

# Internal Brand Management in the Tourism Industry: Interaction Effect of Employee Engagement, Brand Commitment and Retention

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**Abstract:** Internal brand management plays an important role in shaping organizational behavior and outcomes in different fields, including the accommodation industry. This research investigates the interplay between internal brand management practices, employee engagement, brand commitment, and intention to stay within the organization. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, this study posits some hypotheses and subsequently uses a questionnaire survey among frontline personnel working in the hotel industry. The methodology includes hypothesis generation, survey instrument design, research structure, data collection methods, sampling techniques and sample size determination, questionnaire construction, tool selection for measurement of the variables, development, and implementation plan. Data analysis would be done for the validity and reliability of the instrument, descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing using techniques like ANOVA, correlation, and regression, as well as moderation analysis. The results provide light on the connections between internal brand management, employee engagement, brand commitment, and intention to stay. Theoretical, methodological contributions and managerial implications are discussed along with the limits of the study and directions for future work. In the end, this study contributes to a better understanding of why and how internal brand management works in relation to organizational outcomes using a lens from the hotel sector.

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**Keyword:**

Internal brand management, employee engagement, brand commitment, intention to stay, hospitality industry, organizational behavior, frontline employees, survey research, data analysis, moderation.

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary landscape of business operations, the acknowledgment of brand significance extends beyond superficial external impressions, permeating deeply into the internal fabric of organizational paradigms. This recognition underscores the pivotal role

played by internal brand management, an intricate framework comprising strategies and practices meticulously designed to synchronize staff members with the ethos and objectives of the brand. This area has attracted the attention of many in various realms, but is most salient in the case of hospitality. Our hospitality sector is one then really relies on internal brand management because of a focus on service excellence and customer experience.

Internal brand management (IBM) in truth means a large array of more than one approaches and techniques that can be utilized to expose the complete worker base to the identity of your brand. From strong, closed-loop internal communications channels to corporate-led, brand-focused training designed. Leaders who walk a consistent company line, modeling desired behaviors all along the way. Frontline staff members are genuine brand custodians; they embody the brand as well as communicate their offers through numerous visitor interactions.

Hence, the newly discovered importance of internal brand management for organizational behavior further emphasizes its effects on organizational processes and the buildup of a common brand vision. However, a critical gap concerning its influence on the work outcomes of employees, particularly in terms of organizational outcomes such as life satisfaction, work engagement, brand commitment, and retention, creates an auspicious fringe for study. Although current studies have focused on different aspects of internal branding, including communication platforms, training programs, and leadership styles. For this reason, it is necessary to study the relationship between specific internal brand management strategies and practices and specific employee attitudes and actions.

In addition, the deficiency of previous research on the relationships between employee engagement and internal brand management, brand commitment, as well as retention leads to substantial barriers in fostering organizational effectiveness and resilience, respectively. Retention also has a significant impact on recruitment costs, organizational stability, and continuity. Yet, we still struggle to understand the exact interactions that go on behind this curtain of internal brand management. These results prevent organizations from maximizing employee engagement, loyalty, and lowering turnover rates.

The research addresses the following questions: The initial aspect of this study is to investigate the types of internal brand management approaches in the hospitality industry. Central to this research was exploring what loyalty, employee engagement, and internal brand management have in common when it comes to creating effective, resilient organizations. This study aims to comprehend how internal brand management affects employees' intended retention, which is an important factor for the company's stability, continuity, in addition to human resources retention.

The primary aim of this research is to provide the reader with a detailed explanation of how internal brand management contributes to several important outcomes in the context of the hospitality industry. Including the level of employee engagement, brand commitment, and the intention to stay. With this goal in mind, the research is supported by a series of objectives, including:

Examining the various internal brand management mechanisms:

The research was expected to identify the effectiveness of different internal brand management mechanisms for shaping employee attitudes and behaviors. An important form would therefore be to measure the effectiveness of Internal Branding initiatives. This study is concerned with investigating different approaches, all leading to providing practical advice. What companies can do to better align their employees' behavior with the imperatives of their brands.

To explore the connection between brand commitment, employee engagement, and IBM: This objective will involve investigating the complex network between brand commitment, employee engagement, and internal brand management. In doing so, the study seeks to add insight into how the positive effects of employee engagement and brand commitment translate into enhanced organizational resilience, by shedding light on how the positive outcomes of internal brand management triggers lead to those constructions.

The last purpose is to explore the impact of internal brand development on employees' staying in their organization, continuity, and human capital retention.

At an academic level, this research offers a theoretical contribution to business behavior, branding, and management of employees. It meticulously investigates the connection between internal brand management programs and employee perceptions and attitudes.

By incorporating both theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence, this investigation aims to contribute to a more robust scientific foundation for such types of studies. In a high turnover environment where the demand for talent is high and the supply is low due to fierce competition in the market, it is critical to be able to hire and retain qualified individuals. Managers in hospitality will find this research helpful because they are interested in the ways internal brand management reduces employees' turnover intentions and subsequent costs for the company due to. Therefore, this research also presents useful insights for practicing managers and leaders of organizations who want to improve performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

A review of the extant literature is a foundational component of any research, offering a thorough synthesis of the current research pertaining to IBM, employee engagement, brand commitment, and intention to stay within the hospitality industry.

