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# Innovation-Oriented Employer Branding and Its Influence on Employee Retention: A Study of ABB India Limited

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**Abstract -** Organizations operating in technology-intensive sectors increasingly rely on employer branding to attract and hold on to skilled talent, and innovation has become one of the central themes shaping how employees judge a workplace. This study examines how four dimensions of innovation-oriented employer branding, exposure to technological learning, employee involvement in innovation, the Organization's sustainability image, and an innovation-driven work environment, relate to employee retention at ABB India Limited. A descriptive, quantitative design was used, with a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms to 190 employees of the company. Responses were examined using mean scores, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression in Microsoft Excel. Employees rated the Organization favorably across all four dimensions, with the innovation-driven work environment receiving the strongest agreement. All four dimensions showed moderate positive correlations with retention, and together they accounted for close to a third of the variation in retention scores, with the innovation-driven work environment standing out as the only statistically significant predictor. The findings suggest that retention in engineering-led Organizations depends less on any single branding initiative and more on whether employees experience day-to-day work as genuinely innovative, a distinction with practical implications for how such firms design their people strategies.

***Key Words:*** employer branding, employee retention, innovation, technological learning, sustainability, work environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations no longer compete for talent on compensation alone. Employer branding, understood broadly as the reputation and value an organization offers as a place to work, has become a core part of how firms attract, engage, and retain employees in labor markets that keep getting tighter (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). What employees weigh when deciding whether to stay somewhere has also broadened. Salary and perks are still important, but so are learning opportunities, the speed of innovation in the workplace, workplace culture and whether the organization takes sustainability seriously (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Abdul Rahman et al, 2024). A recent study takes this further by proposing that employer branding is not just restricted to recruitment, but also impacts engagement and long-term commitment well beyond someone has joined an organization (Barbulescu et al., 2024; Singh et al., 2024).

The notion of employer brand was introduced by Ambler and Barrow (1996) and extended by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) to the value proposition a business offers to its current and potential employees. In short, it's how companies become places people want to join and stay. A well-managed employer brand results in better candidates, stronger engagement and fewer voluntary attrition (Edwards, 2010; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). And the flip side is likewise. A bad or inconsistent employer brand can prove a barrier to attracting the right talent for a company, resulting in a higher turnover of experienced workers, increased recruitment costs and reduced performance.

Cost is not the only driver for retention. Tenured workers with longer tenure in the organization contribute institutional knowledge, maintain productivity and maintain relationships that are vital to technical and customer-facing work (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Also, longer tenure is associated with higher engagement and willingness to contribute ideas rather than just perform tasks (Sharma & Prasad, 2022). There is already a direct proof for this. Organizations that provide richer employer brand experiences are far higher in retention than organizations that rely solely on traditional human resource procedures (Azimi et al., 2025).

Technology has transformed what employees desire from an employer's investment in them. Instead of treating the training as an afterthought, the people are looking for companies that would allow them to obtain new skills, existing tools and participate in the systematic development (Kumar & Latha, 2022). Continuous learning is a capability builder in engineering driven businesses and is a signal to employees that the organization has a stake in their growth. The exposure to technological learning in itself has thus become an important aspect of employer branding (Botha & Bussin, 2023).

Related is the degree to which, say, employees control innovation itself. Personnel are more likely to be engaged and committed when they are given the opportunity to contribute ideas, to participate in decision making and to interact with other teams on improvement projects (Vatsa & Roy 2021). Employees who see that their voice is being heard are more likely to have more ownership and less likely to seek other choices (Verma & Tyagi, 2023).

When it comes to selecting a job, sustainability is no longer a niche issue for employees. It is not only required to write it in a mission statement with ethical governance and environmental responsibility but it is also required to show it (Deloitte, 2024). For example, younger professionals usually seek employers with social responsibility and sustainability values that correspond to the business's real activities (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2023). Recent reviews indicate that corporate social responsibility is not a fringe benefit but a real driver of attraction, identification and retention (Ivanov, 2025).

These, together with an environment of creative work that is accepting of failure in the pursuit of learning, and offers cooperation, and is conducive to experimentation, have also been a strong and persistent predictor of both satisfaction and commitment (Lee & Kim, 2024). On the contrary, internal branding approaches that involve innovation and engagement appear to enhance retention in the face of the ever-changing conditions of the workforce (Barbulescu et al., 2024).

