



## **The Impact of Employer Attractiveness on Employee Engagement: A Study in Vietnam**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to explore the effect of employer attractiveness on employee engagement in depth. The analytical method in quantitative research is PLS-SEM. The survey sample, through the survey questionnaires, was collected from 937 respondents as employees from 37 enterprises operating in Vietnam. Employer attractiveness has a positive impact on employee engagement with a high coefficient. This result helps to demonstrate the new research direction that employer attractiveness affects not only the potential candidates but also the existing employees.

**JEL Classification:** M10, M12, M16

**Keywords:** Employer attractiveness; employee engagement; employer branding; talent management

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## INTRODUCTION

Employer attractiveness has been focusing on clarifying the different understandings regarding this concept. Employer attractiveness is considered as the form of marketing (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) or communication (Bergstrom et al., 2002), management (Gatewood et al., 1993) and so on. In addition, employer attractiveness form is related to psychology (Collins and Stevens, 2002; Jurgensen, 1978) or behavior (Soutar and Clarke, 1983). The concept, being used is that of Berthon et al. (2005), holds that employer attractiveness, the benefits of an organization perceived by potential candidates as the best place to work, includes five dimensions (interesting value, economic value, social value, developmental value and application value). Jiang and Iles (2011) developed and expanded this concept as follows: employer attractiveness implies the level of perception by current as well as potential employees in an organization. In accordance with this concept, an organization considered the best place to work will bring more efficiency than other organizations with long term maintenance (Supriyanto and Ekowati, 2020). Therefore, employer attractiveness is divided into internal and external employer attractiveness: Internal employer attractiveness reflects the degree to which current employees feel attracted to the organization they are working for whereas External employer attractiveness reflects the attractiveness of the organization to potential candidates (Pingle and Sharma, 2013). In addition, other recent studies related to current employees refer mainly the impact of employer branding on employee performance (Ha et al., 2022) or employee engagement (Ha et al., 2021). In the previous studies of employer attractiveness, most authors focus on potential candidates; in particular, a number of studies have studied the effect of employer attractiveness on the application intentions of potential candidates (Ha and Luan, 2018; Sivertzen et al., 2013). This research direction emphasizes the role of employer attractiveness in influencing perceptions of potential candidates that affects the candidates' decisions to apply to businesses. Another research direction, in accordance with the qualitative approach to branding employers, means that researchers make an attempt in understanding the factors that build employers' brands in small and medium enterprises (Tumasjan et al., 2011). Therefore, the previous studies of employer attractiveness mostly focused on the direction of impact on potential candidates (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2022). This gap research focuses on exploring to supplement the employer branding theory system, specifically the impact of employer attractiveness on employee engagement. The findings in this study will provide researchers as well as managers with a new research direction on employer attractiveness as well as new and innovative solutions in retaining talent. In the period that the turnover rate is rather high in Vietnam as well as in the world, the discovery of the solutions to the employee engagement problem will be of great significance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), built on the combination of sociology and social psychology theory, holds that an individual's actions in the organization which depends on the reward of another (Blau, 1964). The foundation of this theory includes the process of contingent and rewarding involving 'transactions' or 'exchange'. This theory also proves that behavioral psychology can be effectively applied in human social behavior (Homans, 1969). Besides the exchange between two parties, the idea that the social exchange theory refers to the exchange networks is derived from the willingness of a group of actors to share. Emerson (1976) developed the concept of exchange for a large group by confirming that exchange is not influenced, whether between two people or among many people. Moreover, this theory is developed in different aspects as follows: Blau (1964) focused on technical and economic factors while Homans (1969) paid attention to the tools of employee's psychological behavior as well as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) concentrated on psychology concepts. In summary, social exchange theory is beyond a theory but serves as a framework for values (resources) transfer through the centered social process (Waha et al., 2018). That this resource is transferred once value is embedded in is called as reinforcement and an simply-flowing exchange.

Employer branding theory (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) is built on the combination of marketing and human resources. Accordingly, employer branding is understood as the package of economic and psychological benefits in the organization. This theory comprises two external marketing and internal marketing components: External marketing builds companies as the first choice of potential candidates whereas Internal marketing builds organizations with an interesting and different working environment

compared to other organizations. Another basis to develop employer branding theory is psychological contract theory with the emphasis on the relationship between employees and organization. In this relationship, the employee will commit to loyalty to the organization, in return for work safety assurance (Hendry and Jenkins, 1997). On the contrary, that the organization will actively provide its employees with career development opportunities through effective training and coaching programs assists employees in working at the best for the organization (Ha and Luan, 2021). In addition, employer branding theory is built on the concept of brand equity. According to Aaker and Equity (1991), the term 'brand equity' is defined as a 'a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and / or to that firm's customers'. A customer will depend on brand equity for brand knowledge impact on the response of customers to the product presented (Keller, 1993). Using this content in employer branding, brand equity can attract potential candidates as well as motivate current employees to stay and contribute to the company. Despite the same hiring process as well as the efforts to retain talent, that the reactions of potential candidates and current employees are completely different indicates that the employer is different in employer brand equity.

