

Employer attractiveness can therefore be explained as the perceived benefits that prospective employees see in working for a particular organisation. Employer attractiveness has been operationalised through the attractiveness attributes, these are the factors considered by potential candidates when choosing an employer (Berthon, Ewing & Hah, 2005). These factors are prioritised by applicants according to their respective needs and expectations (Cable & Turban, 2001). Therefore, employer attractiveness influences the recruitment and selection processes (Gatewood, Gowan & Lautenschlager, 1993) and the retention of existing professionals (Helm, 2013), it also adds to a vital concept in knowledge-intensive contexts where appealing high calibre employees with adequate skills and knowledge comprises a primary source of competitive advantage. The more attractive an organisation is perceived to be by prospective employees, the sturdier the employer brand equity of that organisation (Berthon, et al., 2005).

The City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (CoJ) is a participant in the long-term growth and development strategy, the Joburg 2040 Growth and Development Strategy (2011) outlines the City's goals and objectives. The City of Johannesburg has dedicated themselves to collectively harness that which steers economic growth, optimal management of natural resources and the environment in a positive trajectory, as well as develop an inclusive society that contributes to the development of local government.

Presently, one of the critical corporate challenges is to meet the escalating demand for top-tier talent; to successfully plan, develop and implement strategies to bring the Integrated Development Plan into fruition – medium and long term. The City of Johannesburg needs to develop adequate and appropriate strategies as well as put efforts in place to elevate their attractiveness as an employer in order to access the best pool of available candidates and to nurture and retain its current employees. To effectively compete in this continuous 'war of talent' the City needs to understand the effect that the antecedents of employer attractiveness have on the organisation as

they endeavour to be an employer of choice, as well as establish who in the organisation is the custodian of the employer brand management function. It is therefore vital for organisations to look for quality talent, and it is as important for the candidates to be attracted to the organisation.

1.3. Problem statement

In the next section the main and sub problem of this study will be presented.

1.3.1. Main Problem

Organisational attractiveness illustrates the future benefits that a prospective employee sees by being employed by a particular organisation (Berthon, et al., 2005). Jiang and Iles (2011) see it as an allure that appeals to applicants' attention to a particular organisation's employer branding and inspires existing employees to stay dedicated to an organisation.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) state that organisations more than often concentrate their branding energies in developing corporate and product brands, branding can also be integrated in the area of talent or human resource management. Employer attractiveness can be a function of the combination of principles from branding and human resource disciplines. According to Greening and Turban (2000) corporate success is dependent more on a quality workforce, and organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the need to attract the best workers to their organisations. Therefore becoming an employer of choice, by enhancing employer attractiveness, is a fundamental human resource, business and marketing imperative.

Local Government is seen as the face of the government, they are the first point of contact civilians interact with when it comes to dealings of day to day deliverables of a municipality. To efficiently service the residents of a municipality, in this instance the City of Johannesburg, there needs to be a skilled and qualified workforce acting as a catalyst to execute on the promised efficiency. Seasoned professionals consistently choose the Private Sector over the Public Sector because of the belief that they will

be better taken care off in the Private sphere which then leaves the City of Johannesburg with a limited pool of candidates to choose from.

City of Johannesburg employees are continuously plagued with assumptions of incompetence, laziness and the lack of commitment to their civil duties. This raises a number of questions, namely;

- Do skilled and qualified professionals searching for employment find the City attractive as an employer?

- What efforts are being put in place to make the City an appealing employer for both existing and prospective employees?

1.3.2. Sub-problems

The sub-problems for the study are as follows:

- The first sub-problem is to explore the main antecedents of employer attractiveness;

- The second sub-problem is to analyse and understand the consequences and effects that the antecedents have on employer attractiveness; and

- The third sub-problem is to find out who in the organisation is responsible for of the employer brand management function.

1.4. Significance of the study

According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) the concept of employer brand sets its premise on the assumption that human resources bring value to an organisation, and through astute investment in human capital, an organisation's performance can be substantially improved.

Barney (1991) supports this by suggesting that the characteristics of an organisation's resources can contribute towards a sustainable competitive advantage in the market;

and the possession of resources that are rare, valuable, non-substitutable and difficult to imitate allow an organisation to move ahead of its competitors.

The concept of employer branding addresses the proactive management of an organisation's image as an employer, as perceived by current and potential employees (Rampl, 2014), it is thus essential that organisations develop a better understanding of the expectations of prospective employees and the organisational characteristics that influence them during their job search (Montgomery & Ramus, 2011). Therefore, it is important to analyse and understand dimensions of employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors that contribute towards employer attractiveness.

This study aims to contribute towards the depth of literature that is currently available, as well as provide insights for decision makers on how to best influence the perceptions of current and prospective employees, as well as to positively position an organisation as an employer of choice by improving its attractiveness.

This study further aims to establish the effect that employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors (as antecedents) have on employer attractiveness and how they can be used by management to position an organisation as an employer of choice. The study considers the City of Johannesburg (Local Government) an entity of the state, as an organisation to explore.

1.5. Delimitations of the study

Simon (2011) defines delimitations of a study as the characteristics that scope the research and are controllable. The following are the delimitations of this study:

- The study is delimited to the area of talent/employer attraction;
- The study only considers the City of Johannesburg as the organisation of interest; and

- The study also only considers senior decision makers in the City of Johannesburg as individuals of interest.

1.6. Definition of terms

The below terms will be used in this study:

- **Talent management:** Gallardo-Gallardo and Thunnissen (2016) define talent management as a systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of talents. Talent management is supposed to fulfil the quantitative and qualitative needs for human talent, as well as contribute towards the organisation's overall performance - profits, competitive advantage and sustainability.
- **Employer branding:** Martin (2008) provides a detailed description of what employer branding is; he states that employer branding is an emerging discipline with its roots in classical marketing and brand management principles. It aims to position an image of a company as 'a great place to work'. The idea is first to develop an emotional link with the best human talent, and then offer prospective candidates tangible benefits based on evidence. The promise and fulfilment of an employer brand enables the attraction, motivation and retention of appropriate talent for the business to continue delivering on the corporate brand promise.
- **Employer attractiveness:** According to Berthon et al., (2005) attractiveness of an employer is employee-based brand equity resulting from putting efforts to communicate the expected value that a potential employee should anticipate when joining an organisation.
- **Recruitment:** Ployhart (2006) refers to recruitment as activities undertaken by organisations in an effort to identify and attract potential applicants.
- **Brand loyalty:** The attachment that a consumer has to a brand (Aaker, 1991).
- **Human talent:** Rana, Goel and Rastogi (2013) describe a talented resource as a person who has multiple skills and self-motivation, excellent core working

knowledge and general skills like communication, creative outlook and leadership.

1.7. Assumptions

There are a number of assumptions that need to be taken into consideration, namely:

- Participants are senior individuals who make decisions at an executive level within the City of Johannesburg's structure;
- Participants are aware of and understand employer attractiveness and its advantages; and
- Participants will reflect normal perspectives and experiences.

1.8. Format of the Study

The study will have the following 6 chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction. In this chapter the purpose and context of the study will be presented. The research problem will be defined and a motivation will be presented about the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. A review of the available literature will be given focusing on the consequences and effects of the antecedents that impact employer attractiveness.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology. In this chapter the design of the research project will be presented followed by a discussion of the target population, research instrument used, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results. In this chapter the results of the structured interviews will be presented. The antecedents will be presented first, followed by their consequences and effects.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the Results. In this chapter the findings will be discussed. The first part will be used to give a description of the demographic of the participants covering qualifications and the different positions held by the participants. This will be followed by a discussion about the results of the findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations. This chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations and suggestions of future research are shared at the end of the chapter.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter defines the overview of the study undertaken. It reflects on the introduction presented and includes the context in which the study was conducted. The chapter also contains the problem statement and the research gap that forms the reason for having conducted the study. Furthermore, the research questions and research objectives were put forward. It can be expected that this study will contribute to existing literature of employer branding, and further compliment the few studies that have been done on employer attractiveness in Local Government. The next chapter includes a comprehensive review of the literature.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Product branding enables marketers to understand their customers, while the end goal of human resource management is to strengthen employer-employee relations; and the combination of these two disciplines gives an organisation a communication channel to better understand prospective and existing employees. While developing a robust employer brand, an organisation should identify the attractive and persuasive attributes that can help it attract and retain qualified professionals, these attributes should be true and entrenched in the culture of the organisation.

2.2. The City of Johannesburg

The Structure of the current South African government, of which the City of Johannesburg is part of, is reflected in Figure 2.1 below.

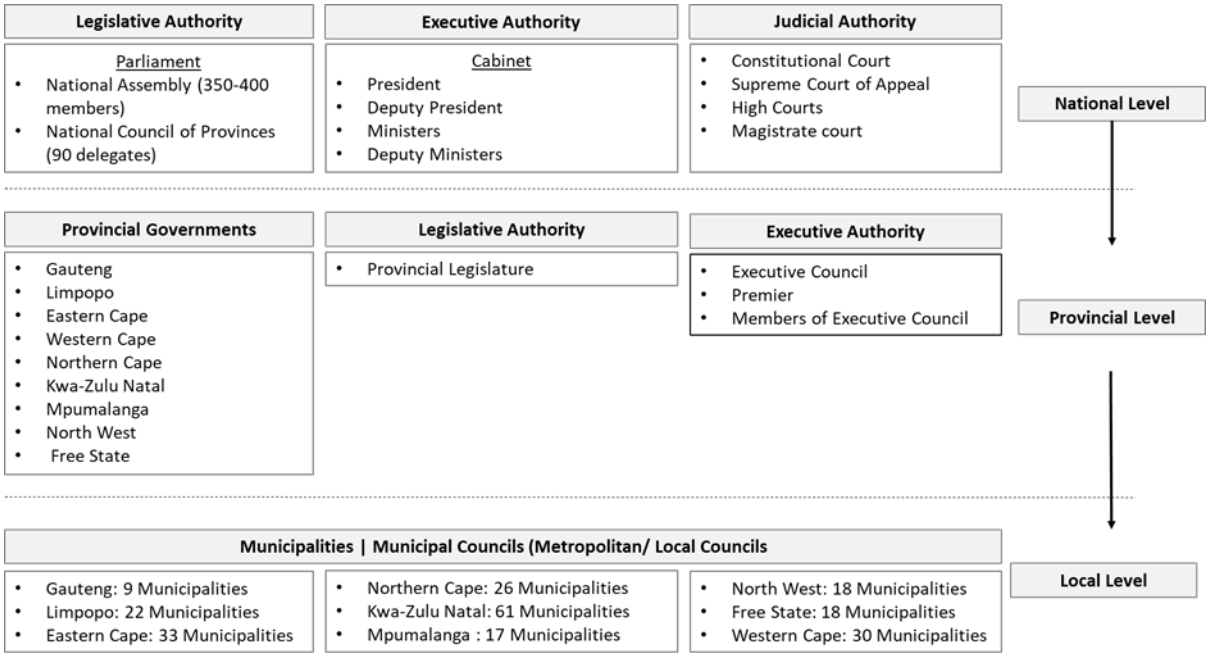

Figure: 2.1: Structure of the Government of South Africa
(**Source:** South African Year Book, 2017)

Nationally, municipalities are represented in the National Council of Provinces by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). SALGA also sits as the employer in the South African Local Government Bargaining Council (Municipality, 2017). There are three types of municipality in South Africa, namely; metropolitan, local and district. Johannesburg is a metropolitan municipality with half its councillors elected through a proportional representation ballot, where voters vote for a party. The other half are elected as ward councillors by residents in each ward. In line with its mission to be a world-class African city, Johannesburg has divided up its responsibilities into several key departments; the departments currently employ a total 26,926 individuals and have 1,242 vacancies (Statistics South Africa, 2016). Each department is required to deliver quality service to residents and visitors, while ensuring the City functions immaculately (Tibane, 2016).

The City of Johannesburg is made up of a legislative arm – the council, an executive arm – executive mayor, and the mayoral committee as well as an administrative arm. The legislative function is the political administration and it is made up of the councillors (elected and proportional representatives chosen every five years during the Local Government elections), the council is headed by the Council Speaker, this function meets monthly to discuss how best to create a world-class African City for citizens and visitors alike (Municipality, 2017). The Speaker is supported by the Chief Whip of Council whose duty is to build relationships among the various political parties and ensure a well-oiled governing party. The council makes policies and oversees their implementation, its key responsibility in its current structure is to focus on legislative, participatory and oversight roles. Council also ensures debates and discussions take place between the different political parties.

The executive work of the council is managed by the executive mayor, who is elected by the council to provide a strategic direction for the municipality. The mayor is assisted by a mayoral committee made up of 10 councillors. The mayoral committee is responsible for the individual portfolios and they report directly to the mayor. A municipal administration headed by the City Manager is supported by an executive management team and makes sure that the vision and mission of the council becomes

reality - they deliver the services envisioned by the politicians. The City Manager is responsible for employing staff and making sure that they implement all the programmes approved by the council; the mayor and his executives oversee the work of the City Manager and department heads. The municipal manager is the municipality's Chief Accounting Officer whose role is supported by executive directors who are responsible for the individual City departments for the delivery of key public services to residents.

Group Communications and Marketing is made up of four departments whose focus areas are; communications, events, marketing and tourism. One of the objectives of the Group Communications and Marketing team is to facilitate the dialogue between local government, residents and businesses; as well as continuously letting people know what the local government is up to (Tibane, 2016). Apart from its public relations and information function, the department also organises the City's flagship events and markets Johannesburg internationally, nationally and locally as a world-class African city. The department's key deliverables are:

- Building the image of a world-class African city;
- Enhancing citizen engagement, participation and commitment to the City;
- Deepening democracy; and
- Entrenching good governance through transparency and accountability.

2.3. The antecedents of employer attractiveness and their consequences

The first research objective of the study was to explore the antecedents of employer attractiveness in the available literature followed by the second research objective to analyse and understand the consequences that these antecedents have on employer attractiveness.

Collins and Stevens (2002) found that organisation-based attributes have a greater impact on prospective employees than role-specific attributes. According to Berthon, et al., (2005) attractiveness of an employer is employee-based brand equity derived by putting efforts to communicate the expected utility that a potential employee should anticipate when joining a company. Khatibi and Robertson (2013) framework reveals employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors as attributes that influence employer attractiveness which in turn impacts on how potential and existing employees view an organisation.

The antecedents of employer attractiveness identified for this study are reflected in Figure 2.2 below.

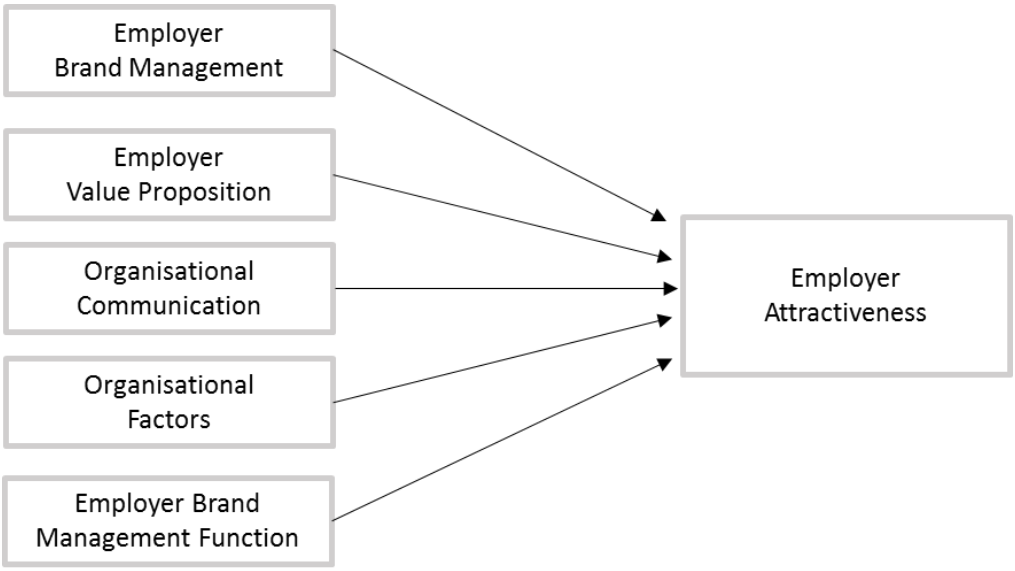

Figure 2.2: Conceptual model of antecedents of Employer Attractiveness

As reflected in Figure 2.2 the antecedents of organisational attractiveness as employee of choice identified for this study are employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors. These antecedents and their effect on how potential employees view the attractiveness of an organisation as potential employer will be discussed next.

2.3.1. Employer brand management

Refining an employer brand is one of many ways that organisations can increase their attractiveness and position themselves as employers of choice in a highly competitive market. Ambler and Barrow (1996) define the employer brand as the functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company; therefore, employer brand management holds that organisations build and manage their brand as an employer to maximise their presence to both potential and existing employees. Earlier studies suggested that employer branding can help an organisation attract, retain and motivate those employees who deliver the company brand promise (Uncles & Moroko, 2005). The role of employer brand management increasingly extends beyond the confines of recruitment communication to become a more integrated and predominant feature of HR strategy planning and implementation (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011). This allows the organisation an opportunity to differentiate itself from competitors and to develop a recognisable identity through practices that are perceived as desirable to employees and the public (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Love & Singh, 2011).

A few scholars have also suggested that the components of employer knowledge such as employer branding, employer brand equity, employer brand associations, employer branding process, and employer branding benefits are critical for and will have an influence on applications and job choice decisions (Cable & Turban, 2001; Collins, 2007).

2.3.1.1. Employer branding

Brands are notably organisations' most cherished assets; thus brand management is one of the key activities in many organisations. Although organisations normally prioritise their branding initiatives toward developing product and corporate brands, branding can also be incorporated in the human resource management discipline. Employer branding refers to an organisation's reputation as an employer and its value proposition to its employees (Barrow & Mosley, 2011), a value proposition that individuals believe they will receive by working for a specific employer (Backhaus &

Tikoo, 2004). Attracting qualified quality potential employees is a significant portion in the recruitment process, since it involves how companies compete for often scarce skills in the labour market (Collins & Kanar, 2014; Fernandez-Araoz, Groysberg & Nohria, 2009; Hewlett & Rashid, 2010). According to Sullivan (2004), employer branding is a strategy to manage stakeholders' awareness, perceptions, opinions and beliefs with regard to a particular organisation; it represents the organisation's effort to communicate to internal and external audiences what makes it both desirable and different as an employer (Jenner & Taylor, 2007).

