

The Mediating Role of Job Engagement in the Relationship Between the Employer Brand and Citizenship Behavior

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Abstract: Banks requires paying special attention to the organizational citizenship behavior to compete in today's rapidly changing environment. This leads to customer retention and improving financial performance and profitability. On the other hand, the employer brand is a long-term strategy to attract, retain and develop human resources that can be one of the effective factors on the citizenship behavior. Research has also shown that one of the necessary infrastructures for OCB is job engagement. Therefore, this research is focused on investigating the impact of employer brand on organizational citizenship behavior as well as assessing the mediating role of job engagement in the relationship between employer brand and citizenship behavior. The target population includes all staff of central branch of Tejarat banks in Tehran. The sample under study consists of 196 employees of central branch of Tejarat bank. Sampling is performed according to Morgan's table. The study is a descriptive research of correlational type and a researcher-made questionnaire is used to collect data. Data analysis is conducted using equation modeling in LISREL Software. The results show that employer brand and job engagement affect citizenship behavior and also the employer brand affects job engagement.

Key words: Employer brand, job engagement, citizenship behavior, infrastructures, citizenship

INTRODUCTION

Employer brand is one of the concepts that have been discussed nearly two decades in the marketing and human resources management literature (Ambler and Barrow, 1996). Although, various definitions are proposed for this concept but it can be considered as the image formed from the features of an organization (as employer) in the minds of employees and job applicants in the labor market about the organization. The positive brand of an organization represents the features of the organization in the employees' and applicants' minds that makes the organization as an appropriate environment to work. Perhaps, one of the main reasons of considering this issue is making strategic and talented human resource available from the competitive labor market which are not attract to the organization using common staffing strategies (Knox and Freeman, 2006). From another perspective, the human and moral requirements of managing a business require that any organization has a certain conceptual framework of value creation for its employees as a group of key stakeholders, for providing an appropriate environment to work and grow for them.

The term "employer brand" was first used by Ambler and Barrow in their research. After in-depth study of respondents from several companies, they concluded that the concept can also be applied about the staff. The employer brand is based on the idea that investing in human resource creates value for the company and through investment on improving staff skills, it will be possible to improve the organizational performance (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Efforts to improve performance have been the subject of interest from the early days of the formation of the management science and every day captures more areas in this field. In primary school of management, employees were evaluated based the job descriptions and expected competencies but today, it is expected to act beyond this tasks. These behaviors are identified as prosocial behaviors, extra-role behaviors, underlying function, spontaneous behavior or organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational citizenship behavior can also include employees optional behaviors that are not part of their official duties and they are not directly considered by the organizational formal system but can increase the overall effectiveness of the organization. The organizational citizenship behavior can

also contribute organizational effectiveness. Podsakoff and Mackenzie state various reasons that organizational citizenship behavior may have an impact on organizational effectiveness. Some areas in which citizenship behavior helps organizational success can be summarized as follows:

- Increasing management and staff efficiency
- Releasing resources for more productive purposes
- Reducing the need to allocate scarce resources to the tasks with preservative nature
- Strengthening the organization's ability to attract and retain qualified personnel
- Increasing consistency of the organization performance
- Empowering organizations to adapt more effectively with the environmental changes (Kwantes, 2003; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000)

In general, it can be said that today, all organizations need to improve their performance. As it was mentioned earlier, research shows that both the employer brand and citizenship behavior leads to improve organizational performance. On the other hand, several studies have addressed examining the predictors of organizational citizenship behaviors such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational justice, leadership styles, personal characteristics, organizational support, staff perception of organizational justice, etc., since it seems that the job engagement variable can also be one of the predictors of OCB (Mosley, 2007), this research aims to investigate the relationship between employer brand and citizenship behavior by taking the job engagement as the mediating variable at the central branch of Tejarat Bank in Tehran.