Employer branding, originally developed by Ambler and Barrow (1996), defines psychological, functional and economic dimensions. Berthon et al. (2005), based on this background, expanded the scale of employer attractiveness, in which, the psychological benefits are separated into interest value factor and social value factor. In addition, functional benefits evolved into development value and application value whereas economic benefits are identified through economic value. According to Berthon et al. (2005), employer attractiveness is measured by interest value, social value, development value, application value and economic value. Arachchige and Robertson (2013), in another study on employer attractiveness, surveyed students and employees at enterprises in Sri Lanka and presented that the consistent formula between the two survey groups of students and employees. Consequently, the authors advanced in terms of Job structure, Social commitment, Social environment, Relationships, Personal growth, Organisational Dynamism, Enjoyment, and Corporate environment. This research result shared the similarity with the research results of Berthon et al. (2005): interest value (similar content to that of dimensions job structure and Enjoyment), social value (similar dimensions relationships, personal growth and corporate environment), development value (similar in dimensions organisational dynamism), application value (similar to social environment dimension) and economic value (similar to social commitment dimension). Along with the research on employer attractiveness scale, Roy (2008), upon studying in the Indian context, added three additional dimensions: ethical value, psychological value and career opportunity. In short, the scale of employer attractiveness includes: factor 1 (Application Value), factor 2 (Interest Value), factor 3 (Ethical Value), factor 4 (Economic Value), factor 5 (Social Value), factor 6 (Psychological Value), factor 7 (Career Opportunities) and factor 8 (Development Value). In another study on startups in Sweden, Gadibadi (2020) added two dimensions: entrepreneurial and challenge. To be more specific, 'entrepreneurial' demonstrates the content related to development opportunities through performance evaluation from different roles at work and building knowledge. Besides, 'challenge' addresses challenges, attractive work, high responsibility as well as authorization activities in the organization. In another aspect, this study added safety value dimension through the process of qualitative and quantitative research. This dimension proves how employees are attracted by job security (Berthon et al., 2005). Upon supporting this view, Lazorko (2019) emphasized the role of job security as an important factor for communication to attract employees. Herman and Gioia (2001) argued that employer branding standard is safety value, implying that safety value is one dimension of employer attractiveness. In summary, 5 dimensions of employer attractiveness developed by Berthon et al. (2005) and safety value (as one added dimension) factor have been widely used in the previous studies (Arachchige and Robertson, 2013; Biswas and Suar, 2016; Ha and Luan, 2018; Kaur et al., 2015; Reis and Braga, 2016; Roy, 2008; Sivertzen et al., 2013). Therefore, this study constructs the components of employer attractiveness that are comprised of social value, development value, application value, safety value and economic value.

In accordance with these definitions, employee engagement focuses on perception, emotion and behavior factors (Saks, 2011). Furthermore, with the approach to human resources and organizational behavior, employee engagement refers to employees' efforts and commitment to the organization as well as their satisfaction with a high motivation to optimize their capacity (Bridger, 2014). On the basis of the concepts and definitions of employee engagement, Schaufeli et al. (2002) demonstrated the characteristics of employee engagement as vigor, dedication and absorption. In particular, vigor exhibits high energy, resilience

and the desire to strive and never to give up to challenges whereas dedication reflects a sense of satisfaction, enthusiasm, value and challenge, while absorption was considered as the property acquired with concentration for a certain task. Schaufeli et al. (2002) developed the concept of employee engagement, quite similar to that of Saks (2006): vigor means employees' perception while dedication is seen as emotion as well as absorption as behavior. Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), based on theoretical analysis, identified two factors related to employee happiness, including: activation (divided from exhaustion to vigor) and identification (divided to the degree of cynicism to dedication). Therefore, that two levels of activation and identification can be classified: exhaustion (low activation) and cynicism (low identification) called burnout. In contrast, engagement status is classified by vigor (high activation) and dedication (high identification). The third factor of employee engagement is absorption as representing someone's high level of energy and willingness to put the effort into one individual's work as well as being persistent in difficult situations. In short, it can be confirmed that employee engagement has three dimensions: vigor, dedication and absorption.

In addition, one fundamental theory of research on the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement is the value congruence theory. The main content of this theory deals with the importance of expected behavior and the end state (Cable and Edwards, 2009). This theory is widely applied in the study of employee attitudes and behaviors. The state of similarity between the individual and the organization occurs only when the values between the individual and the organization are consistent (Wang and Zhang, 2017). In other words, the larger this consistency is, the more positive effects it will have on the organization listed as organizational identification, perceived organizational support, peer-rated citizenship behaviors, turnover intention and job satisfaction occur. This can be easily explained because employee expectations and organizational goals are compatible (Cable and DeRue, 2002).

