Providing a model of employer branding attractiveness in the Khorasan Regional Electric Company

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Abstract

Nowadays, the demand of organizations for skilled employees has increased to fight against the insufficiency of human capital. Attracting potential employees is a big challenge for organizations, which can be dealt with through employer branding attractiveness. This study is conducted to provide a model of employer branding attractiveness in the Khorasan Regional Electric Company. It is an applied study in terms of objectives, interpretive in terms of philosophy, and exploratory in terms of nature, with a qualitative approach. The data are collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The statistical population includes the employees of Khorasan Regional Electric Company, who were selected through purposive sampling. According to the results, employer branding attractiveness has economic, developmental, social, human-oriented, functional, innovative, and cultural components that can be considered by organizations to attract and maintain human capital.

Keywords: employer brand, employer branding attractiveness, human resource management (HRM), Khorasan Regional Electric Company
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1 Introduction

The electricity industry is one of the industries where technical and technological knowledge significantly contributes to the development of technology and its innovation. So, human resources are among the main pillars of the intellectual capital of organizations operating in this industry [42]. Employer branding is one of the strategies that has become very popular among employers and academics in attracting and maintaining human capital [21]. As a unique set of features, employer branding enables the employer to stand out in the market [6] and use it as a strategic lever to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage [12]. Employer branding is a set of efforts of a company to communicate with current and potential employees to provide a favorable place for their activities [50]. It involves a set of mostly intangible characteristics that demonstrate the organization's differentiation, provide an employment experience, and attract people who perform best according to the company's culture [42]. Employer branding is a combination of branding and people management [50] or, in other words, marketing and human resource management (HRM). Studies suggest

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that customer and employee alignment can be hoped for if marketing and human resources are strategically aligned [46]. Employer branding brings benefits not only to the organization but also to the employees [47]. It contributes to simplifying management and focusing on priorities in organizations and increases the attractiveness and retention of the workforce, bringing increased productivity to the organization [20]. Strong employer branding can help organizations achieve their goals, which typically include lower costs, higher customer satisfaction, and higher ROI or profits [8] and lead to higher recruitment rates, retention, and employee engagement [48]. It is well understood by organizations that effective employer branding creates a competitive advantage and helps employees to integrate the organization's values [29]. It can also create organizational identity [17] and improve organizational culture [39]. However, the question is what is the model of employer branding attractiveness?

Preliminary surveys and interviews conducted with some managers of the Khorasan Regional Electric Company showed that one of their main concerns is employer branding because not only the attraction and retention of talents become the problems of the top managers of this company, but the migration of these talents always brings a lot of lost costs for the organization, which are spent on matters such as recruitment, socialization, and employee training. Since the brand of other companies, such as oil industry subsidiaries, has more history, social value, attractiveness, and reputation than the studied company, talents are more willing to be employed in competing companies. Besides, the evidence indicates that they move to other companies after being employed by the Khorasan Regional Electric Company and spending various expenses for their training and socialization. The main concern of this company is to attract labor market talents and then retain them in the organization. Accordingly, this study seeks to provide a model of employer branding attractiveness to help attract and retain organizational talents in the Khorasan Regional Electric Company.