The term suggests that an organisation benefits from employer branding when it is perceived as a great place to work in the minds of both current and prospective employees, and key stakeholders in the external market (Minchington, 2010); and lately it has evolved to include an extensive set of organisational activities aimed at recruiting and retaining talented professionals (Mosley, 2007; Davies, 2008). Organisations may attain differentiation and become more competitive in attracting talent through employer branding initiatives by effectively communicating their unique and positive aspects and the corresponding employment value proposition.

Increasingly, organisations are applying employer branding tactics to attract prospective employees and ensuring that existing employees are engaged in the culture and the strategy of the organisation. Employer branding has therefore emerged as a vital management practice used by organisations to create images of being a desirable employer in the minds of prospective employees; it aims to create value, influence and position an organisation as 'a great place to work' and improve employer attractiveness. A solid employer brand will attract superior candidates, and positively shape their expectations about their employment (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

Employer branding refers to the sum of an organisation's efforts to communicate to existing and prospective employees that it is indeed a desirable place to work (Berthon, et al., 2005). It involves applying branding principles to the recruitment and hiring process; and focuses on the combination of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by the employment and identified with employing organisation (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Employer branding strategies contribute

towards increasing employer attractiveness in the labour market as a whole and, more precisely, among potential qualified candidates (Reis & Braga, 2016; Pingle & Sharma, 2013). According to Lievens (2007), employer branding includes three stages, namely:

- A convincing and unique employer value proposition, the attributes or benefits to be offered to prospective and actual employees is designed;

- This value proposition is communicated; and

- The implementation stage, to actually implement the promises made in the value proposition, in terms of the attraction attributes.

Since competition for highly talented employees became almost as fierce as the competition for customers (Berthon, et al., 2005), organisations want to be seen as attractive employers for prospective applicants and current employees (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). The underlying reason is that human capital brings value to the organisation and that firm's performance can be enhanced through strategic investment in human capital (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). According to Dabirian, Kietzmann and Diba (2017), a great work environment does not emerge accidentally, but rather results from thoughtful and strategic initiatives aimed at attracting, engaging, and retaining employees. Sokro (2012) suggests the following to develop a strong employer brand:

- Understand the organisation, create a compelling brand promise for employees that mirrors the brand promise for customers;

- Develop standards to measure the fulfilment of the brand promise, continually align all people practices to support; and

- Reinforce the brand promise, execute and measure.

Measuring the steps that were taken to develop a strong employer brand strategy can be seen as a control tool that consistently keeps efforts aligned to the desired business objectives.

The degree to which an organisation's envisioned employer brand matches its employees' experiences with the organisational culture and values determines the employer brand's impact in the market. Understanding an industry's employer attractiveness spectrum allows leaders to gain insight regarding which value propositions employees in their industry care about, and the relative weights of these.

Collective employee opinions shape not only the loyalty, engagement, and retention of existing employees, but also how firms are seen publicly and how they are able to attract new talent. In order to grow a favourable employer brand, leaders have to understand what factors are important in order to attract potential candidates to the firm (Alnıaçık, Alnıaçık, Erat & Akçin, 2014). Employer brand strategies and activities contribute towards an organisation's attractiveness to the extent that they create, convey, and reinforce the positive aspects of the firm as an employer (Collins & Kanar, 2014; Edwards, 2009); in addition, employment branding is a long-term strategy designed to maintain a steady flow of skills in the organisation (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010).

The brand must be able to differentiate, to create loyalty, to satisfy and establish an emotional connection with potential candidates (Davies, 2008). Thus, the value of a brand is associated with its awareness and recognition degree and the image it conveys to people. Besides differentiation and loyalty, employer branding can bring additional benefits to the organisation, insofar as it provides a rationale to simplify management and to establish and focus on priorities, increasing productivity and improving recruitment, by ensuring a continued flow of adequate candidates (Holliday, 1997).

2.3.1.2. Employer brand equity

Han and Collins (2002) define employment brand equity as the outcome of applicants' decision opportunities attributable to their beliefs about the company as an employer. An organisations efforts to recruit job seekers are similar in many ways to its efforts to attract consumers to purchase its products or services (Cable & Turban, 2001), the employer brand puts forth an image showing the organisation as a good place to work (Sullivan, 2004), this is achieved through strong brand equity and takes into account both prospective and current employees. Employer brand equity refers to the value provided by employment to existing or potential employees, it recognises an interactive relationship between employer and employee (current and prospective) as part of the employer branding activity, which begins even before an employee joins the organisation (Alshathry, Clarke & Goodman, 2017).

Organisations are finding it increasingly hard to source new qualified employees to fill key roles necessary to meet demanding organisational objectives, a human resources problem so critical that it has often been labelled the "war for talent". Nowhere is this shortage felt more than in the battle for knowledge workers, those employees with the education and skills that drive organisational innovation and performance in the new economy (Collins & Stevens, 2002). With any brand, the goal is to attract and retain customers to ensure there is brand and product success. Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) established that organisational prestige and organisational stereotypes have an impact on employees' identification with an organisation, which further predicts their intent to join the organisation.

That being said, leaders should consistently cultivate, enhance, and communicate the company's reputation and identity similarity between the organisation and the applicants during the recruitment process. A collaborative human resource management and marketing team are important for sustaining an organisation's talent pipeline; Sovina and Collins (2003) points out the concept in research that sets out to discover how to apply marketing principles to recruitment practices in human resource management, in essence how to build an organisations employment brand equity.

Sustainable competitive advantage, marketing strategy, and company image are major marketing constructs related to employment brand equity (Kim, Jeon, Kim, Jung, Jung, Moon & Lee, 2009). Kim, Jeon, Jung, Lu and Jones (2012) define sustainable competitive advantage as the long-term benefit of implementing some unique value-creating strategies which competitors do not implement simultaneously, along with the inability to duplicate the benefits of this strategy. As with any other intangible assets, brand equity exhibits the qualities required for creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

One theory that focuses on an organisation's investment strategies, marketing communications and stakeholder management practices required to establish and protect a desired market position is known as the Brand Equity framework (Aaker, 2004; Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009; Kim & Kim, 2005). The Brand Equity framework is multi-dimensional and it gives strategists a conceptual basis to manage the five brand assets that support an organisation's ability to define, establish and protect a desired market position in a competitive marketplace. The five brand assets consist of four consumer-related assets, namely - brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand Loyalty; and one market-related asset, namely - other proprietary rand assets (Lee & Back, 2008).

Brett Minchington (2013) developed the model of employer brand equity that consists of four core employer brand assets, namely: employer brand awareness, associations, loyalty and perceived employment experience:

- **Employer brand awareness** is the level of recognition people have about an organisation's positive and negative employment attributes.

- **Employer brand associations** include the ideas of current and perspective employees about rational and emotional employment attributes.

- **Employer brand loyalty** refers to an individual's commitment to join or remain employed with an organisation.

- **Perceived employment experience** is the association employees have about working for an organisation based upon the online and offline touch points the person interacts with.

Ideally, in a human resource setting employer brand equity consists of three elements:

- How much an individual knows about a particular employer (Cable & Turban, 2001; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004);

- How they assess the employer based on that knowledge, which includes employment-related and non-related associations (Collins & Kanar, 2014); and

- What experience they have with that employer brand (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Edwards & Edwards, 2013), and whether their contribution to the employer is valued and well compensated.

Brand image is important to job applicants, Cable and Turban (2003) found that candidates remembered more from advertisements from companies with a good brand image, and were willing to earn a little less with such a company. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) highlight that employer brand equity influences prospective applicants to apply or not, and is the desired outcome of employer branding activities, therefore, employer branding activities are designed to enhance both. The ultimate goal for EBE is to generate interest from potential employees in joining the organisation, whereas the goal for existing employees is to ensure that they continue experiencing the value associated with belonging to the organisation (Alshathry, et al., 2017).

2.3.1.3. Employer brand associations

Despite the advantages associated with being an employer of choice, it is astonishing that, with very few exceptions, research has overlooked the investigation of preferred choice brands beyond those related to consumers, neglecting other relevant marketing stakeholder relationships such as those with suppliers, investors or and more importantly employees (Ferrell, Gonzalez-Padron, Hult & Maignan, 2010; Hult, 2011).

Kotler (2003) describes effective branding as associating the brand's name with a desirable benefit which works best when the target market believes that the organisation is best at delivering the benefit.

Brand association is anything which is deep-seated in consumers mind about a brand, it can also be defined as the degree to which a specific attribute is recognised within its being – the elements of a brand's image. Aaker (1991) defines brand associations as anything linked in memory to a brand, and states that the main purpose of brand associations is to create meaning for consumers. According to Rampl (2014), being a preferred choice brand is a valuable asset for any organisation, both for remaining competitive and for attracting potential employees.

One group of employer brand associations that is particularly prevalent in the situation of choosing an employer, and therefore may also be relevant for an organisation to become an employer of choice, is job attributes, which include salary, advancement opportunities, location and work content (Rampl, 2014). In their study of potential applicants in the banking industry, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) show that advancement opportunities, locational considerations, the work itself and salary are the best predictors of employer brand attractiveness.

Most popular marketing and branding scholars agree that brand managers together with human resource management need to specify a set of associations to link with the brand, and to align activities for prospective employees to learn about these associations. Brand association match is therefore a cornerstone of effective brand building (Aaker, 2005; Kapferer, 2004; Kotler, 2003). Aaker (1991) trusts that brand association and brand equity are strongly interrelated because brand association enhances the memorable of a particular brand. Brand association also acts as an information collecting tool (van Osselaer & Janiszewski, 2001) to execute brand differentiation (Aaker, 1996) and it is highly effective in simultaneously boosting the brand and its equity, which leads to higher brand loyalty (Atilgan, Aksoy & Akinci,2005).

Keller (1993) conceptualises brand knowledge as associations in consumers' minds, in this instance a prospective employee, that vary by favourability (positive evaluation), strength (closeness to the brand node), and uniqueness (exclusive to one brand in the employment market). Equity is high when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds favourable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory (Kamakura, de Rosa, Mazzon & Russell, 1991). Based on a review of past work on brands, Till, Baack, and Waterman (2011) suggest the following five features of brand associations:

- **Strength**: Strength of association is defined as the strength of the connection between the association and the brand, one of the main goals of a marketing campaign is to influence the strength of consumers' associations with the brand and the exposure to marketing messages should increase association strength. The stronger the association, the stronger the connection between a brand and a consumer;

- **Favourability/valence**: Favourability of the association is defined as the degree to which the association is perceived as positive or negative. Some associations are seen as more negative or positive than others, therefore, brand managers need to continuously strive to create favourable associations in order to strengthen the brand's equity;

- **Uniqueness**: Association uniqueness is described as the degree to which the association is perceived as a distinct and different brand feature within competitive market. Brand specialists use brand positioning strategies in an effort to differentiate via unique associations, and this differentiation is often a source of competitive advantage;

- **Relevance**: The relevance of the association is defined as how much people perceive the association as a valuable, important, and purchase decision driving feature for a brand; and

- **Number**: Is defined as simply the number of associations in the consumer's associative network for a brand.

Positive associations are a strategic asset (Weigelt & Camerer, 1988) and a source of sustainable comparative advantage (Barich & Kotler, 1991), leading to more positive brand response (Krishna, 2012; Spears, Brown & Dacin, 2006). According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), prospective employees create employer brand associations based on the information that is not controlled by the employer, effective employer branding needs to take a proactive approach by firstly identifying the preferred brand associations and then striving to create these associations.

2.3.1.4. Employer branding process

Increasing attention has been given to the important role employees' play in the development and success of an organisation's brand; and they are fast becoming a recognised determinant of successful brand management. Employers need to understand the range of factors that influence career decision making and the role of employer branding in attracting human capital that best fits and contributes to the strategic aims of an organisation. An organisation should choose carefully its direction, by differentiating itself from other employers and by strategically positioning their important attributes, namely, their importance (attractiveness for prospective employees), the authenticity and superiority (distinct advantages) in the market they operate in.

According to Riel (2001), corporate branding is a progressively designed and executed process of developing and maintaining the good reputation of an organisation through sending the signals to stakeholders via its behaviour, communication and imagery using their corporate identity. Employer branding can be used as a long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, prospective employees and related stakeholders, the strategy can help in shaping the perceptions of an organisation as an employer of choice (Cooper, 2008).

Priya (2014) explains that employer branding is not a logo, letterhead or a clever advertisement campaign but it is rather the communication of an organisation's personality and unwritten promises about its culture to potential applicants; it is the combination of factors that differentiate an organisation as an employer and shapes

the perceptions of past, current and future employees. Employer branding is an elaborate process, mainly because it includes not only a single experience, but a lot more; namely, organisational prestige, organisational trust, leadership style, organisational value proposition and the unique atmosphere of a place. Employers who have a desirable employer brand value are perceived by potential employees as more attractive than those with lower employer brand value (Berthon, et al., 2005). Similarly, according to Fombrun, Gardberg and Sever (2000) the reputation of an organisation is considered as the net perception as the overall capabilities of company to meet the expectations of all its stakeholders

Aurand, Gorchels and Bishop (2005) argue that the impact of human resource plans, processes and actions have inconceivable impact on the corporate branding process of any organisation. Furthermore, Gosti and Wilson (2001) assert that human resource practices like recruitment policies must align with the brand values in order to avoid inconsistent messages. Wallace, Lings, Cameron and Sheldon (2014) states that, from a human resource management perspective employer branding has three elements, namely;

- The value proposition is developed around the organisation's culture, management style, current employment image which enable the organisation to conceptualise the value offered by their organisation to employees;

- This value proposition is marketed to potential employees; and

- The value proposition is also marketed to current employees so they enact the organisations values (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

Moroko and Uncles (2005) describe the employer branding process as an overarching concept that includes mechanisms that shape and define the brand, it also includes ways in which prospective and current employees interact with the employer brand. The employer branding process is made up of a number of general marketing and human resources concepts, these include relationship marketing, corporate branding, culture and identity, internal marketing, corporate reputation and organisational

behaviour. Gupta and Marwah (2014) created an employer branding model that identifies important processes that will work for any organisation, which is as follows:

- **Research:** Research is the starting point in employer branding because it helps the organisation find the deviation between where an employer is positioned and where it wants to be placed in the appropriate sector. It also helps in analysing and preparing the appropriate action plan for the implementation of the same. For this one, an organisation needs to be clear with the stages of research:

    - Clearly define the target audience.
    - Identify what the target audience wants and needs from an employer.
    - Measure and rate the present employer positioned in appropriate sector as compared to its competition.
    - Update the research data regularly.

- **Employer Value Proposition (EVP)**: The EVP helps an organisation to impart motivation to the employees and also reflects the organisation's brand image. An organisation can manage its EVP effectively by increasing the employees' participation.

- **Communication strategy**: An all-encompassing communication strategy always serves as a base to define the employer value proposition of an organisation, which is a very important tool for managers at all levels. A good communication policy makes the policy maker clear about what they have to communicate, how to get work done and also in defining the roles and responsibilities of the employees. Selecting the right and efficient way to communicate is what makes the adding point to employer branding.

- **Communication Solutions**: The employer value proposition helps to define the right corporate image and employer branding efforts. It is important that the medium of communication that has been chosen for communication should be

recognised and easily accessible by the target audience. Another important factor, organisations should strive to maintain consistency in the entire communication material.

- **Action:** Last step is action, which is similar to controlling, it helps in measuring deviations from what was planned, what is done or achieved and taking corrective measures or preparing as well as implementing plans to reduce deviations.

Employer branding is a combination of marketing principles and recruitment practices and is based on the concept that, just as customers have perceptions of an organisation's brand, so do other stakeholders including employees (Wallace, et al., 2014). The employer brand concept consolidates a broad range of existing thoughts regarding the way in which potential and current employees interact with an organisation's brand and, in particular, the organisation's brand image as an employer (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

2.3.1.5. Employer branding benefits

While product branding considers how a product is represented to consumers and corporate branding considers how an organisation is represented to a variety of external audiences, employer branding considers current and potential employees as branding targets. Employer branding strategies contribute towards increasing employer attractiveness in the labour market as a whole and, more specifically, among skilled potential candidates (Backaus & Tikoo, 2004; Collins & Kanar, 2014; Edwards & Edwards, 2013; Pingle & Sharma, 2013).

A key finding from research work in the employer attractiveness area is that potential recruits are more likely to apply for a job at a particular organisation that has an existing positive reputation. The greater a company's reputation, the more attractive it tends to be seen by potential employees. Cheung and Law (2008), Sluss, Klimchak and Holmes (2008) and Edwards (2009) present research signifying that employees are more likely to identify with an organisation when they perceive that the organisation is

supportive of its employees; higher levels of employee identification are found where an open communication environment is perceived (Bartels, Pruyn, De Jong & Joustra, 2007).

Organisations with a good employer brand will attract more talented applicants (Cable & Graham 2000; Cable & Turban, 2003; Turban & Greening, 1996). Employer branding also helps to retain talented individuals, build trust in leadership and develop stronger bonding ties through its impact on individual, team and organisational engagement (Gittell, Seidner, & Wimbush, 2010). Favourable employer branding can reduce recruitment costs by improving the recruitment performance (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Berthon, et al., 2005), contribute to employee retention and reduce staff turnover (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Berthon, et al., 2005) and improve organisational culture (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). In order to develop a favourable employer brand, managers have to understand what factors are vital in order to attract potential employees to their organisation. Kucherov and Zavyalova (2012), reference the following to identify the employer brand factors in leading organisations:

- Positive image in the labour market;
- Standard performance of obligations to employees, commitment to the psychological contract;
- Uniqueness of a combination of the material and non-material characteristics valuable to potential and current employees;
- High degree of recognition of the organisation as employer by target audience;
- Accurate differentiation of the organisation as employer from competitors in the labour market segment by target audience; and
- Stable policy and activities for positioning the company in the labour market.