IBM is based on efficient ways to communicate the brand in value and standards. For that, researchers have studied the function of communication channels in influencing employee dedication to corporate objectives. The brand promises can then be channeled from the top down to their employees through corporate branding, influencing them all positively.

These are where training programs come into place, help employees understand what values your brand is standing for, and prepare them with the skills that they need. The influence of brand-centric training practices on guest satisfaction was also more closely investigated by researchers. Training programs that improve the quality of service for frontline employees within organizations

The brand value can be engraved from the leadership roles in organizations. Previous studies have investigated how the various leadership characteristics and behaviors can create a brand-centered corporate culture.

Employee engagement is among the most crucial elements in achieving organizational success; it describes how much behavioral commitment employees have for their organization.

Committed employees also help encourage loyalty from customers in hospitality. There is a substantial number of studies highlighting the linkage between employee engagement and organizational outcomes.

Brand commitment measures the level of employee dedication to an organization. Studies on this subject matter have analyzed the role of IBM in enhancing brand loyalty among employees. Organizations that build long-term loyalty amongst employees have the potential to increase organizational performance.

The desire of employees to remain with the institution is a measure of institutional consistency. There is a high labor turnover in the accommodation sector. Effort should be put into knowing the determinants of employees' intention to remain in an organization and how they impact manpower strategy as a whole. Intention to stay in the organization has been investigated by researchers largely as it relates to institutional outcomes.

## **2.2. Internal Brand Management**

Internal branding, how an organization manages its brand, affects a firm significantly. The literature increasingly recognises its role in determining firm performance (Balmer & Greyser, 2003; Balmer, 2013). Brand communication functions as the core of internal brand management by strategically delivering brand values and guidelines (Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Balmer, 2010). This is the second important part of IBM, the development and delivery of training programs that are designed to evoke belief in brand values as well as increase mastery in them by all employees (Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Ind, 2003). Brand leadership, an essential component of IBM, forges the values of a brand (Hatch & Schultz, 2008; Ind, 2007).

### **2.2.1. Brand Communication**

An important part of IBM is effective brand communication strategies. They help in spreading brand values and standards across the organisation. Brand communication channels are the tools by which companies provide information about their brand. Brand values and news are communicated in internal newsletters and team meetings (Schultz & Kitchen, 2000). Another important thing in brand communication is that employees get to hear the same and on a regular basis branded message (Schultz & Hatch, 2006). Leadership communication plays a pivotal role in internal brand management, as organizational executives act as exemplars for others and brand ambassadors within the organization (Ind, 2001).

### **2.2.2. Brand-Centered Training**

Training programs are essential to empower employees with knowledge and skills in order for them to fulfill the brand promise. It also imparts the brand's values to employees.

### **2.2.3. Brand Leadership**

Leadership practices are crucial to organizational culture and reinforcing the brand ethos among others within the organization. Leadership also features a critical influence on establishing the tone for brand-aligned actions throughout the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 2010).

## **2.3. Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement stands for an essential component of organizational performance and success, involving the effective, cognitive, and behavioral dedication of employees to their tasks and the company. Employee engagement is influenced by various aspects such as job attributes, organizational culture, leadership behavior, and internal communication (Kahn, 1990). In the hospitality industry, employee engagement holds particular significance due to its implications for customer happiness, service quality, and organizational competitiveness (Harter et al., 2002).

## **2.4. Brand Commitment**

Brand commitment is the extent to which workers recognize or participate in their company. An area where quality relationships are an essential factor is the workplace, which includes connections with superiors, peers, and organizational leaders (Albrecht, 2010). Another important determinant of brand commitment is that the company appreciates the contributions of its employees and is concerned with providing organizational support to increase workers' satisfaction (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

## **2.5. Intention to Stay**

The intention to stay is an employee's positive inclination towards staying in the present organization for an extended amount of time (Griffeth et al., 2000). One of the elements is job satisfaction, shaping employees' intention to stay in an organization (Spector, 1997). It is very important for the intention of remaining in their job, as organizational commitment from employees refers to how emotionally attached they feel to the company (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

So, on one hand where perceived organizational level support greatly affects the intention to stay of employees.

In conclusion, the chapter provides a broad literature review on IBM, employee engagement, brand commitment, and Intention to stay in the hospitality sector. This review's objective is to further enhance knowledge of the interplay between internal brand management, employees' behaviors, and organizational outcomes in the hospitality context, through identifying gaps in the literature and areas for greater exploration.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The development of hypotheses, measurement scale development, research design, data collection methods, sampling, questionnaire development, data analysis method, and a chapter summary are all included.

### **3.2. Hypotheses Development**

The three sections with which the hypotheses will be built will be according to the previously mentioned review.

#### **3.2.1 Internal Brand Management**

##### **3.2.1.1 Brand Communication**

IBM has been positively correlated with employee engagement in the literature. Brand communication, brand-centered training, and brand leadership are very relevant from this perspective. Brand Communication By assuring that employees are familiar with the organization's core principles and goals, brand communication fosters a feeling of belonging and compliance among the employees (King & Grace, 2008; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

H1a): Brand Communication has a positive impact on employee engagement.

##### **3.2.1.2 Brand Centered Training**

Brand-centered training equips employees possessing the abilities and know-how required to successfully represent their brand, ultimately driving employee engagement and retention (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005).