2 Theoretical foundations and literature review

2.1 Employer branding

The term employer branding was first introduced by Ambler and Barrow in 1996 at the London Business School. According to them, employer branding includes a set of functional, economic, and psychological advantages that are provided by employment and recognized by the employer. The relationship between the company and the employees brings a set of mutual benefits [4]. Other leading researchers in this field have defined employer branding based accordingly. Backhaus and Tikoo [7] argue that employer branding is the process of developing a recognizable and unique employer identity that differentiates a company from its competitors. Furthermore, by discussing that employer branding is a long-term strategy for managing the level of awareness and perception of current and potential employees and stakeholders in a company, Sullivan [44] adds a strategic aspect to his definition. The similarities between these definitions all refer to targeting current and potential employees as consumers by providing a value based on tangible and intangible benefits, presenting the organization as a top employer, and, consequently, differentiating the organization from its competitors. These key definitions of employer branding derive from classic marketing patterns that focus on the differentiation strategy and value proposition from the organization to a potential employee. It can be argued that their approach is based on one-way communication from the organization to the employees. This is supported by Aggerholm, Andersen, and Thomsen [1] who point out that current employer branding is rooted in an old way of thinking about brand management, functionalistic ideas, and the conceptualization of the relationship between the employer and employees. New theoretical issues in the field of brand management, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and HRM emphasize processes with more than one predefined output. A major criticism of these definitions of employer branding is that they ignore implicit factors and assume that current and potential employees simply accept the product offered by the brand. So, incorporating sociological and content paradigms is a more modern approach to meeting employer branding requirements. Philosophically, this approach is derived from social constructivism, which states that people create knowledge and real image through social conversations and interactions [10]. Aggerholm, Andersen, and Thomsen [1] confirm this theory by saying that there is a special need to think more about stakeholders and their relationship with employer branding so that this concept can be supported in the field of social constructivism. Thus, employer branding should be seen as a process in which potential and current employees and the organization interact with each other and create an employer branding image. Employer branding is no longer just a magic recruitment tool, but a strategic and dynamic organizational action that brings together various organizational programs and actions such as HRM, strategic management, social responsibility, and marketing. Moreover, it is a communication program that establishes long-term relationships between current and potential employees and organizations [15]. In this way, employer branding is referred to as a strategic branding process that establishes relationships between the organization and its potential and current employees under the influence of diverse corporate concepts to jointly create sustainable values for the individual, organization, and society as a whole [1].

A brand is generally a name, word, symbol, design, or a combination of them that is used to create an image that differentiates the product from competitors' products [26]. Employer branding brings the same benefits to its employees that product branding does to its customers. These benefits include developmental (functional) activities, monetary and material (economic) rewards, and feelings such as purpose, direction, and assets [4]. Employer branding links marketing principles to HR activities concerning current and potential employees [15], sustaining the company's product and business brand [7]. The primary focus of employer branding is on developing a privileged external reputation rather than describing internal efforts to achieve positive employee engagement or culture change [29, 32]. Its focus then shifts to an integrated approach. The strength of employer branding is efforts to harmonize internal ideas with external brand messaging [30]. Every brand is surrounded by competition for the audience's attention, interests, and loyalty. So, brands need to focus on effective competition in this crowded area [8]. The objectives of brand positioning are the right audience with multiple complete benefits and brand messaging [8, 18]. Brand positioning is highly dependent on employer brand positioning because employees represent an important target group for the brand with different needs and inspirations for their consumers [8]. The challenge that employer branding faces is creating a rare unity between marketing and human resources, each of which is independent in many organizations. Vidyavihar [49] suggests that the best way for employer branding is to include internal marketing and communications. These functions can support human resources in the development of employer branding, which can cause a competitive advantage for the organization. Defining, developing, and managing the organization's brand requires expertise in communication [49]. Organizations need an integrated process that connects all organizational units to achieve successful employer branding [31].

3 The foundation of employer branding

Ever since the concept of employer branding was proposed by Barrow and Ambler, as a new way of combining branding techniques with human resource activities, it has attracted a lot of attention in research and organizational applications [8]. However, increasing the level of awareness and application of this concept is due to the lack of talented people in the past, present, and future. Although skilled people are scarce, organizations look for suitable candidates (i.e., using employer branding) and have no other choice [14]. The lack of talented people in the past was caused by economic booms and low unemployment rates. Today, however, it is caused by other things.