Employer brand loyalty results in moving employees from employment contract to psychological contract. Such brand loyal employees prefer to remain committed to the organisation for longer duration even if the circumstances demand exploring other employment opportunities. Employer branding positively affects the productivity and the culture of the organisation.

2.3.2. Employer value proposition

Holttinen (2014) constructs value propositions as an organisation's proposal that integrates:

- **Sign value**: the meaning of value propositions addressing desirable cultural discourses,
- **Experience value**: Sign value materialised into experience in practice,
- **Exchange value**: Financial and non-financial sacrifices, and
- **Resources needed**: To address and materialise sign value.

Organisations co-create value with their stakeholders with the help of value propositions. According to Grönroos (2008) a value proposition ties organisations and their customers together, it is also a concept that creates loyalty amongst current employees and can be used as a draw card for prospective employees.

In the recruitment marketing literature, the value proposition concept is used as a tool to identifying why job applicants should choose to work for one organisation rather than another. The studies on *The War for Talent* by Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin and Michael (1998) and Axelrod, Handfield-Jones, Welsh (2001) suggest that producing a winning value proposition for employees involves tailoring the job and the organisation's brand so that they appeal to carefully targeted prospective candidates.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) suggest that an organisation's image as an attractive employer is based to a large extent on the employer value proposition it offers to prospective employees. Employer value proposition is a unique set of offerings, associations and values that positively influences targeted prospective candidates and existing employees (universamgloal.com, 2016). Employer value proposition concept is now recognised as having an important role in business strategy, and according to Webster (2002) it should be an organisation single most key organising principle; managing intangibles like brand and talent of an organisation is essential for earning competitive advantage and represents a statement of the organisation's core strategy.

It is important for organisations to identify unique value propositions which position them to potential employees as the "best place to work". Gowan (2004) argues the recruitment value proposition should comprise three key elements, namely; job and work characteristics, total rewards and corporate image.

To retain star performers and attract new talents, organisations need to establish their images as 'great place to work' or 'employer of choice' (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer branding can be used as strategic tool by organisations to market their unique employment offerings or value propositions to both their internal and potential employees; according to Eisenberg, Kilduff, Burleigh and Wilson (2001) value propositions are the central message of employer brand.

Top management that succeeds in managing their organisation's employer value proposition benefit from an increase in (the quality and quantity) their talent pool and employee engagement. An employer value proposition gives both prospective and current employees a reason to work for an employer and reflects the company's competitive advantage as well as its attractiveness. By analysing and understanding the factors that influence employer branding, and by defining a coherent and authentic employer value proposition, organisations can deliver sound and consistent communications during the communications phase of the signalling theory, and develop an attractive and unique employer brand.

The employer value proposition should be distinct, authentic, consistent and relevant. Parnell (2006) states that organisations that develop the most persuasive value propositions will have the best organisational performance.

Lanning (2003) points out that unfortunately the term value proposition is regularly used in a very casual and trivial way, rather than being rigorously developed from a strategic standpoint, also highlighting an observation that most organisations do not have clearly articulated value propositions. Therefore, from an employer's perspective, a strategically differentiated value proposition needs to motivate and retain current employees as well as attract qualified candidates, who are best equipped to help achieve the goals of the organisation.

2.3.3. Organisational communication

Communication is one of the vital components of every organisation, according to Daft (1997) organisational communication is the process by which information is exchanged and understood by two or more people, usually with the intent to motivate or influence behaviour. Weihrich and Koontz (1993) state that the function of communication in an organisation is to connect the employees of the organisation in order to reach mutual goals, the set of activities involved in managing and orchestrating all internal and external communication aimed at creating favourable starting points with stakeholders which the organisation depends on (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Within organisational context, communication is defined as exchange of information and opinions between the components of the organisation (internal environment) and the external environment of the organisation for implementing organisational goals and for carrying out daily activities within the organization (Tınaztepe, 2012).

Organisational communication commonly has two objectives (Van den Hooff, Vijvers, & De Ridder, 2003); the first objective should be to inform the employees about their tasks and about the policy and other issues of the organisation, and the second objective of communication is to create a sense of community within the organisation - in other words a means to provide information. It has often been observed that

communication and information sharing creates the conditions for commitment, and hence should be seen as an antecedent to employer attractiveness (Postmes, Tanis, & De Wit, 2001).

2.3.3.1. Corporate communication

Van Riel (1992) defines corporate communication as the arrangement of all the instruments in the field of organisational identity (communications, symbols and behaviours of organisational members), it is an appealing and realistic manner to create or maintain a positive reputation for groups with which an organisation has an interdependent relationship. According to Steyn (2003), corporate communication is a strategic management process which provides a strategic framework that helps to connect communication plans to the corporate mission, it is an outcome of a strategic thinking process by senior communicators and top managers taking decisions with regard to the identification and management of, and communication with, strategic stakeholders. Kotler (2000) relates corporate communication to integrated marketing communication in which an organisation carefully integrates and coordinates its communication channels to deliver a clear and consistent message.

Corporate communication can be viewed as a management function, derived from the overall organisational strategy, it integrates external and internal communication activities that can be used to either build, maintain, change or repair an organisation's reputations in the market. Corporate communication includes and manages all company's communication initiatives as an integrated whole with the aim of building and maintaining a respected corporate reputation across the various stakeholder groups, markets and audiences (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011); if this is done well it can enhance some aspects of an organisation's performance.

Scholars of corporate communication like Goodman and Hirsch (2010), Argenti (2015) and Cornelissen (2014) have proposed categorisation based on specialist areas such as media relations, internal communication and change communication, issue and crisis management, identity, image and reputation, corporate responsibility and investor relations. According to Shelby (1993) corporate communication can thus be

used as a broad and comprehensive term to include a variety of communication and management activities. The controllable functions of CCM, include managing public relations, employee communication, investor relations and corporate advertising (Balmer & Soenen, 1999). In order to play a strategic management role, Van Riel (1997) suggests that the corporate communication custodians of an organisation should ideally be placed at the top management level. This will allow both internal and external communication to be aligned in order to promote effective corporate communication.

The core objective for strategic communication is to communicate effectively (Goodman, 2000) and instil a positive attitude (Argenti, 2000) among current and perspective employees. The most important corporate communication provides a potential route for competitive advantage for the organisations (Van Riel, 1995).

The corporate communication strategy is conceptualised as a practical strategy, providing focus and direction to the corporate communication function. Acting as a framework for the communication plans developed to implement an organisation's strategy, it makes the corporate communication function relevant in the strategic management process by providing the link between key strategic issues facing the organisation and communication plans.

2.3.3.2. Talent management

Human talent is an organisation's main source of competitive advantage, an essential asset; and according to Hughes and Rog (2008) it is one that is becoming increasingly limited in supply. Organisations now find themselves competing for talent in an already limited pool of quality candidates. The task of attracting talent needs leaders to embrace new strategies and practices for attracting talent as well as to pay close attention to the requirements, preferences and expectations of skilled professionals. Before embracing new strategies organisations need to know how their current employer attractiveness is perceived by the skilled professionals; Cable and Turban (2001) succinctly addresses this by saying that employers must measure their existing position in the minds of their target market before developing their recruitment

strategies and interventions. Human resource management together with business unit leaders need to invest in distinct talent management strategies in order to successfully compete in the market; however, to be successful one has to explore and understand the concept of talent management.

Thunnissen (2016) defines talent management as a systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention and deployment of human talents. Talent management is meant to fulfil the quantitative and qualitative needs for human capital and to contribute to the firm's overall performance - profits, attractiveness, competitive advantage and sustainability. A better understanding of what skilled professionals are looking for is the first step in attracting them to particular roles, and by acknowledging what is needed, the local government as an employer can address some of the negative perceptions around the fading appeal of government jobs due to factors such as the cumbersome nature of the hiring process (or lack thereof) and the poor image of the public sector, including the perception that government work is neither challenging nor creative.

Perrin (2005) identified the following as key recruitment drivers; namely, competitive base pay, work/life balance, career advancement opportunities, competitive benefits, challenging work, salary increases linked to individual performance, learning and development opportunities, competitive retirement benefits, calibre of co-workers and the reputation of the organisation as a good employer.

One of human resources management's key deliverables is effectively attracting skilled professionals into the industry, integrating the signalling theory into the talent management strategies can add more value to the process. Ryne (1991) and Spence (1973) describe the signaling theory as being commonly used to explain how applicant attraction to a recruiting organisation may, in part, be influenced by information, or signals about the organisation's characteristics revealed during recruitment activities. When there is no information about an organisation's characteristics or the available information seems biased or propagandist, applicants tend to form perceptions based on the information conveyed to them through the recruitment initiatives.

According to Celani and Singh (2010) the signalling theory demonstrates the potential to explain the influence of predictors and antecedents of employer branding on applicant attraction outcomes. Organisations can take advantage of the signalling theory by using it to position the antecedents in their favour for applicant attraction because signals from a recruiting organisation is created from an individual level and from an organisational level viewpoint, this is referred to a multi-level perspective to the signalling theory. Therefore a dual message can be tailored for the skilled professionals in the early recruitment stages, an individual message received from the recruitment resource and an organisational one received through the organisation's brand presence in the market (advertising, word of mouth endorsements and existing brand experience).

Celani and Singh (2010) encourages organisations to have an in-depth understanding of the psychological processes involved when an applicant assesses the attractiveness of a recruiting employer, this will support their endeavour to improve applicant attraction for their human talent needs. Signals, if developed and executed correctly, can influence the quality and quantity of the applicant pool that the organisation can choose from. The theoretical model in Figure 2.3 shows the relationship between market signals, instrumental and symbolic inferences, applicant organisational identification, and applicant attraction outcomes in the recruitment context.

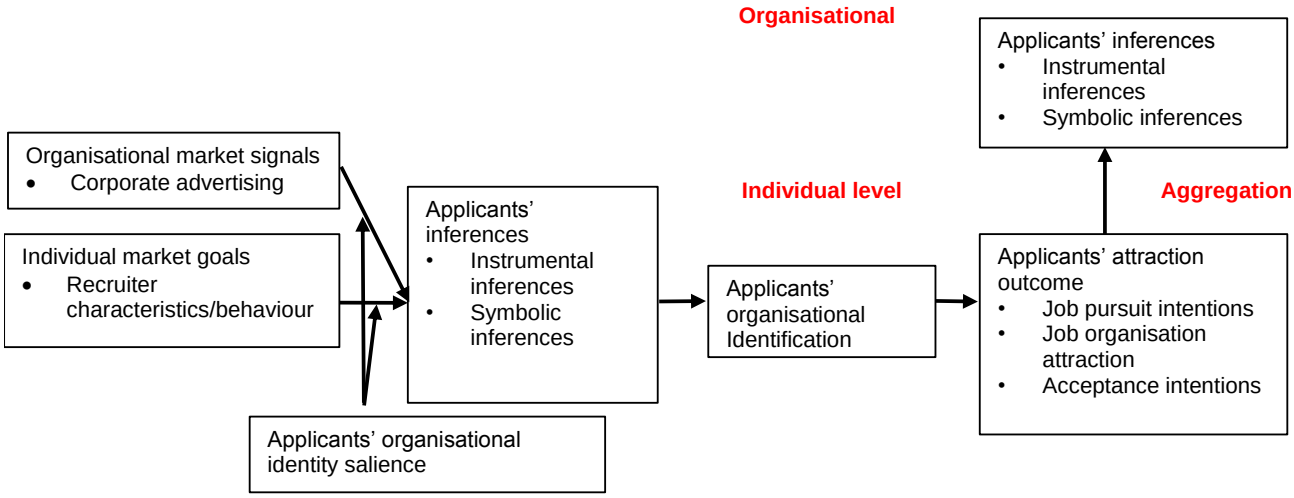

Figure 2.3: A multi-level model of the market signals relationship.
(**Source:** Celani & Singh, 2010)

Celani and Singh (2010) state that the more applicants believe that being a member of the recruiting organisation is significant to their social identity, the more likely they are to infer a greater number of positive inferences about the organisation from its recruiting activities and therefore have a more positive view of that organisation. Should the organisation implement the multi-level communications model, they could possibly see a positive impact on application attraction.

Rana, et al., (2013) highlight the notion that recruitment is planned and carried out through a defined process; this insures the maintenance of a consistent quality pipeline of human talent to meet current and future business requirements. Kelly OCG Outsourcing and Consulting Group emphasises that recruitment processes are organisation specific, and may typically commence with the identification of a vacancy, then the preparation of a job description, database sourcing, role marketing, response management, short-listing, interviews, reference checking, and selection.

An organisation that properly implements a talent management strategy reaps improved recruitment rates, according to Hughes and Rog (2008) the inverse of this could lead to constraints on organisational productivity, efficiency and limitations on

innovation. Taylor (2005) affirms that the effective recruitment of competent individuals into an organisation is an important component of the public administration.

2.3.4. Organisational factors

Villamil (2007) defines organisational attractiveness as the degree to which a prospective employee would personally seek an organisation as an employer and would recommend the organisation as an employer to others. Attracting and retaining talented human capital is a key source of competitive advantage. In order to attract better, skilled and qualified, employees, organisations have recently started using branding principles and practices in the area of human resources management (Alnıaçık & Alnıaçık, 2012).

A collaborative approach between Marketing and Human Resources could see organisational factors like perceived organisational support, organisational trust, leadership of top management and psychological contract obligations, being put at the forefront when it comes to attracting and retaining high quality employees. Turban, et al., (1998) address the importance of organisational attractiveness because any loss of highly qualified applicants may decrease the efficacy of an organisation, therefore, the creation of an organisation's attractiveness is considered crucial to the successful recruitment of high quality human resources.

2.3.4.1. Perceived organisational support

Employer branding focuses predominantly on recruitment and does little about the employee's life beyond on-boarding. According to Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, and Lynch (1997) perceived organisational support represents employees' general perception about how an organisation values their contributions and shows concern for their well-being. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) refer to perceived organisational support as an employee's belief that the employer values their contribution and demonstrates concern for their well-being at work. Perceived organisational support is believed to be an exchange between organisation and employees (Ahmed & Nawaz, 2015), where organisational commitment towards

employees nurtures the feelings of support from the organisation (Baran, Shanock & Miller, 2012).

According to Ahmed and Nawaz (2015) there are many ways through which organisations can express their commitment toward their employees, namely; justice, provision of growth opportunities, supervisor support, and co-worker support. Another way of looking at organisational support is from an employee's perspective or perceived organisational support, this refers to how employees develop a belief system about the degree to which an organisation values their contribution and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger, et al., 1986).

In today's extremely competitive landscape for recruiting and retaining talented employees, employees are viewed as one of the most important assets for most organisations, in particular service-based organisations, because of the benefits of delivering successful performances (Evans, Stonehouse & Campbell 2012). The survival of an organisation is linked to its competitive advantage and human capital itself can be used as strategic differentiator in the market, Ghani (2006) stated that employees lead to organisational success. An organisation's competitive advantage and its agility thereof depends on the extent to which its employees are committed to the organisation's goals, Arshadi (2011) reiterates that this obligation to reciprocate the organisation's concern for its employees increases their sentimental commitment towards the organisation and its objectives.

Managerial support for employees has a positive effect on their commitment to the organisation (Çelik & Findik, 2012). When leaders have high regard for their employees' efforts, this has a positive impact on their self-esteem and organisational affiliation. This constructive valuation also signals that good performance will be recognised and rewarded, in turn leading to increased commitment on the employee's part (Malik, Kazmi & Nadeem, 2016).

From an organisational point of view, perceived organisational support creates a felt obligation to be concerned about the organisation's wellbeing (Muneer, Iqbal, Khan & Long, 2014).

For employees, their organisation is a significant source of tangible (salaries, bonuses and other benefits) and intangible benefits (respect and social and emotional support). Therefore perceived organisational support also improves performance and causes withdrawal behaviours such as absenteeism and turnover to decline (Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell & Allen, 2007). The theory of organisational support thus stems from the expectations that employees have of their organisation. Perceived organisational support is also considered an assurance that an organisation will help its employees work more effectively in stressful or challenging situations (Ashford, George & Blatt, 2007). It is realised that job satisfaction is not only the consequence of perceived organisational support but also an antecedent of organisational commitment.

2.3.4.2. Organisational trust

Leekha Chhabra and Sharm (2014) suggests that employer branding starts with the analysis of an organisation's values, competition, culture, human resources and other policies, brand's current image strengths, trends and the like. This leads to identification of value propositions, based on which the employer branding strategies are articulated (Moroko & Uncles, 2008). Once the strategies are formulated, the communication channels for both internal and external marketing can then be identified to position the brand in the minds of the prospective and existing employees. This can potentially lead to employer attractiveness for the prospective employees and employer brand loyalty for the current employees.

Organisational attributes are an important factor in applicant attraction, moreover when an organisation is trying to strengthen and instil organisational trust amongst prospective applicant's, positive first impressions of an organisation increases the likelihood of post-interview attraction (Turban and Greening, 1997) and offer acceptance (Powell and Goulet, 1996) as cited by Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2010).

McLeary and Cruise (2015) define organisational trust as a feeling of confidence and support in an employer, where employees believe that an employer will be straightforward, follow through on commitments and not be opportunistic; they also believe that employees' perception of an organisation's trustworthiness (ability,

benevolence and integrity), combined with employee trust propensity this defines the organisational trust relationship. On the other hand Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman, (1995) define it as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party.

Organisational trust, as a job resource, is functional in achieving work goals, because situations that promote trust create a clear and predictable work environment in which employees feel free to take risks and invest themselves in their work performance (Kahn, 1990). Trust also implies that employees experience pleasure at work and opportunities for development which stimulates their psychological growth and learning, resulting in higher levels of engagement (Aryee, et al., 2015).

From an organisational perspective, trust is important when it comes to effective communication and successful team-working among co-employees as well as between employees and managers, it minimises risk and operating costs, and enhanced employees' commitment and productivity (Pučėtaitė, Lämsä & Novelskaitė, 2010).