## **HYPOTHESIS AND RESEARCH MODEL**

### **Hypothesis**

Social Value evaluates the extent to which candidates are attracted being provided with a funny, happy working environment, equal partnership and teamwork when working (Berthon et al., 2005). According to the social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), an equitable exchange of benefits between the two partners (employer and employee) is an important requirement to sustain this relationship in a sustainable way. In particular, the benefits are not only material (salary and bonus) but also spiritual ones (respect from the organization) (Shore et al., 2009). In other words, the exchange of values between employer and employee can be categorized as tangible and intangible rewards (Edwards, 2010). Therefore, these reward is social value, developmental value, application value, safety value and economic value. In other words, the social value will have a positive impact on employee engagement. Ferguson and Carstairs (2007) demonstrated that a strong corporate culture helps increase employee engagement.

Developmental Value evaluates the degree to which a candidate is attracted by being recognized, creating confidence, gaining both work experience and 'leverage' in the career path (Berthon et al., 2005). Training activities as well as career development opportunities in the organization always have a positive impact on employee engagement (Parsley, 2006). With this point of view, Konrad (2006) argued that the employee will be more engaged with the organization if the organization helps the employee continue to be educated, trained and developed. Another study has demonstrated that when managers apply different approaches to employee development, employee engagement increases (Abdul et al., 2018). Therefore, investing in training and development will help create a high degree of cohesion between the employee and the company. In summary, overall development and training programs will help increase employee engagement (Choo and Bowley, 2007).

Application Value calculates the extent to which candidates are attracted by being provided with the opportunity to apply the knowledge they have learned, teaching others and the customer-oriented environment and humanitarian (Berthon et al., 2005). In addition, a humane and developmental approach will build a lasting relationship between employer and employee as well as a positive impact on employee engagement (King and Grace, 2008). Furthermore, sharing and applying the knowledge that is learned as a very important factor in employee engagement, called knowledge management. Knowledge management, with 2 main components (knowledge management infrastructure and knowledge management process), is identified as a

process, a function, or a principle that will create, share, and apply knowledge to make an organization more efficient, productive and competitive (Andreeva and Kianto, 2011; Gold et al., 2001; Shujahat et al., 2017; Zheng et al., 2011). Similarly, de Wit-de Vries et al. (2019) found that knowledge transfer is recognized as a fundamental theory for academic studies of engagement. In other words, factors related to application value will have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Safety value reflects the extent to which an individual is attracted to job security (Berthon et al., 2005). The role of employee awareness of ethical leadership style will help improve employee engagement in the organization, in which, there is an intermediate role of psychological safety factor in this relationship (Hendler, 2012). Research results have demonstrated that safety factors have a positive effect on employee engagement as psychological safety is an effective tool of leadership. Brown and Leigh (1996) argued that leadership style is the important factor in creating an environment that is psychological safety and through this, it will positively impact employee engagement. Zohar et al. (2015) affirmed that meta-studies of the theory of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Deci et al., 2001; Rummel and Feinberg, 1988) reveal that employee engagement is an intermediate variable between the two factor safety climate and safety behavior. These research results indicate the intermediate effect of employee engagement on the relationship between safety climate and safety behavior; in other words, safety factor will have an impact on employee engagement.

Economic value estimates the extent to which candidates are attracted by providing higher wages, benefits, insurance and promotion opportunities. Economic value, including competitive recognition and remuneration for employees, is identified as the positive factor affecting the employee's attitude listed as the intention to stay in the organization for a long time (Chew and Chan, 2008). This statement is rather relevant since providing employees with high salaries and benefits will enable the organization to attract and retain employees in the more favorable way (Ash and Bendapudi, 1996). With this point of view, De Vos and Meganck (2009) demonstrated that financial rewards have an important impact on employee turnover. In order to attract and retain good people, each organization is well aware that the value the organization provides to the employee must match employee's needs and expectations (Little and Little, 2006). Employee engagement (Handorf, 2011) plays the crucial role in motivating employees: once employees feel that the company's financial rewards are inadequate, they will leave the organization easily (Sange, 2015). Therefore, economic values (salaries and bonuses) will increase employee engagement and commitment to the organization (Arokiasamy, 2013).

In addition, employer branding is determined to have a positive impact on employee engagement through the intermediate variable motivation (Wardini and Nawangsari, 2021). Employer attractiveness, an important component of employer branding, implies that employer attractiveness will have a positive effect on employee engagement. Along with this point of view, Staniec and Kalińska-Kula (2021) explored internal employer branding as a solution to help improve employee engagement in organizations. Employer attractiveness is this internal employer branding activity is believed to be an important strategy for enhancing the employee value proposition (EVP). This will increase the feeling that employees feel that they are connected and belong to the organization they are working for (Chawla, 2020). In addition, during the research on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) antecedents, researchers showed that employer branding (specifically employer attractiveness) has a positive impact on employee engagement (Lary and Omar, 2021). It is clear that each element of employer attractiveness affects employee engagement in organizations (Bhasin et al., 2019).