According to today's economic knowledge, two main factors are involved in the lack of talent, including demographic changes and sociological changes. Demographically, the older the generations of employees are, the faster they retire, and the younger the generations that are tasked with replacing the previous generation. Sociologically, there is a special need for researchers in technology, engineering, and other knowledge-based fields who are unfortunately not adequately trained. Moreover, younger employees are more inclined to change jobs, causing organizations to face many problems in retaining their key employees [28]. Knowledge-based organizations need talented employees because they are among the most valuable assets of the organization and can be seen as a competitive advantage [12]. This is confirmed by Barrow and Mosley [8]. According to him, the interest in employer branding stems from the growing competition to attract the talented people needed by companies to achieve their organizational goals. So, organizations must differentiate themselves to attract and retain employees [50]. Thus, the lack of talented people along with the needs of the organization has fueled the battle to attract talent, and this battle is the main contributor to the recognition of the employer branding process as an organizational activity.

4 Benefits of employer branding

Employer branding not only brings benefits to the organization but also to the employees [47]. Employer branding contributes to simplifying management and focusing on priorities and increases the attractiveness and retention of the workforce, thus increasing organizational productivity [20]. Strong employer branding can help organizations achieve their goals, which typically include lower costs, higher customer satisfaction, and higher ROI or profits [8] and lead to higher recruitment rates, retention [38], and employee engagement [29]. It is well understood by organizations that effective employer branding creates a competitive advantage and helps employees to integrate the organization's values [7]. It can also create organizational identity [17] and improve organizational culture [39]. On the other hand, employer branding will increase self-confidence [27], job satisfaction [17, 19], loyalty, commitment, and improved performance and occurrence of organizational citizenship behaviors [19] of employees if they are considered. Additionally, employer branding can guide employees when searching for and choosing an employer. Under such conditions, potential employees get a lot of company information that would not be available if there was no employer branding. Employer branding categorizes emotional and functional information, facilitating decision-making [43]. The directional function

of employer branding acts as an anchor of confidence in the existence of employer quality [33]. This means that employer branding indicates the employer's special quality for potential employees and is very reliable [11]. This is especially important when choosing an employer. Since potential employees usually cannot judge the characteristics of a company as an employer before their employment, deciding on the choice of employer is associated with risk [43]. Potential employees can gain confidence in the quality of the employer and reduce the risk of choosing the right employer by taking advantage of employer branding [33].

5 The relationship between product branding and employer branding

Although there are differences between product branding and employer branding, there are similarities. According to Sullivan [44], employer branding should leave a lasting image in the minds of potential applicants, just like product branding for customers. In the meantime, understanding the views, attitudes, and behavior of job applicants is a key phenomenon. Furthermore, consumer behavior models that can be used in marketing can also be used in employer branding. Consumers and employees are the focal point of the company's brand communication and should be viewed holistically. Both of these factors are recognized as angles based on which stakeholders evaluate organizational performance [34]. Organizations offer products and services that have symbolic and economic benefits and are chosen by consumers because they see a fit between emotional and functional needs [23]. Employer branding demands higher prices from the customer, creates brand loyalty, makes a successful brand extension possible, and facilitates decision-making for the consumer. On the other hand, employer branding makes an organization constantly focus on its brand image in the minds of the workforce. This creates a competitive advantage for the company because the employees are highly motivated. They record this image internally and present it to stakeholders [19]. Establishing synergy between internal branding or employer branding and external branding or product branding is suggested by Sirgy and Lee [41]. Employer branding is referred to as the organization's product, which is responsible for attracting customers and motivating job seekers. Both product branding and employee branding contribute to achieving strategic goals. Product branding ensures the achievement of market and marketing goals, but employer branding provides the necessary incentives to employees by turning them into brand advocates. Since employer branding and product branding are independent of each other, aligning them is the main challenge for organization managers. In this way, Simmons [40] emphasizes matching the benefits of product branding with employer branding and corporate branding. The comparison between them can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: The comparison of employer branding, product branding, and corporate branding [40]

Internal (employer branding)	External (product branding)	Corporate branding
A suitable workplace	High-quality products and services	Functional
Competitive benefits and compensation	Greater financial value	Economic
The best employer and commitment to the organization	Reliable products and reference supplier	Psychological
Perceived organizational values and congruence of ethical criteria with employees, customers, and society	The desire for organizational values and belief in having a contribution to society	Ethical
The employee value proposition for current and potential employees	The product value proposition for current and potential customers	Cumulative

Domestic and foreign studies are listed in Table 2 to provide a comprehensive view of the subject under study.