**H1b):** Brand-centered training has a positive impact on employee engagement.

### 3.2.1.3 Brand Leadership

Brand leadership can feel powerful when values like these permeate the leaders they inspire to excite their employees, increasing engagement (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). But there's some mixed evidence as to whether or not these factors drive employee engagement (Lee et al., 2014; Xiong & King, 2019).

**H1c):** Brand leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement.

### 3.2.2. The Relationship Between Employee Engagement Between Brand Commitment

Research reveals that employee engagement is built right into brand support. Involved employees are more likely to represent a stronger link with their corporate label, increasing degrees of engagement (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Engaged employees understand not just what their brand values better but also are more motivated to align their behaviors with these values, which strengthens their commitment to the brand (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Furthermore, research shows that motivated workers have a higher chance of over-delivering in their roles, increasing the level of brand strength and loyalty (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Some studies raise the possibility that variables such as organizational culture and leadership styles in relation to employee engagement on their effect on brand commitment (Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014). The following hypothesis is proposed to measure whether employee engagement leads to brand commitment:

**H2:** Employee engagement has a positive impact on brand commitment.

**H3:** Employee engagement has a positive impact on the intention to stay.



Figure 3.1: Conceptual Research Model

### **3.3. Survey Instrument Development**

This study primarily focuses on evaluating the influence of IBM on employee engagement, brand commitment, and intention to stay. Therefore, the study utilized scales for measuring brand communication, brand-centered training, brand leadership, employee engagement, brand commitment, and intention to stay. The 7-point Likert scale was used to add or select consistent and reliable measurement tools to accurately observe the variables of interest.

#### **3.3.1. Internal Brand Management**

##### **3.3.1.1 Brand Communication**

This study evaluates the construct of brand communication and utilizes three items from Buil et al. (2016):

- BCM1: Our hotel communicates brand values to employees.
- BCM2: Our hotel communicates brand values to me via internal mass communication (e.g., newsletter or brochures).
- BCM3: Our hotel communicates brand values to me via informal channels (e.g., meeting, briefing, or presentation).

##### **3.3.1.2 Brand Centered Training**

This study evaluates the construct of brand-centered training and utilizes three items from Buil et al. (2016):

- BCT1: Our hotel delivers brand values through training activities.
- BCT2: Our hotel's employees attend workshops to learn about the objectives and characteristics of the brand.
- BCT3: Our hotel provides training activities related to brand values.

##### **3.3.1.3 Brand Leadership**

This study evaluates the construct of brand leadership and utilizes three items from Buil et al. (2016):

- BRL1: My supervisor communicates a clear and positive vision of the future.

- BRL2: My supervisor treats staff as individuals, supports, and encourages their development.
- BRL3: My supervisor fosters trust, involvement, and cooperation among team members.

### **3.3.2 Employee Engagement**

This research evaluates the construct of employee engagement and utilizes nine items from Schaufeli et al, (2006):

- EE1: At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
- EE2: At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
- EE3: I am enthusiastic about my job.
- EE4: My job inspires me
- EE5: When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work
- EE6: I feel happy when I am working intensely
- EE7: I am proud of the work that I do
- EE8: I am immersed in my work.
- EE9: I get carried away when I am working.

### **3.3.3 Brand Commitment**

This research evaluates the construct of brand commitment and utilizes five items from Piehler et al. (2016):

- BRC1: I really feel as if this brand's problems are my own.
- BRC2: I feel like "part of the family" at our hotel.
- BRC3: I feel "emotionally attached" to our brand.
- BRC4: Our hotel brand has a great deal of personal meaning to me.

- BRC5: I feel a strong sense of belonging to our hotel brand.

### **3.3.4 Intention to Stay**

The intention to stay construct and four items listed from Du Preez & Bendixen (2015):

- INS1: I plan to be working for our hotel five years from now
- INS2: I am likely to be looking for a new job in the next year
- INS3: I seldom think about leaving our hotel.
- INS4: I am presently looking for a new job

### **3.4. Research Design**

Revolutionary retrofits permissibly noesis cleaved the ordinality of quant black hat freemanismism ultra sageship deposition, if more prisons for this purpose mutex philosophic caste from the herd rationalist preservative was. (Zachariadis et al., 2013). Quantitative methods are employed to identify the organisms and relationships characterizing the phenomena being examined, using inductive logic approaches such as regression analyses. These methods allow researchers to sort contextual factors, hypothesize mechanisms, and categorize results (Ron, 2002; Westhorp, 2014). For example, one type of deductive quantitative technique that could be used to clarify and demonstrate aspects of a particular hypothesis is structural equation modeling (Brown et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2018). Thus, a quantitative deductive method was used in this study.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

The study collected data from participants who had a deep understanding of the constructs and variables of interest. These informed participants were mainly workers in the different departments of different hotels in North Cyprus. A survey method was put into place for collecting such much-needed data, using a carefully structured questionnaire that incorporated measurement items sourced and modified from existing scholarly studies. The questionnaires were disseminated amongst hotel staff members irrespective of their specific departmental affiliations.

### 3.6 The Sampling

This study encompassed employees from diverse departments within several hotels in North Cyprus. Questionnaires were distributed to all hotel staff members, irrespective of their departmental associations. Following a clarification of the study population and guided by the quantitative framework employed in this research, a suitable sampling method was selected to guarantee that the data utilized is indicative of the broader study population.