In accordance with the above reasons, the hypothesis is proposed as following:

*Hypothesis 1: Employer attractiveness has a positive impact on the employee engagement.*

### **The research model**

In accordance with the concept and scale of employer attractiveness factor developed by Berthon et al. (2005) and the concept and scale of employee engagement developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002), this study built the model measurement from the result model (Reflective, Mode A). In addition, employer attractiveness, according to the research hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, is expected to have the positive impact on employee engagement. Therefore, the proposed research model, in accordance with Figure 1, is as follows:

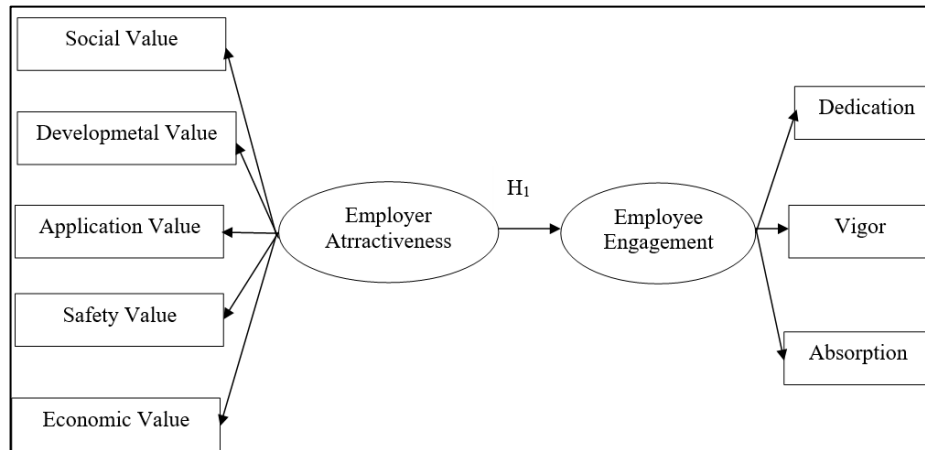


Figure 1 The research model

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research methodology and sampling

This research is performed in accordance with the qualitative research methods adjust scales whereas quantitative research methods evaluate the reliability of the scale and test research hypotheses and evaluate research model. Qualitative research method uses expert interview (4 experts) and group discussion (2 groups, each group includes 10 employees). The experts selected to be interviewed are those with lecturers with understanding of human resources and marketing as well as a lot of experience in research as well as application in business management field. Employees participating in 2 interview groups have been working for the company at least 5 years to ensure these members understand the activities in the company. The experts are invited to interview and the discussion group is guided with the contents. For quantitative research method, the study used analysis software SPSS and PLS-SEM. Quantitative research is conducted through steps including analyzing scale reliability, evaluating the measurement model and evaluating the structural model. For research data collection, the survey questionnaire was set up, based on the perfection scale sent to 937 respondents as employees currently working in 37 organizations and enterprises in Vietnam. The questionnaire is directly sent to each respondent and the respondents will respond to their opinions on the survey. The survey questionnaires, after being recalled, will be screened to choose those that meet the research requirements. Data from these sheets were analyzed, using SPSS and PLS-SEM software.

### Measurement

The scale of all research concepts in this article is based on the previous studies, qualitative research results, adjusted through preliminary research and presented in the form of statements. The scales use the Likert scale with 5 levels from (1) Totally disagree to (5) Totally agree. In which, the scale for the concept of employer attractiveness is based on the scale of Berthon et al. (2005) and developed by Ha et al. (2021) and the scale of employee engagement is based on the scale of Schaufeli et al. (2002).

### Data collection and descriptive statistics analysis

Data for quantitative analysis were collected via paper questionnaires that were broadcast directly to participants (937 samples). Table 1 illustrates the demographic information of the sample. Of the 937 samples, 50.3% were male and 49.7% female.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics results

No.	Content	Frequency	Percent (%)
I	Gender		
1	Male	471	50.3
2	Female	466	49.7
II	Married Status		
1	Single	381	40.7
2	Married	556	59.3
III	Age		
1	From 18 to 30	491	52.4
2	From 31 to 40	349	37.2
3	From 40 to 50	83	8.9
4	From 50 to 60	14	1.5
IV	Qualification		
1	Unskilled	27	2.9
2	Intermediate	180	19.2
3	Colleges	160	17.1
4	University	464	49.5
5	Graduate	106	11.3
V	Job		
1	Production/Technical/RD	347	37.0
2	Business	229	24.4
3	Back Office	361	38.5
	Total	937	100.0

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Scale reliability and validity

