What Influences Employees to Become Digital Advocates?

A Quantitative Study of the Relationship Between Employer Branding and Digital Employee Advocacy in Industrial Organisations

JOSEFIN ILIC

MATILDA TRANELL
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by

Josefin Ilic
Matilda Tranell
Vad får anställda att förespråka sina arbetsgivare på sociala medier?

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Abstract
Since the introduction of social media, the corporate communication landscape has changed significantly, and thus organisations need to find new innovative ways to communicate. One emerging strategy is digital employee advocacy, which ultimately means that employees voluntarily endorse their employers on social media platforms. As of now however, research on how organisations should operate in order to encourage such behaviour is rather unexplored and inadequate, and a stronger understanding of the motivation and underlying mechanisms is needed. One concept that is conceptually identified as a driver for employee advocacy is employer branding, both directly and indirectly through organisational commitment. Therefore, this thesis aims at investigating and analysing the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy as well as the dimensions of employer branding. Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis is to generate insights on which industrial organisations can build strategies for digital employee advocacy programs. This was done by collecting quantitative data through a questionnaire distributed among employees in a Swedish industrial organisation. Based on the data, a PLS-SEM analysis was conducted that both evaluated a newly developed employer branding scale and the relationships between employer branding and digital employee advocacy. The results from the analysis show that employer branding consists of five dimensions: training and development, healthy work atmosphere, ethics and CSR, work life balance as well as compensation and benefits. Furthermore, it can be concluded that employer branding does not lead to digital employee advocacy directly. It can however be shown that the relationships from employer branding to organisational commitment and from organisational commitment to digital employee advocacy are significant and that organisational commitment has a full mediating effect on the direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy. Thus, organisations need to recognise organisational commitment as a necessity, and employer branding as an instrument, for achieving digital employee advocacy.

Key-words
Digital employee advocacy, employee advocates, social media, employer branding, organisational commitment, industrial organisations, brand advocacy, communication strategy.
**Sammanfattning**


**Nyckelord**

Digitala förespråkare, anställda som förespråkare, sociala medier, employer branding, organisationsengagemang, industriella organisationer, varumärkesstrategi, kommunikationsstrategi.
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction................................................................................................................. 1  
1.1 Background............................................................................................................. 1  
1.2 Problem Description............................................................................................... 2  
1.3 Purpose .................................................................................................................. 3  
1.4 Research Questions ............................................................................................... 3  
1.5 Delimitations .......................................................................................................... 3  
1.6 Outline .................................................................................................................... 4  

2 Literature and Theory.................................................................................................. 5  
2.1 Social Media............................................................................................................ 5  
2.2 Digital Employee Advocacy..................................................................................... 6  
2.2.1 Acknowledged Success Factors ........................................................................ 6  
2.3 Employer Branding .................................................................................................. 8  
2.3.1 Work Life Balance ............................................................................................ 10  
2.3.2 Ethics and CSR .................................................................................................. 10  
2.3.3 Training and Development ............................................................................. 10  
2.3.4 Healthy Work Atmosphere .............................................................................. 10  
2.3.5 Compensation and Benefits ........................................................................... 10  
2.4 Organisational Commitment ................................................................................. 10  
2.5 Frame of Reference ............................................................................................... 11  

3 Methodology................................................................................................................ 16  
3.1 Research Purpose .................................................................................................. 16  
3.2 Research Approach ............................................................................................... 16  
3.3 Research Strategy .................................................................................................. 16  
3.4 Data Collection ...................................................................................................... 16  
3.4.1 Design of Questionnaire .................................................................................. 17  
3.4.2 Measures........................................................................................................... 17  
3.4.3 Pre-test ............................................................................................................. 18  
3.5 Sample Selection ................................................................................................... 18  
3.6 Data Analysis ........................................................................................................ 19  
3.7 Quality ................................................................................................................... 20  
3.7.1 Reliability ........................................................................................................ 20  
3.7.2 Validity ............................................................................................................. 21  
3.8 Ethics ..................................................................................................................... 22  

4 Data Analysis and Results............................................................................................. 23  
4.1 Demographics ........................................................................................................ 23  
4.2 Measurement Model Test ....................................................................................... 25  
4.2.1 Convergent Reliability ................................................................................... 25  
4.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability ..................................................................... 26  
4.2.3 Discriminant Validity ..................................................................................... 26  
4.3 Structural Model Test ............................................................................................ 27  
4.3.1 Collinearity Validity ....................................................................................... 27  
4.3.2 Path Coefficients ............................................................................................ 27  
4.3.3 Coefficient of Determination ......................................................................... 29  
4.3.4 Predictive Relevance ....................................................................................... 30  
4.3.5 Organisational Commitment as a Mediator .................................................... 31  
4.4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing .......................................................................... 32  

5 Conclusion.................................................................................................................... 33  
5.1 Summary of Research Questions .......................................................................... 33  
5.2 Theoretical Contributions ..................................................................................... 33  
5.3 Practical Implications ............................................................................................ 34  
5.4 Limitations and Future Research ......................................................................... 35
List of Figures

Figure 1. Modified illustration of the traditional and social media communication models by Kohli et al. (2015) .......................................................... 5
Figure 2. Employer branding framework by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) ................. 8
Figure 3. Employer branding framework by Tanwar and Prasad (2016)................... 9
Figure 4. Five dimensions of employer branding according to Tanwar and Prasad (2017)........ 12
Figure 5. Research model ............................................................................. 13
Figure 6. Gender and age distribution of the respondents ..................................... 23
Figure 7. Used social media platforms ............................................................... 24
Figure 8. Most frequently used social media platforms ....................................... 24
Figure 9. Time spent on social media platforms ................................................. 24
Figure 10. Path Coefficients and $R^2$ values in model from SmartPLS 3.0 ........... 28

List of Tables

Table 1. Definitions of the concepts used in model ........................................... 14
Table 2. Removed indicators in the outer loading relevance test ......................... 25
Table 3. CR and AVE values for all constructs .................................................. 26
Table 4. Cronbach’s alpha for all constructs ..................................................... 26
Table 5. Inner VIF values .............................................................................. 27
Table 6. Path coefficients, t-values, p-values and result for hypothesis 1 to 8 ........ 29
Table 7. Effect size $f^2$ .................................................................................. 30
Table 8. Predictive relevance .......................................................................... 30
Table 9. Variables and result for effect size $q^2$ ................................................. 30
Table 10. Values used to determine mediator role and calculation of VAF .......... 31
Table 11. Result of hypothesis testing ............................................................... 32
Preface

First of all, we would like to thank our supervisor Mana Farshid, Associate Professor at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, for giving us the courage to step out of our comfort zone and to continuously challenge ourselves.

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This thesis has been a fun but challenging journey that we will never forget. So lastly, we would like to thank each other and the people around us that have always been there – you know who you are!
1 Introduction

In this chapter, the background of the thesis is presented followed by a description of the problem, purpose and research questions. The chapter is concluded with a presentation of the delimitations and outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

In 2010, Dell contemplated how they wanted to give their employees superpowers to do more for their organisation, but soon they realised that every employee already had access to superpowers - their social media networks. By developing a program to teach their employees how to use social media, Dell realised that they could unlock these powers and turn them into digital advocates. This strategy turned out to be very successful as over 10,000 of Dell’s employees now are active on social media and posting brand related content. The strategy has furthermore resulted in 36% of all new external hires in 2015 coming from employee referrals, which equals a 17 percentage point increase since the introduction of the program (Dell, 2015; Miles & Mangold, 2014). In short, Dell’s social media strategy is about encouraging employees to act as brand advocates and thus capturing the opportunities that social media represent (Dell, 2018).

Unilever and GE are two other examples of organisations with successful digital employee advocacy programs (LinkedIn, 2016; Pepe, 2017). Unilever’s program is focused on making sure that employees can easily and safely share content with their networks. This is done by engaging their employees with new content and reminding them why sharing matters. Ultimately, their program resulted in employees sharing content 14 times more frequently than before and after just one year, Unilever experienced six times more traffic to their LinkedIn page and five times more employee-influenced job views (Edwards, 2016; LinkedIn, 2016). GE’s program is focused on providing “ready to use” content to employees that they can share on social media. The reason for this focus is a previous unsureness among the employees of what to share. The developed program therefore involves a platform where communication managers create and approve content that employees then can choose from when they want to advocate the organisation. GE’s digital employee advocacy program has led to content being shared four times more frequently than before, which increased the engagement with partners, customers and prospective talents (Pepe, 2017).

The benefits of digital employee advocacy programs are many (see e.g. Löndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014; Morhart, Herzog & Tomczak, 2009; Tsarenko, Leo & Herman, 2018). For example are the social media networks of employees on average ten times larger than the networks of organisations and content shared by employees are twice as likely to be clicked on (Yacovone, 2017). This means that digital employee advocacy programs can lead to a boost in visibility and reach that in turn can have a large impact on organisations’ brand awareness and employer branding (Sivertzen, Nilsen & Olaåsen, 2013; Tsimonis & Dimitriadiis, 2014). With an increased brand awareness, stakeholders develop positive associations with the brand, while employer branding leads to competitive advantages that will make it easier to attract and retain employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Kohli, Suri & Kapoor, 2015; Sivertzen et al., 2013). According to studies done by LinkedIn (2018), organisations with social media advocates are 58% more likely to attract top talent and 20% more likely to retain it.