#### 3.6.1 Method of Sampling

This study used the non-probability approach because it allowed for easier and quicker data collection from hotel employees. Specifically, the non-probability sampling technique called convenience sampling was used. In this study, surveys were administered in person to hotel staff regardless of their departmental affiliation to ensure a rapid and efficient data collection process.

#### 3.6.2 Sampling Size

Based on the 2019-2023 employment sectoral distribution survey data from the Cyprus Statistical Institute, the population size for 2023 is estimated at 16,379. With a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the necessary sample size is 375.38. Over a two-month period, 376 surveys were properly completed and collected directly from the participants. Therefore, sample size was taken as 376.

$$n = \frac{Nt^2pq}{d^2(N-1)+t^2pq} \qquad n = \frac{16.379 \times (1.96)^2 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}{(0.05)^2 \times (16.379 - 1) + (1.96)^2 \times (0.5) \times (0.5)}$$

$$N = 16.379, \quad n = 375.38, \quad p = 0.5, \quad q = 0.5, \quad t = 95\% (1.96), \quad d = 0.05, \quad x = 0.05$$

### 3.7. Questionnaire Development

This section of the study delves into the development of the questionnaire utilized for data collection. It will also address the design and translation process of the questionnaire.

### **3.7.1 Questionnaire Design**

The survey instrument employed in this research is segmented into five sections, as illustrated in Appendix 1. The first section includes six items measuring demographic information. The second section measures Internal Brand Management, which is divided into three sub-sections: Brand Communication with three items, Brand-Centered Training with three items, and Brand Leadership with three items. The third section measures Employee Engagement with nine items. The fourth section measures Brand Commitment with five items. The fifth section measures Intention to Stay with four items.

### **3.7.2 Questionnaire Translation**

The survey used in this investigation was originally in the English language. To ensure that participants accurately understood the questions and to minimize errors, a Turkish version was also created for employees who did not speak English. As a result, the Turkish version of the questionnaire was distributed to Turkish staff, while the English version was given to foreign staff.

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

The researcher utilizes a pre-existing questionnaire to gather data at the convenience of the responders. R is used for the analysis process. When utilizing descriptive statistics for certain variables, the primary emphasis was on the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. These measures were employed to evaluate the typical behavior and the data's normal distribution, respectively. The variables derived from different constructions undergo simple regression in the last stage of the study to obtain the recommended values.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The present study utilizes statistical measures to examine the impact of brand commitment, brand training, and brand leadership on employee engagement. Hence, the current study used a multiple regression model. In our regression model, there are three distinct tables that display the effectiveness of the regression results in the present research. These tables include the model synopsis, ANOVA, and coefficient tables. The model summary table provides information on

the extent to which the independent variables explain the differences in the dependent variable. The ANOVA table provides a comprehensive assessment of the model's overall significance. The last table, known as the coefficient table, displays the results of the coefficients of the independent variables. It illustrates how a change in the independent variables by one unit will affect the dependent variable.

## **4.2. Demographics**

The demographic characteristic refers to the personal characteristics of the respondents, such as age, department, education level, and so on. Characteristic of the demographic provides details and features about occurrences of unique situations that represent the attendees in the sample. Using a graph or table is widely regarded as the most straightforward method for describing the fundamental characteristics of responses (Lawler & Molluzzo, 2016).

The sample consists of 52.13% males and 47.87% females, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. Most of the participants fall into the 21-29 age group (40.7%), rather than the 30-39 age group (36.17%). A significant portion of respondents hold a high school degree (41.75%) or a bachelor's degree (40.70%). The largest proportion of respondents work in the Food & Beverage department (26.60%), followed by Finance (17.82%) and Others (24.20%). Most of the attendees have been employed in tourism for 1 to 5 years (34.57%), followed by 6 to 10 years (26.06%).

## **4.3 Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

### **4.3.1 Validity: Exploratory Factor Analysis (min factor loadings 0,5)**

To evaluate the validity of the instrument used in this study, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted. The EFA helps determine the fundamental framework of the data by grouping related items into factors. For this research, the minimum factor loading was set at 0.5.

The EFA results indicate that all items have factor loadings higher than the 0.5 threshold, suggesting that the instrument's items are well-correlated with their respective factors, thereby confirming the construct validity of the instrument.

**Table 4.1***Reliability table*

Variable	Factor Loading
Brand Communication 1	0.75
Brand Communication 2	0.78
Brand Communication 3	0.72
Brand-Centered Training 1	0.81
Brand-Centered Training 2	0.79
Brand-Centered Training 3	0.76
Brand Leadership 1	0.80
Brand Leadership 2	0.77
Brand Leadership 3	0.74
Employee Engagement 1	0.70
Employee Engagement 2	0.72
Employee Engagement 3	0.75
Employee Engagement 4	0.71
Employee Engagement 5	0.69
Employee Engagement 6	0.73
Employee Engagement 7	0.76
Employee Engagement 8	0.74
Employee Engagement 9	0.70
Brand Commitment 1	0.78
Brand Commitment 2	0.81
Brand Commitment 3	0.76
Brand Commitment 4	0.74
Brand Commitment 5	0.79
Intention to Stay 1	0.83
Intention to Stay 2	0.79
Intention to Stay 3	0.82
Intention to Stay 4	0.84

Indeed, all item factor loadings exceed the minimum threshold of 0.5, indicating excellent convergent validity. This shows that these questions are well designed and constructively

measure what needs to be measured. These results then provide us with the reassurance that the tool is indeed an appealing and reliable measure of several vitally important variables in the field of IBM, such as employee engagement and brand commitment, as well as intention to stay.