Problem statement: Iranian organizations have to confront some challenges in the country in addition to the global developments and trends. Hierarchical organizational structures, slowness of work flow, low efficiency, unrealistic assessment of human resources and in some cases, employees' and clients' dissatisfaction on one hand and developing the 20 years vision and communicating it by the highest authorities of the country on the other hand has obliged the officials to prepare conditions in a plan started in 2005, to make Iran the first economic, scientific and technical power in the region. Of course, achieving this goal requires extensive planning in various aspects; one of these dimensions is evaluating the state of the administrative system of the country and improving its development and human resource indicators. On the other hand, during the governance the public administration thought (initial approach) because of the emphasis on the separation of politics from

administration, public managers accountability was based on the hierarchy system and it was subjected to the bureaucracy malfunctions; observing the regulations and implementing governmental policies, had led to emerging the behaviors such as position-seeking, command, control, punishment, etc. in managers and the other public servants; therefore, in the dry and soulless organizational environment, managing affairs was practically against the organizational citizenship behaviors. With the advent of new public administration that considered servicing customer as the most important role of managers and providing service to citizens (government customers) as the most important role of government executives it was possible to growth the democratic values such as freedom, participation, equality etc. and led to prosperity and formation of civil and citizenship behaviors in the organizations.

Today, the company's ability to attract, recruit and retain talented human resources from the labor market is an important part of the successful company's strategy. Since 1990, a large number of companies have spent a significant cost on the employer brand showing that these companies have realized the importance of employer brand). Today, every organization is not only relies on products and services brand to compete in the market, and the organizations must regularly assess their image and brand in the minds of potential and actual staff. Strong employer brand in an organization show that the organization is an attractive place to work and encourages the labor to work in the organization. Strong employer brand enables organizations to attract more talents. At the current time, in which the war for talent is taking place between the organizations, building a strong employer brand is critical for the organizations. Attract and retain talented human capital is one of the very important sources of the competitive advantage. Recently, companies have inclined towards branding principles and methods in the field of human resources management to attract better employees, this application of branding principles in the field of human resource management is called employer brand.

What was said, suggests the importance and necessity of these two categories theoretically which it is required to conduct a scientific-applied research to test this theory in practice. For this reason in this study which is adapted from a field research, researcher are looking to answer the question of whether in practice, we see a relationship and correlation between the employer brand and organizational citizenship behavior regarding the mediating role of job engagement in central branch of Tejarat bank? And if this link exists, in which area it is stronger? Answering these questions provides conditions so if there is a significant positive relationship between the categories and their sub-components, the