6 Methodology

It is an applied study in terms of objectives, i.e., to provide a model of employer branding attractiveness, interpretive in terms of philosophy, and exploratory in terms of nature, with a qualitative approach. The data are analyzed using thematic analysis. The statistical population includes the employees of Khorasan Regional Electric Company, who were selected through purposive sampling. In other words, only some members of the population can provide the information desired by the researcher to provide the model of employer branding attractiveness, and the researcher only interviews the subjects with more than 15 years of work experience in the company. This criterion was chosen because people should be interviewed who have sufficient experience in the studied company and who are aware of the desired concepts according to the questions. Besides, the data are collected using semi-structured interviews according to the study's philosophy, approach, and strategy. In this study, a step-by-step and comprehensive process is used for thematic analysis by combining the methods proposed by King and Horrocks [24] and Attride and Stirling [5]. This process is implemented in three stages and six steps.

Table 2: A brief literature review

| Row	Year	Researcher	A brief description
1	2005	[9]	The dimensions identified in the qualitative phase include desirability value, social value, growth value, economic value, and utility value, whose validity was confirmed in the quantitative phase.
2	2012	[3]	There is a significant difference between the levels of perception of the importance of employer branding attractiveness in terms of the gender of the respondents, but none of the age and the current status of the employees affect these levels of perception.
3	2012	[37]	Trust in employer branding is affected by brand intimacy, and employer branding is positively affected by stimulation and seduction and negatively by strength.
4	2013	[25]	Employer branding positively affects students' decision to accept a job in SMEs.
5	2013	[16]	There is a significant direct relationship between the specific value of employer branding, the value of progress, economic value, and brand trust, as well as an indirect relationship through the mediating role of organizational attractiveness on the desire of job seekers.
6	2014	[13]	Organizational culture, brand name, and reward are the organizational attitudes preferred by students, and there is a significant positive relationship between a strong brand image and the likelihood of adoption.
7	2014	[35]	There is a direct relationship between employer branding and corporate branding among customers and other stakeholders, and the internal and external branding of an organization together determines the organization's leadership.
8	2015	[22]	the differentiation created in employer branding due to these factors can lead to employer attractiveness in all dimensions if employer branding is based on the needs of the target group, distinctive value proposition, individual strategy, brand compatibility, employer branding communications, and employer branding metrics.
9	2016	[2]	Subsidiary companies of the Ministry of Oil can present a more attractive image than other organizations as an employer with more appropriate planning and introduction in innovation, development, social, employment, and economic values, respectively.
10	2017	[45]	Among the dimensions of employer branding, developmental and social values are predictors of organizational commitment.
11	2019	[36]	There is a positive relationship between personality dimensions of employer branding and trust in employer branding and between trust in employer branding and employer branding attractiveness.
12	2019	[17]	Employer branding has a significant positive impact on organizational identity, organizational personality, recruitment, and job satisfaction.

(Source: the authors)
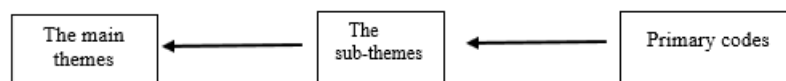
Figure 1: The data analysis process

In the first step, the transcribed interviews are frequently read after being checked with the recorded files to familiarize the researchers with the data collected through the interviews. The text is then separated into brief, meaningful, and important sections by labeling, and each separate semantic unit is identified. Interesting aspects of the data are coded at the overt and covert levels through full and equal attention to the data. The distinguished semantic units or the underlined sentences are then compressed for better understanding.