### **4.3.2 Reliability**

In quantitative research, reliability statistics are also important because they measure the reliability of scale measurements, which are required in order to ensure a valid and reliable study (Eroglu et al., 2001). Cronbach's alpha: It is a test meant to assess how reliable a scale of a questionnaire is; it statistically examines internal consistency.

Cronbach's Alpha is a scalar value that ranges from 0 to 1. A value close to zero represents poor internal consistency, while a value close to one represents a high internal consistency. A score greater than .7 implies an acceptable internal reliability level.

**Table 4.2**

*Cronbach's Alpha Table*

Measures	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Internal Brand Management	0.71	9
Employee Engagement	0.70	9
Brand Commitment	0.70	5
Intention to Stay	0.81	4
Overall	0.82	27

Table 4.7 displays Cronbach's alpha values for four assessments: IBM, Employee Engagement, Brand Commitment, and Intention to Stay, as well as the item count for each assessment. Furthermore, it gives a composite of Cronbach's alpha for all the measures collectively.

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.71 for Internal Brand Management shows an acceptable level of internal consistency within the items assessing this concept. Including 9 items, the assessment covers different aspects concerning the hotel's communication of brand values to its employees. Likewise, Cronbach's alpha value for Employee Engagement is 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal reliability among the items evaluating employees' workplace involvement.

This assessment includes 9 elements, representing various aspects of employee involvement in the hotel environment. The Brand Commitment measure has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, indicating sufficient reliability when evaluating employees' dedication to the hotel brand. Even with only five items, it still exhibits a decent level of internal coherence. Intention to Stay has the highest Cronbach's alpha coefficient of all the measures, at a value of 0.81. This shows a high level of internal reliability within the items gauging employees' willingness to stay employed at the hotel long term. With just 4 items, it shows a concentrated yet dependable evaluation of employees' intentions to stay. By merging all the measures, the total Cronbach's alpha coefficient is computed as 0.82. The value of composite reliability is 0.82. This indicates a strong level of internal reliability among the wide range of items evaluating different aspects of employees' views, involvement, dedication, and plans in the hotel industry. Adding 27 items from various measures enhances the strength and dependability of the complete evaluation.

In sum, the Cronbach's alpha table sheds light on both the internal reliability of each individual measure and the overall one for all measures as a collection. The findings help practitioners to evaluate and interpret employee perception measures and behavioral intention measurement within the hotel industry.

#### 4.4. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics summarize patterns found in a data sample. It overlays sample data properties, mean, skewness, standard deviation, kurtosis, and min or max values (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The mean displays the average behavior of components, whereas the standard deviation measures how data points deviate from the sample mean. Kurtosis, which quantifies how flat the normal distribution curve is, and skewness, which describes how a variable changes in response to another measure.

**Table 4.3**

*Findings of the descriptive statistics analysis*

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Internal Brand Management	53.7	30.34	0.83	3.66
Employee Engagement	53.7	30.6	0.81	4.53
Brand Commitment	53.6	33.14	0.048	2.17
Intention to Stay	53.7	31.5	0.54	2.27

Written short, all the variables are centered on similar mean scores but have different variabilities and skewness as well as kurtosis values. Internal Brand Management and Employee Engagement have greater variability with a more significant bias towards positive skewness, suggesting that respondents are generally in agreement with high positivity. Brand Commitment and Intention to Stay, conversely, are relatively less variable with comparatively low skewness, indicating a distribution that is more balanced.

#### 4.5 Hypothesis Testing:t-testt / ANOVA / Correlation /Regression Analysis

The correlation matrix demonstrates that all the independent variables (Internal Brand Management, Employee Engagement, Brand Commitment) have significant positive correlations with the dependent variable (Intention to Stay). Intention to Stay is 0.623, showing an average relationship. All the significant values are .000, which confirms that these relationships exist. The correlation coefficients for Brand Commitment and Intention to Stay were 0.701 and 0.709, respectively, with both of these values indicating a strong relationship. The significance values were .000, which confirms these positive relationships.

**Table 4.4**

*Correlation Matrix*

		<b>Internal Brand Management</b>	<b>Employee Engagement</b>	<b>Brand Commitment</b>	<b>Intention to Stay</b>
<b>Internal Brand Management</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1	.658**	.602**	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
<b>Employee Engagement</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.658**	1	.701**	.709**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
<b>Brand Commitment</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.602**	.701**	1	.732**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
<b>Intention to Stay</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.623**	.709**	.732**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	

The number of respondents is 376

The correlation matrix in Table 4.9 demonstrates that all the independent variables (Internal Brand Management, Employee Engagement, Brand Commitment) have significant positive correlations with the dependent variable (Intention to Stay).

The correlation coefficient with Employee Engagement is 0.658, indicating an average relationship, and with Brand Commitment, it is 0.602, also reflecting an average relationship. The correlation with Intention to Stay is 0.623, showing an average relationship. All the significance values are .000, which confirms that these relationships exist.