When trust levels are high, organisations are better equipped to take risks and use resources optimally (Yilmaz & Atalay, 2009). According to Rampl and Kenning (2012) the five most important organisational attributes that entrench organisational trust and enhance employer attractiveness are:

- Investment in the training and development of employees;
- Caring about employees as individuals;
- Clear opportunities for long-term career growth;
- A variety in daily work; and
- A dynamic, forward-looking approach to business.

Several additional factors (Cufaude, 1999) are associated with a culture of trust in an organisation, including:

- The depth and quality of interpersonal relationships;
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities;
- Frequency, timeliness, and forthrightness of communication;
- Competence to get the job done;
- Clarity of shared purpose;
- Direction and vision; and
- Honouring promises and commitments.

In other words, employees who do not trust their leaders and organisation are less likely to be committed and effective. Davis, Schoorman, Mayer and Tan (2000) argue that management has a direct impact on trust, the trust in top management scale developed by Ellis and Shockley-Zalabak (2001) places greater emphasis on the role of communication in the development and maintenance of trust in top management. When employees recognise that the leadership has good insight and the ability to augment the organisation's growth and productivity by making competent decisions, being open, concerned and reliable, it will give them increased assurance of a more profitable future for the organisation (Spreitzer & Mishra, 2002).

Korthuis-Smith (2002) found that engaged leadership, direction, people decisions, organisational support, and performance feedback and improvement opportunities were highly related to all dimensions of trust. Northouse (2001) supports the link between performance and trust with regard to integrity and consistency when he stated that transforming leaders build trust in organisations by making their positions clearly known, standing by them, and by articulating and consistently implementing a

particular direction. An organisation can leverage off these traits by positively influencing them in order to position itself as an entity that proactively strives to grow organisational trust amongst its prospective and current employees.

2.3.4.3. Leadership of top management

The role of the leader has never been as important or demanding as it is today. More than ever before, organisations are concerned with building connections and interactions among employees and the overall leadership capacity of the workforce (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & McKee, 2014). Leaders at all levels must deliver consistent, sustainable results in the organisation and get things done with limited resources; as well as ensure that the right people are in the right roles with the right skills. Özbağ (2016) emphasises that ethical leadership is important because of its effects on the behaviour and performance of individual employees. According to Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005) ethical leadership is defined as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to employees through two-way communication reinforcement, and decision-making.

To fully realise the benefits of building the leadership capacity, organisations must expand beyond the constraining focus on single, formal leaders and high potentials, whose span of influence will be limited. Rather, organisations must identify ways to enhance the capacity for leadership behaviours and leadership influence shared between every employee of the organisation. Effective team leadership is one of the most influential factors in developing high-performance teams (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp & Gilson, 2008).

Culture is very important in bringing an organisation towards success, provided that all employees in the organisation are fully committed on this goal. Organisational culture is the element which bonds the aims of employees to achieve high levels of excellence while reflecting the image of the organisation. An appropriate leadership style, that harnesses positive organisational culture, is one of the challenges for most

organisations operating in today's world of rapid change and the need for continuous development of both current and prospective employees of the organisation.

Successful team performance has become a key driver of organisational success (Ernst & Young, 2013), and thus optimising leaderships' performance has become an imperative for organisations. Nag, Hambrick and Chen (2007) affirm that strategic leadership which involves the formulation and implementation of major goals and initiatives taken by the organisation's senior management based on the consideration of resources and an assessment of the internal and external environment in which the organisation competes.

Top management serve as role models by creating a moral atmosphere of a working environment, characterised by shared perceptions of right and wrong behaviours, as well as common assumptions about how an organisation typically handles moral issues (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum & Kuenzi, 2012). According to Brown et al., (2005) ethical leadership is made up of two important dimensions, namely; moral person dimension and moral manager dimension. The first is about possessing personal traits and characteristics such as honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness whereas the second indicates a manager who proactively seeks to influence employees' ethical conduct (Bouckenooghe, Zafa & Raja, 2015). As moral individuals, ethical leaders are fair, principled, and genuinely concerned for their employees. As moral managers, ethical leaders set, communicate, and reinforce high ethical standards (Brown et al., 2005). Moral managers emphasise ethical standards and put ethics at the forefront of their leadership agenda (Trevino, Hartman & Brown, 2000).

To help shed light on the competencies that differentiate top performing leaders; Calantone, Gonzalez-Padron, and Hult (2008) and Bina (2012) proclaim that OnPoint Consulting, in partnership with the American Management Association, collected data on the managerial effectiveness of 622 leaders across organisations including government agencies, non-profits, multi-nationals, Fortune 500, and Fortune 1000 organisations.

The results pointed to four key findings:

- The ability to build trust and demonstrate personal accountability is the foundation for leadership success;

- Exceptional managers, regardless of level, also demonstrate competence in three other core skill areas, namely; action orientation, building teams, and critical and analytical thinking;

- In addition to the four core competencies, it is important to master specific competencies that are critical for success at each level of management; and

- The ability to execute plans and initiatives effectively is the hallmark of an exceptional manager.

This new model of leadership is inherently multilevel in that employees interact via dynamic leader-follower exchanges within a broader network of leader-follower relationships (Carter, DeChurch, Braun & Contractor, 2015). Organisations need leaders who will not only manage people, but who primarily will work with them to achieve common goals, who will inform about changes in the organisation and participate in analysing and solving individual and group problems.

2.3.4.4. Psychological contract obligation

Psychological contracts can be defined as the set of expectations held by the individual employee which specifies what the individual and the organisation expect to give to and receive from each other in the course of their working relationship (Sims, 1994), it describes the perceptions of an employee regarding the reciprocal obligations between themselves and their employing organisation, for example, the organisation's obligation (training and development) in exchange for employee's obligation (hard work), the contract is therefore deemed an important component of the relationship between employees and their organisations. The creation of the psychological contract is a process that takes place during newcomers' first days at work and it lasts for a few

weeks. During this time, the outsider becomes a newcomer and faces the new working reality, promises and information are intensively exchanged and expectations are being revised (Louis, 1980).

The psychological contract can be classified into transitional, transactional, balanced and relational contracts, which vary in strength and generality (Rousseau & McLean Parks, 1993). Transitional contract, as the name suggests, is a passing phase of relationship between the two parties reflecting the absence of commitments regarding future employment; whereas the transactional psychological contract indicates obligations that may be considered to be "economic" in nature, largely based on remuneration and other short-term benefits to the employee which are publicly observable; lastly, relational contracts on the other hand involve long term obligations based upon trust and are concerned with personal, socio-emotional as well as economic resources. Rousseau (1990) proposed that within these two sets of obligations there are subsets of transactional and relational obligations. Transactional contracts are a set of short-term economically focussed attitudes involving limited involvement between the parties (Raja, Johns & Ntlalianis, 2004). Relational contracts are a set of long-term and broader based attitudes that include factors related to loyalty, security and growth (Raja, et al., 2004).

The psychological contract is the foundation of the employment relationship (Rousseau, 1989). In this market where the war for talent is rife, just as with high-potential employees, in-demand employees' motives to stay with their employing organisations are often grounded in perceived guarantees from the organisation (Dries & De Gieter, 2014). The psychological contract can be broken down into the three distinct components, namely; obligations, fulfilment and breach. Obligations and fulfilment refer to the employees' perceptions of specific promises the organisation has given them, and the extent to which the employee perceives them as fulfilled, respectively (Robinson, 1996). In contrast, when an employee notices that the organisation has neglected to keep a promise in the psychological contract, this is a psychological contract breach (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Psychological contracts provide employees with the feeling that they can influence their purpose in an

organisation since they are party to the contract and because they choose whether to carry out their obligations.

From a management perspective, it is the content of the psychological contract that is important rather than the type of contract, it is the content of such contracts that is managed or determines an employee's behaviour and that, determines feelings of fulfilment or breach. Tallman and Bruning (2005) identified five employee obligation dimensions, which are;

- Commitment to the organisation;
- Commitment to the job;
- Stewardship behaviours;
- Show initiative; and
- Serve the needs of the organisation.

The dimension of commitment to an organisation includes variables that relate to a demonstration of support for an organisation in ways that go beyond job requirements and includes loyalty to and trust in the organisation. Commitment to the job involves carrying out the job to the best of one's abilities, being honest, using one's time well and using good judgement. Stewardship behaviours require accepting and making the best of what you have at work. The dimension of showing initiative focuses on employees' supervision of others and their motivation to deal with issues encountered on the job. The last dimension, serve the needs of the organisation, relates to employees' willingness to accept a transfer and remain in the organisation.

The appraisal of one's psychological contract emerges from the rational assessment of the consistency between the perceived terms of the employment agreement and what has been delivered by the employer. When a discrepancy occurs, individuals will presumably increase or reduce their participation and involvement in the organisation.

Fulfilment has been linked to employee outcomes more strongly than obligations (Lambert, 2003), maybe because repeated fulfilment is thought to progressively increase trust between the employee and an organisation over time (Conway, Guest and Trenberth, 2011) and reinforcement is a mechanism by which fulfilment drives employee outcomes (Arnold, 1996). Traditional outcomes related to psychological contract fulfilment, or lack thereof, are organisational commitment (Sturges, Conway, Guest & Liefooghe, 2005), organisational citizenship behaviours (Turnley, Bolino, Lester & Bloodgood, 2003), and turnover intentions (Sutton & Griffin, 2004). Good contracts may not always result in superior performance, but poor contracts tend to act as demotivators and can be reflected in lower commitment and heightened absenteeism and turnover. The concept of a contract is about will, agreement, obligation, promise and commitment, staying true to one's commitments, cooperation, sanction and bond.

2.4. Employer brand management function

The third objective of the study is to determine who in the organisation is responsible for the employer brand management function.

While the marketing team's external focus is to create a value proposition to consumers; the human resource function aims to create an employer value proposition that will resonate with prospective and current employees. Both branding and employer branding have recently emerged as growing themes in the scholarship of organisation studies and human resource management, with contributions within these fields attempting to further understand the meanings, practices and significance of working under branded conditions (Brannan, Parsons & Priola, 2015).

This work has extended the disciplinary focus beyond marketing expertise on which branding studies traditionally resides and that generally has as its main focus the relationship between the brand and its customers (Thomas, MacInnis & Park, 2005). The question of where in the organisation does the employer brand management function sit then comes into play, and if this is determined by the brand's audience. Collaboratively, business, marketing and the human resource functions have a role to

play in an organisation's culture, policies and processes, and the way these are portrayed internally and externally.

Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2010) simplify the functions as follows; the human resources function can be seen as shaping the nature and development of the organisation to attract and retain the employees required to maintain corporate growth, while the marketing function can then contribute expertise they typically provide to any product management and development team in an organisation, these are: helping to understand the needs and wants of the target market (i.e. prospective and current talent), identifying meaningful segments within the target market, finding effective channels of communication, managing the consistency of brand messaging and representation across all target market touch points, and providing means of feedback from the target market to the product managers and developers (i.e. to human resources).

According to Russell and Brannan (2016), intangible assets and intellectual capital are used as a strategic advantage and human resource specialists can make a greater claim to their need to be included in the brand management process because it will contribute to sustained organisational success. Human resource specialists also have a role to play with building bridges to other functions within the organisation, such as the marketing department and ensuring that relationships are established with clients and customers (Martin, Beaumont, Doig & Pate 2005). Despite the frail links between human resources and branding in the past, it is recognised that in a highly competitive market, the 'war on talent' and the need to be an 'employer of choice' is an important human resources and business imperative for some organisations.

Employees are more committed when supported by appropriate styles of leadership (Mitchell, 2002). Internally, the relationship between management and employees, the level of autonomy granted by managers to employees, and the level of flexibility managers allow employees in service delivery influence branding messages (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). Leaders set a tone that influences the way employees feel about their employer, the way they perform for and interact with customers (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001), and consequently, how the employer brand is perceived.

Chunping and Xi (2011) state that key factors to implementing employer branding are:

- **Business executives (leaders),** with the increasing competition amongst organisations, many senior managers recognise the advantage of talent as being an important factor for an organisation to succeed. Leaders in organisations are responsible for setting corporate strategy, corporate values and mission, setting examples and actively play the role of brand ambassadors.

- **Human resources department** is the key driver in identifying talents, constructing human resource processes, systems, structure and incentive system to promote employer brand.

- **Business sectors**, is responsible for ensuring business goals, direction, subordinate employee behaviour consistent with company's value and employer brand.

The employer brand does not exist in a stagnant market environment and it has to be organisationally shaped; enterprises therefore need to build their employer brand with their own unique characteristics, and establish a series of evaluation and feedback system. The system can be two fold, firstly, for external use - to attract excellent potential employees, mainly investigating and analysing attraction towards employer brand. Secondly, for internal use - to maintain good relations and increase existing employees' sense of belonging; to using job satisfaction, employee loyalty, employee turnover and other indicators to reflect on the implementation outcomes of employer brand (Chunping & Xi, 2011)

Organisations have to attract employees and retain them which is why becoming an employer of choice is a collaborative and thoughtful business strategy which drives organisations to benchmark themselves against others in the 'Best Places to Work' rankings.

2.5. Conclusion of Literature Review

The purpose of the review was to expand on the antecedents of employer attractiveness and the employer brand management function. By answering the research questions, the study aims to understand the effects of employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors; as well as identify who in the organisation is responsible for the employer brand management function. This is significant because in-depth value adding strategies and tactics can be tailored for employer attractiveness.

2.6. Research questions for the study

The research questions of the study were converted into the following research objectives:

The Research Objective 1: To determine the antecedents of employer attractiveness.

The Research Objective 2: To determine the consequences and effects of the antecedents of employer attractiveness.

The Research Objective 3: To determine who is responsible for the brand management function at the City of Johannesburg.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, literature relating to the antecedents of employer attractiveness was extensively covered, as well as the management of the employer brand management function. Three research objectives were introduced over the course of this literature review. The methodology of this research will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and describe the methodology that was used in this study, Creswell (2013) defines methodology as plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. There are three objectives that this chapter aims to achieve, namely; to explain the chosen research strategy, the research design that was followed, and the methods that were used. To conclude the chapter, any limitations of the methodology will be highlighted, along with a discussion on the validity and reliability of the methodology.

3.2. Research methodology

Research approach or strategy has three processes that can be possibly applied, namely, qualitative research strategy, an unstructured and exploratory research methodology based on small samples that provides insights and understanding of the problem setting (Wagner, Kalluwich & Garner, 2012); quantitative research strategy, an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2013); and the mixed method research strategy, the term mixed method research is used as a simple shorthand to stand for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research in a single project (Bryman, 2012).

Babbie (2015) defines data collection instruments as documents comprising of questions and other useful items aimed at gathering information applicable for analysis. There are various tools or instruments accessible to assist when collecting data relevant to a study, such as; questionnaires, interviews, observations, case studies and diaries.

3.2.1. Quantitative approach

Quantitative research strategy is one of the three research strategies. Bryman (2012) defines it as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Quantitative research identifies variables to study, uses unbiased approaches and observes and measures information numerically, it also allows for structural equation models that incorporate causal paths and the identification of collective strength of multiple variables (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative method has a number of shortcomings, it is often conceded out in unnatural or artificial environments, relies on numerical options rather than narratives, it pre-sets answers and does not necessarily indicate how people feel, a study could be misguided based on wrong questions, and it does not give people a chance to talk about their opinions (Creswell, 2003; Malhotra & Peterson, 2006; Malhotra, 2010).

3.2.2. Qualitative approach

This research was conceptualised and conducted using a qualitative approach. Creswell (2013) defines it as an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The main objective of qualitative research was to have an in-depth understanding and represent the experiences of the participants as well as to attain an understanding of the topic being studied through the experiences of those being studied (Elliott, et al., 1999). This methodology was the most appropriate because of a number of reasons, its advantages are; issues can be examined in detail and in depth, interviews are not limited to specific questions and can be guided in real time, subtleties and complexities that are often missed by the quantitative approach are discovered through the qualitative research strategy.

Qualitative samples are usually small in size, and individual interviews are probably the most widely used method for gathering information in qualitative research. A semi-structured data collection instrument in the form of an interview was used to gather the relevant information for the study. An interview provides an opportunity for detailed analysis of participants' personal perspectives, for in-depth understanding of the

personal context within which the research phenomena are located as well as for very detailed subject coverage.

A semi-structured interview is one modification of the half-structured interview method; the topics were known beforehand but the strict design and order of questions that is to structural interview is missing, an interview guide contained key questions to be put to the participants, but also allowed issues to be explored as they arose.

3.3. Research Design

Bryman (2012) defines research design as a framework for the collection and analysis of data. Malhotra (2010) and Neuman (2014) complement Bryman's (2012) views by asserting that research design is a framework that specifies how you shape the study and collate the relevant data to explain marketing research problems. Four types of research designs exist and can be applied as frameworks, these are; cross sectional design, longitudinal design, quasi experimental design, case study and comparative. For this study, the cross sectional research design was be applied. Malhotra (2010) defines the research design as a type of design involving the collection of information from any given sample of population elements only once at a single point in time.

3.4. Target Population and sample

The population signifies the pool of units from which a sample will be chosen (Bryman, 2012). For this study the target population had to comply with the following criteria;

- The participants are individuals who make decision at a senior level within the target organisation structure;

- The participants were required to be aware of and understand employer attractiveness and its advantages; and

- The participants had to reflect normal perspectives and personal experiences.

With the above criteria in mind the target population for this study included senior decision makers in the City of Johannesburg structure. The sample deduced from the population comprised of the following:

- Senior managers of business units; and
- Various human resources and marketing custodians.

3.4.1. Sample and sampling method

Bryman (2012) articulates that sampling is the share of the population that is carefully chosen for a specific research study by means of a sampling method. Sampling a population can be done either using probability sampling or non-probability sampling techniques; for the resolve of this study the sample was drawn using the purposive sampling technique, which means participants were picked from the population on the basis that they could purposely enlighten the study (Creswell, 2013), see Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Profile of respondents (by position)

Description of respondent type	Number that was sampled
Senior managers of business units	2
Human resources custodians	4
Marketing and communications custodians	8

As reflected in Table 3.1 above senior employees that utilised human resource on a daily basis is included in the sample population.