In the next step, the compressed units that are more semantically connected are placed in a set under the identified themes after preparing a list of the compressions made in the previous step. The closest concept that comes to mind considering the compressed units is then determined as the label of that set or sub-component. Semantically connected sub-themes or sub-components are placed in the form of a main theme or component, and each main theme is defined and named. The themes are then refined to meet the study objectives and ensure appropriate naming, and categories change in some cases. In the following, the text of the interviews and compressed semantic units are re-examined after a few days so that no item is omitted, and new themes are added to the previous ones. Finally, the classification is finalized and reviewed again after a few days, and similar items are removed.

7   Findings

As mentioned earlier, the model of employer branding attractiveness is identified using thematic analysis. For this purpose, the researchers first read all the interviews line by line and code them. In this way, 95 primary or open codes are obtained. The sub-themes are then formed by categorizing the codes into concepts, and the main themes

are developed by integrating these themes. Examples of how to identify primary codes or open coding from the text of the interviews along with the sub- and main themes can be seen in Table 1. This is done for all the interviews, and similar primary codes are merged if any. A more general categorization is then done based on the sub-themes identified in the text of all the interviews, and the main themes are identified.

Table 3: Identifying the primary codes from the text of the interviews along with the sub- and main themes

Part of the text of the interviews	The primary codes	The sub-themes	The main themes
I talked to many job seekers due to my job requirements. According to most of them, an attractive organization helps them to recognize their weaknesses and overcome them with proper training.	Having the opportunity to learn and develop	The developmental dimension	Employer branding attractiveness
I think that the electricity distribution company should get to know individuals in addition to bringing them closer to jobs and professional knowledge to attract talented people. Albeit, it's very difficult!	The possibility of individual recognition		
Well! The organization's approach to human resources is very important to me. When I realize that the organization I work for does not care about the amount of work and hours of entry and exit and provides me with the opportunity to progress, I will be attracted to it and encourage others to be employed in such an organization.	Providing opportunities for advancement		

(Source: the authors)

This is done for all the interviews. Table 4 shows the categories resulting in the model of employer branding attractiveness.

Table 4: The Concepts and categories resulting in the model of employer branding attractiveness

Categories	Concepts
Economic	Salary
	Ensuring job security
	Insurance and health-related benefits
	Motivational rewards
Developmental	Providing opportunities for advancement
	Having the opportunity to learn and develop
	The possibility of individual recognition
Social	Fun work environment
	Teamwork spirit
	The company's reputation
	Having competent colleagues
	Supportive managers and supervisors
	Paying attention to social responsibilities
Human-oriented	Giving importance to customers by the organization
	Friendly and respectful relationships
	Appreciating the meritorious employees
Functional	The opportunity to apply what has been learned
	Work-family balance
	Challenging and varied tasks
Innovative	Providing innovative products and services
	Working in new ways
Cultural	Organizational values
	Organizational habits

(Source: the authors)

Finally, the model of employer branding attractiveness in the Khorasan Regional Electric Company is designed as follows based on thematic analysis.

After designing the model of employer branding attractiveness in the Khorasan Regional Electric Company, questionnaires consisting of 27 items are first developed according to the components and sub-components of employer branding attractiveness to measure the model fit. The questionnaires are then sent to the experts to check their face and content validity and examined in terms of the clarity of the questions and their relevance to the components. The corrective comments of the experts are then applied. Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaires is checked using MATLAB and PLS. The location of the variables in the figure below is specified as X and Y coordinate to measure
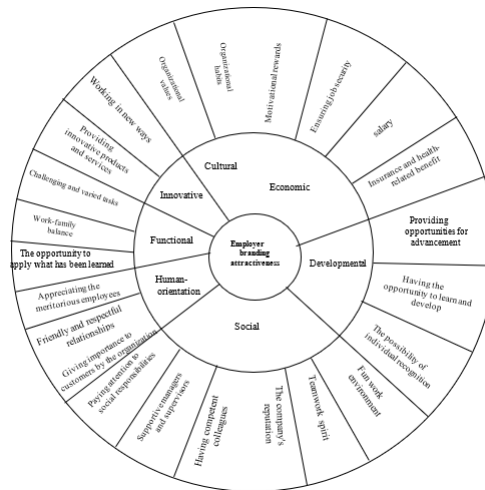
Figure 2: The model of employer branding attractiveness in the Khorasan Regional Electric Company (Source: the authors)
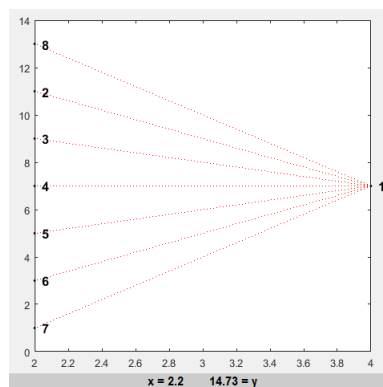
the model fit in MATLAB.