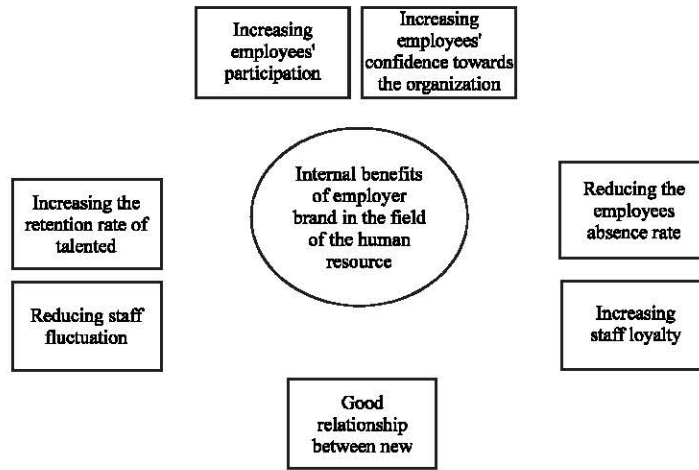


Fig. 1: The internal benefits of employer brand in the field of human resources

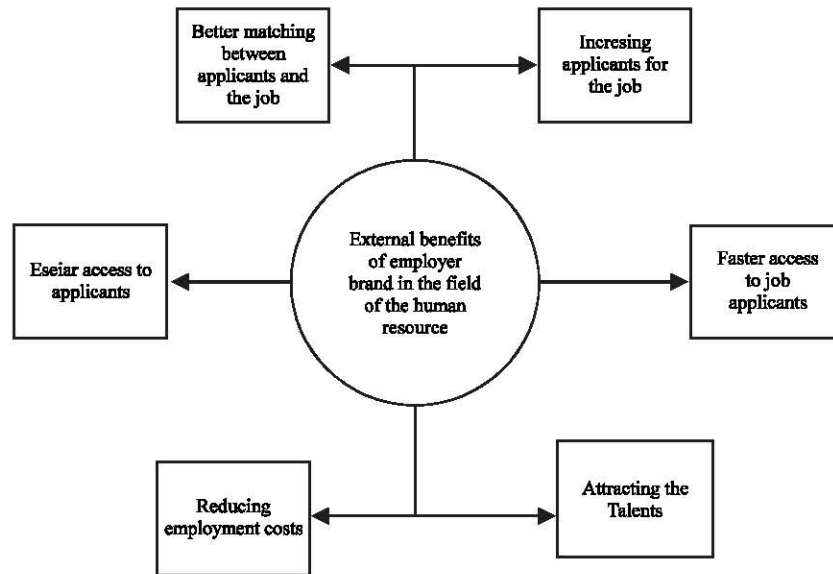


Fig. 2: The external benefits of employer brand in the field of human resources

solutions and suggestions can be presented to strengthen the use of research results simultaneously. So, because of the conceptual richness of these categories and functional values of this concept and also the management gap in the field, we intended to study these categories simultaneously.

THE RESEARCH THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND THE THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

Employer brand: The main purpose of the employer brand is trying to improve the company’s internal and external environment and it is looking for what differentiates the

company and makes it good for its employees. In other words, companies improve their internal and external images using employer brand and makes the potential employees eager and convinced about cooperating with the organization (Berthon *et al.*, 2005). The employer brand has the key and important benefits for the organization in the field of human resources. Figorska and Matoska have classified these benefits in to the employer brand benefits in the internal and external are as of human resources which are shown in the Fig. 1 and 2.

Employer branding is in fact offering a value, a value which results in company attractiveness and makes the corporate image stronger in the minds of staff and the others. This value is consisted of the following

dimensions: the progress value, the social value, the reputation value, cost, the diversity value which will be discussed in the next study.

The progress value: Leads to confidence and belief among staff and brings them career promotion through enhancing job experience (Ambler and Barrow, 1996). In fact, according to some experts' opinion, good internal training opportunities, career development, empowerment in work place and individual assessment of jobs can lead to the development of progress value.

Social value: Underlies the development of cordial and pleasant work place and lead to team spirit among the people; factors such as reliable and safe work environment, friendly relations between employees, strong team spirit, competition between employees, good managers, etc., underlie the social value for the organization (Alniacik and Alniacik, 2012).

The reputation value: Underlies providing the exciting and energetic workplace in which employee creativity to create high-quality products and innovation in providing products and services will increase. Factors such as good quality of products, well-known products, new products, company good reputation among its competitors and company good brandlead to the creation of value (Alniacik and Alniacik, 2012).

Economic value: The value that brings employees adequate salaries, job security and other economic benefits in addition to the factors such as good salaries, insurance for employees and also leads to create the economic value for the organization (Alniacik and Alniacik, 2012).

The diversity value: Provides very important opportunities and situations for the employees where in they learn various skills and also teach others. This value leads to increase employees' job satisfaction and push them towards better serving the customers (Ambler and Barrow, 1996). Factors such as work activities are diverse, competitive tasks (i.e, tasks that are created in the sense of competition, what with in stitutional partners and among competing organizations) and cool things to the creation of the value of diversity (Alniacik and Alniacik, 2012).