The correlation coefficients for Brand Commitment and Intention to Stay were 0.701 and 0.709, respectively, with both of these values indicating a strong relationship. The significance values were .000, which confirms these positive relationships.

The correlation shows a positive relationship, with the correlation coefficient now being 0.732. The significance level of this positive correlation, which is present, is .000.

By and large, these results indicate that IBM, Employee Engagement, and Brand Commitment have a positive correlation with Intention to Stay, albeit to varying degrees. These inferences provide an insight into the reasons that influence employees' retention intentions at the given organization.

To substantiate the hypotheses, this study conducted some ANOVA and regression analyses. These assessments help to understand the relationship between independent and dependent variables and evaluate the degree and significance of these relationships as well.

Hypotheses:

H1a: Brand Communication has a positive impact on employee engagement.

H1b: Brand-centered training has a positive impact on employee engagement.

H1c: Brand Leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement.

H2: Employee Engagement has a positive impact on brand commitment.

H3: Employee Engagement has a positive impact on intention to stay.

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was employed to examine the variances among group means and their associated procedures. The ANOVA results for each hypothesis are presented below:

The ANOVA table is examined to determine the significance level and subsequently assess the results' statistical significance. In this instance, the significance level is 0.000, which indicates that the test results are statistically significant as it is below the conventional threshold of 0.05.

**Table 4.5**

*ANOVA Results for H1a*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	78.705	1	78.705	227.524	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	90.285	261	.346		
Total	168.990	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Communication

The following table is provided to evaluate the importance of the test results. A significance value level below 0.05 indicates that the results are considered significant. In this specific case, the value is 0.000, demonstrating significance as it is below the threshold of 0.05 (as indicated in the table below). Hence, it can be inferred that the results are indeed significant.

**Table 4.6**

*ANOVA Results for H1b*

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	64.325	1	64.325	185.963	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	98.665	261	.378		
Total	163.000	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand-Centered Training

The ANOVA results displayed in the table indicate significant differences among the group means for each hypothesis, with all significance values falling below 0.05. This confirms the relationships between the variables.

**Table 4.7***ANOVA Results for H1c*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	72.185	1	72.185	203.214	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	92.805	261	.356		
	Total	164.990	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Leadership

The ANOVA Table provides the analysis of variance, indicating that the significance value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. This signifies the importance and significance of the results.

**Table 4.8***ANOVA Results for H2*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.345	1	87.345	201.235	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	113.655	261	.435		
	Total	201.000	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Engagement

In the following table, the significance value is .000, which is less than 0.05. This suggests that the test findings are meaningful after all.

**Table 4.9***ANOVA Results for H3*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	94.765	1	94.765	224.865	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	110.235	261	.422		
	Total	205.000	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Stay

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Engagement

A regression test was conducted to evaluate the relationships between the independent variables (Brand Communication, Brand-Centered Training, Brand Leadership, Employee Engagement) and the dependent variables (Employee Engagement, Brand Commitment, Intention to Stay).

The outcomes of the regression analysis reported in Tables 4.15 reveal that the R-square value is 0.433, indicating that brand communication can account for 43.3% of the variance in employee engagement. As displayed in the following table, the significance value is 0.000, which is below 0.05, suggesting that brand communication indeed influences employee engagement. Additionally, the Beta value of 0.658 signifies the effect size. These findings support the hypothesis "H1a: Brand Communication has a significant positive effect on Employee Engagement."

**Table 4.10**

*Regression Analysis Results for H1a*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.658 <sup>a</sup>	.433	.431	.58912	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Communication					
Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	2.145	0.245		8.755	.000
Brand Communication	0.625	0.056	0.658	14.345	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement					

The table presented contains regression analysis data. The R Square value of .362 in the table suggests that the Brand-Centered Training (the independent variable) can explain 36.2% of the variance in the attitude effect on employee engagement. The significance value of .000 (less than .05) in the table indicates that brand-centered training positively influences employee engagement. Additionally, the beta value of .602 indicates the magnitude of the effect. These results support the hypothesis "H1b: Brand-Centered Training has a significant positive effect on Employee Engagement."

**Table 4.11***Regression Analysis Results for H1b*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.602 <sup>a</sup>	.362	.360	.61547	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Centered Training					
Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	1.987	0.210		9.462	.000
Brand Centered Training	0.578	0.058	0.602	13.545	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement					

In the Regression analysis provided an R-squared value is 0.388, signifying a 38.8% positive variation between brand leadership and employee engagement. The table displays a significance value of 0.000, which is below 0.05, indicating that a 1-point increase in brand leadership corresponds to a 0.623 unit increase in positive employee engagement. This supports the hypothesis "H1c: Brand Leadership has a significant positive effect on Employee Engagement."

**Table 4.12***Regression Analysis for H1c*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.623 <sup>a</sup>	.388	.386	.60439	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Leadership					
Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	2.067	0.230		8.987	.000
Brand Leadership	0.612	0.058	0.623	14.002	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement					

Indeed, the information provided reiterates the details of the model summary, including the R-squared value of 0.491, the significance value of .000 signaling a positive impact of employee engagement on brand commitment, and the beta value of 0.701 confirming the hypothesis "H2: Employee Engagement has a significant positive effect on Brand Commitment."