These issues are a great topic to discuss together at ABB India Limited. ABB is a major pioneer in technology for electrification and automation. There are many interesting industries in which we need to build new solutions. The declared emphasis of ABB India Limited on development of employees, digital learning and collaborative practice (2025) makes it a good venue to experiment with how innovation-oriented employer branding works for retention.

Despite a fairly rich body of work connecting employer branding to retention, comparatively little of it examines technological learning exposure, innovation participation, sustainability image, and an innovation-driven environment together, within one framework, and fewer studies still look specifically at engineering and automation firms in India. The present study takes up this gap directly by examining how these four dimensions, taken together, shape employee retention at ABB India Limited, with the aim of adding to employer branding research while offering organizations something they can act on.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employer branding began as an application of marketing logic to human resource practice and has since grown into something broader, covering reputation, the employee value proposition, workplace culture, career paths, leadership, innovation, and sustainability (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Organizations that manage this well tend to see it pay off twice over, in the caliber of people they attract and in how long those people stay (Edwards, 2010). Systematic reviews over the past decade point to a field that keeps expanding, with growing attention paid to employee experience and organizational attractiveness rather than recruitment metrics alone.

The empirical findings regarding employer branding and retention are quite consistent across various studies. According to Dabirian et al. (2019) employees stay longer in innovative work environments with real opportunities for development. Culture and learning were more important than salary when deciding whether to stay, respondents said in their findings. In a similar vein, Tumasjan et al (2020) found that the higher the levels of monitoring employer branding, the higher the levels of satisfaction, commitment and retention outcomes. The recent study of Azimi et al. (2025) indicates that employer brand experience is related to talent retention through emotional attachment and brand identification. It's the experience of living that keeps people around. It's not the message.

The literature clearly shows the effect of technology on the expectations of the employees from the employer. However, Kumar & Latha (2022) found that the employees of companies investing in developing digital skills showed lower intentions to leave and higher engagement. Botha and Bussin (2023) found out that continuous learning opportunities create employees' sense of support, which leads to greater commitment and retention levels. Together, the studies show that learning initiatives serve a double function, improving capability and enhancing the organization's reputation as a place to work where people want to stay.

A parallel line of research looks at innovation participation. Vatsa and Roy (2021) observed that employees who participate actively in innovation activities are more engaged and emotionally attached, and Verma and Tyagi (2023) found that this form of participation helps to create ownership and satisfaction, which in turn enhances organizational commitment. The pattern in both studies is that firms that invite employees into collaborative problem solving and recognize their contributions tend to hold on to talented staff more effectively than firms that treat innovation as management's job alone.

More recently, and with some force, sustainability has entered this discussion. Rampl and Kenning (2022) directly linked organizational reputation and employer brand trust to employee loyalty and commitment, while industry data from Deloitte (2024) and LinkedIn Talent Solutions (2023) both show a growing employee preference for organizations that visibly practice sustainability, diversity and ethical leadership, rather than just claiming to. Ivanov (2025) sees corporate social responsibility as a separate employer branding strategy that matches organizational values with employee expectations and thus enhances attraction and retention in tandem.

One dimension outweighs the rest: an innovation-driven work environment. Lee and Kim (2024) connected it to stronger engagement and commitment. Arora and Mehta (2024) asked a slightly different question and got a matching answer, firms that kept pushing continuous improvement reported higher satisfaction and less voluntary turnover. Barbulescu et al. (2024)'s data went beyond that. Internal branding built around innovation, engagement, and genuine HR support lifted both attractiveness and retention, whether the organization sat in the public sector or the private one.

Employer branding doesn't seem to work on a single lever. It was found that integrated strategies are more effective than isolated strategies in terms of retention (Sharma & Prasad, 2022). On loyalty, Banu and Rajkumar (2024) found similar results. "Reputation and employee engagement reinforce each other." Singh et al. (2024) studied Indian organizations and found that prolonged engagement leads to retention.