Figure 3: The dimensions of the model in MATLAB

In the developed model, the way of naming the dimensions and direction of the arrows in MATLAB can be seen.
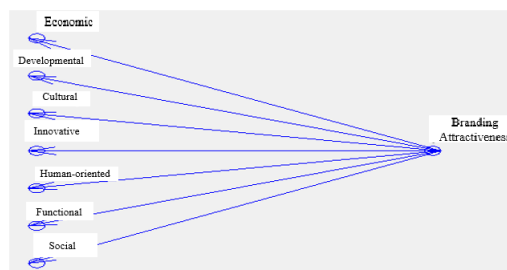

Figure 4: The dimensions of employer branding attractiveness in MATLAB

8 The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the questionnaires

The model fit means to what extent the model is compatible and agreeable with the relevant data. So, the model fit is checked in this part to ensure its compatibility with the data and deduce the answers to the questions.

Factor loadings are calculated according to the correlation between the indicators of a construct and that construct. If this value is equal to or greater than 0.4, the variance between the construct and its indicators is greater than the
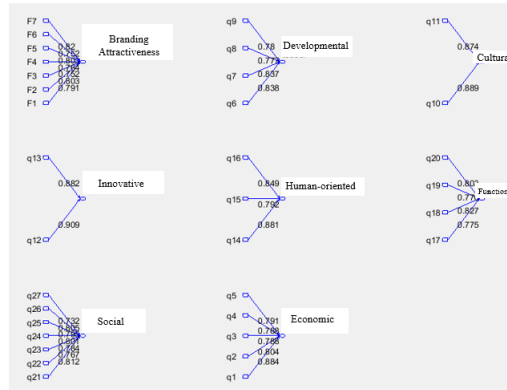
Figure 5: Factor loadings in MATLAB

variance of the measurement error of the construct, and the reliability of the measurement model is acceptable. It should be noted that if values less than 0.4 are obtained after calculating the factor loadings between the construct and its indicators, those indicators (questions) should be modified or removed from the model. According to Table 5, the factor loadings of the variables are all above 0.4.

Table 5: The factor loadings of the items

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	Significance level	Result	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Economic	q1	0.884	0.000	Significant	0.87
	q2	0.804	0.000	Significant	
	q3	0.788	0.000	Significant	
	q4	0.788	0.000	Significant	
	q5	0.791	0.000	Significant	
Developmental	q6	0.838	0.000	Significant	0.824
	q7	0.837	0.000	Significant	
	q8	0.777	0.000	Significant	
	q9	0.780	0.000	Significant	
Cultural	q10	0.889	0.000	Significant	0.713
	q11	0.874	0.000	Significant	
Innovative	q12	0.909	0.000	Significant	0.754
	q13	0.882	0.000	Significant	
Human-oriented	q14	0.881	0.000	Significant	0.793
	q15	0.792	0.000	Significant	
	q16	0.849	0.000	Significant	
Functional	q17	0.775	0.000	Significant	0.806
	q18	0.827	0.000	Significant	
	q19	0.776	0.000	Significant	
	q20	0.803	0.000	Significant	
Social	q21	0.812	0.000	Significant	0.896
	q22	0.767	0.000	Significant	
	q23	0.784	0.000	Significant	
	q24	0.801	0.000	Significant	
	q25	0.795	0.000	Significant	
	q26	0.805	0.000	Significant	
	q27	0.732	0.000	Significant	