This study uses Cronbach’s Alpha testing to check scale reliability and explore factor analysis (EFA) to test the internal consistency of the scale. From Table 2, the results show that all scales meet the reliability requirements: Cronbach's Alpha of the scales is greater than 0.8 and all items must be maintained. From Table 2, that the value of the employer attractiveness KMO and employee engagement are 0.948 and 0.953 ranging within [0.5 - 1], respectively, indicates that these scales are suitable. In addition, the significant in Bartlett's test of both scales has a value of 0.000 (<0.05) indicating that the scale meets the standard of explore factor analysis (EFA) (Hair et al., 2016). For Total Variance Explained index of employer attractiveness, it reached 71.583% (> 50%) and the employee engagement reached 67.043% (> 50%), both met the requirements of the standard (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). That the value of eigenvalue of the employer attractiveness factor reaches 1.024 (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988) and shows the 5 factors: social value (SOC), developmental value (DEV), application value (APP), safety value (SAF) and economic value (ECO). Meanwhile, the eigenvalue of employee engagement value was 1.085 and shows the number of factors of 3 including dedication (DED), vigor (VIG) and absorption (ABS). Both the eigenvalue of these two factors are greater than 1, indicating that this scale meets the standard (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). In addition, the two scales, employer attractiveness and employee engagement have a Composite Reliability (CR) value is greater than 0.70 and convergent validity with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.50. This proves that both of these scales meet the standards of the internal consistency reliability.

Table 2 Scale reliability results

No.	Dimensions	Cronbach Alpha	Explore Factor Analysis (EFA)			Eigenvalues (> 1.0)	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
			KMO (>0.5)	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: (sig<0.05)	Test of Cumulative %: (> 50%)			
I	Employer attractiveness (Outer loading: 0.688 – 0.913)							
	SOC	0.911	0.948	0.000	71.583%	1.024	0.931	0.694
	DEV	0.902					0.925	0.674
	APP	0.832					0.889	0.666
	SAF	0.844					0.906	0.764
	ECO	0.849					0.908	0.767
II	Employee engagement (Outer loading: 0.757 – 0.871)							
	DED	0.917	0.953	0.000	67.043%	1.085	0.934	0.668
	VIG	0.900					0.924	0.669
	ABS	0.864					0.902	0.649

Finally, the study examines the discriminant value among the latent variables of employer attractiveness. Table 3 shows the heterotrait – monotrait (HTMT) for all pairs of variables studied in a matrix. All values of HTMT are much smaller than 0.85. In addition, the low and high limit of the 95% confidence interval (the difference between the calibration and cumulative) of all groups of research variables does not contain the number 1 (Table 4). This proves that the structures which measure the employer branding gain discriminatory value.

**Table 3 HTMT of Employer Attractiveness (EA)**

	SOC	DEV	APP	SAF	ECO
SOC					
DEV	0.759				
APP	0.654	0.773			
SAF	0.687	0.701	0.611		
ECO	0.605	0.707	0.586	0.594	

**Table 4 HTMT Ratio of Employer attractiveness (EA)**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
EA → SOC	0.867	0.867	0.000	0.846	0.885
EA → DEV	0.908	0.908	0.000	0.895	0.921
EA → APP	0.790	0.790	0.000	0.755	0.823
EA → SAF	0.765	0.765	0.001	0.727	0.800
EA → ECO	0.735	0.734	-0.001	0.697	0.768

Besides that, the study examines the discriminant value among the latent variables of employee engagement in the study. Table 5 shows the HTMT (heterotrait – monotrait) for all pairs of variables studied in a matrix. All values of HTMT are much smaller than 0.85. In addition, the low and high limit of the 95% confidence interval (the difference between the calibration and cumulative) of all groups of research variables does not contain the number 1 (Table 6). This proves that the structures that measure the employer branding gain discriminatory value.

**Table 5 HTMT of Employee Engagement (EE)**

	DED	VIG	ABS
DED			
VIG	0.805		
ABS	0.816	0.737	

**Table 6 HTMT Ratio of Employee Engagement (EE)**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Bias	2.5%	97.5%
EE → DED	0.933	0.933	0.000	0.917	0.943
EE → VIG	0.889	0.889	0.000	0.864	0.907
EE → ABS	0.861	0.861	0.000	0.837	0.883

All groups of variables comprising the scale of employer attractiveness (includes 5 latent variables SOC, DEV, APP, SAF and ECO) and the scale of employee engagement (includes 3 latent variables DED, VIG and ABS) achieved internal consistency reliable values, convergent validity and discriminant validity.

**Structural model assessment**

From Table 7, VIF values of all endogenous variables and the corresponding exogenous variables will evaluate the following set (forecast) of the research variable on multi-collinearity. VIF values are all less than 5; as a result, the collinearity between predictive variables does not occur in the research model.