Today, quality assurance often comes from what individuals say on social media. This is true for both products and potential workplaces, e.g. if an employee attest that he or she is satisfied with their workplace, it will be stamped as good in the eyes of others (Kohli et al., 2015). Furthermore, social media content generated by employees have a greater effect on the brand
than content generated directly from organisations (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2016). This indicates how powerful digital employee advocates can be. One of the reasons for this is that information shared by them is perceived as more credible than information shared by organisations directly. This can for example be seen in Edelman’s annual trust barometer, which in 2018 showed that individuals rate peers as the most credible spokespersons, together with technical and academic experts. In comparison, CEOs and board members are rated far below (Edelman, 2018).

Social media does however not only bring opportunities for organisations, it also bears risks since whoever can say whatever. Furthermore, due to the viral effects that are associated with social media, the risks can have a wide-reaching impact on the reputation of an organisation (Dreher, 2014). In other words can social media both build up and tear down a brand reputation, and it is therefore increasingly important for organisations to develop strategies for how to manage it (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre, 2011; Kohli et al., 2015).

1.2 Problem Description
Due to the emergence of social media, the former one-way communication between organisations and stakeholders has changed into a multidimensional two-way communication (Miles & Mangold, 2014; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). The corporate communication landscape has thus shifted from a single controlled source to countless touchpoints with the outside world. This represents a paradigm shift for how organisations and stakeholders communicate (Kohli et al., 2015). Furthermore, social media is a great part of employees’ daily lives, and organisations need to understand that their activity on social media platforms has the power to influence the corporate reputation (Miles & Mangold, 2014). Communication departments are thus no longer the only ones managing the reputations, and new communication strategies therefore need to be developed in order to both manage the risks and leverage the benefits that come with social media (Dreher, 2014; Kohli et al., 2015; Miles & Mangold, 2014). One of the strategies that has shown positive results is the development of digital employee advocacy programs, as seen in the examples with Dell, Unilever and GE (Dreher, 2014; Miles & Mangold, 2014).

Digital employee advocacy is dependent on the participation of employees and their willingness to endorse their employer on social media. It is in nature voluntary, since advocating behaviours often goes beyond formal job responsibilities, and therefore organisations need to have a strong understanding of the motivation, underlying mechanisms and concerns of their employees. However, since the concept of digital employee advocacy is rather new there is not sufficient research on these factors (Tsarenko et al., 2018). Tsarenko et al. (2018) is one of the first to investigate some underlying mechanisms, and could show relationships between employees’ personal resource investment, organisational support and employee advocacy behaviours. However, the study only investigates and analyses a few underlying mechanisms and employees who are in direct contact with customers (Tsarenko et al., 2018).

Tanwar and Prasad (2016) suggest in a conceptual framework that employer branding is an underlying mechanism for employee advocacy, which is unique since it earlier only has been identified as an outcome. The framework has however not been quantitatively tested and thus can the relationship between employer branding and employee advocacy be questionable (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). In a more recent study, Tanwar and Prasad (2017) present a scale for measuring employer branding specifically which they suggest could be used to measure the effect of employer branding on organisational outcomes, such as employee advocacy. They furthermore suggest that employer branding consists of five dimensions: training and
development, healthy work atmosphere, work life balance, ethics and CSR as well as compensation and benefits. This is however only tested in one setting, which could rise questions about the generalisability (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017).

Moreover does existing literature on advocacy tend to focus on the engagement of consumers, not employees. Additionally, it is mainly business to consumer (B2C) organisations that have been under examination. Literature focusing on employees in business to business (B2B) organisations is therefore much rarer and not as complete (Iankova, Davies, Archer-Brown, Marder & Yau, 2018; Pitt, Plangger, Botha, Kietzmann & Pitt, 2017). Furthermore are industrial organisations, often categorised as B2B organisations, generally not developing social media strategies (Dreher, 2014; Michaelidou, Siamagka and Christodoulides, 2011). According to Michaelidou et al. (2011), this is true regardless of industrial sector. Industrial organisations are however also in possession of employees who are active on social media and hence they do have the key resource for successful social media strategies (Huotari, Ulkuniemi, Saraniemi & Mäläskä, 2015).

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to investigate and analyse the factors that are influencing employees in industrial organisations to become digital advocates. To fulfil this purpose, the thesis will investigate acknowledged success factors for advocacy programs and examine the potential relationship between digital employee advocacy and employer branding. In order to properly examine this relationship, the dimensions of employer branding need to be assessed as well. Accordingly, the intent is to generate new knowledge and empirical insights about the dimensions of employer branding and the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy. Ultimately, the purpose of this thesis is to generate insights on which industrial organisations can build strategies for digital employee advocacy programs that will promote them as good employers.

1.4 Research Questions
Based on the purpose of the thesis, the following research questions can be formulated:

Research question 1:  
What are the dimensions of employer branding in industrial organisations?

Research question 2:  
Does employer branding lead to digital employee advocacy in industrial organisations?

1.5 Delimitations
This thesis will be delimited in several ways. Firstly, the thesis will investigate the concept of digital employee advocacy, i.e. employee advocacy on social media. This means that the thesis will only investigate this specific concept, and not employee advocacy in general. Secondly, the thesis will focus on current employees. Due to this internal perspective, it will not consider what external individuals would like to see on social media in order to develop positive attitudes towards the organisation. Thirdly, the thesis will not consider what content employees would prefer to share, it will only consider factors that encourage advocacy behaviours.

In addition, the thesis will be delimited regarding the impact of digital employee advocacy. It will not consider the potential impact on sales, personal brands, organisational performance etc. The thesis will instead solely consider the potential impact on employer attractiveness. Lastly, the social media platforms included in the literature and analysis of the thesis are Facebook,
LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and blogs. The reason behind this delimitation is that these five are found to be among the most used social media platforms globally (Statista, 2018).

1.6 Outline
The thesis will proceed by introducing relevant literature and theories that serve as a foundation for the research. Thereafter the methodology of the thesis will be presented together with a discussion regarding quality and ethical aspects. This will be followed by a presentation of the data analysis and results. Thereafter, the conclusions will be presented which will cover a summary of the research questions along with a presentation of the theoretical contribution, practical implications, limitations and future research. Lastly, the findings of the thesis will be discussed, both in regard to previous literature as well as ethics and sustainability.
2 Literature and Theory

This chapter presents the theoretical background of the thesis. It begins with introducing social media and its effects on the communication landscape. Thereafter digital employee advocacy is introduced together with already acknowledged success factors for the concept. Due to the interesting relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy, employer branding and organisational commitment are introduced as well. The chapter ends with a presentation of the frame of reference and hypotheses.

2.1 Social Media

Thanks to the tremendous growth of internet, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs, have been able to evolve immensely (Kent, 2015; Sparby, 2017). Facebook for example, went from zero to over a billion users in less than one decade (Kent, 2015). Due to this development, social media has been able to transform the traditional model for corporate communication. Before, corporate communication was often characterised as a one-way channel from organisations to stakeholders. Today however, stakeholders are more in command of the communication directed towards them and are able to initiate communication towards the organisations and with each other, see figure 1. Social media has thus made it possible for stakeholders to control what communication they receive and what to pass on to others (Kohli et al., 2015). In other words, corporate communication has become democratized, meaning that the power has been moved from communication departments to individuals (Kietzmann et al., 2011). As Kietzmann et al. (2011, p. 242) state “communication about brands happens, with or without permission of the firms in question”.

![Figure 1. Modified illustration of the traditional and social media communication models by Kohli et al. (2015)](image-url)

Social media platforms have also facilitated and made it possible for organisations to engage and have relationships with stakeholders in near-real time (Guo & Saxton, 2014). Furthermore, compared to traditional media, it enables organisations to distribute content to a more diverse group of individuals (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2013). Thus, due to the interactive and decentralized nature, social media is a low-cost way for organisations to interact with large audiences (Guo & Saxton, 2014). On this note, Guo and Saxton (2014) suggest that social media is an increasingly important advocacy tool.

Five of the most used social media platforms globally are Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and blogs (Statista, 2018). Facebook is used to share information, opinions and personal status among others, but also for conversations with public, private or connected networks of friends (Chang, Liu & Shen, 2017; Manasijevic, Zivkovic, Arsic & Milosevic, 2016). While users on Facebook display relational information, interest and hobbies on their profiles, LinkedIn users display professional information in the format of a CV (Florenthal, 2015). LinkedIn is thus more of a professional networking site where recruiters and
professionals who are looking for career opportunities can meet (Chang et al., 2017; Florenthal, 2015). Another popular social media platform is Instagram where users share photos and videos through their mobile phones (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Self-expression and social interactions are seen to be two of the key reasons for using Instagram (Moon, Lee, Lee, Choi, & Sung, 2016). A blog is defined as an online diary where users, i.e. bloggers, frequently publish posts on a website or online page (Ifinedo, 2017; Karlsson & Åström, 2016; Madanick, 2015). These posts often allow comments from readers, which enables a two-way communication (Karlsson & Åström, 2016). Blogs can be seen as reliable channels of communication and numerous organisations are therefore constructing platforms for blogs in order to reach stakeholders (Luo, Guo, Zhang, Chen & Zhang, 2015). Twitter, often described as a micro-blog, also allows users to write posts, but within a 140 character limit (Shin, Singh, Cho & Everett, 2015). Twitter is an effective communication tool because posts can be spread quickly and reach many (Kong, Ye, Feng & Zhao, 2015; Newman, 2017).