Since the t-value is used to check the significance of the coefficients in SmartPLS and this value is 1.96 for the 5% error level, the t-value of the relationship is compared with the above value to check the significance. The relationship will be significant if the t-value is greater than 1.96.

Since Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (internal consistency), and AVE are in the normal range, the reliability and convergent validity of the model are confirmed.

The model fit indices can be seen in the above table. According to the obtained values, the data collected for the measurement of hidden variables have the necessary adequacy and fit. Accordingly, the results of the model estimation are reliable.

Table 6: The results of reliability and convergent validity

Variables	Cronbach_Alpha	Rho_d	Rho_a	AVE
Economic	0.870	0.906	0.876	0.659
Developmental	0.824	0.883	0.828	0.654
Cultural	0.713	0.874	0.714	0.777
Innovative	0.754	0.890	0.762	0.802
Human-orientated	0.793	0.879	0.801	0.708
Functional	0.806	0.873	0.809	0.633
Social	0.896	0.918	0.898	0.617

Table 7: The goodness-of-fit (GOF) criteria

Variables	The acceptable Range	The observed value	Result
SRMR	Less than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999)	0.079	Good fit
NFI	More than 0.25 (Bonett & Bentler, 1999)	0.778	Good fit
GOF	More than 0.25 (Bonett & Bentler, 1999)	0.638	Good fit

Divergent validity

The third criterion for assessing the fit of measurement models in the PLS method is divergent validity, which is measured by two methods. The first one is reciprocal factor loadings, in which the degree of correlation between the indicators of a construct with that construct and between the indicators of a construct with other constructs is measured. The divergent validity of the model will be questioned if the degree of correlation between an indicator and a construct other than its construct is higher than the degree of correlation between that indicator and its relevant construct. Another important criterion characterized by divergent validity is the degree of correlation between a construct and its indicators compared to the correlation of that construct with other constructs. Acceptable divergent validity of a model indicates that a construct in the model is more correlated with its indicators than with other constructs. The divergent validity is acceptable when the AVE for each construct is greater than the shared variance between that construct and other constructs in the model. The divergent validity indicates that the variables have a favorable divergent validity.

Table 8: The divergent validity proposed by Fornell and Larcker

	Cultural	Innovative	Human-orientated	Functional	Social	Economic	AVE	Result
Developmental	0.277	0.280	0.365	0.253	0.401	0.388	0.654	Favorable
Cultural	0.000	0.275	0.299	0.283	0.249	0.287	0.777	Favorable
Innovative	0.000	0.000	0.316	0.293	0.323	0.264	0.802	Favorable
Human-oriented	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.282	0.428	0.282	0.708	Favorable
Functional	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.295	0.633	Favorable
Social	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.397	0.617	Favorable
Economic	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.659	Favorable

9 Discussion and conclusions

According to the results of data analysis, employer branding attractiveness has economic, development, social, human-oriented, functional, innovation, and cultural components and 23 sub-components, which will be explained in the following. The findings suggest that the economic component includes the sub-components of salary, ensuring job security, insurance and health-related benefits, and motivational rewards. This component indicates that employer branding attractiveness can be provided by paying employees at least higher than the industry average, providing a platform for them to feel job security, considering benefits that can reduce the various risks of employees as much as possible, monitor their health, and treat them if necessary, and providing attractive and exciting rewards to employees. Identifying the economic component as one of the dimensions of employer branding attractiveness is consistent with the results of the study by Berthon et al [9] who refer to the economic dimension as one of the dimensions of employer branding attractiveness. Another component identified in this study is the developmental dimension of employer branding attractiveness, which consists of the sub-components of providing opportunities for advancement, having the opportunity to learn and develop, and the possibility of individual recognition. The developmental dimension of employer brand attractiveness suggests that a person is attracted to an employer that provides him/her with the opportunity to develop personally and professionally and take steps in the path of progress. The interviewees argued that an employer who provides the right platform to identify and address the training needs of employees and takes