**Table 7 VIF value in research model**

	ABS	APP	DED	DEV	ECO	EE	EA	SAF	SOC	VIG
EE	1		1							1
EA		1		1	1	1		1	1	



Coefficients  $R^2$  are used to measure and evaluate the research model. When the value of  $R^2$  is high, the prediction of the model is better. For multiple regression,  $R^2$  adjusted values were used to avoid deviations in complex models. From Table 8,  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  adjusted coefficients Employee Engagement (0.638/0.639) are at average level. However, an  $R^2$  value of 0.20 is considered high in areas (consumer behavior) (Hair et al., 2016). Therefore, the relationships in the research model have a consistent level of interpretation of employee engagement.

Table 8 Determination coefficient  $R^2$  adjusted

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	0.639	0.638

In addition to assessing the  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  adjusted coefficients of all endogenous variables, the change in  $R^2$  values, when a specific exogenous variable is omitted from the model, is used to evaluate whether the variable is omitted or whether there is a significant impact on endogenous variable. This measurement is called the effect size ( $f^2$  coefficient). From Table 9, in the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement, the effect size evaluates that the contribution of exogenous variables (employer attractiveness and employee engagement) to the  $R^2$  value of Endogenous variables is small.

Table 9 The effect size  $f^2$

	ABS	APP	DED	DEV	ECO	EE	EA	SAF	SOC	VIG
EE	2.86		6.77							3.75
EA		1.67		4.69	1.18	1.77		1.41	3	

In addition to assessing the importance of  $R^2$  values as a criterion for accuracy prediction, the researchers tested  $Q^2$  values. In the structural model, the  $Q^2$  value is greater than 0 for a particular endogenous variable that results in the predictive relation of the path model to this specific dependent variable.

Table 10 presents a summary of all result of the blindfolding. This shows that the  $Q^2$  value of endogenous variables is higher than 0. Specifically, Employee engagement has the  $Q^2$  value (0.34). The results indicate the model's predictive relationship with endogenous variables.

Table 10  $Q^2$  value

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
ABS	4685.00	2453.79	0.48
APP	3748.00	2220.81	0.41
DED	6559.00	2769.35	0.58
DEV	5622.00	2525.66	0.55
ECO	2811.00	1664.19	0.41
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	16866.00	11145.67	0.34
EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS	20614.00	20614.00	
SAF	2811.00	1569.69	0.44
SOC	5622.00	2719.04	0.52
VIG	5622.00	2677.05	0.52

The results of Table 11 describe the relationship between the research variables and the test of research hypotheses. Employer attractiveness has a strong positive impact on employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.799$ ) with 99% confidence level, the hypothesis  $H_1$  is supported.

Table 11 Hypothesis testing result

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values	Comment
EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS -> EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	0.799	0.799	0.017	45.832	0.000	Supported

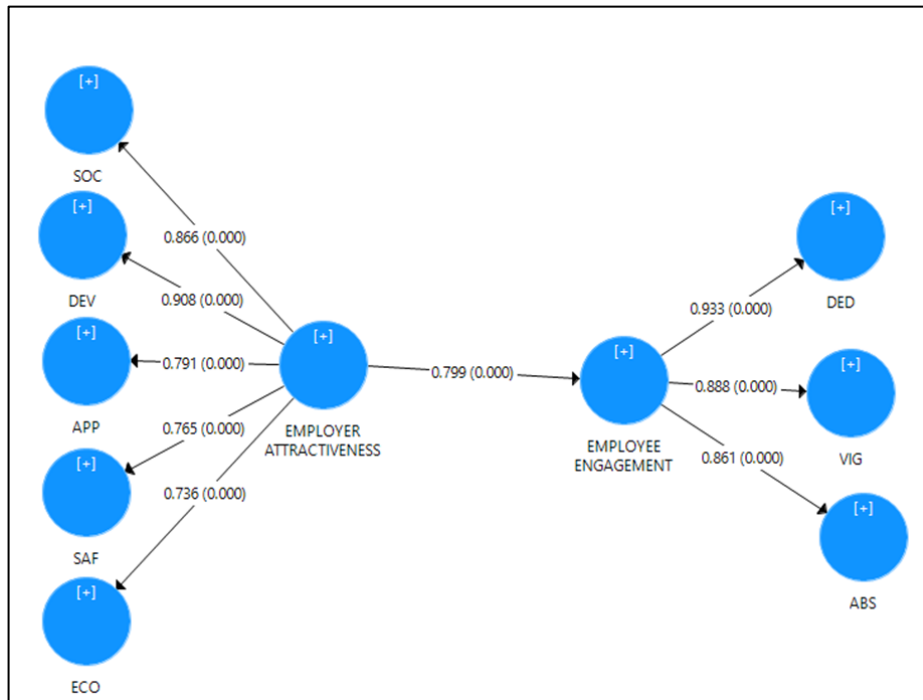


Figure 2 The research result

## DISCUSSION

That Employer attractiveness has a positive impact on Employee engagement with impact coefficient  $\beta = 0.779$  (significance level  $p$ -value = 0.000) means this hypothesis is accepted. An impact factor of 0.779 shows that Employer attractiveness has a strong and significant impact on the employee engagement. This is the second strong impact in the relationship of the research model. At the same time, that this impact is significant to 1% ( $p$  - value = 0.000 < 0.001) signifies that Employer attractiveness and Employee Engagement are positively related and statistically significant.