2.2 Digital Employee Advocacy
Brand advocacy is often defined as a type of positive word of mouth communication where brand advocates endorse an organisation by voluntarily giving recommendations to other stakeholders (Fullerton, 2011). Brand advocacy is not a new concept, but the term for brand advocates differs throughout literature; the most common are brand ambassadors, brand champions, brand evangelists and brand maniacs (Morhart et al., 2009). When employees advocate their employer, the concept often is defined as employee advocacy (Fullerton, 2011; Tsarenko et al., 2018). Miles and Mangold (2004) were some of the first to discuss employee advocacy, which they defined as employee behaviour that strengthen stakeholders’ positive perceptions of a brand. Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014) added to this definition by defining employee advocacy as activities both on and off the job that contribute to the employer’s branding efforts. With advocates, positive outcomes such as a stronger brand reputation, enhanced employer brand, increased sales as well as enhanced organisational effectiveness and performance can be obtained (Lages, 2012; Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014; Morhart et al., 2009; Sivertzen et al., 2013). Ultimately, employee advocacy could strengthen an organisation’s competitive advantage significantly (Tsarenko et al., 2018).

Even though organisations themselves can be present on social media with corporate accounts managed by professionals, digital employee advocates are invaluable (Dreher, 2014; Miles & Mangold, 2014). Individuals judge information from other individuals as more credible and trustworthy, which means that information shared by employees have a greater impact than information shared by organisations directly (Pornpitakpan, 2004; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Employees can furthermore enable organisations to reach new audiences, and thus attract potential talent, since their audience does not have to have a relationship with the organisation on social media already (Dreher, 2014). Schivinski and Dabrowski (2016) furthermore add to the benefits by showing that social media communication from individuals have a positive effect on both brand equity and brand attitude, whereas corporate communication on social media only affect brand attitude. In conclusion, employee advocates on digital platforms play an increasingly important role for organisations (Dreher, 2014; Kohli et al., 2015; Miles & Mangold, 2014; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

2.2.1 Acknowledged Success Factors
Digital employee advocacy does not always come naturally, employees have to be motivated to voluntarily use their own digital channels in favour of the organisation (Tsarenko et al., 2018). Existing literature has identified several factors that need to be considered in order to encourage and enable participation, which will be presented in the following chapters.
2.2.1.1 Employee Engagement
Frank (2015) explains how employees will not become advocates until they have reached a certain level of engagement. Employee engagement can be defined as the level of commitment and involvement an employee has for their organisation and its values (Anitha, 2014). Moreover, employee engagement can be understood in terms of social exchange theory. This theory is based on the argument that commitments are generated through a series of actions between parties that are mutually interdependent (Saks, 2006). The exchange often involves reciprocity or compensation rules, therefore employees that receive e.g. economic compensation from their organisation feel obliged to repay it, and one way to repay the organisation is through engagement (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Saks, 2006). In order to understand how employee engagement can be achieved by an organisation, it is important to understand what is influencing it. Anitha (2014) suggest in her research that work environment as well as team and co-work relationship are the most influential factors, which implies that a healthy work atmosphere and good harmony with other members of the organisation is crucial for employees to become engaged.

2.2.1.2 Organisational Identification
Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014) explain how employees will become more motivated to engage in advocacy behaviours if they can identify with their organisation. Organisational identification is therefore a powerful force for turning employees into advocates. Strong identification leads to motivation for engagement because if the value of the organisation is enhanced, so is the personal value and self-esteem. Löhndorf and Diamantopoulos mean that employees that highly identify with the organisation, and furthermore feel valued and supported by their employer, will show increased voluntary engagement. Tsarenko et al. (2018) strengthen this theory further by stating that if there is a strong alignment between organisational and personal values, employees are much more likely to advocate their organisations.

2.2.1.3 Accessibility
According to Frank (2015), another prerequisite for advocacy is that it is easy to advocate. Tools and channels that enable advocacy must therefore be simple and available for employees (Frank, 2015). Dreher (2014) underlines this further by identifying unrestricted access to social media as a necessity, something that not all organisations grant their employees today. Additionally, software platforms specifically developed for facilitating content-sharing can be seen as important components of employee advocacy strategies (Frank, 2015). Kohli et al. (2015) furthermore recommend that communications departments should provide content for employees on these platforms. According to their research, advocates are constantly looking for opportunities to talk about the brand and it is therefore important to have appropriate tools and content ready (Kohli et al., 2015).

2.2.1.4 Knowledge
Knowledge about how to use social media is also one of the foundational factors for becoming a digital advocate (Dreher, 2014; Frank, 2015). Both Dreher (2014) and Huotari et al. (2015) argue that social media trainings should be an ongoing activity for all employees. This is because employees need to understand how different platforms work, the risks with social media, the organisational policies etc. but also the benefits and opportunities that comes with their social media participation. The trainings should be interactive and combine online and offline methods to spur engagement and motivation (Dreher, 2014).

2.2.1.5 Leading by Example
Dreher (2014) furthermore points out the importance of leading by example. It is essential that the top of an organisation shows a strong commitment to social media if the usage of it is to
become a central part of the organisational culture. This furthermore helps executives and managers to become a part of the social conversations and thus being able to observe and manage them better (Dreher, 2014).

2.2.1.6 Gamification
Gamification is an increasingly popular way for obtaining engagement and enhancing employee advocacy (Basten, 2017; Dreher, 2014; Suh, Wagner & Liu, 2016). In short, gamification is the use of game design elements in a non-game context in order to create a competitive environment (Deterding, Dixon, Khaled & Nacke, 2011; Suh et al., 2016). The business-intelligence start-up company Domo is a leading example when it comes to using gamification as a tool for encouraging employees to use social media (Dreher, 2014). Domo’s gamified project was focused on helping their employees adopt social media and included tasks that had to be accomplished in a specific period of time, which resulted in badges as certification. In this task and badge system, employees were rewarded with intrinsic motivational factors, such as recognition and appreciation, and extrinsic factors, such as financial rewards and additional vacation days. In addition to the task and badge system, Domo included awards for extraordinary performances on social media, such as Best Blogger, Coolest Follower on Twitter and Most Net Followers, where the winners received prize money. In conclusion, Domo succeeded to create a competitive, yet positive environment which enhanced the participation and kept their employees engaged and motivated (Dreher, 2014).

2.3 Employer Branding
Employer branding is a strategy for becoming the employer of choice and can be used both in order to attract new talent, but also in order to retain, engage and motivate current employees (Lenaghan & Eisner, 2006). Backhaus and Tikoo (2004, p. 502) define employer branding as “the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity” and they suggest that the employer brand is what differentiates an organisation from its competitors. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) have furthermore developed a framework to describe the possible outcomes of employer branding, see figure 2. It can be observed that employer branding creates two principal assets; employer brand loyalty and employer brand associations. The employer brand loyalty is affected by the organisational culture and identity and contributes to increasing the employee productivity. Employer brand associations are the determinants of employer image, which in turn affects the organisation’s attractiveness for potential employees.

![Figure 2. Employer branding framework by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004)](image)

In a study done by Tanwar and Prasad (2016), another conceptual framework was developed in order to show not only possible outcomes, but also potential antecedents to employer branding,
see figure 3. The framework applies to current employees and is based on a literature review as well as qualitative data collected in in-depth interviews within the IT industry. Similar to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), Tanwar and Prasad (2016) present productivity as a possible outcome of employer branding, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction, psychological contract and employee retention. However, in difference to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), Tanwar and Prasad (2016) also suggest that employer branding leads to brand advocacy, i.e. employee advocacy. Tanwar and Prasad (2016) propose both a direct path, as suggested by Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2009), and an indirect path through organisational commitment based on previous literature by Babin and Boles (1998), Brown and Peterson (1993) as well as Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979).

Figure 3. Employer branding framework by Tanwar and Prasad (2016)

The framework furthermore includes four antecedents to employer branding: work environment, work life balance, corporate social responsibility (CSR) as well as training and development (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). In a more recent study however, Tanwar and Prasad (2017) update these by conceptualising, developing and validating a scale for measuring employer branding specifically. The new results indicate that there are five dimensions of employer branding: work life balance, ethics and CSR, healthy work atmosphere, training and development together with compensation and benefits. An accompanying test of the scale showed that healthy work atmosphere had the greatest influence on employer branding, followed by training and development, work life balance, ethics and CSR and lastly compensation and benefits (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017).

All five of Tanwar and Prasad’s (2017) dimensions are anchored in a three-dimensional conceptualisation of employer branding developed by Ambler and Barrow (1996). Ambler and Barrow were one of the first to discuss the employer brand and defined it as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (p. 188). Tanwar and Prasad (2017) used this definition when developing their scale, making sure that their five dimensions covered the three different categories of benefits. The functional benefits include developmental and useful activities, which in Tanwar and Prasad’s (2017) model is represented by training and development as well as ethics and CSR. The economic benefits include material or monetary rewards and is represented by compensation and benefits and lastly, psychological benefits include feelings such as belonging, direction and purpose, represented by work life balance and healthy work atmosphere (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017).
2.3.1 Work Life Balance
Work life balance refers to the balance between an employee’s personal and official life, and can be enhanced by, for example, providing employees flexible working hours or opportunities to work from home (Hillebrandt & Ivens, 2013; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). Work life balance is in previous research shown to be a key component of employer branding as a strong employer brand otherwise can be hard to reach. However, even though this has been the consensus in research since early 2000s, strategies for incorporating work life balance have not been widely implemented until recently. (Barrow & Mosley, 2005 in Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017).