3.5. The research instrument

Bryman (2012) and Wagner et al., (2012) describe research instruments as tools that have questions intended to solicit information applicable for analysis, broad themes on what needed to be researched were identified upfront in order for the research questions to be answered. The instrument was collated based on what needs to be known, it therefore needed to include the purpose of the study as well as be agile enough to allow for quality content to be collected.

Research instruments are unstructured, semi-structured, or fully structured; for the purpose of this study, a semi-structured research instrument was used. Wagner et al., (2012) define the semi-structured research instrument as an interview led according to an interview guide which comprises important open ended questions to be put to the participant, the tool also allowed issues to be explored as they arose; semi-structured interviews are often preceded by observation, informal and unstructured interviewing in order to allow researchers to develop a keen understanding the topic of interest necessary for developing relevant and meaningful semi-structured questions (Stuckey, 2013).

For the purpose of this study the research instrument was referred to as a discussion document, its purpose was to assist in constructively guiding the discussions and it also allowed the researcher and participant to have a more interactive engagement. The discussion document is attached in Appendix 1, the document comprised of two sections; the first section required the participant's employment history, and the second section had 6 questions that probed for information about employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication, organisational factors, the employer brand management function and any other inputs that the respondents might have wanted to include. The research instrument was designed using the literature view as reference.

3.5.1. Interview construct

The main objective in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the respondents say, it also seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level (Kvale, 1996). Respondents were interviewed on a face-to-face and one-on-one basis at a venue of their choice, the purpose of the study was explained to each of them before the session started and they were assured of the confidentiality of their personal details.

Standardised and open ended questions were asked across all interviews, this approach enabled quicker interviews that allowed for easier analysis and comparison. The interview schedule was shared few days before the interview, this gave respondents time to acquaint themselves with the questions and come better prepared for the session. Interviews ranged from 15 to 60 minutes, and were recorded; questions were structured in such a way that they were easy to comprehend and could followed up by secondary questions. Respondents were engaging and enthusiastic about the purpose behind the study and the contribution they were making.

3.5.2. Interviews: The data collection

The qualitative research method approach was used in this study because its emphasis lies in producing data which is rich in insight (Abratt & Mofokeng, 2001). Data was collected via semi-structured face-to-face interviews, before this could happen the organisation was contacted beforehand to identify the business unit leaders that were selected to participate in the study. The individuals were then contacted telephonically to solicit willingness to participate in the in-depth interview. 90 minutes long interviews were scheduled around the participants' availability and conducted on their premises.

An interview schedule summarising the open-ended questions was shared with the interviewees prior to the interviews, this promoted ease in expressing viewpoints because of the time given to prepare and reflect on the topics to be discussed. A list

of predetermined questions is commonly formulated and serves to guide the interview process in a focused, yet flexible and conversational manner (Fossey et al., 2002).

All interviews happened face-to-face and recorded; during interviews, respondents were asked a series of open-ended questions in a chronological fashion. Interviews were recorded using standard iOS recording software for iPhone 6, which was then transcribed later and analysed in order to identify themes, this guaranteed that the meaning of the data is not overlooked or misplaced. As Schreier (2012) notes, it is imperative that data has meaning, or else its value is lost.

3.6. Pilot study

A pilot study refers to the mini version of a full-scale study, also called a feasibility study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) done in preparation for the major study; this includes specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule (Baker, 1994).

One of the gains of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance cautioning about where the main research project could be unsuccessful, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether recommended methods or instruments are unfitting or too complicated (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

A pilot study was carried out prior to engaging the participants, three colleagues were asked to test the instrument by engaging in simulated interview processes in order to determine the length and aptness of the instrument. The pilot study was conducted in the same manner as the full study; the same methodologies as described in this chapter as well as statistical analyses were used.

The pilot study helped in a number of ways, namely; it aided in practicing how to be in control of an interview i.e. actively reigning in participants when they were deviating from the questions asked, it allowed to determine whether the duration of time allocated to interviews was sufficient, and it also helped in making sure that the sequence of the questions made logical sense.

3.7. Data analysis

Neuman (2014) describes data analysis as methodically organising, assimilating and scrutinising data to search for patterns and relationships among the specific details. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data.

A six phase Thematic Analysing approach was used to analysis the data as suggested by Braun and Clark (2006) and Javadi and Zarea (2016). The steps consist of the following actions:

Phase 1: Developing an understanding of the data: The phase entails the process of transcribing the recorded interviews. This helps the researcher to familiarise and gain an understanding of the data collected.

Phase 2: Generation of initial codes: The identification and marking of elements of the data that appears significant to the research with coding that define themes.

Phase 3: Searching for the themes: This is followed by grouping of these themes into clusters and sub clusters to form main themes and sub-themes.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes: These main themes and sub-themes are revisited and refined. During this process new themes may be defined, combined with other themes or removed. Mind maps are used during this phase to create thematic maps of the themes, reflecting main and sub-themes.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes: The essence of each theme that was identified where defined to capture its meaning in the context of this study. This detail analysis is supported by the data captured.

Phase 6: Producing the report: The write-up of the findings of the thematic analysis is aimed to address the research questions of the study using data extracts in support.

3.8. Limitations of the study

It is acknowledged that sample limitations exist. A number of potential respondents refused to participate, which may have skewed the representation of the sample. There were no serious ethical limitations associated with this research, although it is acknowledged that some data collected from respondents may have been exaggerated.

3.9. Validity and reliability

Construct validity refers to the extent to which the operationalisation of constructs taps into the actual theoretical constructs that one is trying to measure. According to Creswell (2013) qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for accuracy of findings by employing certain procedures.

3.9.1. External validity

External validity speaks to whether or not a result found in a particular setting with a specific small group beyond that situation or externally to a wider range of settings and many different people can be generalised (Neuman, 2014). In order for the interview to be valid, it needs to ask questions that will result in honest answers. The type of questions asked and the phrasing of questions will assist with achieving measurement validity (Sevel, 2013), external validity therefore strives to guarantee the overall quality of the study. The triangulation of content analysis and interviews permits research to be cross-referenced and crosschecked (Creswell, 2013) and has been successfully applied by Aaker (1996). The input of multiple and independent sources serves to build a credible and justifiable research result.

3.9.2. Internal validity

The extent to which dependable conclusions can be made about the associations between variables, on the grounds that all other external influences have been

eliminated; internal validity means we have not made errors internal to the design of a research project that might produce false conclusions (Neuman, 2014).

While qualitative research, by nature, includes interpretation by the researcher, bias may be brought into the findings (Creswell, 2013). Conceding this permits readers to recognise that the person involved in the research has been important to shaping the findings.

To offset the subjectivity of the researcher, a peer reviewer will be participating in reviewing and interrogating the findings (Creswell, 2013); this individual is the research supervisor, whose purpose will be to add validity to the process.

3.9.3. Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an instrument measures a construct the same way each time it is used under the same conditions with the same respondents (Wagner, Kalluwich and Garner, 2012), it is concerned with the question of whether the results of a study are repeatable (Bryman, 2012).

Therefore to certify that the chosen approach (qualitative approach) is consistent, using reliability measures is both essential and critical. Creswell (2013) suggests a number of practical measures, including ensuring that transcription errors have not been made and that codes are consistently applied during the coding process.

Transcripts will be crosschecked against transcribed material, and the data will be compared with the codes to ensure definitions have not been loosely applied. Double coding will also be applied to ensure consistency.

3.10. Ethical considerations

The main reason of ethics in research is to safeguard the welfare of the individuals participating in the study (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006). The fundamental

principles underlying the ethical considerations are based on informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality.

3.10.1. Informed consent

Gravetter and Forzano (2009) state that informed consent promises that the participants have full disclosure regarding the methods and aims of the research, and can then make an informed decision regarding their willingness to partake. It was voluntary for the City of Johannesburg's employees to participate in the research, context and purpose of the study was availed when the request for the interview was sent to them. Respondents were verbally informed that the interview was audio recorded and that the recordings will be listened to only by the researcher.

3.10.2. Ensuring no harm comes to participants

There were very minimal risks associated with partaking in the research as no participants name was link to any data.

3.10.3. Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity

Anonymity ensures that the respondents' names will not be mentioned anywhere, and that they cannot be linked in any way to the study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). In order to ensure the anonymity of the respondents, aliases were used in all written documents, and any telling characteristics were changed or removed. According to Gravetter and Forzano (2009) confidentiality ensures that the identities of the respondents are kept confidential, and all identifying information that is included in the interview will be disguised when writing up the research findings. Respondents were assured verbally that the interview and its content will remain confidential.

3.10.4. Conclusion

In this chapter the research methodology was outlined; this included, the research strategy, the research design, the sampling design, the research instrument and the data analysis approach. In the latter part of the chapter reliability, validity, limitations as well as ethical considerations were discussed. The following chapter discusses the details of how the data was analysed and provides the presentation results.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This study seeks to understand current trends in employer attractiveness from a South African perspective where the focus will be predominantly on the Local Government. Structured interviews were conducted and the results are presented using direct quotes from participants as well as charts. The antecedents will be discussed first then followed by the consequences.

4.1.1. Demographic profile of the participants

The purpose of this section is to give the reader an idea of the background of the participants. A total of fourteen interviews were conducted, table 3.1 shows the participants' profile, and all participants were academically well qualified with experience from a wide spectrum of fields. All participants had undergraduate degrees, out of the fourteen, ten have postgraduate degrees. The Postgraduate Degrees include five Masters in Marketing and one Masters in Business Administration (MBA). Table 4.1 below gives a break-down of the positions that the participants currently hold in the organisation.

Table 4.1: Position held by the participants

Current positions	
Participant 1	Manager: Communications
Participant 2	Head of Marketing
Participant 3	Head: Communications and Public Relations
Participant 4	Senior Human Resources Manager
Participant 5	Stakeholding Management
Participant 6	Deputy Director
Participant 7	Deputy Director
Participant 8	Senior Marketing Manager
Participant 9	Strategic Relations Specialist

Participant 10	Senior Communications Specialist
Participant 11	Senior Communications Specialist
Participant 12	Senior Human Resources Manager
Participant 13	Chief Operations Officer
Participant 14	Deputy Director: Marketing

4.2. Research objective 1: The Antecedents of employer attractiveness

The Research Objective 1 was to determine the antecedents of employer attractiveness for the City of Johannesburg. The findings will be presented in the next section.

4.2.1. Antecedent: Employer brand management

Participants noted and acknowledged the importance of the role employer brand management plays and how it contributes towards an organisation's ability to attract and retain its skilled and qualified employees.

"It has to do with the primary brand and the primary positioning of the organisation in the first place, whether Private or Public" (Participant 2)

"Brand management is quite critical in the organisation because for an employee at the grass root level...somebody feels important that I am part of that organisation and in the way they do things; and provided that they are also shared in terms of the vision of the company and how the little things they do at their level contribute the bigger picture, it makes that employee feel part or as a citizen of that organisation" (Participant 6)

"Well I think it is important because Government competes with Corporates out there, and there is a perception that when you are a Government employee you are just lazy, you do not know what you are doing, and and or you are either

under qualified or there is favours done; and actually it is not the case" (Participant 8)

"It is important, I think it attracts young talent, it attracts people like you and I who go through so much length to study to empower ourselves, to come with new knowledge, creative innovations that the City could use to up itself and compete with other Cities. So employer brand is very important, I think it is a carrot which you dangle to your prospective, remember employers are competing, Cities are competing for talent! So there must be something that pulls me to the City to come to work for it" (Participant 9)

"Generally brand management for an employer is key to not only attracting but as well as retaining the staff. We would want to attract people, we would want to be an employer of choice to new graduates and stuff. So you need to position yourself in such a way that you are attractive to prospective employees" (Participant 11)

Several participants felt that the City of Johannesburg did a better job at branding itself as a destination and differentiating itself as a destination of choice.

"Joburg the city has a very strong brand and the City of Joburg's Municipality has quite a strong brand they play into each and off each other" (Participant 4)

"One thing I can tell you is that in all the Municipalities that I have worked, the greatest thing the Johannesburg does, Johannesburg can brand! City of Joburg brands and I felt that impact when I was still an external stakeholder" (Participant 7)

"It is happening currently, I think a lot of people when they even think of Gauteng, before they even think of Gauteng they think of Johannesburg. I think it speaks to how they (CoJ) have done a pretty good job for the brand itself" (Participant 10)

"The City is very good at selling themselves to the public" (Participant 11)

Having discussed the importance of employer brand management, and how effectively the City of Johannesburg manages to position itself as a destination of choice; some of the participants highlighted the noticeable need for employer brand management in the organisation, and how the City does not proactively position itself as an employer of choice**.**

"No, not at all, I did not get that sense" and *"So the whole of Government fails anyway in terms of employer branding but a number of other for example the Department of Treasury at a National level is renowned with being very pioneering, very professionally run. So there are pockets that have established themselves as professional" (Participant 2)*

"I think in terms of trying to attract employees, I think you almost need to already be in the Sector, most of the City's jobs are advertised internally, it is not really outward looking" (Participant 4)

"We attract good but the problem is that we cannot retain them, because once they are in, they then suffocate because they do not see the match of what they do and what is being sold as the value proposition of the City" and *"It is important but when it comes to the City of Johannesburg, we are very good in terms of branding but we do not sell that to our internal customer, which is the employees, it is more for external and hence we are able to attract talent, people like Trevor Fowler, you can imagine!" (Participant 6)*

"But I think there is still a long way to go, if you check other brands from the Private Sector people know what Coca Cola is and what it stands for, their ethos and stuff like that" (Participant 10)

Some participants acknowledged that there is still some room for improvement.

> *"Massive! Massive, at the end of the day the problem with Government is from the outside professionals have a fear that to get ahead you need to be associated with certain power" (Participant 2)*

> *"The first thing in your mind is a private company because they (Local Government) never come to varsities and present themselves and what they offer" (Participant 5)*

> *"There is room for growth, we have good plans very good plans, I think the problem is the drivers and implementers of these plans, and in the process the brand the branding part also gets compromised because if you are always on the news for corruption then it says something different from what you are preaching" (Participant 6)*

> *"Open days you will find it is the big corporates that are there. Local Government, in fact Government largely is not there to market itself, to say 'look we are looking for professionals', in students' minds it is, uhm, we have a long way to go, and it is that as a student you are thinking that Government is where my parents work" (Participant 10)*

> *"The perception out there is negative; we are seen as lazy, not qualified, not competent, we do not know what we are doing, ja, that's how it is" (Participant 14)*

It can be assumed that employer brand management is an antecedent of employer attractiveness and has an impact on whether current or prospective employees perceive an organisation as an employer of choice.

> *"Then people start taking pride about the achievements of the organisation, then it comes from inward and then it goes outward; and then people start perceiving or realising the benefits of that particular organisation, so it is not a once of thing,*

I think it is a process and a journey towards an ideal, you start inside before it becomes an actual ideal and then people would want to work for that company" (Participant 1)

"The only thing about you coming into the Government Sector is job security but job security must also be affiliated with job satisfaction" (Participant 3)

"I think it is because of your branding, it even goes much further, I think you should look at the reputation as well" (Participant 12)

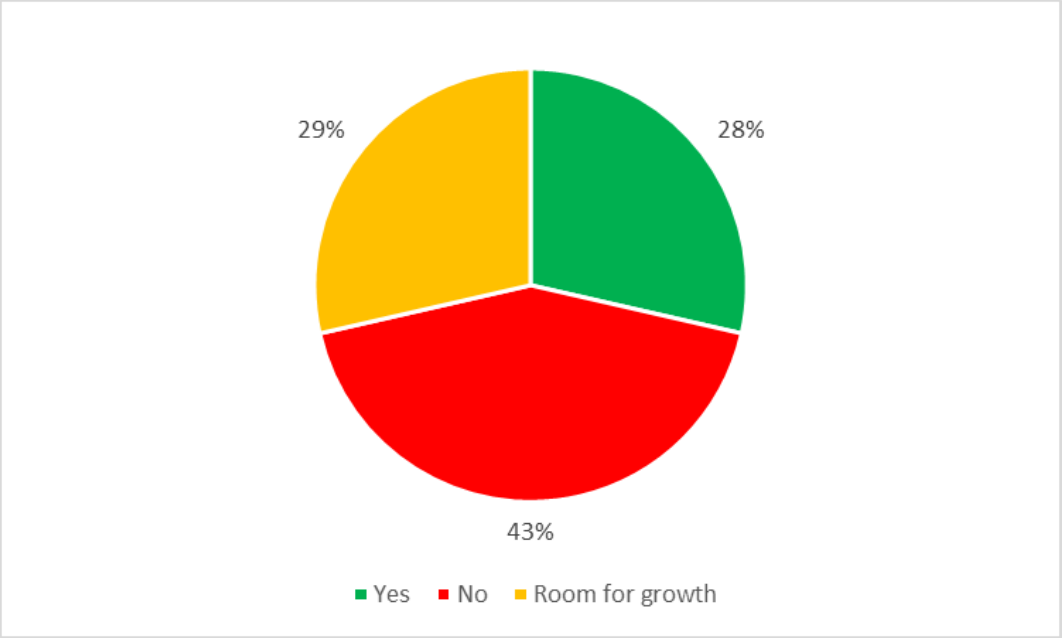

Figure 4.1: The presence of employer brand management

Figure 4.1 shows that the majority of the participants felt that employer brand management is not prioritised as a key deliverable by the City of Johannesburg.

"I think it is a process and a journey towards an ideal, you start inside before it becomes an actual ideal and then people would want to work for that company" (Participant 1)

"It has to do with the primary brand and the primary positioning of the organisation in the first place, whether Private or Public "(Participant 2)

"The first thing in your mind is a private company because they (Local Government) never come to varsities and present themselves and what they offer" (Participant 5)

A portion of the participants, as shown in figure 4.1, mentioned that more can be done to improve the organisations' employer brand; they stated that the City already does a good job in positioning itself as a destination of choice to its consumers, and thought that the same principles can be applied when it comes to their employer brand management.