Job engagement: Many definitions have been proposed about job commitment but there is no definition which is accepted and approved by everyone in this field. According to Macleod and Clarke (2009), employees' job engagement is one of the new paradigms in the field of the

human resources and it has multiple definitions due to its various ways of utilization. Most of the definitions acknowledge that the enthusiasm stems from the personal and environmental resources (Macey and Schneider, 2008). According to Gautam *et al.* (2006), work enthusiasm in talented individuals is an emotional and intellectual connection that an employee makes with a job, organization, manager and co-workers and impacton his doubles efforts in his work. Maslach *et al.* (2001) also knows engagement as a positive and real thinking which is described by power, dedication and interest (Salanova *et al.*, 2005) and provides the grounds for people's desire and satisfaction in work. Truss (2006) considers the engagement as the result providing opportunities for employees to communicate with colleagues and their managers.

Citizenship behavior: OCB behavior is considered as an optional, voluntary, addition to official role and without any expectations that although, it is not directly related to the organization reward and punishment system but it helps its fluidity and operating effectiveness. The concept of arbitrariness of this behavior means that it is not a part of the formal requirements of the role, job descriptions and official duties and it is not mentioned in the employment contract. There are several models and issues in the field of citizenship behavior. But what has attracted most attention among researchers is the Organ Model. In this model, citizenship behavior includes five items namely: dutifulness, altruism, civic virtue, chivalry, honor and reverence. The five dimensions were firstly introduced by Organ and later Podsakoff, developed a standard measurement scale in 1990 using factor analysis for each of the five dimensions; these scales have used by many researchers in the world in the following years to measure citizenship behavior. The following outlines the dimensions described above.

Dutifulness: The conscientiousness dimension is considered as the case in which members perform certain behaviors beyond the minimum level required to perform their duty. In other words, people with developed citizenship behavior, continue to work even in the worst conditions and even in the case of disease and disability which indicates their high degree of conscientiousness.

Altruism: The second dimension namely altruistic refers to the useful and beneficial behaviors such as intimacy, empathy and compassion among colleagues that either directly or indirectly helps to employees who have work problems. Some experts like Podsakoff, consider altruism and dutifulness dimensions in one class and call them as "helping behaviors".

Civic virtue: The third dimension of citizenship behavior is civic virtue including behaviors such as participation in extracurricular activities in the time when this attendance is not necessary, supporting the development and changes provided by the managers, desire to read books, magazines and increasing in general information and emphasizing on posters and notices in the organization to inform others.

Chivalry: The fourth dimension of citizenship behavior is chivalry which refers to be patience in face of favorable conditions, without objection, discontent and complaints.

Respect and honor: The last dimension of OCB is respect and reverence. This dimension refers to how people behave with their colleagues, supervisors and audiences in the organization. People who treat the others with respect and courtesy have a developed citizenship behavior. Mentioning these dimensions, Organ also notes that it is possible that these dimensions do not occur together; in other words, someone with the dutifulness dimension may not be always philanthropist and devoted or some of these dimensions such as altruism and dutifulness may use as a tactic to pressure on the managers (Castro *et al.*, 2004).

Employer brand and citizenship behavior: Today, the relationship between the brand and citizenship behavior has been proven in several studies. Brand citizenship behavior is a relatively new concept that describes how employees can coordinate their attitudes and behavior to improve the brand image of the organization. In principle, the brand citizenship behavior refers to employee's volunteer behaviors that can improve brand identity of the organization (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005). To have a strong brand, it is not enough to simply caring customer. As the organization tries to create a strong brand in the customers' minds, it is required to try and plan for creating the appropriate image in the employees' mind. Many research such as Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2009), Miles and Mangold (2005) and King and Grace (2008) have studied the brand from the staff point of view. In this study, the researchers are also addressed studying brand in the employer's view.