2.3.2 Ethics and CSR
Ethics and CSR refers to an organisation’s ethical and social concerns toward both its employees and the society (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). According to Tanwar and Prasad (2017) do ethics consist of variables such as the organisation’s attitude towards employees and legal procedures while CSR refers to the organisation’s effect on society. Literature suggest that CSR has a positive impact on brand image and organisational reputation, which in turn enhances the employer brand (Brammer, Millington & Rayton, 2007; Kim, Lee, Lee & Kim, 2010; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). In addition, Greening and Turban (2000) suggest that CSR helps organisations to attract employees, which further strengthens the role of it as a dimension of employer branding.

2.3.3 Training and Development
Training and development refers to employees’ skill development and their growth opportunities (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). Some of the common forms of training and development in organisations are internal training and mentorship programs (Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2012). Research by Wilden, Gudergan and Lings (2010), as well as Kucherov and Zavyalova (2012), indicate that training and development is strongly linked to employer branding. Kucherov and Zavyalova furthermore note that organisations with a strong employer brand often invest more in the knowledge and competencies of their employees to make them more qualified and loyal.

2.3.4 Healthy Work Atmosphere
A healthy work atmosphere is defined as a friendly and stress-free work environment. It should furthermore give opportunities for employees to work in teams (Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). In their research, Tanwar and Prasad (2016) conclude that this factor is one of the most important for employees when choosing an employer, and that it can have a significant influence on employees’ attitudes towards organisations. Similarly, Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin and Jones (2005) show that this component has a strong relationship with organisation attractiveness.

2.3.5 Compensation and Benefits
Compensation and benefits reflects the competitive benefits and salaries offered to employees, both financial and non-financial (Anitha 2014; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). If this factor is set correctly, organisations will be more competitive when it comes to attract new talent and retain current employees (Tanwar and Prasad, 2017). Wilden et al. (2010) show that compensation and benefits are especially important for inexperienced employees.

2.4 Organisational Commitment
In Tanwar and Prasad’s (2016) conceptual model, the indirect path between employer branding and employee advocacy goes through organisational commitment, see figure 3. According to Steers (1977), organisational commitment refers to the extent of which an employee identifies
and feels involved with its organisation. A strong commitment can be observed when an employee displays a strong belief in the organisation’s goals and values (Kelley, 1992). An employee furthermore possesses a high level of commitment if he or she has a positive perception of the relationship with their organisation and if they believe that this relationship is worth maintaining (King & Grace, 2012). According to Morgan and Hunt (1994) can organisational commitment be seen as a key factor for organisational success.

Researchers within the field of organisational behaviour have observed that organisational commitment is a complicated construct; consisting of at least an affective and a continuance component (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Affective commitment is based on the emotional attachment to the organisation and a committed employee will in this sense identify with, be involved in, and enjoy being part of the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). This definition of affective commitment goes thus hand in hand with the well-known definition of organisational commitment by Steers (1977). The second component, continuance commitment, is based on the dependence and the costs employees associate with leaving the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Literature has shown that there is a positive relationship between organisational commitment, specifically affective commitment, and organisational citizenship behaviours (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Organisational citizenship behaviours include employee advocacy and other activities that require employees to go beyond the formal requirements of their job (Barroso Castro, Martín Armario & Elena Sánchez del Río, 2005; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Previous research has furthermore shown that commitment has a positive influence on employee advocacy specifically, and thus commitment is suggested to be a prerequisite for employees to become advocates (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016; Tsarenko et al., 2018; Wallace & de Chernatony, 2009).

By conducting qualitative interviews, Tanwar and Prasad (2016) found that organisational commitment is driven by compensation structure and growth opportunities. These factors can be managed through employer branding, and therefore they suggest that employer branding is a helpful tool for creating organisational commitment among employees (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). This connection can be seen in other literature as well, for example in Hanin, Stinglhamber and Delobbe’s (2013) research, which shows that employment offering and experience help predict affective commitment among employees. Another example is Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2009), who suggest that employees’ positive experience with employer branding is one of the most crucial and effective instruments for developing commitment.

2.5 Frame of Reference
Employee advocacy is according to literature linked to employer branding in two ways, it can both strengthen it and be an outcome of it. In their research, Tanwar and Prasad (2016) could show a unique conceptual direct link from employer branding to employee advocacy, as well as an indirect link through organisational commitment. In this framework, they furthermore described four dimensions of employer branding and other potential outcomes of it, see figure 3.

However, in a more recent study, Tanwar and Prasad (2017) identified an additional dimension of employer branding; compensation and benefits, and revised the dimensions from their first study, see figure 4. Due to this, it is appropriate to use these new dimensions when investigating employer branding further. Tanwar and Prasad (2017) could show that these five dimensions
are distinct and interrelated constructs of employer branding by the development of a 23-item employer branding scale. The scale was tested and validated with employees from the IT industry in India and is unique in the sense that it measures employer branding from the perspective of current employees. However, Tanwar and Prasad (2017) state that the scale should be tested in additional settings in order to build more confidence in the five dimensional model. Additionally, they do not test the connections between employer branding and the outcomes identified in their previous conceptual model.

Figure 4. Five dimensions of employer branding according to Tanwar and Prasad (2017)

The first purpose of this thesis is to investigate the dimensions of employer branding in industrial organisations. Since the perspective will be from current employees, it is appropriate to use and evaluate the employer branding scale developed by Tanwar and Prasad (2017). Tanwar and Prasad’s (2017) research will however not be replicated directly since their main focus was to develop the scale, while this thesis will only use and test the scale. The results from this thesis could therefore contribute to the generalisability of the scale since it will be tested in an additional setting. By using this scale, the potential constructs of employer branding can be analysed and the first research question of this thesis answered. In order to do this analysis, five hypotheses are needed and can be formulated as follows:

H1: Work life balance is a construct of employer branding
H2: Ethics and CSR is a construct of employer branding
H3: Training and development is a construct of employer branding
H4: Healthy work atmosphere is a construct of employer branding
H5: Compensation and benefits is a construct of employer branding

In addition to testing the scale and the dimensions of employer branding, some segments of the first conceptual framework developed by Tanwar and Prasad (2016) will be tested quantitatively. This will enable an investigation of the conceptual relationships between employer branding and employee advocacy. Due to the focus of this thesis, the investigation will focus on digital employee advocacy, i.e. employee advocacy on social media, and thus the concept in Tanwar and Prasad’s (2016) model will be modified to fit this purpose. This will enable an answer to the second research question; if employer branding leads to digital employee advocacy. Up until now, the direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy has not been quantitatively tested and thus this thesis will contribute to research by doing so. The relationships between employer branding and organisational
commitment as well as between organisational commitment and employee advocacy have been studied and confirmed in previous research and thus could the results of this thesis add to the generalisability of these relationships. It is however unique to test organisational commitment in relation to digital employee advocacy specifically, and thus this thesis will provide new insights regarding these areas as well. In order to test the relationships between the three concepts, three hypotheses can be formulated:

H6: Employer branding significantly influences digital employee advocacy
H7: Employer branding significantly influences organisational commitment
H8: Organisational commitment significantly influences digital employee advocacy

Organisational commitment could pose as a mediating variable in this model, and it is therefore of interest to investigate its potential impact on the direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy as well (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014). Thus, a ninth and final hypothesis can be formulated:

H9: Organisational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy

The complete model that is to be investigated can be seen in figure 5. Indices for each hypothesis are featured, indicating which relationship they represent. The results of this thesis will thus show if the five dimensions are constructs of employer branding and reveal the nature of the relationships between employer branding and digital employee advocacy in industrial organisations.

Figure 5. Research model

The definition used for employer branding in this thesis comes from Tanwar and Prasad (2017), who state that employer branding is a set of tangible and intangible benefits offered by an organisation in order to attract potential employees and retain existing employees. Tanwar and Prasad’s (2017) definitions for the five dimensions of employer branding will be used as well since these concepts are very specific to their research. Work life balance is defined as the balance between the personal and official life of an employee while ethics and CSR covers the attitude of an organisation towards its employees and the organisation’s impact on society. Healthy work atmosphere is defined as a friendly and stress-free work atmosphere where team
spirit exists among employees and training and development refers to the skill development and growth opportunities provided to employees. Lastly, compensation and benefits is defined as the attractive salary and competitive benefits provided to employees by an organisation. The concept of organisational commitment is defined with help of Steers (1977) and refers to the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in an organisation. Lastly, employee advocacy is defined as employee behaviour that strengthens stakeholders’ positive perceptions of a brand through positive word of mouth communication, where advocates endorse an organisation by voluntarily giving recommendations to others (Fullerton, 2003, 2011; Miles & Mangold, 2004). As of today, there is no clear definition of digital employee advocacy in existing literature. However, since the presented definition of employee advocacy does not specify where the advocacy behaviour should take place, this definition will be used for digital employee advocacy in this thesis. All concepts and their respective operational definition can be found in table 1.