"There is room for growth, we have good plans very good plans, I think the problem is the drivers and implementers of these plans, and in the process the brand the branding part also gets compromised because if you are always on the news for corruption then it says something different from what you are preaching" (Participant 6)

"Then they will lose talent to other Cities, like Cape Town, to Buffalo City, the Metros that are seriously growing and competing for talent and remember Johannesburg is the number one city in Africa, in terms of the economy, size of the budgets and all sorts; so think about it, if Johannesburg would lose talent, it would lose itself technically" (Participant 9)

"It is happening currently, I think a lot of people when they even think of Gauteng, before they even think of Gauteng they think of Johannesburg. I think it speaks to how they (CoJ) have done a pretty good job for the brand itself" (Participant 10)

Some participants, as shown in figure 4.1, affirmed that the City was indeed proactive in their approach when it came to employer brand management.

> *"One other thing that differentiates the City of Joburg from many other institutions, we play in the Private Sector space, we play in the Public Sector space and we play where we are which is Local Government" (Participant 7)*

> *"They are up to date with social media, because where I was employed previously we were not really on social media platforms" and "the City is very good at selling themselves to the public" (Participant 11)*

4.2.2. Antecedent: Employer value proposition

Every organisation has a value proposition that it offers its current employees, as well as uses it to attract prospective talent; the employer value proposition describes how an organisation differentiates itself from competitors. Participants are aware of the importance of an employer value proposition especially when it comes to employer attractiveness, and how it needs to resonate with both current and potential employees.

> *"The value proposition in terms of attracting the skills I have already spoken about from the Public Sector it is in its infancy stage and it will take a long time before they reach a point where we realise as the Public Sector that everything in life has patterns, you need to either attract the right kind of a person into a Service Orientated organisation as opposed to a Commercial Sector organisation, those are two distinct differences"* and *"I think for me the value proposition is not only monetary but it should be intrinsic" (Participant 1)*

> *"For you who is outside and you looking for an employer of choice where you can learn and also exhibit your skills where can I go, well if you are somebody that is looking forward to deploy your skills, then the vision might talk to you because you would say I want to be where things are not yet ideal or where they should be, I want to be part of the processes of fixing this" (Participant 6)*

"It is continuous up skilling, so the growth does not have to be, we do not encourage the straight stock standard" and *"Johannesburg I employ thirty three thousand people but I have more than fifty two job families, career pathing streams, so one has an opportunity to move from look I was at EMS, I learned so much, you will not tell me anything about fire engines, emergency management, disaster management, I know about everything, I was advising the Chief" (Participant 7)*

"In terms of the Public Sector I would say ja the City is doing much better than your Provincial, I would say better than most Local Government employers but in terms of, uhm, it is not quite ready to compete with the Private Sector" (Participant 11)

Having established that there was a general consensus regarding the lack of a formal employer value proposition by the City, participants delved into what they perceived to be the obstacle.

"I think the City has a great amount of room for improvement to start a whole culture" and "Definitely! A lot of room for improvement, I seriously think that it is still premature for me to say we have a hunky dory brand, if I have to be really honest" (Participant 3)

"I am not sure, I just feel like there could be improvements. Communicating it more" and *"You know Private they are more advanced in regards to promoting their brand, I think the City is progressing" (Participant 5)*

"In terms of value proposition we are still in a transition of defining that, the new administration they do not want to associate with that previous administration's value proposition; so it is in the process of being refined retuned, I do not think we are there yet" (Participant 6)

"Currently with the new administration of DA and EFF this collaboration Government, they are revisiting the vision and the mission statement and so

on, with that then obviously the value propositions are also going to change and then these things need to factor in there so that when the Mayor sells the City of Johannesburg each Department needs to bring in something to say what is it that you want the Mayor to sell" (Participant 7)

"I think there is a challenge there, it needs to be done, because by then so doing you get employees that give their all to make it point that they do their work, they take the brand to gracious heights" (Participant 8)

"I think it does not, to be quite honest, it does not. I think that is where I said previously, I mean if Coca Cola people know what it stands for, your auditing companies, your previous KPMG, people know what it stands for and you know that they offer that, they are attractive by nature" (Participant 10)

"Remember I said that we are about service delivery, those soft issues do not matter, that is the problem. We do not nurture our employees" (Participant 14)

Participants felt that the City of Johannesburg needed to build and entrench a positive internal culture that employees can identify with as well as embrace. The participants also noted that the City needed to take an inward looking approach by being more transparent, use current staff successes as testimonials and possibly take learnings from other organisations to positively contribute towards its employer value proposition.

"There is an inward looking type of an approach as an organisation to saying what do we do best, how can we achieve our strategic objectives and how do we make an impact" and *"For us to make a visible impact our value proposition of saying we want the City to be the cleanest in the world is work in progress, I understand, but now we need to infuse or inculcate this culture, this value proposition to the lowest worker in the organisation, now they start being advocates of cleanliness in the City" (Participant 1)*

“A person would start working at Unilever and within a few years you are driving a BMW, we saw mobility so we could aspire. Shell was another one, so let us ask the question first, what makes an employer brand attractive – let us define that. Because when we say does it have a value proposition, because very few of these organisations that I have just mentioned do not set out to have a value proposition, they exist and perform in such a manner that they become attractive, but it is not defined” (Participant 2)

“Yes! And it is cascaded down and then programs are created to facilitate some of those” (Participant 3)

“Maybe you have already designed certain tools to solve certain organisational problems and you are looking for a place to test these tools or to refine tune them, so yes, the Local Government or the Public Sector would be attractive to you” and *“But for somebody that still wants to grow, learn and who does not have the experience or previous work experience I do not think it will appeal to them” (Participant 6)*

“You see with us, we are trend setters, and I think that comes from leadership, I think previous Mayors that we have had, I think acumen is important. The former Municipal Manager Trevor Fowler, and the one before Mavela, the trend is that the City Managers, two City Managers were engineers, Trevor and Mavela were engineers” (Participant 7)

“And I think most importantly young people with talent, your Millennials, they want to travel, they want to see the world and they want to experience so if as part of the package such opportunities are highlight that in this job you will be able to – once or twice – travel the world, then wow!” (Participant 9)

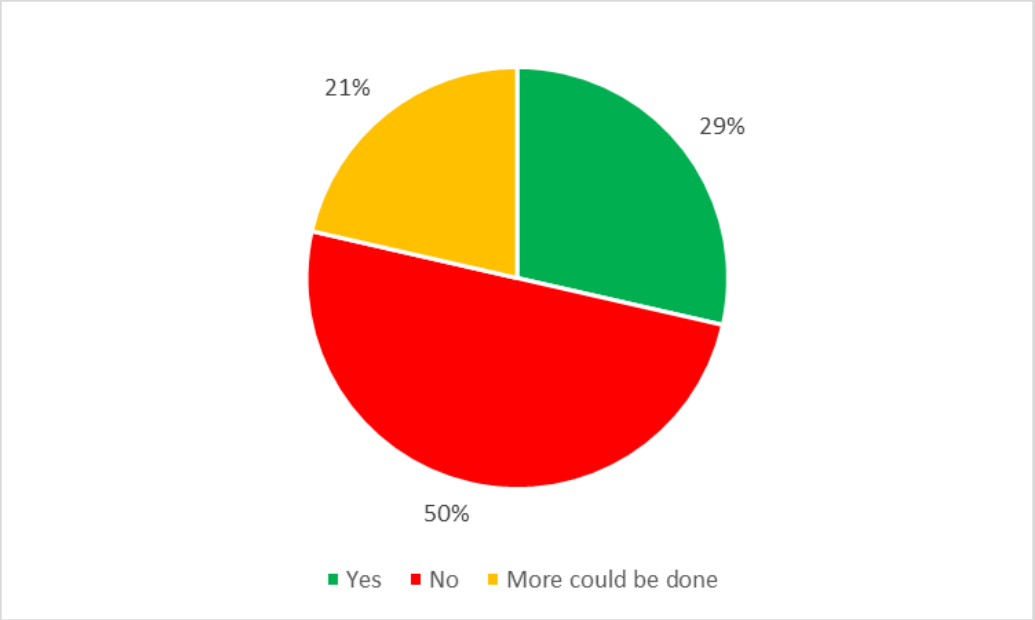

Figure 4.2: The presence of an employer value proposition in the City of Johannesburg

As shown in figure 4.2 the majority of the participants felt that the City does not have formal employer value proposition readily available to use as a retention and attraction tool.

> *"To be honest no we do not have one"* (Participant 3)

While other participants cited that more could potentially be done to harness the little that exist, and attributed the lack of to the administrative cycle.

> *"And the problem with that is the political transition that every five years we change; we are under new leadership, different ethos and people are fatigued, every five years there is a transition, people are fatigued"* (Participant 7)

Some participants felt that the City's employer value proposition was strong enough to compete with other Metropolitan Municipalities.

> *"I think it is strong enough in regards to other Local Government because even in the way we present ourselves" (Participant 5)*

And takes care of its employees.

> *"so employee assistance from a social point of view is critical, also from an educational and training point of view, it is critical, and also just to look after the wellbeing; so what we have realised is since we have introduced sisters clinics at our depots, it started to reduce the absenteeism and people are feeling like they are cared about. A caring company is someone that actually keep people" (Participant 13)*

As well as the fact that the City prides itself as a learning organisation.

> *"Also plus education opportunities if you want to study further, at the moment if I may say my education is being sponsored by the City. Before you proceed let me add, each and every employee of the City every year, every year without a fail, they must produce an ILP - it is called Individual Learning Program – where they must go to school whether they like it or not" (Participant 9)*

4.2.3. Antecedent: Organisational Communication

It was found that communication is a concept that connects employees of an organisation as well as builds comradeship, it also facilitates information sharing across the organisation. This view is supported with the following statements from the participants.

> *"I think the life blood of the organisation is in communication, whether you want to acknowledge it or not. If there is a gap between senior management, middle management and your lower end staff; how do you therefore transmit or communicate the organisational values or strategic objectives such that the lowest worker in the organisations can sing those things and say we as an organisation are going in this direction"* and *"one of the best and effective way of communicating is for leadership to go down to the people, we have done that in this organisation for the past three four months, you get to understand the real problems at other levels – depot levels, and you get to realise that*

people are committed to their work but also they need management to be committed too or address issues that they are facing on a daily basis" (Participant 1)

"I think it is a useful thing, one of the most important things for an organisation to have clear channels of communication and to feel like you really do know what is going on" (Participant 4)

"Internally it works that much because what you communicate to your internal clients would not necessarily be of the same interest to your external clients" (Participant 6)

"Internal staff they need to be kept abreast of issues within the organisation, they need to know what is what, they do not want to be taken by surprise" (Participant 11)

"You know I have looked at some of our sister companies that have a monthly newsletter and all of that, we have started that, and I think immediately it brings a change and you feel like you become part of the company. So communication internal and external is key for people to understand what is happening. Anyone will tell you it should be a two way communication and that what we also do is our MD will go out and he will do road shows and talk to the people" (Participant 13)

Participants felt that organisational communication can fulfil a dual role, to facilitate information between employees and leadership of an organisation as well as act as a talent management tool.

"The thing is intellectual capital and organisational capital is very important, there is a number of people, good people that have left the organisation. We have to get people who have new energy, new blood but the thinking also has to be there and it has to be aligned; so it is not just about having a logo as I

alluded to in the beginning, that logo in itself needs to have intrinsic and extrinsic values" (Participant 3)

"It is important to retain staff and also it is important to make them feel appreciated and motivated because I believe if employees feel appreciated in their work even when they speak about the company from outside they are going to talk about positive things about the company" (Participant 5)

"I do not think externally they do enough to showcase such instances as a caring City where Neo outside would say 'Wow! I cannot believe Johannesburg has done that for someone who was a driver'" (Participant 9)

"Yeah, yeah because it is through communication that you can teach and it can help you retain, it can help you attract" (Participant 11)

Participants understand the advantages and importance of having a coherent communications systems, they do state that some improvements are needed to enhance the existing communication system

"Very very important and I will be very honest, we are really not doing it in the broader schemes of things" (Participant 3)

"I think in terms of branding ourselves against our peers, the current communication systems does talk to that but in terms of attracting, to some degree it will attract somebody that is already in the employment of the City" (Participant 6)

"The communication may have not gone out fully the way I would envisage it to but internally it is there and this is one thing that still needs to be communicated and very well" (Participant 7)

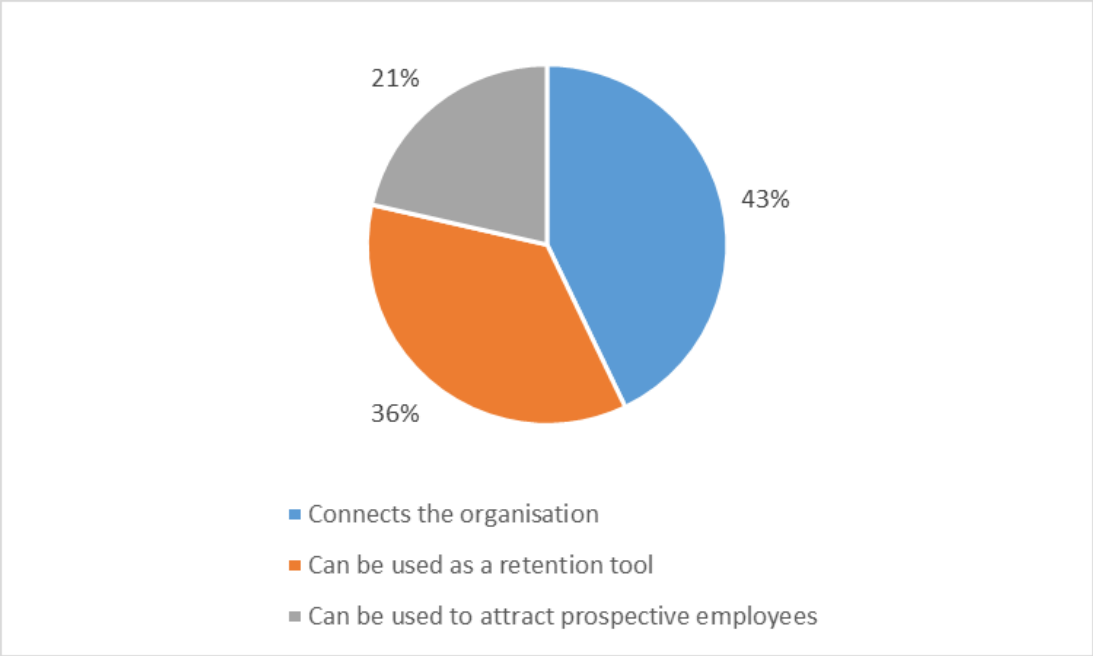

Figure 4.3: Uses of organisational communication

There is a general consensus amongst the participants that organisational communication is indeed critical to an organisation as depicted in figure 4.3, not only does it connect employees of an organisation,

> *"One of the best and effective way of communicating is for leadership to go down to the people"* (Participant 1)

It can be used as a retention catalyst,

> *"The thing is intellectual capital and organisational capital is very important, there is a number of people, good people that have left the organisation"* (Participant 3) and *"It is important to retain staff and also it is important to make them feel appreciated and motivated"* (Participant 5)

As well as position the organisation as an employer of choice.

> *"when you see 'Worldclass African City' you want to be part of that worldclass and the way it is branded and communicated you would want to be part of that;*

but internally, I want to see how the City enables me to deliver on that, how is the City going to enable me to deliver on the vision, that communication needs to come for internal people" (Participant 6).

4.2.4. Antecedent: Organisational factors

The primary purpose of the City of Johannesburg is to provide an effective municipal service to its residents. In order to execute on its mandate of service delivery the City needs an astute and committed workforce that can perform optimally to meet the necessary objectives. Organisational factors such as support, trust, leadership and psychological contracts play a key role in retaining existing employees - ensuring that employees feel needed and appreciated in their roles.

"Then came Parks Tau towards the end of my tenure there, and the one thing about Parks he had that mix of politician and technocrat, so you kind of felt that maybe the City was in good hands. He was the man of the people, he was young and he was educated; and under his tenure came Sputla, so he started hiring these relatively young CEOs for his entities and seemed to be a breath of fresh air into the entities" (Participant 2)

"I think currently I would say no because we interact with all the professional levels in the City, from the CM (City Manager) right through to the sweeper so you then see that walk the talk principle is not there" and *"So I think we are experiencing leadership bankruptcy, employees do not really trust leadership and now with the new transition it even makes it worse because it is a new political party and it is also associated with white people and all that" (Participant 6)*

A happy and committed workforce increases an organisations attractiveness as an employer because existing employees position the organisation as an employer of choice through a form of ambassadorship.

"The psychological contract, once you disturb that thing to say you know they are no permanent jobs, and you go into a Public Sector organisation that we have all grown up knowing if I can work in the Public Sector I am secured for the rest of my life, now that narrative is changing and it is changing very fast" (Participant 1)

"Yes I do think it is important to have it because other companies have such you know. Sometimes I feel like we should have team leadership things, to motivate the employees or sometimes get an award for the best performing, just like how they do it in Private companies" (Participant 5)

"The City is very supportive in terms of organisational trust. But in terms of working spaces, where people work and they trust their work and they trust that the political leadership supports them, no!" (Participant 10)

"I mean for an organisation as big as City of Johannesburg, I think there has been to be honest that visible leadership but I think because the organisation is so huge, it is only that top leadership, you still need middle leadership" and *"I mean I have been fortunate to work in the City and for different departments, and you could see – I am talking about the general staff, the despondence. Some will even tell you they expect something as a 'thank you' from their immediate management, but it is not there you see, so you can imagine if those things your basics are not there" (Participants 11)*

"A caring company is someone that actually keep people. It when it comes to leadership it is the same thing, it is 'walk the talk'! Those are the key things" (Participant 13)



Figure 4.4 Organisational factors consideration in the organisation

Figure 4.4 shows that more than half of the participants felt that the City does not consider the organisational factors, the impact they have on staff moral and the influence they have on employer attractiveness.