Ozcelik and Findiki (2014) also found that employer brand affects emerging the citizenship behavior. Therefore, based on the results of empirical studies, the employer brand affect the citizenship behavior, thus:

- H₁: employer brand has significant positive effect on the citizenship behavior

Employer brand and job engagement: It is expected that the managers of all levels of the organization act with honesty and integrity and respect their personals; talk more effectively with employees and involve them in decision-making. Foster good relations through face to face and two some conversations and make the employees feel proud about their jobs (Hughes and Rog, 2008). Management theorists believe that job engagement is the result of two-way communication between the employee and employer and what is needed to be done by both sides (Lanphear, 2004). Therefore, based on the results of empirical studies, the employer brand affects job engagement, so:

- H₂: employer brand has a significant positive effect on job engagement

Job engagement and citizenship behavior: In most cases, engagement is defined as the emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization (Richman, 2006) or the voluntary efforts which is devoted by staff in their work. Hukkko *et al.* (2012) also defined engagement as the staff positive attitude towards the organization and its values. Christian *et al.* (2011) have defined the job engagement as follows: a state of mind that is relatively stable and represents the simultaneous investment of people energy on work experience or performance. Kahan has defined the individual engagement as expressing and utilizing individual wisdom in job roles. He was the first person who used the term work engagement; he believed that in case of the engagement, people express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally. The most common definition of the concept effort Schaufeli have offered the most common definition of job engagement. They have described job engagement as a positive and satisfactory state related to the work in which the person feels strong and has an effective relationship with his/her job activities and considers him/herself as a capable person to respond job requests (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). So, it is not hard to imagine that employees who have high levels of job commitment, manifests citizenship behaviors.

Therefore, based on the results of empirical studies, the job engagement affects the citizenship behavior, so:

- H₃: job engagement has a significant positive effect on citizenship behavior

RESEARCH MODEL

According to the literature mentioned above, the research model is considered in Fig. 3.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to determine the causal relationship between employer brand and organizational citizenship behavior considering the mediating role of job engagement (Fig. 3). Also, given that the results of this research can be applied practically, the present study is an applied research in terms of the purpose and a descriptive and correlational research in terms of collecting the data. The population of this study consists of all staff of central branch of Tejarat Bank in Tehran which is equal to 400 people. According to the Krejcie and Morgan (Table 1), a sample size consisting 196 people is selected. In the analytical model of the study, the employer brand is an independent variable; job engagement is the mediating variable and citizenship behavior is the dependent variable. A researcher-made questionnaire is the main tool of collecting data. The 41 items are used to measure employer brand which has five dimensions; 4 items are used to assess the resilience and 20 items are used

for assessing citizenship behavior which has five dimensions. The 5-points Likert scale is used for all the variables. In order to assess the reliability, a sample contains 30 questionnaire is pre-tested and then using the data obtained from the questionnaires, the reliability coefficient is calculated using Cronbach's alpha which results is mentioned in the following (Table 1).

Since, the Cronbach's alpha obtained for all variables and also for the whole questionnaire is >0.7 , therefore, the questionnaire has the appropriate level of reliability.

The findings of this research are achieved by confirmatory factor analysis approach using LISREL Software and reviewing structural model. In the factor analysis, we must ensure that the data can be used to analyze. In other words is the number of intended data (sample size and the relationship between variables) right for factor analysis or not? For this purpose, KMO index and Bartlett's test is used. If the value of KMO index is close to one, the data (sample size) are enough for factor analysis and otherwise (generally <0.6), factor analysis is not appropriate for the desired data. Additionally, if the level of significance (Sig.) of Bartlett test is $<5\%$, the

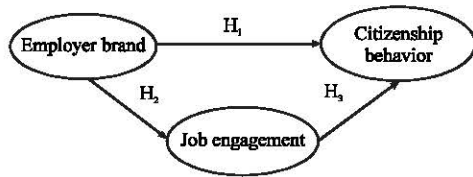


Fig. 3: The research conceptual model

Table 1: The questions reliability

| Variable name | No of questions | Reliability number |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Employer brand | 41 | 0.756 |
| Resiliency | 4 | 0.832 |
| Empowerment | 20 | 0.735 |
| Total | 65 | 0.721 |