Table 1. Definitions of the concepts used in model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Theoretical Definition</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Employer Branding     | A set of tangible and intangible benefits offered by the organisation to attract potential employees and retain existing employees. | • My organisation provides flexible working hours  
• My organisation offers opportunity to work from home  
• My organisation provides on-site sports facilities | Tanwar & Prasad, 2017 |
| Work Life Balance     | The equilibrium between an employee’s personal and official life.                     |                                                                                        | Tanwar & Prasad, 2017 |
| Ethics and CSR        | Ethics covers the attitude of the organisation towards its employees and legal procedures while CSR is the organisation’s impact on society. | • My organisation has fair attitude towards employees  
• Employees are expected to follow all rules and regulations  
• Humanitarian organisation gives back to society  
• There is a confidential procedure to report misconduct at work | Tanwar & Prasad, 2017 |
| Healthy Work Atmosphere | Friendly and stress-free work atmosphere and team spirit amongst employees.          | • My organisation provides autonomy to its employees to take decisions  
• My organisation provides opportunities to enjoy group atmosphere  
• I have friends at work who are ready to share my responsibility at work in my absence  
• My organisation recognises me when I do good work  
• My organisation offers a relatively stress-free work environment  
• My organisation offers opportunities to work in teams | Tanwar & Prasad, 2017 |
| Training and Development | Skill development and growth opportunities provided to employees for current and future job positions. | • My organisation provides us online training courses  
• My organisation organises various conferences, workshops and training programmes on regular basis  
• My organisation offers opportunities to work on foreign projects  
• My organisation invests heavily in training and development of its employees  
• Skill development is a continuous process in my organisation  
• My organisation communicates clear advancement path for its employees | Tanwar & Prasad, 2017 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Compensation and Benefits | Attractive salary and competitive benefits provided by the organisation. | • In general, the salary offered by my organisation is high  
• My organisation provides overtime pay  
• My organisation provides good health benefits  
• My organisation provides insurance coverage for employees and dependents | Tanwar & Prasad, 2017 |
| Organisational Commitment | The relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a specific organisation. | • I find that my values and this organisation’s values are very similar  
• I am extremely glad I chose this organisation to work for over other companies I was considering at the time  
• I really care about the fate of this organisation  
• For me, this organisation is the best of all possible organisations to work for | Hartline, Maxham & McKee, 2000  
Steers, 1977 |
| Digital Employee Advocacy | Employee behaviour that strengthen stakeholders’ positive perceptions of a brand through positive word of mouth communication where advocates endorse an organisation by voluntarily giving recommendations to others. | • Say positive things about X to other people  
• Recommend X to someone who seeks your advice  
• Encourage friends and relatives to do business with X | Fullerton, 2003  
Fullerton, 2011  
Miles & Mangold, 2004 |
3 Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology for the thesis is presented. Firstly, the research purpose, approach and strategy are defined, followed by a description of the data collection, sample selection and data analysis. To conclude this chapter, the quality and ethical aspects of the methodology are discussed.

3.1 Research Purpose

A research can either have an exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or evaluative purpose, or a combination of them all (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015). An exploratory research is focused on gaining a deeper understanding of a specific research subject, a descriptive research is focused on describing certain events, persons or situations, an explanatory research is focused on determining causal relationships between constructs and lastly an evaluative research is focused on finding out how well something works (Saunders et al., 2015).

The research purpose of this thesis can be seen as a combination of an exploratory and an evaluative purpose. It can be considered to be exploratory since the research questions are aimed at gaining insights about a specific topic, in this case employer branding and digital employee advocacy. The research purpose can also be considered to be evaluative since the aim is to assess how well the existing employer branding scale works. The research purpose cannot be considered to be explanatory or descriptive because the aim is not to determine causality or to describe particular situations.

3.2 Research Approach

A deductive approach begins with reviewing theory, from where hypotheses are generated, and then ends with testing the generated hypotheses. Since this thesis is structured in this way, it can be considered to have a deductive approach. A deductive approach is furthermore often associated with a quantitative method. With a quantitative method, numerical data is collected in order to investigate relationships between variables or constructs (Greener, 2008; Saunders et al., 2015). Based on the deductive approach, it was decided to proceed with a quantitative approach in order to investigate the constructs of employer branding and the relationship between employer branding, digital employee advocacy and organisational commitment.

3.3 Research Strategy

A quantitative research approach is predominantly associated with experimental or survey strategies. A survey strategy is furthermore commonly associated with deductive research approaches, and data collected with this strategy can be used to produce models of relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2015). Based on these assumptions, it was decided to proceed with a survey strategy for this thesis.

There are several data collection techniques that can be used as a part of the survey strategy, but the most common technique is a questionnaire. Questionnaires are efficient for collecting responses for a quantitative analysis since all respondents are asked the same set of questions. The survey strategy using questionnaires furthermore allows data collection in a very economical way and is generally perceived as trustworthy (Saunders et al., 2015). Due to these reasons, and the quantitative approach of this thesis, a questionnaire was selected as the data collection technique.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaire type used for this thesis is a self-completed web questionnaire, i.e. a questionnaire that is completed by the respondents themselves and accessed through a web
browser. It was decided to do a web questionnaire since it is inexpensive to distribute, less time consuming than physical ones, such as postal questionnaires, and can be used to collect large samples that are geographically dispersed. Accordingly, the data collected for this research has been primary data, i.e. new data (Saunders et al., 2015). The data had to be primary since the aim is to test the construct of employer branding in a new setting and investigate the relationship between different concepts that had not been under investigation before.

3.4.1 Design of Questionnaire
The design of the questionnaire is important due to the fact that it can affect the response rate as well as the validity and reliability of the collected data. The questionnaire was designed in SurveyMonkey*, an online tool for creating and analysing questionnaires. The layout of the questionnaire was designed in order to encourage participation (Saunders et al., 2015). This was done by making the questionnaire easy to understand and follow, for example by having a progress bar to indicate the percentage completed and by having a short introduction for each construct. In addition, all questions for each construct were presented together on one page and the questions for the next construct could not be accessed until these were completed.

The questionnaire was first sent out to a pre-test group, see more in 3.4.3 Pre-test. After revising the questionnaire based on the obtained feedback from this group, the questionnaire was sent out to the main group of respondents. Invitations were distributed by email to all employees individually, together with a hyperlink to the online questionnaire along with information regarding the thesis and the confidentiality. The emails were sent as blind carbon copies (BCC) because of the inappropriateness to send mass emails. This also gave the impression that the invitations were sent to employees personally which could have encouraged participation, due to the feeling of being selected. Other advantages of sending invitations by email are that it yields high confidence that the right individuals receive the questionnaire and that it offers a better control of the respondents since most individuals read and respond to their own emails. This method thus increases the reliability of the responses (Saunders et al., 2015).

3.4.2 Measures
All concepts were measured in the same way as they were found to be measured in literature. This means that all concepts except organisational commitment, were measured with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The concept of organisational commitment was measured with a 7-point Likert scale, also ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. All questions were considered closed, i.e. respondents were presented with a set of alternatives from which they had to choose one answer. Some of the advantages with closed questions are that it is easy to process the answers, it enhances the comparability of answers and are easy for respondents to complete. However, closed questions rule out the possibility to receive interesting replies that are not covered by the fixed answers and could therefore cause irritation among respondents if they are not able to find an answer that suits them (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In this case, the advantages were outweighed by the disadvantages and no open questions were included in the questionnaire.

To measure the concept of employer branding, a scale of 23 items from Tanwar and Prasad (2017) was used. The scale covers the areas of work life balance, healthy work atmosphere, ethics and CSR, compensation and benefits as well as training and development. Organisational commitment was measured with four items from Hartline, Maxham and McKee (2000). The concept of digital employee advocacy was measured with three items from Fullerton (2003),

* www.surveymonkey.com
which had to be adjusted in order to address employee advocacy on social media specifically. All questionnaire items can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to the items measuring the three concepts, questions regarding the demographics of the respondents and their social media usage were included. The demographics questions consisted of age and gender, where the age interval was collected from Correa, Hinsley and De Zuniga (2010). The questions covering social media usage were based on items from Warner-Søderholm et al. (2018). All questions regarding demographics and social media can be found in Appendix B.

3.4.3 Pre-test
Self-completion questionnaires need to have clear and unambiguous questions since there is no interviewer present to help the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A pre-test was therefore performed in order to test the questionnaire and improve the validity of it (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The pre-test questionnaire was distributed by email to a small group of employees within the sample organisation with the information that they may voluntarily take part in the pre-test group. In order to identify ambiguities and difficult questions, respondents were asked to give feedback (Peat, 2001). A total of 17 complete responses were collected in the pre-test and the obtained feedback was then used to re-word questions that were difficult or ambiguous.

3.5 Sample Selection
A sample is used when it is unfeasible to collect data from the entire population. In this case, the population is represented by employees in industrial organisations and a sample was therefore needed. Sampling can be conducted by using either probability or non-probability sampling. For probability sampling a sampling frame is required, i.e. a complete list of all cases (Saunders et al., 2015). In this research, a sample frame was not available and it was therefore decided to proceed with non-probability sampling.

There are several techniques associated with non-probability sampling. In this research it was decided to use volunteer sampling, specifically the self-selection sampling technique due to the fact that individuals were easy to access and the technique’s compatibility with exploratory purposes. This technique furthermore allows individuals to identify their own will to take part in the research. Invitations were therefore sent by email to encourage participation and data was collected from those who responded. With self-selection, individuals often decide to participate due to their strong feelings or opinions regarding the research which could have generated less neutral responses (Saunders et al., 2015).