Research results on the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement have added to the theoretical system of employer attractiveness. This is the new finding compared to previous studies. Because the previous employer attractiveness researchers focused on attracting potential candidates (Ha and Luan, 2018; Sivertzen et al., 2013), the results indicate that employer attractiveness has a positive impact on employee engagement, which has opened up a new research direction of employer attractiveness.

Theoretically, the results of this research are consistent with those of the current theories related to the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement. First, according to social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976), an employee's behavior often occurs when receiving an exchange as a reward. When an employee receives a reward, they will return it in a positive way. In other words, social exchange theory can be a reference framework for carrying out the transfer of valuables (resources) through the social process that it focuses on. This resource will only be moved when the value is tied to it. Based on this theory, it is clear that the positive effect of employer attractiveness on employee engagement is the social exchange between the company and the employee. In particular, the company provides values (society, application, development, safety and economy) to employees; in return the employee will act positively to the company by engagement. This demonstrates that the research results of this relationship are completely consistent with social exchange theory.

Upon comparing to the previous studies, Maceachern (2003) studied the impact of positive coaching on employee engagement. The results of this study have affirmed that: if an enterprise has positive coaching, it will have a positive impact on employee engagement. Related to this study by Maceachern (2003), that the positive coaching factor is similar to the development value of Employer attractiveness can be interpreted as the result of a employer attractiveness with a positive impact on employee engagement in accordance with the findings of Maceachern (2003). In another study, Heger (2007) identified a link between Employment Value

Proposition (EVP) and employee engagement. The results of Heger (2007) affirmed that EVP has a positive impact on employee engagement. In particular, that EVP is defined as the values or benefits that the company provides to employees is similar to employer attractiveness implies that the employer attractiveness result positively affecting employee engagement is consistent with the results of Heger (2007). In addition, according to Ugwu et al. (2014), organizational trust and empowerment has an impact on employee engagement. This result is similar to the impact of employer attractiveness on employee engagement because of the employer attractiveness elements including the empowerment element (in the development value) as well as the organizational trust with the similar concept to the employer attractiveness. In addition, Ha et al. (2021) found that employer attractiveness has a positive effect on employee performance which is closely linked with employee engagement (employee engagement is the antecedent of employee performance). Therefore, it can be implied that employer attractiveness will have a positive impact on employee engagement. Therefore, this research result is completely consistent with those of the previous studies.

In practice, the results reveal that employer attractiveness has a positive impact on employee engagement. Firstly, the social value of this factor provides a friendly working environment, good relationship among colleagues, between superior and subordinate that will surely guarantee employees feel secure in their work and long-term commitment to the business. Among the various surveys of the Vietnamese working organizations, the biggest cause for employees to leave the company is due to the relationship with the manager and the working environment. The results of this study are completely practical. Moreover, the value of development and application is an important factor to help employees to see a future direction for their work; at the same time, creating conditions to experience, to learn and to be empowered to practice skills as well as apply the knowledge learned at work are the great values that employees expect. Therefore, the more this factor increases, the more likely it is for employees to stay at the company. Another important factor is employee safety, both physical and psychological. When the working environment is safe, employees tend to want to work with the company long-term. Last but not least, the final value of employer attractiveness is the economic value very crucial to employee engagement. Vietnamese businesses with competitive income and benefits often have very low turnover rates. In a nutshell, that employer attractiveness positively influences employee engagement is completely consistent with the reality.

## CONCLUSIONS AND MANAGERIAL SUGGESTIONS

The study on 'the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement in Vietnam' is aimed at the goals of testing the relationship between employer attractiveness and engagement. That employer attractiveness has a positive effect on employee engagement directly (strong impact factor is 0.779) demonstrates the fact that the employer attractiveness affects not only the potential candidates but also the existing employees by enhancing their engagement with businesses. Firstly, social values (a good relationship with colleagues and superiors as well as a happy, funny and friendly working environment) will help the employee's spirit to be more comfortable and positive. This not only reduces work stress but also helps them feel happy to work. Therefore, managers need to pay attention to encourage a friendly culture, teamwork spirit with team building activities, inter-departmental projects, sports, entertainment activities, etc. to increase social value, Secondly, to strengthen training and career development activities for employees through programs (career paths, inter-departmental experience experiences, succession planning, authorization of work, etc). Helping employees to build a rich experience and perfect working skills to be ready to take on future opportunities. Thirdly, the company allows employees to share their learned experiences and knowledge to help them with a more meaningful and interesting work. In other words, the company can research a learning organization model both valuable for the company to share and spread knowledge in the organization while helping employees increase their motivation. Fourthly, the company cares about the safety of employees, both physical and mental. A safe working environment is one priority need in choosing an organization to work for. Therefore, managers need to study and implement EHS (Environment - Health - Safety) strategy effectively in the enterprise. Last but not least, in terms of the economic solutions, the company should continue to pay attention to building competitive and rich salary, bonus and welfare packages. This will help attract and retain good employees. In short, in order to effectively retain employee,

managers need to synchronize solutions related to all elements (social, development, application, safety and economic).