> *"Currently in Pikitup there is a trust deficit" and "Currently in Pikitup there is a trust deficit" and "There is a new MD who started in May last year and obviously with change comes uncertainty, comes distrust, comes a whole lot of factors that have to be addressed at senior level so that they can permeate down to everybody in the organisation" (Participant 1)*

> *"And the unfortunate thing about Government is things stop and start depending on who is in power, that message should resonate right through Public Service, you are there to serve, you make a choice to go and serve, it is not just a job" (Participant 2)*

As with many organisations there is always room to improve on elements that have an bearing on employee centricity, figure 4.4 shows that a portion the participants that the City can do quite a lot in improving the current state of the inclusion of organisational factors.

> *"I think there is room for improvement, you may also remember that our Local Governments, now I am going to go into politics, it has been too politicised, I think that it is where it is anyway" (Participant 8)*

> *"There is a guy, if I may give an example, he is a driver but he is going to Wits; he just finished a two year course to empower himself, these are benefits not for middle or upper management, it is for everyone" (Participant 10)*

> *"I would say that the top top management, yes the support is there, from top down" (Participant 11)*

A small percentage of participants noted that they felt that organisational factors where considered internally and employees were reaping the benefits of the outcomes.

> *"There is also very obvious implications of the leadership doing things, with this rooting out corruption and stuff like departments are getting changed, their leadership is being changed; you can see the effects if not necessarily that direct relationship with them" and "I think there is quite strong level of trust within my department, I can feel that; but obviously there is distrust in the organisation at large with corruption and things like that, it is not a cohesive thing, it is so big as well" (Participant 4)*

> *"In an organisation like ours where we have got over 5000 people, it is critical, especially if you look at the level of the people" (Participant 13)*

4.3. Research Objective 2: Consequences and effects of the employer attractiveness antecedents

The second research objective was to determine the consequences and effects of the antecedents that influence employer attractiveness for the City of Johannesburg. The findings will be presented in the next section.

4.3.1. Employer brand management

An organisation's employer brand is very important, it is a vital component in retaining and attracting skilled and qualified employees, and the lack of this function seems prevalent in the City of Johannesburg.

> *"So there are pockets but Local Government does not make that effort, when you look at Local Government across the board from outside, you are thinking Ward Councillors - have you met Ward Councillors?!" and "They are nominated and elected to office by the people, they represent them. Half the time nobody has trained them on what they have to do, they are just activists and sometimes activists without a purpose "(Participant 2)*

> *"I think we want civil servants who want to make things happen" and "I think one of the appealing things is feeling like you could make a difference in this space" (Participant 4)*

> *"As the Cities we compete, we compete, especially in my space which is Tourism, everybody else wants to go elsewhere but your destination; so it is then important to hire or to get people that also have that understanding to say as much as I am in Marketing and I am marketing Government entities" (Participant 8)*

> *"I recall saying to myself and the team that 'I want to see this brand competing with the KPMGs of this world, I want the City of Johannesburg to be the*

employment of choice'; we brag about the fact that we are the biggest, the number one employer in Johannesburg" (Participant 14)

Employer branding has a value consequence, if not done attentively the brand might not resonate with prospective and current employees thus diminishing its attractiveness.

"Open days you will find it is the big corporates that are there. Local Government, in fact Government largely is not there to market itself, to say 'look we are looking for professionals', in students' minds it is, uhm, we have a long way to go, and it is that as a student you are thinking that Government is where my parents work" (Participant 10)

"The most important thing if you are going to come in a public service organisation is to know that if you are going to serve the public then you are offering them a service, you are responsive to what they request and that tells you a lot about an organisation" (Participant 12)

"You see, that is why there is a positive and a negative. Because of all the publicity Pikitup has been having for the past ten years, a lot of it has been negative. So people associate employment with the negativity, very few people will apply" (Participant 13)

4.3.2. Employer value proposition

The employer value proposition describes how an organisation differentiates itself against competitors in the human capital market, it also has an impact on whether an organisation is viewed as an employer of choice. If an organisation does not consistently and continuously communicate its employer value proposition this will inevitably have a negative effect on the ability of the organisation to attract and retain employees.

"There is an inward looking type of an approach as an organisation to saying what do we do best, how can we achieve our strategic objectives and how do we make an impact" (Participant 1)

"You know sometimes students do not know what the City is offering, communicate more about the bursaries that we have and how one can apply, and also go to varsities more because I feel we lack in that" and "And I also feel that with regards to retaining employees that are already there because when you study with the City it is up to your Honours level, so I think they should also increase that to Masters, not just Honours, there should be some improvements regarding that" (Participant 5)

"We are going through that transition where they must tell us in their new high level arrangement where are they going to place them, and how will they affect then their identity. So I think it is constant evolution, but we have reached a point now where things can, where a juncture where things can and they ripen and open ready for change" (Participant 12)

4.3.3. Organisational communication

An organisation does not function in insolation and the communication needs to be adapted to suite the receiver of the communication otherwise the possibility of ineffective information transfer increases. It seems from the discussions that there is possible room for improvement.

"If there is ineffective internal communication that knowledge or those decisions they are relayed at the top but they must be implemented at the bottom; now are we going to achieve? No we are not going to achieve" (Participant 1)

"A few years ago the Government had a campaign which was the Batho Pele campaign, I think it was powerful because it made public servants, I do no not

know to what extent, reflect and remember that they are first and fore most there to serve the people" (Participant 2)

"When you are communicating you cannot communicate the same to different LSMs, change the language because some people are illiterate, so it should be different to how we communicate with them, so that everyone is able to get the message" (Participant 5).

The way and by whom the communication is made may have an effect on the perception on employer attraction.

"Funny enough you realise as well that a lot of information on how best to turn the organisation around or best to do certain services for communities lays at the bottom of the organisation, not at the top of the organisation" and "communication, communication and then acknowledging best practice" (Participant 1)

"When you see 'Worldclass African City' you want to be part of that worldclass and the way it is branded and communicated you would want to be part of that; but internally, I want to see how the City enables me to deliver on that, how is the City going to enable me to deliver on the vision, that communication needs to come for internal people" (Participant 6)

"A student would not think about the City of Joburg, Local Government would be last of their list of choice. I think it speaks volumes to that we are not proactive" (Participant 10)

4.3.4. Organisational factors

It was found that the organisational factors (support, trust, leadership and psychological contract obligation) have a serious impact on how the City of Johannesburg is regarded as an employer of choice, which in turn impacts its reputation and its ability to attract talent.

"It is up to the current administration, which they are trying so much to bring back that trust and to demystify some of the negative perceptions from employees towards the party" and "I think change management is one key element with any transformation in the organisation but your change management starts with your leadership" (Participant 6)

"I think you should look at the reputation as well. If you are a municipality that is performing well, or if you are responsive to the people, and they express some kind of dissatisfaction with you, whether it is a service delivery protest or complaints to editors or however they channel their frustrations; as long as you can be responsive to them that also has an impact on the brand of the organisation because there is no perfect Government anywhere in the world, but it is how you relate to the people that you serve" (Participant 12).

Trust, employees want to be assured that the trust between themselves and an employer exists, a mutually beneficial trust relationship, that strong relationship between employer and employee.

"Once this entity fails, does not live up to the brand promise, then the trust relationship is broken, and the same applies to Services Industries which is what Municipalities are, they are there to serve. So, you break my trust, how do I then continue to believe in you, competency and living the brand promise is what matters" and "And the unfortunate thing about Government is things stop and start depending on who is in power, that message should resonate right through Public Service, you are there to serve, you make a choice to go and serve, it is not just a job" (Participant 2)

"I would say in Government as a whole, I do not think that [change in thought] we are actually get to have that attitude of you know I just need to look into my own space, get my own work done, you do not really go that extra mile to say if 'I do this and go the extra mile I know I will be remunerated in such a way', because I mean even, just to make an example – overtime is not compensated

in financial terms, you just get a day off; I have enough leave days, I do not need that I need money (Participant 11).

Support from leadership seems to be minimul in the City, employees feel that more can be done to cultivate the habit of support internally. The quality of leadership plays an important role in an organisation, an astute leader is agile in is approach and is able to prioritise employee centricity.

"If the entire executive do not see the same vision or do not believe in the same vision then it is difficult for them to sell to the vision lower levels in the organisation, so I think change management is one key element but that is dependent on leadership" (Participant 6)

"No - Remunerate us accordingly, that is all people want honestly. I mean there are strikes every what, every year, every second year? It is about increments, it is rare that for a strike to say 'our working conditions are not up to standard'. Yes, it does happen that employees complain about poor working conditions but the majority of the strikes are about money" *(Participant 11).*

Corruption has a major impact on organisational factors, particularly leadership. If leaders are perceived to be involved in corruption, it diminishes their character and reduces confidence from employees.

"The system is kicking out those that do not adhere to the values of what a public servant is, I mean there has been many incidents of theft, fraud, corruption and people are getting caught and dismissed" and "I am trying to create this employer brand whereas I am perceived in this way and internally as well what comes out that you see on a day to day basis – Mashaba has fired this one for corruption, it is part of the process of cleaning but the results will not come today, it is an ideal that you are moving towards" (Participant 1)

You see one thing is dependent on the other and I think what is more important is the leadership in the organisation plays a very critical role in terms of being

the brand ambassadors themselves first so that the employees can see that if they say zero tolerance for corruption we can see from these people, I think that is something that we are still lacking and hence employees they do not associate with the vision of the City" (Participant 6).

"Yes! Because the respect that I have you would not think that I work for a Municipality you would think that I work for RMB or all these other corporates, these glamorous branded corporates yet they are also as corrupt as us, we all the same" (Participant 7).

4.4. Research Question 3: Employer brand management custodian

The Research Objective 3 was to determine who in the City of Johannesburg is responsible for the employer brand management function. The findings will be presented in the next section.

4.4.1. Employer brand

Participants were asked whether they believed that the City of Johannesburg proactively promoted its self as an employer of choice; figure 4.2 shows that majority of them stated that they did not believe that the City is putting enough effort into employer branding but also highlighted the importance of employer branding for an organisation when it comes to attracting and retain employees.

"No, not at all, I did not get that sense" and "So the whole of Government fails anyway in terms of employer branding but a number of other for example the Department of Treasury at a National level is renowned with being very pioneering, very professionally run. So there are pockets that have established themselves as professional" (Participant 2)

"I do not think it really wants to position externally, is my sense based on very little information, I think most circulars, most job adverts almost says this is for internal use" (Participant 4)

"Yes, I think it is important because another thing that I have discussed in regards to their brand positioning is like you know in varsity you have these open days? But have you noticed that majority is private companies, you never see Local Government, and so I think Government needs to improve in regards to that" (Participant 5).

"It is important, I think it attracts young talent, it attracts people like you and I who go through so much length to study to empower ourselves, to come with new knowledge, creative innovations that the City could use to up itself and compete with other Cities. So employer brand is very important, I think it is a carrot which you dangle to your prospective, remember employers are competing, Cities are competing for talent! So there must be something that pulls me to the City to come to work for it" (Participant 9)

Participants also felt that the City of Johannesburg did a great job in positioning itself as a destination as well as a consumer brand.

"Joburg the city has a very strong brand and the City of Joburg's Municipality has quite a strong brand they play into each and off each other" (Participant 4)

"Apart from Johannesburg being the economic hub, the City of Gold, the financial services capital of South Africa. The City of Joburg as a Municipality, their brand is big and it has an impact, when they brand they go all out, and that is one great thing, that is one strength, one among other strengths that City of Johannesburg has it right" (Participant 7).

"It is happening currently, I think a lot of people when they even think of Gauteng, before they even think of Gauteng they think of Johannesburg. I think it speaks to how they [CoJ] have done a pretty good job for the brand itself" (Participant 10).

4.4.2. Employer brand management custodian

There is no certainty as to who in the organisation should be the custodian of the employer brand management function.

"I think, as I said project led organisation, what is it that we want to achieve, how do we want to appear to our external stakeholders, what values do we want to communicate to our external stakeholders, how do I conduct myself as an employee of this particular organisation; it starts at senior level, it cannot start anywhere else" and "in terms of this organisation I would pick up Ops, pick up the COO into that, you would pick up the head of HR into that and the MD into the whole project" (Participant 1)

"I think one of the places it should sit is with the Comms people. That said, our department is quite integral to thinking through the content that those people can drive, except again with departments being so separated, now they are trying to sort of redesign part of the branding – the slogan, and it has kind of been giving to Comms but Comms does not really have a background on what they want to say and we are like well you tell us tell process" (Participant 4)

"But then I feel like it should be everyone's responsibility, in all departments, it should not be Marketing's responsibility to promote the City" (Participant 5)

"It is more like your finance, each and every executive has got the financial responsibility under his job role, so whether you are an IT exec the fact of the matter is you are responsible for the budget of that department, you cannot not have the financial component; same applies with the branding or marketing side, each and every executive of the department needs to have that as one of their KPIs" (Participant 6)

"When you are HR, from the moment that you recruit you are actually practicing brand management, when you go to head hunt it is brand management, when

you go to do talent pool from schools it is brand positioning right there" (Participant 7)

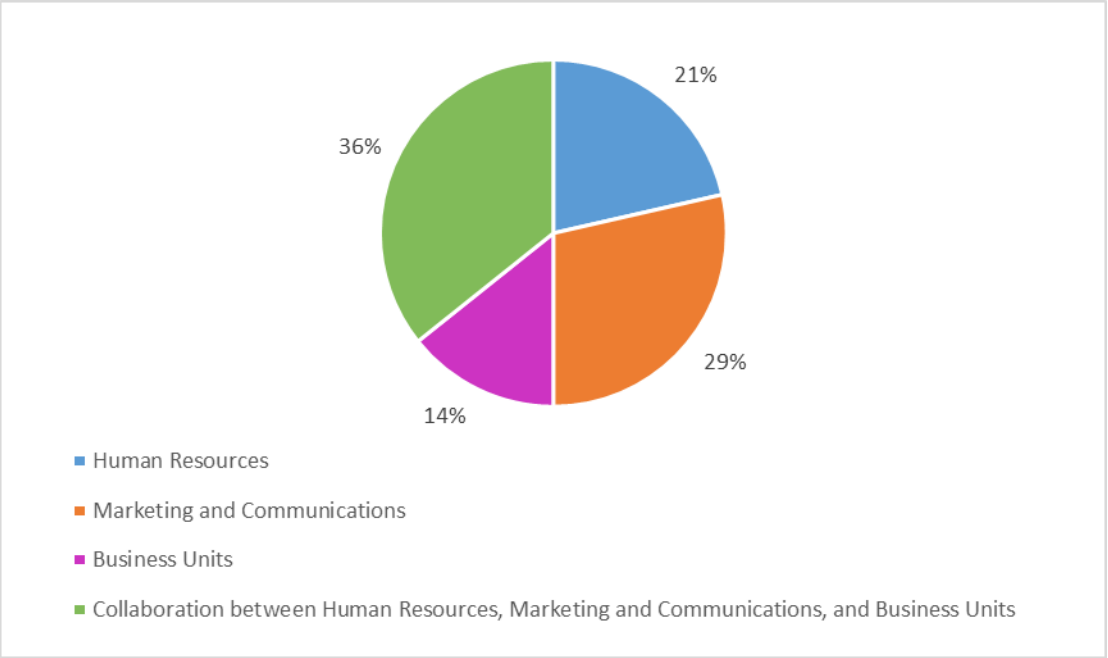

Figure 4.5: Custodians of the employer brand management function

Most of the participants, as shown in figure 4.5, felt that the employer brand function should be collaborative across the organisation, where each functional unit contributes towards the broader employer brand.

"It is a collaboration, it is employer and employee, and the various other support mechanisms" (Participant 3)

"It would obviously be easier if one unit just centralised it, controlled it. Obviously that does not work either if you want people to have buy in, you have to involve everyone" (Participant 4)

"I feel like it should be everyone, it should not be Marketing and Communications people, everyone" (Participant 5)

"Everyone needs to play a role in it, all functions" (Participant 14)

Most participants stated that it is best that it is situated in a dedicated area, where it can get specialised attention; the identified functions were Human Resources, Marketing and Business Units.

> *"I think it is an intersection between Marketing and Communications, it is an integrated marketing and communication function, and with HR as a client. HR cannot build brands, HR is about talent management, talent nurturing" (Participant 2)*

> *"It is more like your finance, each and every executive has got the financial responsibility under his job role, so whether you are an IT exec the fact of the matter is you are responsible for the budget of that department, you cannot not have the financial component; same applies with the branding or marketing side, each and every executive of the department needs to have that as one of their KPIs" (Participant 6)*

> *"A standalone and it is reporting directly to the Managing Director so that it is driven from a strategic point and not from a line specific function" (Participant 13)*

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter results from the discussions were presented using charts and quotes. The results show that the majority of the participants believe that employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication, organisational factors and the employer brand management function are essential traits that an organisation should have and they ultimately have a positive effect on employer attractiveness if executed efficiently.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings shown in chapter 4 and the findings are explained with reference to the literature review. The effects and consequences that the antecedents (employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors) have on employer attractiveness were researched by determining to what extent they were being effectively implemented and managed in the organisation, as well as to determine who is the custodian of the employer brand management function in the organisation. The discussion will follow the same sequence as the research objectives stipulated in chapter 2.

For ease of reference see objectives below:

The Research Objective 1: To determine the antecedents of employer attractiveness.

The Research Objective 2: To determine the consequences and effects of the antecedents of employer attractiveness.

The Research Objective 3: To determine who is responsible for the brand management function at the City of Johannesburg.

5.2. Discussion pertaining to research objective 1 and 2

The aim of this section is to determine whether the effects and consequences of the antecedents have an effect on the City's employer attractiveness.