In general, the literature agrees that employer branding and retention are related, but has rarely tested technological learning exposure, innovation participation, sustainability image and innovation-driven environment as one combined framework. Specifically, engineering and automation companies in India are not well explored. Reviews call for more integrated models that integrate innovation, employee experience, and sustainability into the retention research (Francis & Sangeetha, 2025; Ivanov, 2025). The present study tries to address this by testing all the four dimensions jointly on the data collected directly from the employees of ABB India Limited, with the aim of building a more complete picture of how innovation orientated branding works in this type of organization.

## 3. RESEARCH GAP

Most of the research done on employer branding and retention has revolved around the same set of characteristics, culture, leadership, salary, engagement (Dabirian et al., 2019; Tumasjan et al., 2020; Sharma & Prasad, 2022). That is useful work. It just seldom combines technological learning exposure, participation in innovation, sustainability image and innovation driven environment in one model. This has already been pointed out in reviews which claim that retention research has to consider innovation, employee experience, sustainability and digital transformation as one connected picture and not four separate strands (Francis & Sangeetha, 2025; Ivanov, 2025).

Beneath this there is a smaller gap. While employer branding has been dissected in service and IT environments for years, there is virtually nothing out there for Indian engineering and automation companies. ABB India Limited has brought out this very well. The corporation is vocal on innovation, digital transformation and sustainability, and yet it is hardly present in this research at all (Singh et al., 2024).

## 4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine how employees at ABB India Limited perceive the organization's employer branding practices.

2. To evaluate the impact of Technological Learning Exposure on employee retention.

3. To evaluate the impact of Employee Participation in Innovation on employee retention.

4. To investigate the relationship between Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image and employee retention.

5. To find out the impact of Innovation – Driven Work Environment on employee retention.

6. To provide practical suggestions to improve employer branding and employee retention.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative approach built around a descriptive research design, chosen because it allowed employee perceptions of the selected branding dimensions to be collected and analyzed systematically rather than explored in an open-ended manner.

Data collection relied on a structured questionnaire built using Google Forms. Beyond basic demographic items, the questionnaire measured five constructs, Technological Learning Exposure, Employee Participation in Innovation, Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image, Innovation-Driven Work Environment, and Employee Retention, using a five-point Likert scale running from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Responses came from 190 employees of ABB India Limited, gathered through convenience sampling. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed of the purpose of the research before answering, and confidentiality was maintained throughout; the information collected has been used solely for this academic study.

Secondary sources, peer-reviewed articles, books, ABB's own annual and sustainability reports, and other credible material, informed the conceptual framework, the literature review, and the identification of the research gap discussed above.

All 190 responses were exported to Microsoft Excel, checked for completeness and consistency, and then analyzed in three stages: mean analysis to gauge overall perception of each dimension, Pearson correlation to test the strength of association between each dimension and retention, and multiple linear regression to determine each dimension's individual contribution to retention.

### *5.1 Conceptual Framework*

The framework treats Technological Learning Exposure, Employee Participation in Innovation, Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image, and Innovation-Driven Work Environment as independent variables acting on Employee Retention as the dependent variable. This structure draws on established employer branding theory together with more recent work highlighting innovation, employee development, and organizational sustainability as meaningful drivers of retention (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016; Francis & Sangeetha, 2025).

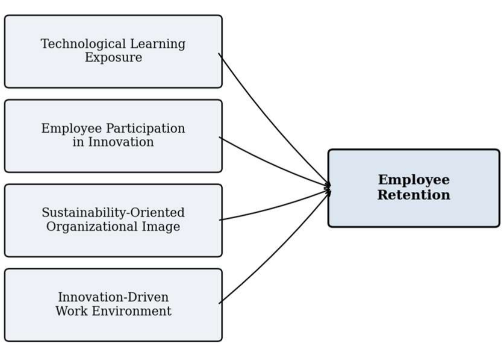


**Fig -1: Conceptual Framework of the Study**

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *6.1 Respondent Profile*

**Table -1: Age-wise Distribution of Respondents**

| Age Group | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Below 25 Years | 55 | 28.95 |
| 25-30 Years | 55 | 28.95 |
| 31-40 Years | 65 | 34.21 |
| Above 40 Years | 15 | 7.89 |
| Total | 190 | 100.00 |

*Source: Primary data collected from employees of ABB India Limited (N = 190).*

Respondents spanned a reasonably wide age range. The largest single group, 34.21 percent, fell between 31 and 40 years, while those below 25 and those between 25 and 30 each made up 28.95 percent of the 190 respondents. Employees above 40 accounted for the remaining 7.89 percent, so while the sample leans toward mid-career staff, all age bands are represented.