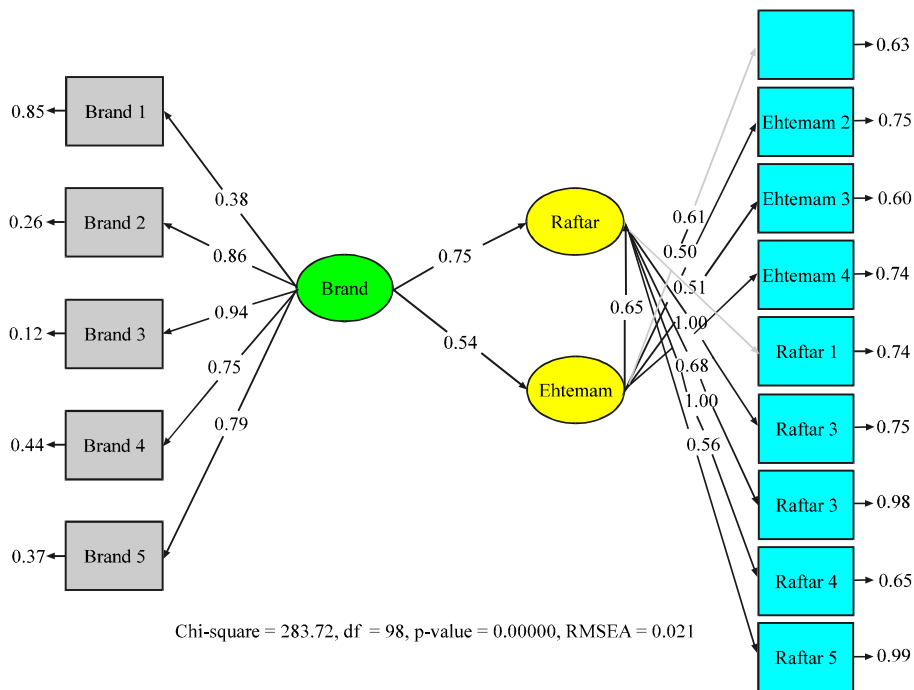


Fig. 4: The research structural model at the standard estimation state

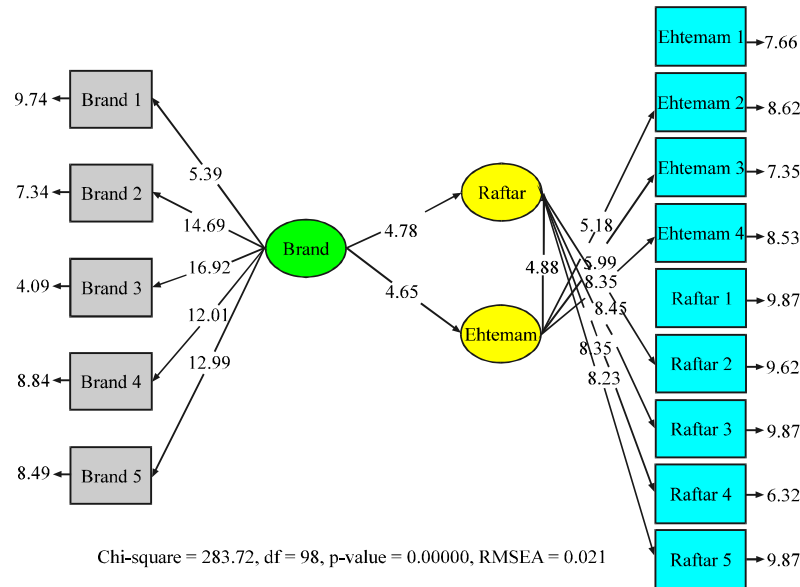


Fig. 5: The research structural model in the significance state

Table 2: The results of Bartlett and KMO tests

| Variables | Values |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| KMO index value | 0.816 |
| The Bartlett test statistic | 9011.746 |
| Degree of freedom | 98.000 |
| Sig. | 0.000 |