5.2.1. Employer brand management

Employer branding refers to the sum of an organisation's efforts to communicate to existing and prospective employees that it is indeed a desirable place to work

(Berthon, et al., 2005), participants supported this finding, they felt that if the City wanted to resonate with employees as an employer of choice it needs to proactively and consistently communicate its efforts when it comes to employer branding. Figure 4.1 shows that some participants indicated that the City needs to urgently improve its current stance on employer branding, while the majority of the participants felt that employer branding does not exist in the organisation. The general consensus was that being able to attract and retain high calibre professionals is a function of an efficiently managed employer brand. A solid employer brand will attract superior candidates, and positively shape their expectations about their employment (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

Participants pointed out that the consequences of the absence of a well-articulated employer brand leads to high turnover of seasoned employees and deters prospective employees from joining the organisation, *"we attract good but the problem is that we cannot retain them, because once they are in, they then suffocate because they do not see the match of what they do and what is being sold as the value proposition of the City"* (Participant 6). The Public Sector is perceived to be lagging because they are not investing as much in their talent acquisition strategies (Chunping & Xib, 2011), Local Government's employer brand management was constantly being compared to that of the Private sector; participants seemed more captivated with how the Private Sector invested in their employer brand and how it presented itself to prospective employees, they indicated that it would help the City to take learnings from other companies and apply them internally, "*but I think there is still a long way to go, if you check other brands from the Private Sector people know what Coca Cola is and what it stands for, their ethos and stuff like that"* (Participant 10) and *"I think organisations themselves need to start learning from each other and benchmarking as practices because that is the only way to learn and that is the only way improve. Is this something that the City could learn from Deloitte? I agree two hundred percent"* (Participant 9)

The City also has a mammoth task in changing the existing perception that the public (residents, visitors and prospective employees) has about its workforce, *"the perception out there is negative; we are seen as lazy, not qualified, not competent, we do not know what we are doing, ja, that's how it is"* (Participant 14) and *"and there is a perception that when you are a Government employee you are just lazy, you do not know what you are doing, and and or you are either under qualified or there is favours done; and actually it is not the case"* (Participant 8). Participants stated that initiatives like internal campaigns are needed to build the employees morale, and external campaigns that bring employees and the public together. Such initiatives are perceived to be the starting point of changing the face of the City of Johannesburg in the eyes of residents and prospective employees, *"It has to do with the primary brand and the primary positioning of the organisation in the first place, whether Private or Public"* (Participant 2) and *"maybe it is community involvement, I know the Mayor is now doing the clean up once a month, but at the same time how is he thanking those communities"* (Participant 3).

The findings are consistent with those of Uncles and Moroko (2005) who concluded in their study that employer branding can indeed help organisations attract and retain employees. The study also confirms findings of studies by Reis and Braga (2016) and Pingle and Sharma (2013) that the development and implementation of comprehensive employer branding strategies contributes towards elevating an organisation's attractiveness in the labour market.

Therefore, current and previous findings imply that the City needs to invest in robust employer branding strategies in order to address the concerns raised by the participants, these strategies need to be appropriately developed for:

- Residents: to change the current negative perception about the City's employees;
- Current employees: to grow morale and build comradeship; and
- Prospective employees: to position the City as a highly esteemed employer of choice.

This was expected, based on the literature reviewed in chapter 2, since an organisation being viewed as an employer of choice is likely to create lucrative human capital pipeline, as well as create employer brand commitment amongst existing employees which would result in increased organisational attractiveness.

5.2.2. Employer value proposition

According to Grönroos (2008) a value proposition ties organisations and their customers together, it is also a concept that creates loyalty amongst current employees and can be used as a draw card for prospective employees, this statement is supported by *"A person would start working at Unilever and within a few years you are driving a BMW, we saw mobility so we could aspire. Shell was another one, so let us ask the question first, what makes an employer brand attractive – let us define that. Because when we say does it have a value proposition, because very few of these organisations that I have just mentioned do not set out to have a value proposition, they exist and perform in such a manner that they become attractive, but it is not defined"* (Participant 2).

According to the findings the City's employer value proposition does not formally exist, participants indicated that it can be partially attributed to the transition from one administration to another, the whole process delays the communication of the value proposition. The City competes well in the 'war of talent' with our Metropolitans, but is seen as failing when it comes to the Private Sector. At the moment the employer value proposition seems to be more around monetary gain, fringe benefits - house allowance, medical aid, car allowance, pension fund; nevertheless, participants see an employer value proposition as an inward looking and intrinsic concept, intrinsic in a sense that there should be civic pride because an employer needs to be appealing first as a brand (consumer consumption) before it can be appealing as an employer brand, *"for us to make a visible impact our value proposition of saying we want the City to be the cleanest in the world is work in progress, I understand, but now we need to infuse or inculcate this culture, this value proposition to the lowest worker in the organisation, now they start being advocates of cleanliness in the City"* (Participant 1).

A brand with a positive image is most likely to be an employer of choice; the inverse applies when the brand image is negative, *"I mean if Coca Cola people know what it stands for, your auditing companies, your previous KPMG, people know what it stands for and you know that they offer that, they are attractive by nature"* (Participant 10).

Service delivery is a key focus for Local Government, participants highlighted it is given the utmost attention in the organisation, which inevitably compromises soft issues including the development of an employer value proposition, *"Remember I said that we are about service delivery, those soft issues do not matter, that is the problem. We do not nurture our employees"* (Participant 14).

According to their results (Eisenberg et al., 2001), it is possible to entrench an employer value proposition within an organisation and have it resonate with employees because value propositions are the central message of an employer brand. This study confirms findings of a study by Grönroos (2008) that absence of an employer value propositions is detrimental to an organisation because a value proposition ties organisations and their customers together, it is also a concept that creates loyalty amongst current employees and can be used as a draw card for prospective employees. The results of a study by Parnell (2006) and Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) showed that ultimately a persuasive value proposition and an attractive organisational image will attract a high calibre of prospective employees as well as retain existing high value employees.

Based on the findings of this research it is clear that the City is not effective in communicating its employer value proposition, it is preoccupied with its key mandate of service delivery to the resident of Johannesburg. The research also showed that the five year administration cycle hampers the efforts of developing and entrenching a meaningful employer value proposition, *"It does not address issues of consistency going into the future and for a country like ours you need, uhm, the new Growth Pact for an example it is a National Government strategy that address some of the key things in the next twenty thirty years , now you can imagine if twenty nineteen another party comes into play what about the long term strategy that has identified key areas of development, key areas of training and development, human capital that identifies*

a whole host of issues that needs to be addressed before we can go on a successful trajectory both economically development wise and political wise, socially and everything now we have to stop and have another plan" and *"So your leader has a lot to do with how the brand is perceived, but I am speaking now as an insider; turning around a ship as huge as some of these public entities is not something you do in three to four years, it takes a little bit more than that"* (Participant 2).

5.2.3. Organisational communication

The findings from the research revealed that there were communication problems within the organisation and the various business units functioned in silos, however, participants felt that communication ideally is a concept that connects employees of an organisation, can be used to retain and attract employees, this is shown in figure 4.3. Participants believed that communication does not happen in isolation, it is between internal as well external stakeholders using different communication platforms, *"I think the life blood of the organisation is in communication, whether you want to acknowledge it or not. If there is a gap between senior management, middle management and your lower end staff; how do you therefore transmit or communicate the organisational values or strategic objectives such that the lowest worker in the organisations can sing those things and say we as an organisation are going in this direction"* (Participant 1).

Participants felt that communication facilitated conversations between managers and employees across an organisation and helped in addressing real problems, which can improve operations, *"so communication internal and external is key for people to understand what is happening. Anyone will tell you it should be a two way communication and that what we also do is our MD will go out and he will do road shows and talk to the people"* (Participant 13). The current communication system does not effectively contribute towards retaining and attracting employees, thus having a negative impact on word of mouth about the brand. Participants believed that organisational communication can definitely be used as a talent management tool, *"when you see 'World-class African City' you want to be part of that world-class and the way it is branded and communicated you would want to be part of that; but*

internally, I want to see how the City enables me to deliver on that, how is the City going to enable me to deliver on the vision, that communication needs to come for internal people" (Participant 6) and *"Yeah, yeah because it is through communication that you can teach and it can help you retain, it can help you attract"* (Participant 11); it can be used in the following ways:

- Be used as a recognition tool;
- Top leadership can use it to remain visible; and
- Can be used to motivate staff an increase appreciation.

In a study conducted by Goodman (2000), the results showed that communicating effectively among current and perspective employees was indeed a core objective of strategic communications. This study also confirms findings of a study by Van Riel (1997) that the custody of organisational communication needs to sit with top management, this allows both internal and external communication to be aligned in order to promote effective corporate communication. The findings are also consistent with those of Van Riel (1995), who concluded in their study that organisational communication can be used to create a competitive advantage in the labour market.

The findings revealed that there was enthusiasm about organisational communication amongst employees; participants were aware of the role that communications plays in an organisation, the benefits that can be reaped from an efficient communication system as well as how the City can use the system to retain and attract high calibre staff members.

5.2.4. Organisational factors

Villamil (2007) defines organisational attractiveness as the degree to which a prospective employee would personally seek an organisation as an employer and would recommend the organisation as an employer to others. Organisational factors such as perceived organisational support, organisational trust, leadership of top

management and psychological contract obligations are a key component when it comes to attracting and retaining high quality employees.

When suitably implemented they can be used as a differentiator when it is time to retain and attract human capital. The findings indicate, as seen in figure 4.4, that the majority of the participants believed that the organisational factors are not a priority to the City and therefore not taken into consideration, *"so I think we are experiencing leadership bankruptcy, employees do not really trust leadership and now with the new transition it even makes it worse because it is a new political party and it is also associated with white people and all that"* (Participant 6). A small percentage of the participants believed that the City did in fact consider the organisational factors, whereas others indicated that the City has a chance to improve its standpoint around organisational factors, an opportunity to benefit from the outcomes of well-orchestrated organisational factors, *"I would say that the top top management, yes the support is there, from top down"* (Participant 11) and *"a caring company is someone that actually keep people. It when it comes to leadership it is the same thing, it is 'walk the talk'! Those are the key things"* (Participant 13).

By inculcating the organisational factors in the organisation, the City will have a happier and committed workforce that will execute effortlessly on the service delivery mandate; however, the inverse of this will lead to despondency and high employee turnover, which is what is currently happening in the organisation, *"I mean there are strikes every what, every year, every second year? It is about increments, it is rare that for a strike to say 'our working conditions are not up to standard'. Yes, it does happen that employees complain about poor working conditions but the majority of the strikes is about money"* (Participant 11).

In their study, Alnıaçık, Alnıaçık, Erat and Akçin (2014) revealed that in order to retain employees, leaders need to understand what factors are important to employees, and to consistently and continuously make them a priority. This finding confirms the importance of the role played by leadership regarding employer attractiveness. According to their results (Alnıaçık & Alnıaçık, 2012), integrating branding and human resource management principles enables an organisation to better position

themselves when attracting better, skilled and qualified employees. In a study conducted by Arshadi (2011), the results showed that an organisation's concern for its employees' wellbeing increases commitment and loyalty amongst the staff, this inevitably increases the organisations attractiveness. This study also confirms findings of a study by Mathieu, et al. (2008) that effective leadership is, amongst other factors, the most influential factor in cultivating high-performing teams.

It is therefore clear from the opinions of the participants that satisfied and engaged employees are testament of an organisation that views organisational factors as a key concept used to retain and attract employees.

5.3. Discussion pertaining to research objective 3

The aim of this research objective 3 was to determine who is responsible for the brand management function at the City of Johannesburg.

According to the findings in chapter 4 participants believed that the City needs to invest in robust employer branding strategies, this will support the organisation in their retention and acquisition objectives.

Both branding and employer branding have recently emerged as growing themes in the scholarship of organisation studies and human resource management, with contributions within these fields attempting to further understand the meanings, practices and significance of working under branded conditions (Brannan, Parsons & Priola, 2015). Figure 4.6 shows the different views from the participants regarding where the employer brand management function should sit in the organisation. Majority felt that it needed to be a collaborative effort, where each business unit contributed towards the end result, "I feel like it should be everyone, it should not be Marketing and Communications people, everyone" (Participant 5) and "Everyone needs to play a role in it, all function" (Participant 14).

The marketing team's external focus is to create a value proposition to consumers; the human resource function aims to create an employer value proposition that will resonate with prospective and current employees conditions (Brannan, et al., 2015). Participants that felt that the function should purely sit in Marketing and purely in Human Resources, indicated that Marketing should lead and manage deliverables around employer branding because of the specialised skills they possess, *"I think it is an intersection between Marketing and Communications, it is an integrated marketing and communication function, and with HR as a client"* (Participant 2); this group believed that Human Resources cannot build brands and their scope is about talent management and talent nurturing. Similar was said by the participants that indicated that the function should purely sit with Human Resources, they highlighted that their academic background gave them the agility to be the preferred custodian "*when you go to school to study HR, HR is not alone, HR is grouped with a subject called Business Management and in Business Management marketing is in there, so usually there three majors, it will be the very HR, Business Management and probably Training and Development or any other major"* (Participant 7).

Employer branding is a very important function that should be echoed under the Corporate Strategy, in the case of the City of Johannesburg the IDP (Integrated Development Plan), its primary responsibility is to create effective branding strategies.

In a studies conducted by Chunping and Xi (2011) and Martin et al. (2005), the results showed that there needs to be an active and collaborative relationship between business, human resources and marketing in order to successfully implement employer branding.

Based on the findings of this research it is clear that the various functional areas, specifically to Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, Operations and Business, are responsible in ensuring that parts of the employer branding strategy that are applicable to them are included in the final strategy.

5.4. Conclusion

The results of this research and the above discussions show that the antecedents, namely; employer brand management, employer value proposition, organisational communication and organisational factors, do have an effect on an organisations' employer attractiveness and their absence results in unfavourable consequences. Furthermore, the results show that where the employer brand management function sits has an effect on the process of collating the employer brand strategy, which inevitably has an effect on employer attractiveness.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on summarising, giving the conclusions and recommendations of the research. The purpose of this study was to examine factors that have an effect on employer attractiveness in Local Government in South Africa, as well as establish who in an organisation is responsible for the employer brand management function. The study explored how each of the antecedents influenced and affected an organisation's employer attractiveness.

6.2. Conclusions of the study

The main aim of the research was to gain an in-depth understanding of employer attractiveness in Local Government, City of Johannesburg in particular, as well as to explore the main antecedents of employer attractiveness. The research questions were answered in a conclusive manner and wealth of information regarding the participants' view of the antecedents was gathered. The research questions covered the below themes;

- Employer brand management
- Employer value proposition
- Organisational communication
- Organisational factors
- Employer brand management function

The study supported that the above mentioned antecedents have an effect on an organisations' employer attractiveness and their absence results in unfavourable consequences. Furthermore, the results show that where the employer brand management function sits has an effect on the process of collating the employer brand strategy, which inevitably has an effect on employer attractiveness.

6.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings and the conclusions of the research:

Employer brand management

- Align the City of Johannesburg brand (a destination of choice) with the City of Johannesburg employer brand (an employer of choice), this will help demystify the negative perceptions that the public has about the City's employees.
- Develop an employer brand strategy that supports the corporate strategy and take learnings from other organisations (through field research).
- Entrench the employer brand ethos by re-launching it internally through on site activations.
- Participate in career expositions, especially at higher institutions of learning.

Employer value proposition

- Establish a value proposition specific to the City as an employer, the proposition needs to clearly communicate the City's stance around employee centricity.
- Communicate the City's value proposition through the various internal communications platforms so that it gets instilled in the organisation and becomes part of the culture.

Organisational communication

- Develop a system or process that supports two-way communication between employees and leaders.
- Use organisational communication to publicly recognise and award employees, this will assist in retaining staff and building ambassadorships.
- Use organisational communication to support the efforts and initiatives around the development and implementation of the employer brand strategy and value proposition.

- Find creative and innovative ways of using organisational communication to reach people outside the organisations, such as participating and/or attending thought leadership events.

Organisational factors

- Use organisational communication to position the City as a learning organisation by encouraging employees to further their studies because the City funds it, this message needs to reach all employees regardless of the position they hold. This will increase the quality of the workforce.
- The City is a big organisation and it is recommended that interventions are put in place to focus on introducing new employees to the organisation, this will help with interdepartmental communication.
- Build trust in leaders by increasing their visibility through roadshows.
- Develop and implement a fair and dependable recognition system, where employees' efforts are complimented.
- Train middle to executive managers on people issues, the soft issues that seem to be neglected but have an impact on the retention and attraction on employees.

Employer brand management function

- Create, promote and support an atmosphere of collaboration amongst the various functional areas when it comes to employer brand management; strategy, messaging and positioning needs to be consistent and uniform. An inclusive approach guarantees buy from the functional areas and gives the areas a sense of purpose.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

The impact of political activities on the effectiveness of an organisation should be investigated.

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ANNEXURE: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT



Discussion Document

Questions pertaining to senior management as employees:

1. **Prior to joining the local municipality where did you work and for how long?**
2. **What was your reason for leaving your previous job?**

Questions pertaining to senior management as employers of human capital in a local municipality:

1. **Employer brand management**
    a. How important is employer brand management to an organisation – branding, brand equity, brand associations, branding process and branding benefits?
    b. What effects and consequences does an organisation's employer brand management function have on its attractiveness as an employer?
2. **Employer value proposition**
    a. Do you think an employer's value proposition differentiates them from competitors?
    b. What effects and consequences does an organisation's employer value proposition have on its attractiveness as an employer?
3. **Organisational communication**

a. How important is corporate communications in an organisation?
b. Is talent management needed in an organisation, does it help in retaining existing employees? And does it have any bearing on the minds of the organisation's target market?
c. What are the effects and consequences of organisational communication on employer attractiveness?

4. Organisational factors

a. What are your thoughts on the below organisational factors, do you think they benefit an employer in any way?

   Perceived organisational support, Organisational trust, Leadership of top management and Psychological contract obligation.

b. Does the organisation currently use these factors to position the organisation as an employer of choice?
c. What effects and consequences do organisational factors have on employer attractiveness?

5. Employer brand management function

a. Does an organisation need to actively promote itself as an employer brand?
b. Which function in the organisation do you think is responsible for employer branding? Why?
c. Do you think that the responsibility should be spread across various functions?
d. Who is the custodian of the employer brand management function in the organisation?

6. **Is there anything else you want to say about employer branding that we have not covered?**