action so that they can develop their capabilities will be attractive. Besides, the acquisition of individual knowledge by employees makes them believe that not only their capabilities but also their knowledge and awareness of themselves are important to the employer. The developmental dimension of employer branding attractiveness is somewhat close to the development value mentioned by Berthon, Ewing, and Hah [9]. They consider individual recognition as one of the constructs of employer branding attractiveness. However, previous studies have not paid attention to the provision of opportunities for advancement and having the opportunity to learn and develop as sub-components of the developmental dimension of employer branding attractiveness.

Another dimension of employer branding attractiveness identified in this study is the social dimension, which has the sub-components of a fun work environment, teamwork spirit, the company's reputation, having competent colleagues, supportive managers and supervisors, and paying attention to social responsibilities. Employer branding that has extra-organizational social factors such as the company's reputation and paying attention to social responsibilities in addition to intra-organizational social factors such as a fun work environment, teamwork spirit, having competent colleagues, and supportive managers and supervisors will be attractive to people. Although some studies such as those by Berthon, Ewing, and Hah [9], Tanwar [45], and Alizade Sani and Nejat [2] have mentioned the social dimension and its effect on employer branding attractiveness and organizational commitment, it can be argued that no study has addressed sub-components such as having competent colleagues, supportive managers and supervisors, the company's reputation, and paying attention to social responsibilities. The human-oriented component, which includes the sub-components of giving importance to customers by the organization, friendly and respectful relationships, and appreciating competent employees, is one of the other dimensions of employer branding attractiveness identified in this study. This component suggests that paying attention to people, both employees and customers, can lead to attractiveness for the employer and encourage employees to start or continue working with it. Since studies on employer branding attractiveness have not addressed the human-oriented dimension, this study is innovative in this regard. According to the interviewees, people will be attracted to an employer who allows the employees to apply what they have learned in the workplace and teach it to others. People will find employer branding more attractive if the employer provides a platform where employees can balance work and family and defines challenging and varied tasks for them. These sub-components, which make up the functional component of employer branding attractiveness, are in line with the results of studies such as those by Alnıaçık and Alnıaçık [3] and Berthon, Ewing, and Hah [9].

Another component identified in this study is the innovative dimension of employer branding attractiveness, which consists of the sub-components of providing innovative products and services and working in new ways. This component indicates that employer branding attractiveness for employees comes from the organizations turning to innovative actions. In other words, the employer will be recognized as attractive by the employees if using new methods and practices to promote organizational affairs and market innovative products and services. In line with the innovation component, Alnıaçık and Alnıaçık [3] have mentioned the market value, arguing that it is the degree to which a person is attracted to an employer that offers high-quality, innovative, and customer-oriented products and services to the market. Finally, the sub-components of organizational values and organizational habits under the cultural component are the last dimension of employer brand attractiveness, which have been mentioned by the participants and not by studies on employer branding attractiveness. The alignment of the organizational culture with the individual values of the employees makes them welcome and attracted to such an organization. According to the results, the following recommendations are made:

- It is recommended that all identified components and sub-components be viewed from a systemic point of view to manage employer branding attractiveness because they are closely connected and neglecting one of them may reduce the effectiveness of the model of employer branding attractiveness to a great extent;

- It is recommended that not only the components and sub-components identified in this study but also the models of employer branding attractiveness in other organizations be investigated to retain employees and prevent them from migrating from the Khorasan Regional Electric Company to other organizations because it must be determined what are the components and sub-components of employer branding attractiveness in those organizations from the employees' point of view.

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