**Table -2: Work Experience of Respondents**

| Work Experience | Number of Respondents |
|---|---|
| Below 1 Year | 43 |
| 1-3 Years | 46 |
| 4-6 Years | 72 |
| Above 6 Years | 29 |
| Total | 190 |

*Source: Primary data collected from employees of ABB India Limited (N = 190).*

Work experience followed a comparable spread. Most respondents, 72 of 190, had worked at ABB India for four to six years, followed by 46 with one to three years, 43 with under a year, and 29 with more than six years. This distribution suggests most participants had accumulated enough time with the organisation to form a considered view of its employer branding practices.

### *6.2 Descriptive Statistics*

**Table -3: Mean Scores of Study Variables**

| Variable | Mean |
|---|---|
| Technological Learning Exposure | 3.62 |
| Employee Participation in Innovation | 3.79 |
| Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image | 3.82 |
| Innovation-Driven Work Environment | 3.98 |
| Employee Retention | 3.90 |

*Source: Computed from primary survey data (N = 190*

The mean ratings for all five constructs were consistently on the positive side of the scale. The Innovation-Driven Work Environment has the highest mean score (3.98) followed by Employee Retention (3.90), Sustainability-Oriented Organisational Image (3.82), Employee Participation in Innovation (3.79) and Technological Learning Exposure (3.62). In general, the overall figures show a positive attitude towards the employer branding of ABB India, with innovation-driven day-to-day work as the strongest.

### *6.3 Correlation Analysis*

**Table -4: Correlation between Employer Branding Dimensions and Employee Retention**

| Variable | Employee Retention (r) |
|---|---|
| Technological Learning Exposure | 0.458 |
| Employee Participation in Innovation | 0.474 |
| Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image | 0.477 |
| Innovation-Driven Work Environment | 0.467 |

*Source: Computed from primary survey data (N = 190).*

Pearson correlation coefficients between each branding dimension and retention were all positive and moderate in strength. Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image showed the strongest association (r = 0.477), just ahead of Employee Participation in Innovation (r = 0.474), Innovation-Driven Work Environment (r = 0.467), and Technological Learning Exposure (r = 0.458). None of the four dimensions dominates the others by a wide margin at this stage, which suggests each contributes something to how employees think about staying, even before regression is used to separate their individual weight.

### *6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis*

**Table -5: Regression Model Summary**

| Particulars | Value |
|---|---|
| Multiple R | 0.565 |
| R Square | 0.320 |
| Adjusted R Square | 0.305 |
| Significance F | 1.02272E-14 |

**Table -6: Regression Coefficients**

| Variables | Coefficient |
|---|---|
| Technological Learning Exposure | 0.129 |
| Employee Participation in Innovation | 0.149 |
| Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image | 0.142 |
| Innovation-Driven Work Environment | 0.239 |

*Source: Computed from primary survey data (N = 190).*

The regression model explained 32 percent of the variance in employee retention ($R^2 = 0.320$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.305$) and the model overall was statistically significant (Significance F = 1.02272E-14).

Of the four, only the Innovation-Driven Work Environment was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.239$, $p = 0.004$) and had the largest coefficient when examining the individual coefficients. Technological Learning Exposure ($\beta = 0.129$), Employee Participation in Innovation ($\beta = 0.149$), and Sustainability-Oriented Organizational Image ($\beta = 0.142$) exhibited positive coefficients but, were not significant at the 5 percent level. That

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is, all four dimensions are heading in the right direction, but only the innovation-driven work environment has sufficient individual strength to push retention on its own within this model.

### *6.5 Discussion*

The findings are largely consistent with the previous research on employer branding with experience of ABB India. The positive correlations across the four dimensions are significant and are consistent with Tanwar and Prasad (2016), Dabirian et al. (2019) and Abdul Rahman et al. (2024) who found that a stronger employer brand was associated with higher commitment and retention.

More specifically, the only significant predictor was the strength of the innovation driven work environment. This is very much in line with Lee and Kim (2024) where they found organizations built on creativity, collaboration and continuous improvement see stronger engagement and longer retention. The other three dimensions – learning exposure, participation in innovation and sustainability image – move in the same direction, but do not achieve individual significance here. They suggest that they play a role in how employees perceive the organization as a whole, but are not necessarily the deciding factor for whether someone stays on board.