The sample for this research consisted of employees at a Swedish industrial organisation with global presence. The organisation was founded in Sweden and is headquartered in Stockholm, but it has local offices spread around the world. The number of employees in Sweden is approximately 1 400. This sample was selected because of the feasibility to collect data and because it represents a new setting for testing both the employer branding scale and the model. Employees that were not directly employed by the sample organisation or were not working in Sweden, e.g. consultants or employees in other countries, were not eligible to participate in the research. Employees who were not using social media for personal purposes were not eligible as well since this research is specifically about social media and they would not have been able to answer some of the questions. In order to filter out these employees, screening questions were used in the questionnaire.
Approximately 700 individuals were reached by sending out invitations using the organisation’s internal emailing lists. No emails were returned with information that individuals were no longer part of the organisation and it was therefore assumed that all employees were reached. Data was collected for two weeks and after one week a friendly follow-up email, i.e. follow-up email, was sent to all employees. During this period, a total of 306 complete responses were collected. To calculate the total response rate, Neuman’s method was used. Neuman’s method (2014) takes the total number of responses (306) and divides it with the total number in the sample (700) less the ineligible responses (108). This yields a response rate of 51.7% which can be compared to the average response rate of 52.7% for organisational studies collecting data from individuals (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). There are several factors that could have affected the response rate negatively, e.g. the design of the questions and its structure (Saunders et al., 2015). With the pre-test, an attempt to minimise the impact of these factors was done. However, external factors could have affected the response rate as well. In this case, a privacy scandal including Facebook emerged during the time of the research (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018). Due to this, individuals might have stopped using social media or become reluctant to the subject, and were thus not eligible for the questionnaire or willing to participate.

3.6 Data Analysis

The questionnaire was designed around each construct of interest, i.e. employer branding, organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy, and data for each was thereby obtained. Employer branding is in the investigated model a higher-order construct and was therefore evaluated by asking questions surrounding the five underlying constructs: work life balance, ethics and CSR, training and development, healthy work atmosphere as well as compensation and benefits (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). These were all designed as formative constructs of employer branding whilst the indicators of them were arranged as reflective. The indicators of organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy were also designed as reflective.

PLS-SEM, partial least square structural equation modelling, can handle models with both reflective and formative constructs, and therefore it was decided to use this method for the research (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012). PLS-SEM is also appropriate when the aim of the research is to identify key drivers of certain constructs and when the research is of exploratory nature, which complies with the aim and approach of this research (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011). Based on the choice of performing PLS-SEM, SmartPLS 3.0 was chosen as the data analysis tool.

The model for this research was first created in SmartPLS 3.0. The higher-order construct, employer branding, was constructed using the repeated indicators approach, meaning that the indicators from the lower-order components, i.e. the five formative factors, were deployed again for the corresponding higher-order component (Hair, Hult et al., 2014). The construct of employer branding was then connected to the constructs of organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy.

Before properly assessing the structural model, it was necessary to test the measurement model since the reliability and validity of it needs to be satisfactory before proceeding (Wong, 2013). In the measurement model test, the convergent reliability, internal consistency reliability and discriminant validity were assessed. To retrieve these, a PLS algorithm was run using the software’s internal calculation function. As suggested by Hair, Hult, et al. (2014), the maximum number of iterations were set to 300 and the stop criterion to 5. This test also served as a confirmatory factor analysis for the scale. For the structural model test, collinearity validity was
firstly assessed followed by the assessment of the path coefficients, coefficient of determination, predictive relevance and mediator effect. These values were retrieved from the PLS algorithm, a bootstrapping method and a blindfolding procedure. The bootstrapping method was used in order to determine the level of significance of the relationships in the model and for this method a sample of 5000 was set (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins & Kuppelwieser, 2014). The blindfolding procedure was performed using an omission distance of seven (Hair, Hult et al., 2014). After completing the structural model test, conclusions about the hypotheses could be drawn.

3.7 Quality
The quality of a research can be analysed by looking at the reliability and validity of it. Reliability refers to replication and consistency, i.e. if the research can be replicated and the same findings obtained. Validity refers to the suitability of the used measures and the accuracy and the generalisability of the findings (Saunders et al., 2015).

3.7.1 Reliability
According to Greener (2008), a research must be designed in a transparent and clear way in order to ensure reliability. Reliability can furthermore be divided into internal and external reliability. Internal reliability reflects the consistency during a research and can be achieved by for example using more than one researcher for analyses and document procedures. External reliability reflects the extent to which the data collection technique and analytical procedures produce the same results if they are repeated (Saunders et al., 2015).

According to Saunders et al. (2015) and Greener (2008) there are four main threats to the reliability of the research. The first two refer to the participants of the study and are known as participant error, which means any factor that could alter the way in which a participant performs, and participant bias, which means any factor that includes a false response, e.g. answering questions falsely due to fear of being observed (Saunders et al., 2015). This thesis has tried to minimise these risks by firstly giving the participants two weeks to answer the questionnaire and not limiting the time to complete it, and thus enabling the participants to answer when it suits them. Secondly, the anonymity of the participants has been communicated carefully in order to ensure that the participants feel safe and are able to trust that their answers will not be used against them in any way. The third and fourth threats are known as researcher error, referring to any factor which could alter the researcher’s interpretation of data, and researcher bias which refers to any factor that induces bias in the recording of responses (Saunders et al., 2015). These threats are minimised in this thesis as the collected data is completely anonymous and analysed quantitatively.

According of Saunders et al. (2015) there are two main approaches to assess the reliability of a questionnaire: test re-test and internal consistency. The test re-test method estimates reliability by correlating data from two different distributions of the questionnaire under near equivalent settings, meaning that the participants have to answer the questionnaire twice. This method can however create problems as it is hard to motivate a participant to respond to the same questionnaire multiple times. Due to this, the test re-test method was not conducted. Instead, the internal consistency approach was chosen. Internal consistency involves correlating the responses of the questions with each other. In this way, the consistency of responses across a subgroup of questions can be measured (Saunders et al., 2015). The common and traditional criterion for evaluating the internal consistency is Cronbach’s alpha, but it can also be evaluated with the composite reliability (CR). The problem with Cronbach’s alpha is that it tends to underestimate the internal consistency reliability when the number of items in a scale is low.
(Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). Since the number of items are low for some constructs in this thesis, both the CR and Cronbach’s alpha were measured and assessed in order to ensure internal consistency, see more in 4.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability.

3.7.2 Validity

According to Saunders et al. (2015) there are three main types of validity. The first type is known as measurement validity and refers to the method and the extent of which it is measuring what it is intended to measure. The second type is known as internal validity and refers to the accuracy of the analysis and results. The third type refers to the generalisability of the findings and is defined as external validity (Saunders et al., 2015).

3.7.2.1 Measurement Validity

Measurement validity, also referred to as internal validity in relation to questionnaires, reflects the ability of a questionnaire to measure what it is supposed to measure and that the results represent the reality (Saunders et al., 2015). According to Saunders et al. (2015), does measurement validity consist of face validity, construct validity, content validity and predictive validity. In this thesis, measurement validity was ensured primarily by conducting a measurement model test, see 4.2 Measurement Model Test. Face and content validity were however ensured by other measures as well.

Face validity is according to Saunders et al. (2015) the agreement that a question seem to logically and accurately reflect what it is intended to measure. In other words, face validity means that anyone, i.e. non-researchers, in broad terms can see that the used method makes sense for the purpose of the research (Greener, 2008). The face validity was ensured by the pre-test as the obtained feedback was used to improve questions where it was needed, see 3.4.3 Pre-test (Saunders et al., 2015).

According to Saunders et al. (2015) is content validity the extent to which the asked questions provide adequate coverage of the investigative questions. Saunders et al. bring up three methods that can be used to judge the adequacy: using constructs well-grounded in literature, discussion with experts and using panels of individuals that can assess the necessity of each question. In this thesis, the content validity was ensured by using recognised scales from prior research. However, the scale measuring employer branding is newly developed and it can thus be seen to not have as high content validity as the scales for organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy. This is however recognised in the research purpose which partly is about validating this scale.

3.7.2.2 Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the extent to which the research can demonstrate a causal relationship between two variables (Greener, 2008; Saunders et al., 2015). It can be easy to assume that a factor causes an effect due to findings of one research, but the question if the independent variable account completely for changes in a dependent variable, or if there are surrounding factors influencing the result, must be considered (Greener, 2008). According to Saunders et al. (2015) there are several threats to internal validity. In this thesis two are relevant: past and recent events together with testing.

Past and recent events refer to happenings which could change the participants’ perceptions (Saunders et al., 2015). Since the questionnaire asks questions regarding social media, a privacy scandal involving Facebook, that took place just before the distribution of the questionnaire, can have changed the respondents’ attitudes towards Facebook and thereby influenced the result (Cadwalladr & Graham-Harrison, 2018). However, since the questions do not only cover
Facebook but other social media platforms as well, it might not have had as great impact as if the questionnaire was investigating Facebook solely. Furthermore, preparations for major internal restructurings were happening within the sample organisation simultaneously as the research was conducted. This might also have affected the participants’ perceptions of the investigated constructs and thus altered their responses.

Testing refers to the impact of informing the participants about the research project as this might alter their responses, especially if they believe it might lead to future consequences (Saunders et al., 2015). The constructs studied in this thesis are personal in nature and thus it is possible that the respondents answer what they believe are expected of them rather than what they actually believe. In order to minimise this risk, the participants were carefully informed about the research purpose and their anonymity.