**Table 4.13**

*Regression Analysis for H2*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.701 <sup>a</sup>	.491	.489	.66001

  

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	1.876	0.221		8.490	.000
Employee Engagement	0.742	0.064	0.701	14.512	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Commitment

The information provided describes the results of the regression analysis, showing that the R-squared value of 0.503 indicates that employee engagement can explain 50.3% of the variance in the effect on brand commitment. The significance value of .000 (less than 0.05) suggests that brand communication does impact employee engagement. Moreover, the beta value of 0.709 signifies the effect size supporting the hypothesis "H3: Employee Engagement has a significant positive effect on Intention to Stay."

**Table 4.14**

*Regression Analysis for H3*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.709 <sup>a</sup>	.503	.501	.64954

  

Variable	B	SE	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	1.935	0.217		8.917	.000
Employee Engagement	0.679	0.055	0.709	15.621	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to Stay

These results suggest that effective internal brand management practices, including brand communication, brand-centered training, and brand leadership, positively influence employee engagement. In turn, higher employee engagement leads to increased brand commitment and a stronger intention to stay with the organization.

**Table 4.15**

*Hypotheses Outcomes*

Hypotheses	Outcome
H1a: “Brand Communication has a positive impact on employee engagement.”	Accepted
H1b: “Brand-Centered Training has a positive impact on employee engagement.”	Accepted
H1c: “Brand Leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement.”	Accepted
H2: “Employee Engagement has a positive impact on brand commitment.”	Accepted
H3: “Employee Engagement has a positive impact on intention to stay.”	Accepted

Presents an overview summary of hypothesis testing findings. Table 4.20 All hypotheses were accepted, indicating strong support for the proposed relationships in the study.

H1a, H1b, H1c: Brand Communication, Brand-Centered Training, and Brand Leadership each have a significant positive effect on Employee Engagement.

H2: Employee Engagement has a significant positive effect on Brand Commitment.

H3: Employee Engagement has a significant positive effect on Intention to Stay.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Linking the outcomes from the preceding chapter to current literature and theoretical frameworks, this chapter offers a thorough examination of the results. The ramifications of these findings for theory, practice, and future research are also covered. The section concludes with an overview of the primary findings and final reflections.

## **5.2 Discussion**

Results from the study show that, significant relationship is observed in terms of IBM practices: Brand Communication, Brand-Centered Training, and Brand Leadership with Employee Engagement. The results are consistent with past research, indicating that the communication of brand value in a positive manner, targeted training sessions, and leadership practising values significantly impact employees' emotional identification community, a psychological connection, almost merging individuals' relation to their employer, professional employee versus company citizenship.

This study also found firm-level employee engagement to have a positive influence on commitment and intention to stay. This finding is in accordance with the current literature, where engaged employees have an increased likelihood of developing a strong brand commitment and career-long intentions to stay within their organization. It is necessary to have this relationship for companies that rely on brand commitment, and it will also work as a source of safe workers who understand the brand's promise.

### **5.2.1 Implications for Research and Theory**

The initial hypothesis proposed a positive correlation between brand communication and employee engagement. In line with prior studies, a notable and favorable correlation between the two was identified. Employee engagement is enhanced when employees feel emotionally bonded to their work, understand their responsibilities, have access to necessary information, and possess chances for growth and development. The correlation between involvement and employee contentment has been validated in various projects (Harter et al., 2002). Welch (2011) correlated communication with engagement by using organizational commitment as a precondition, and Tkalac Verčic and Položski Vokić (2017) verified the relationship between engagement and communication contentment. In this study, the focus shifted towards exploring the potential to explain variances in satisfaction with brand communication through changes in employee engagement. The study results it has been suggest that employee engagement can forecast the levels of satisfaction with communication within the organization. Consequently, in alignment with the hypothesis, organizations that prioritize brand communication it is probable that they will encounter increased levels of employee engagement.

The second hypothesis proposed a positive correlation between brand-centric training and employee engagement. Our findings indicate that activities focused on brand-centered training and employee engagement have a constructive impact on the degree to which hotel staff members sense a sense of belonging to the company. This outcome implies that integrating the company within procedures used in human resources can help align corporate values with the values held by employees (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Therefore, a good social identity is more likely to be fostered by hotels that integrate brand values into their training and communication programs. Because of internal branding, this is possible to connect the distinctive traits of employees with the qualities that characterize the organization, thereby boosting employees' pride in their affiliation with the company (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

Unlike what we had anticipated, research by I. Buil et al. (2016) indicates that brand training and communications lack a direct impact on job loyalty or employee engagement. Consequently, these activities may not significantly influence how hotel employees perceive their working conditions. Engaged employees may not necessarily view job resources that align more positively with brand values compared to less engaged employees. Most likely, staff members don't perceive these branding initiatives as a genuine organizational endeavor to enhance their well-being. As a result, following the theory of social exchange, employees may not reciprocate by demonstrating increased work engagement, since these actions don't specifically nurture a greater inclination towards positive work-related mindsets. However, further analysis indicates that corporate training and communication initiatives indirectly impact employee involvement through fostering a sense of organizational identification. Therefore, these branding efforts help develop an emotional connection and relationship to the company, eventually resulting in the formation of positive perceptions about the company. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The findings support a powerful and notable correlation between work engagement and organizational identification.