But the bigger picture is that employer branding works better as a single strategy, not as a bunch of unrelated initiatives. Being a technology-driven organization, ABB India would probably retain more people by strengthening the innovation-driven work environment as well as learning opportunities, employee involvement and sustainability efforts, rather than taking any single lever in isolation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Employer branding has moved away from its initial purpose as a recruitment tool to a method by which organizations create engagement, commitment and long-term retention (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). This study examined the relationship of four dimensions of innovation orientated employer branding, Technological Learning Exposure, Employee Participation in Innovation, Sustainability Orientated Organizational Image and Innovation Driven Work Environment with employee retention in ABB India Limited.

Employees have a positive perception of the organization's branding practices overall, with the innovation-driven work environment receiving the highest score of all. All dimensions are positively related to retention, in line with previous studies linking employer branding with commitment and retention (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Dabirian et al., 2019; Abdul Rahman et al., 2024).

Regression pointed the same direction. The four dimensions together explained a meaningful share of retention, and the innovation-driven work environment was, once again, the only one that reached statistical significance as a predictor, matching what Lee and Kim (2024) found.

For organizations operating in technology-intensive sectors, the practical takeaway is that employer branding deserves treatment as a long-term strategic investment rather than a recruitment exercise. Reinforcing learning opportunities, encouraging participation, following through on sustainability, and building an innovation-oriented culture together offer a more durable path to retention than any single initiative on its own.

More broadly, these findings add empirical evidence from the Indian engineering sector to a literature that has largely looked elsewhere, and offer organizations in similar settings a concrete basis for strengthening their own retention strategy.

## 8. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Investment in learning and development should continue, especially in the area of new technologies, as structured career development enhances the perceived support of employees and promotes long-term commitment (Botha & Bussin, 2023).

It is worthwhile to deliberately establish formal channels for employees to contribute ideas, work across departments, and participate in improvement initiatives rather than leaving it to chance, as this kind of participation builds both engagement and a genuine culture of innovation (Verma & Tyagi, 2023).

The ongoing sustainability efforts within ABB India could be communicated more actively to the employees themselves. Increased internal awareness of environmental and social initiatives has tended to boost reputation, employer attractiveness and employees' own sense of pride in the organization (Rampl & Kenning, 2022; Deloitte, 2024).

Because the innovation-driven work environment was the strongest predictor of retention in this study, it merits special managerial attention by recognizing innovative contributions, encouraging experimentation, and supporting collaboration as part of the daily work rather than as occasional initiatives, consistent with Lee and Kim (2024).

In practice, an AI-enabled employer branding and employee experience platform that brings learning management, career development, innovation participation, recognition and HR analytics all under one roof could help. This idea is directly inspired by the present findings and more general trends in AI-enabled human resource management.

## 9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results are based on employees of a single organization, ABB India Limited, and therefore may not be directly applicable to firms in other industries or regions. The cross-sectional nature of the design means perceptions were captured at one point in time and may change as organizational or technological conditions change. Convenience sampling is pragmatic, but limits the extent to which the sample can be assumed to be representative. Only four dimensions of employer branding were tested, other factors such as compensation, leadership style, work-life balance and diversity were left out and may also affect retention (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Finally, the analysis was done using Microsoft Excel. More sophisticated statistical methods may reveal relationships not found in this study.

## 10. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future work could extend this framework to other sectors, including information technology, healthcare, banking, and manufacturing, to see how employee perceptions compare across industries. Additional employer branding dimensions, leadership effectiveness, employee well-being, culture, diversity and inclusion, work-life balance, and compensation, could build a fuller model of retention (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Longitudinal designs would help clarify how these relationships evolve over time, and more advanced techniques, Structural Equation Modelling, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling, or Artificial Intelligence-based predictive models, could uncover more complex relationships among the variables studied here. Comparative work across multiple organizations or countries would also strengthen how far these findings can be generalized.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this research.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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| | academic work aims to contribute to contemporary HR research by exploring practical and data-driven solutions to challenges related to talent management, employee engagement, retention, and the development of future-ready workplaces. |