3.7.2.3 External Validity
The external validity of a research, also known as generalisability, refers to the extent of which the findings can be generalised to other relevant contexts (Greener, 2008; Saunders et al., 2015). In order to be able to establish such validity it is necessary to replicate the research in several settings (Saunders et al., 2015). In this thesis, only one setting was tested and thus it is hard to draw any conclusions about the generalisability of the findings. However, since this research will evaluate a newly developed scale it could contribute to the generalisability of that particular scale. In addition, some relationships in the model, such as the relationship between employer branding and organisational commitment, have been confirmed before and this research could thus contribute to the generalisability of them. In conclusion, this research could contribute to the generalisability of earlier findings, but to establish external validity of this research it needs to be tested again in additional settings.

3.8 Ethics
In order to avoid ethical concerns and risks with this research, a consideration of the most important ethical aspects has been made. First and foremost, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of the data and the respondents is seen as a key ethical principle (Saunders et al., 2015). This research has ensured the confidentiality and anonymity by not asking for personal data that could be traced back to the respondent, e.g. asking for name, IP-address, email or even position in the organisation. It was also clearly stated in the invitation that the obtained data was only going to be used for this research. The rights of the participants are another important ethical principle (Saunders et al., 2015). To ensure this, participants had the right to exit the questionnaire whenever they wanted. They were however not given the option to withdraw their provided data due to technical restrictions; it was not possible to retrieve a respondent’s data because of the anonymity of the answers. Overall, to handle ethical concerns and risks, this thesis has followed the ethical guidelines provided by Vetenskapsrådet (2002).
4 Data Analysis and Results

This chapter begins with a presentation of the demographics of the respondents. This is followed by the measurement model test and the structural model test, which were conducted by following the guidelines for PLS-SEM analyses by Hair, Hult, et al. (2014). Lastly, a summary of the hypothesis testing is presented.

4.1 Demographics

A total of 306 responses were collected and used for the data analysis. As seen in figure 6, 34% of the respondents were female and 66% male. The majority of the respondents, 61%, were between the ages of 35 and 54 whereas 28% were between 18 and 34 and 11% were older than 55. These results indicate that the obtained responses come from a diverse group of individuals. Participation from the older generation might be considered low, but this could be due to this group’s proximity to the Swedish pension age, leading to a smaller group of possible respondents (Pensionsmyndigheten, 2017). Furthermore, the older generation is less likely to use social media for personal purposes, and thus many might have been ineligible for participation in the questionnaire (Perrin, 2015).

![Figure 6. Gender and age distribution of the respondents](image)

Regarding the usage of social media for personal purposes it can be observed that 88% of the respondents use Facebook, 82% use LinkedIn, 67% use Instagram, 16% use Twitter and 6% use blogs, see figure 7. Other social media was represented by the alternative other in the questionnaire which 6% of the respondents selected. Examples of other social media specified by the respondents are Snapchat, WeChat and YouTube. The most frequently used social media platforms among the respondents are Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, see figure 8. This indicates for example that even though many have a LinkedIn account they do not use it as frequently as Instagram. In figure 9, it can furthermore be observed that over 75% of the respondents check their social media accounts on a daily basis.
Figure 7. Used social media platforms

Figure 8. Most frequently used social media platforms

Figure 9. Time spent on social media platforms
4.2 Measurement Model Test
The measurement model test was performed by assessing the convergent reliability, internal consistency reliability and discriminant validity of the reflective indicators (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). This can also be seen as the confirmatory factor analysis for this research.

4.2.1 Convergent Reliability
Firstly, an assessment of the reflective indicators’ convergent reliability was conducted. This was done by evaluating the indicator loadings and the average variance extracted (AVE). According to Hair, Hult et al. (2014), indicator loadings less than 0.4 should be excluded from the model and loadings greater than 0.7 should be kept while loadings with a value in between 0.4 and 0.7 need to be evaluated through an outer loading relevance test. This approach is normally applied when newly developed scales are used in a measurement model, and since this is the case with the employer branding scale, this approach was used to assess the indicators with values between 0.4 and 0.7. The outer loading relevance test is based on how the removal of one indicator affects the CR and AVE of the construct. An indicator should be removed if the removal leads to an increase of CR or AVE that bring them above the threshold value, i.e. above 0.7 for CR and above 0.5 for AVE (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). If the values of both the CR and AVE are above threshold value, convergent reliability is obtained.

No indicators with outer loadings less than 0.4 were present after the first run of the PLS algorithm, but 13 indicators in the employer branding scale had an outer loading between 0.4 and 0.7. An outer loading relevance test was thus performed on these in order to see which of them that should be kept in the model. The indicators were tested in the order of their loading, i.e. the indicators with the smallest loading were tested first. They were removed one by one in order to see if this increased the AVE and CR of their related construct. After each removal, the PLS algorithm was run again to see if the values of AVE and CR for the latent construct increased and the indicator was removed if the values increased. This procedure was repeated until the AVE and CR for all latent constructs were above the thresholds and thus convergent reliability was obtained. A total of four indicators were removed, see table 2. Each indicator and their corresponding question are furthermore listed in Appendix A. The outer loading relevance test resulted in six indicators with loadings still in between 0.4 and 0.7, but since convergent reliability was already obtained, they were kept in the scale. In table 3 all CR and AVE values can be found.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure no.</th>
<th>Indicator no.</th>
<th>Result of removal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>CR and AVE above threshold for Work Life Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>CR and AVE above threshold for Ethics and CSR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>CR and AVE above threshold for Healthy Work Atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>CR and AVE above threshold for Compensation and Benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. CR and AVE values for all constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Balance</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td>0.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and CSR</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td>0.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>0.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Work Atmosphere</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and Benefits</td>
<td>0.763</td>
<td>0.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td>0.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td>0.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.948</td>
<td>0.858</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Internal Consistency Reliability

In order to ensure internal consistency reliability for the measurement model, Cronbach’s alpha and CR were evaluated. By running the PLS algorithm, these values were retrieved for each construct. Cronbach’s alpha is assumed to be adequate if the value is greater than 0.7 and values between 0.7 and 0.95 are acceptable for CR (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014).

For this measurement model, Cronbach’s alpha was greater than 0.7 for all constructs except for compensation and benefits (0.544), ethics and CSR (0.619), and work life balance (0.604), see table 4. All of these constructs had only two or three indicators, which could explain an underestimation of their values (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). The CR values were however all within the established criteria, see table 3. Based on this it was concluded that internal consistency reliability was obtained for the measurement model.

Table 4. Cronbach’s alpha for all constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Balance</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and CSR</td>
<td>0.619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>0.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Work Atmosphere</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and Benefits</td>
<td>0.544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>0.879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>0.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Discriminant Validity

To ensure that a construct is unique and does not capture the phenomena represented by other constructs, discriminant validity needs to be established. Discriminant validity can be evaluated by assessing the cross loadings of the indicators or by the Fornell-Larcker criterion. A discriminant validity problem occurs either when a cross loading is greater than the outer loading of a specific construct or if the square root of AVE of each construct is not greater than its highest correlation with any other construct (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014).
To assess the discriminant validity of the measurement model both methods were conducted. The observation of the cross loadings showed that no cross loadings were greater than the outer loading of each construct. Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was fulfilled since the square root of AVE was greater than its correlation with any other construct, see Appendix B. This indicates that discriminant validity is obtained for the measurement model.

4.3 Structural Model Test
When the measurement model was confirmed to be reliable and valid, the structural model was assessed in order to determine how well the empirical data fit with theory (Hair, Hult et al., 2014; Sarstedt, Ringle, Smith, Reams & Hair, 2014). This assessment was done by examining the relationships between the different constructs and the model’s predictive capabilities (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). According to Hair, Hult, et al. (2014) the steps for the PLS-SEM assessment include evaluation of collinearity validity, significance of the path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), f^2 effect size, predictive relevance (Q^2), q^2 effect size and lastly potential mediator roles.

4.3.1 Collinearity Validity
Since path estimations are based on ordinary least squares regressions and the result of these might be biased if collinearity is present, the structural model firstly needed to be assessed for collinearity (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Collinearity is assessed through the value of the inner variance influence factor (VIF) which should be less than 5 between all constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2014). The inner VIF values of the model were all within the acceptable interval, ranging from 1 to 2.071, and thus collinearity validity could be established, see table 5.

Table 5. Inner VIF values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Digital Employee Advocacy</th>
<th>Employer Branding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>2.050</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>2.050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and CSR</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation and Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Work Atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Balance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.2 Path Coefficients
The relationships between the constructs in the model can be determined by calculating their path coefficients. The path coefficients can vary between -1 and 1, where 1 equals a strong positive relationship and -1 a strong negative relationship. The closer a path coefficient is to zero the weaker the relationship is and accordingly, a value close to zero is more likely to be nonsignificant. The significance of a path coefficient does however depend on the t-value and the p-value, which can be retrieved with the help of a bootstrapping algorithm. The t-value is derived from the standard error while the p-value is the probability of erroneously rejecting the null hypothesis. In order for a path coefficient to be significant the t-value must be greater than 1.96 and the p-value less than 0.05 (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014).
All path coefficients in the model met these criteria except the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy, see figure 10 and table 6. The path coefficient between these two concepts is close to zero, the t-value less than 1.96 and the p-value is greater than 0.05 and it can therefore be concluded that the relationship is nonsignificant. In other words do the findings show that employer branding does not have a direct significant influence on digital employee advocacy and thus hypothesis 6 is rejected. Hypotheses 1 to 8 can however be accepted, see table 6.