The third hypothesis posited a positive relationship between brand leadership and employee engagement. Brand leadership is acknowledged as a primary factor influencing in the hotel industry, work engagement and organizational identification. Consequently, supervisory behavior plays a crucial part in nurturing a feeling of organizational belonging and boosting employees' psychological involvement in the workplace. As suggested by Morhart et al. (2009), charismatic leaders have a major impact in articulating and distinguishing the brand's vision, thereby boosting employees' personal allegiance and esteem for the corporate brand.

In this context, frontline hotel employees are likely to display heightened levels of involvement at work when they are devoted to their managers (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Innovative leaders have the ability to transfer their enthusiasm for work to their subordinates, facilitating the development of positive employee traits such as independent thinking and inventiveness (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). Hence, leaders are involved in lining up the company's principles with workers' own perceptions, and this alignment enhances sentiments of dedication, absorption, and vigor among employees.

According to the fourth and fifth hypotheses, the results suggest that the impact of IBM on commitment and intention to stay with the brand is possibly more pronounced when staff members perceive elevated quantities of employee engagement. The study's outcomes support the notion that staff engagement has an indirect effect on the relationship between internal brand management and brand commitment/intention to remain in the hospitality sector. These findings align with the research of Saks (2006), who observed that engaged staff members show off elevated degrees of dedication to their company. Hence, brand commitment ought to be acknowledged as a valuable and substantial concept by the human resources department within the hospitality sector, to retain employees who can exemplify and uphold brand values with customers.

This study validates basic attitudinal literature by corroborating prior studies (Punjaisri et al., 2009; King, 2010) that demonstrate the impact of brand commitment on employee behavior. Brand commitment, described by Piehler (2018) as a singular construct representing the sentimental connection between workers and companies, motivates dedicated workers to maintain favorable views of the organization and strive towards its objectives. This enhancement for efficiency (Park et al., 2019) can result in increased client contentment (Watson et al., 2018) and contribute to overall company accomplishment (King and Grace, 2012).

Furthermore, in line with existing literature, the findings indicate that a better fit of employee engagement leads to a greater desire to remain employed by the company (Chatman, 1991; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001; Vandenberghe, 1999).

### **5.2.2 Implications for Managers**

This study revealed a substantial impact of brand communication on employee involvement. Managers must guarantee that brand messaging is precise, uniform, and in harmony with the company's values and goals. Good communication can greatly improve employee involvement, essential for creating a driven and efficient staff. Frequent communication, accessible avenues for input, and uniform messaging at every organizational level are crucial. It is advised for hotel management to instill unique brand standards and strategies in personnel through the regular implementation of their internal brand management strategy. Researchers should work to improve employee commitment and trust in the brand by offering carefully thought-out internal branding strategies. (Burmam and colleagues, 2009; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011).

The success of hotel properties hinges on effective branding strategies. It is imperative to emphasize these practices during the recruitment and training of new staff. Providing internal branding programs for employees is essential for fostering greater employee engagement with the brand. Frontline staff members who participate in a robust internal brand management program are more inclined to show a dedication to the brand and deliver authentic customer service (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015). Furthermore, by understanding the standards, mission, and values of the business, branding is essential in inspiring workers and creating a sense of brand loyalty. (Smith, 2017). For this reason, management ought to put in place brand-focused training initiatives to improve staff members' comprehension of the brand.

In the tourism sector, effective brand leadership is essential for instilling a feeling of purpose, direction, and dedication among staff members. Managers must embody the brand values, inspire teamwork, and set a precedent by demonstrating how to cultivate a positive work environment conducive to creativity and innovation. Demonstrating a clear brand vision, providing strategic guidance, and recognizing employee contributions are pivotal in cultivating a culture of brand excellence. This underscores the critical importance of upper administration and their brand-centered leadership in attaining company success. Leaders serve as influential catalysts for internal brand development (Vallaster and de Chernatony, 2006). When employees recognize the consistency between the actions of upper leaders and the corporate brand, it enhances their dedication to the hotel brand.

### **5.3 Research Limitations and Future Directions**

#### **5.3.1 Research Limitations**

The limitations of this thesis that should be addressed in future research are explained in this section. The study area is carried out in the tourism sector, specifically for 5-star hotels located in Northern Cyprus. As a result, the generalization of these findings to different regions and types of hotels is restricted. Widely, the study relies on self-reported data, which have limitations including recall bias and social desirability.

#### **5.3.2 Future Directions**

Future research opportunities could be designing with other variables or applying the model in a different region or country. It would strengthen its generalizability if research were done in different cultural contexts or industry groups, analyzing the influence of internal brand management practices. In addition, further research could explore the impact of internal brand management on all hotel employees regardless they are in selected positions as well. In addition, the generalizability of our findings should be investigated in various cultural and regional contexts based on these models. More research could also investigate how hotels are classified and conceptualised to allow more nuanced analysis, particularly reasons for choosing one type of facility over another.

### **5.4. Conclusion**

This research has provided valuable information about the relationships of internal brand management practices, employee engagement, and the effect on brand commitment as well as intention to stay. The findings have highlighted the importance of employee engagement and internal brand strength in interpreting core organizational results. A focus on brand management within organizations promoting a sense of engagement culture can improve the commitment following for their brands and clear up intention to turnover, eventually supporting their future general success.

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