Table 3: Goodness of fit index

| Indexes | AGFI | GFI | NNFI | IFI | CFI | χ^2/df | RMSEA |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|-------|
| Acceptancethres hold | >9.0 | >9.0 | >9.0 | >9.0 | >9.0 | <3.0 | <8.0 |
| Value | 93.0 | 94.0 | 95.0 | 96.0 | 93.0 | 895.2 | 21.0 |

Table 4: The hypotheses results

| Hypothesis | Description | Standard coefficient | Significant number | Result |
|------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Employer brand has positive and significant impact on citizenship behavior | 0.75 | 78.4 | Confirmed |
| 2 | Employer brand has positive and significant impact on Job engagement | 0.54 | 4.65 | Confirmed |
| 3 | Job engagement has positive and significant impact on citizenship behavior | 0.65 | 4.88 | Confirmed |

factor analysis is appropriate to identify the structure (factor model). In the present study, we examined the above conditions; the results are presented in the Table 2 and 3.

- Job engagement has the positive and significant impact on citizenship behavior (confirmation of the third hypothesis) (the significance numbers are higher than 1.96) (Fig. 4, 5 and Table 4)

The model in the standard coefficient state

Model in the significance state: From the model it can be inferred that:

- The employer brand has the positive and significant impact on citizenship behavior (confirmation of the first hypothesis)
- The employer brand has the positive and significant impact on job engagement (confirmation of the second hypothesis)

CONCLUSION

In this study, the effect of employer brand on citizenship behavior with the mediation role of job engagement has been investigated and it is shown that the bank under study should devote special attention to job engagement and employer brand in order that the staff citizenship behavior can be emerged. The result of testing the first hypothesis showed that the employee brand affects citizenship behavior (that is in line with the results of Schmidt and Hasnizam and Ozcelik and Findiki. The

bank can use employer brand to improve internal and external image and make its staff convinced and enthusiastic to work with the organization (Berthon *et al.*, 2005). So, it can be imagined that the enthusiastic and convincing staff try towards presenting citizenship behavior (beyond the expected level). Therefore, it is suggested that the bank provide diversity context and an exciting and intimate environment to develop organizational behavior. The result the second hypothesis showed that the employer brand affects job engagement. So, it is expected that the emotional and committed employees are pioneers in demonstrating the behavior not stated in their job description (citizenship behavior). Therefore, it is suggested that the bank provide its personnel tourism and pilgrimage trips and actions like this (e.g., positive and endearing view to each other, expressing kindness, observing fairness, ignoring and tolerance, forgiveness, good mood, good thinking, soft in speech, transparency, acceptable appointment, equality, tolerance), provide establishing an emotional connection between employees with each other and organization and consider these efforts as an investment not cost. The third hypothesis result showed that the job engagement affect citizenship behavior (Chiu and Chen, 2005). So, it is suggested that the bank try to employ methods and procedures and support them through delegating responsibilities and authority. This will cause motivating and the sense of responsibility in personnel and promote organizational citizenship behavior in staff.

LIMITATIONS

Every study has its own limitations regarding its nature, purpose and method. This research is not an exception. The most important limitations in this study are as follows:

- The large number of questions in the questionnaire causing fatigue and reluctance in answering the questions
- Semantic closeness between some of the traits causes respondents' confusion; however, it is attributable to the different interpretations that can be made of different words
- In the present study, because of the executive limitations as well as time constraints, only headquarter staff of central branch of Tejarat bank were evaluated; so, further research should be conducted to evaluate the other organizations

SUGGESTIONS

According to the literature of the employer brand, it can be imagined that the variables of attracting, retaining

and development of human resources can have a mediating role in influencing employer brand citizenship behavior, so it is suggested that the mentioned variables be considered in the future research as the mediating variables.

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