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study, because of the use of data collection method as a non-probabilistic method, in particular, a convenient sampling method, will face limitations: the inability to show the overall of the data as well as the accuracy of the data. In addition, the data collection was only performed at the specific time; consequently, it was impossible to compare the changes in respondents' perception and outlook at different times. This influences the accurate measurement of respondents' perceptions of concepts as well as the relationships between factors. Another limitation is that the data collection area mainly takes place in the south of Vietnam while in Vietnam, that the culture, customs and attitudes are very different from one region to another will affect research data generalization. Finally, the respondents in this study mostly worked in enterprises whereas many other types of organizations (socio-political, educational, cultural, journalism, non-profit organizations) have not been surveyed yet.

With the above limitations, further studies can be approached in the direction of surveying other various types of organizations across the country for a better data generalization, at the same time, the sampling method can use the probability method to ensure data accuracy. Furthermore, it is possible to collect data at different times and do a study to evaluate cognitive change over time. Regarding the research content, it is possible to expand some intermediate variables on the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement that will help clarify the relationship between employer attractiveness and employee engagement.

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## APPENDIX

### I. The scale of Employer attractiveness

#### 1. Social value (6 items)

- | No. | Items  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | <i>Colleagues in the company always get along with each other.</i> |
| 2   | <i>Having a good relationship with your colleagues.</i>            |
| 3   | <i>Supportive and encouraging colleagues.</i>                      |
| 4   | <i>Having a good relationship with your superiors.</i>             |
| 5   | <i>Happy work environment.</i>                                     |
| 6   | <i>A fun working environment.</i>                                  |

#### 2. Developmental value (6 items)

- | No. | Items   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | <i>You feel the desire to stick with the organization because of the opportunities that come from experience in a professional workplace.</i> |
| 2   | <i>Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organization.</i>  |
| 3   | <i>Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for a particular organization.</i>  |
| 4   | <i>A springboard for future employment.</i>   |
| 5   | <i>Gaining career-enhancing experience.</i>   |
| 6   | <i>My organization always implements decentralized employee</i>   |

#### 3. Application value (4 items)

- | No. | Items   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | <i>Opportunity to teach others what you have learned.</i>   |
| 2   | <i>Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution.</i>                           |
| 3   | <i>You have the opportunity to share your real experiences with everyone in the organization.</i> |
| 4   | <i>Acceptance and belonging.</i>  |

#### 4. Safety Value: SAF (3 items)

- | No. | Items   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | <i>The organization I work with always ensures occupational safety during work activities.</i>                          |
| 2   | <i>Job security within the organization.</i>  |
| 3   | <i>The organization I work with is always safe in the work environment (without pressure, sexual harassment, etc.).</i> |

#### 5. Economic value (3 items)

- | No. | Items   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | <i>An above average basic salary.</i>                     |
| 2   | <i>An attractive overall compensation package.</i>        |
| 3   | <i>My organization has good allowances for employees.</i> |

### II. The scale of Employee engagement

#### 1. Dedication: DED (7 items)

- | No. | Items  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | <i>For me, the job is interesting.</i>                               |
| 2   | <i>To me, I am enthusiastic about my job.</i>                        |
| 3   | <i>To me, I am proud on the work that I do.</i>                      |
| 4   | <i>To me, my job inspires me.</i>                                    |
| 5   | <i>To me, I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.</i> |
| 6   | <i>I feel happy when I am working intensely.</i>                     |
| 7   | <i>When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.</i>      |

#### 2. Vigor: VIG (6 items)

- | No. | Items  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | <i>At my job, I always have a positive spirit.</i>                     |
| 2   | <i>I am ready to face challenges at work.</i>                          |
| 3   | <i>At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.</i> |
| 4   | <i>I can continue working for very long periods at a time.</i>         |
| 5   | <i>At my job, I am very resilient.</i>                                 |
| 6   | <i>At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.</i>                          |

#### 3. Absorption: ABS (5 items)

- | No. | Items   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | <i>When I am working, I forget everything else around me.</i> |
| 2   | <i>It is difficult to detach myself from my job.</i>          |
| 3   | <i>Time flies when I am working.</i>                          |
| 4   | <i>I am immersed in my work.</i>                              |
| 5   | <i>I get carried away when I am working.</i>                  |