According to Hair, Hult et al. (2014), path coefficients can also be interpreted relative to one another such as if one is larger, it has a greater effect on the endogenous construct. Regarding the components of employer branding, it can be observed that training and development has the greatest effect on employer branding (0.422), followed by a healthy work atmosphere (0.339), ethics and CSR (0.221), compensation and benefits (0.176) and work life balance (0.111). Regarding the path coefficients from employer branding to organisational commitment (0.716) and from organisational commitment to digital employee advocacy (0.581), it can be observed that both are significant and relatively strong.

![Figure 10. Path Coefficients and $R^2$ values in model from SmartPLS 3.0](image-url)
4.3.3 Coefficient of Determination

In order to measure the structural model’s predictive accuracy, the coefficient of determination, $R^2$, is used. $R^2$ represents exogenous latent variables combined effect on an endogenous latent variable (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). The value can vary between 0 and 1, where a number close to 1 indicates a high level of accuracy. According to Hair, Hult, et al. (2014), the rule of thumb is that coefficients above 0.75, 0.5 and 0.25 can be described as substantial, moderate and weak levels of accuracy (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014).

The coefficients of determination are 0.267 for digital employee advocacy and 0.512 for organisational commitment, see figure 10. This means that organisational commitment together with employer branding can explain 26.7% of the variance of digital employee advocacy and that employer branding explain 51.2% of the variance of organisational commitment. According to the rule of thumb, it can be concluded that the coefficients of determination show a weak and a moderate level of accuracy respectively.

4.3.3.1 Effect Size $f^2$

The effect size on the coefficient of determination, $f^2$, can be used in order to determine whether an excluded exogenous construct has an impact on an endogenous construct (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). If an exogenous construct contributes to explaining an endogenous construct by large means, the difference between the $R^2$ included and excluded will be high, leading to a high value of $f^2$ (Hair, Sarstedt, et al., 2014). According to Cohen (1988), $f^2$ values above 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 can be interpreted as small, medium and large effects. Effect sizes less than 0.02 indicate that there is no effect (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).

By running a PLS algorithm, the values of the effect size $f^2$ were retrieved, see table 7. It can be concluded that there is no $f^2$ effect size of employer branding on digital employee advocacy since it is less than 0.2 (0.006). Further on, there is a medium effect size of organisational commitment on digital employee advocacy (0.225). Both of these results agree with the earlier analysis of path coefficients and significance, i.e. there is no significant relationship or effect of employer branding on digital employee advocacy, but there is a significant relationship and a medium effect size of employer branding on digital employee advocacy.

Table 6. Path coefficients, t-values, p-values and result for hypothesis 1 to 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>WLB* → EB*</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>6.988</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>E&amp;CSR* → EB</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>18.757</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>T&amp;D* → EB</td>
<td>0.422</td>
<td>20.203</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>HWA* → EB</td>
<td>0.339</td>
<td>18.715</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>C&amp;B* → EB</td>
<td>0.176</td>
<td>10.812</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>EB → DEA*</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>1.296</td>
<td>0.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>EB → OC*</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>22.655</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>OC → DEA</td>
<td>0.581</td>
<td>8.043</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: WLB: Work Life Balance; EB: Employer Branding; E&CSR: Ethics and CSR; T&D: Training and Development; HWA: Healthy Work Atmosphere; C&B: Compensation and Benefits; DEA: Digital Employee Advocacy; OC: Organisational Commitment
Table 7. Effect size $f^2$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous</th>
<th>Endogenous</th>
<th>Effect size $f^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4 Predictive Relevance

The predictive relevance, $Q^2$, should be analysed for the structural model as well. Predictive relevance is obtained when the data points of indicators can be accurately predicted in reflective measurement models of endogenous constructs (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). The $Q^2$ values were obtained by running a blindfolding procedure. According to Hair, Hult, et al. (2014), values greater than zero indicate that the model has predictive relevance for a certain endogenous construct. The results indicate that the model has predictive relevance since all of the endogenous constructs have a $Q^2$ value greater than zero, see table 8.

Table 8. Predictive relevance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Endogenous Construct</th>
<th>$Q^2$ Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>0.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>0.303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.4.1 Effect Size $q^2$

In order to determine the effect size of the predictive relevance $Q^2$, the value of $q^2$ need to be analysed. The effect size $q^2$ captures the relative impact of predictive relevance and is evaluated with the same guidelines as for the $f^2$ effect size (Hair et al., 2016). SmartPLS 3.0 cannot calculate the $q^2$ values so they were therefore calculated manually. The $q^2$ values can be obtained by using the following formula (Hair et al., 2016):

$$q^2 = \frac{Q^2_{\text{included}} - Q^2_{\text{excluded}}}{1 - Q^2_{\text{included}}}$$

To obtain the values of $Q^2$ excluded, the predictors were excluded and the blindfolding procedure was run again. After obtaining the needed values, $q^2$ was calculated. The $q^2$ effect size of employer branding on digital employee advocacy can, as in the case with $f^2$, be considered as non existent due to its low value (-0.001). The $q^2$ effect size of organisational commitment on digital employee advocacy can be considered as medium. See table 9 for the values used for obtaining $q^2$.

Table 9. Variables and result for effect size $q^2$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Endogenous Construct</th>
<th>$Q^2_{\text{included}}$</th>
<th>$Q^2_{\text{excluded}}$</th>
<th>Effect size $q^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer Branding</td>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>0.214</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
<td>0.213</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3.5 Organisational Commitment as a Mediator

When a third variable intervenes between two other related constructs, a mediating effect is created. If a variable is a mediator, it might absorb some of the relationship between an exogenous and an endogenous construct via indirect effect. By examining the mediator, it is therefore possible to gain a better understanding of the true relationship between the related constructs. If there is a full mediation effect, the mediator fully absorbs the direct relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables which then becomes almost zero (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014).

In this model, organisational commitment can potentially act as a mediator. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) can organisational commitment be identified as a mediator if it meets three conditions: (1) variations in employer branding account significantly for the variations in organisational commitment, (2) variations in organisational commitment account significantly for variations in digital employee advocacy and (3) if the previous direct relationship between employer branding and organisational commitment change significantly when the paths to and from organisational commitment are controlled. In order to test this, Hair, Hult, et al. (2014) suggest that researchers should follow a procedure developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). First, the direct effect, i.e. without the mediator, should be significant. Second, the indirect effect, i.e. including the mediator, must be significant which means that both the path between employer branding and organisational commitment and the path between organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy must be significant. Lastly, if these criteria are met, the variance accounted for (VAF) is used in order to evaluate the size of the indirect effect in relation to the total effect and thus the magnitude of the mediation can be obtained (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). According to Hair, Hult, et al. (2014) does a VAF less than 0.2 indicate that no mediation is present while a VAF greater than 0.8 indicates full mediation. If the VAF is greater than 1, a suppressor effect is present, which always equals full mediation.

After completing the procedure, the direct effect (0.320), excluding organisational commitment, was shown to be significant. Furthermore, the indirect effects (0.716 and 0.581) were found to be significant as well. When calculating the VAF, a value of 1.3 was obtained, see table 10. This indicates that a suppressor effect is present, which furthermore can be seen in the sign change of the path coefficient between employer branding and digital employee advocacy when organisational commitment is excluded from the model. This means that full mediation is present and thus that all the effect that employer branding has on digital employee advocacy is mediated by organisational commitment (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014).

Table 10. Values used to determine mediator role and calculation of VAF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Path coeff.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Indirect effect</th>
<th>Total effect</th>
<th>VAF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1:</strong> Direct effect (without mediator)</td>
<td>EB$^<em>$ → DEA$^</em>$</td>
<td>0.320</td>
<td>5.563</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2:</strong> Indirect effect (with mediator)</td>
<td>EB → DEA</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>1.296</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>-0.097</td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EB → OC$^*$</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>22.655</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>0.416/0.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OC → DEA</td>
<td>0.581</td>
<td>8.043</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: EB: Employer Branding; DEA: Digital Employee Advocacy; OC: Organisational Commitment*
4.4 Summary of Hypothesis Testing

After completing both the measurement model test and the structural model test, all hypotheses can be accepted except one, see table 11. All investigated dimensions, i.e. work life balance, ethics and CSR, training and development, healthy work atmosphere as well as compensation and benefits are found to be formative constructs of employer branding. Furthermore is employer branding found to significantly influence organisational commitment, which in turn significantly influences digital employee advocacy. Organisational commitment is moreover found to fully mediate the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy. Lastly, employer branding is found to have a nonsignificant influence on digital employee advocacy.

Table 11. Result of hypothesis testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Work life balance is a construct of employer branding</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ethics and CSR is a construct of employer branding</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Training and development is a construct of employer branding</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Healthy work atmosphere is a construct of employer branding</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Compensation and benefits is a construct of employer branding</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Employer branding significantly influences digital employee advocacy</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Employer branding significantly influences organisational commitment</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Organisational commitment significantly influences digital employee advocacy</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Organisational commitment significantly mediates the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the conclusions of the thesis are presented. Firstly, the conclusions are summarised in regard to the research questions. This is followed by a presentation of the theoretical contributions and practical implications. Lastly, the limitations of the thesis are presented together with proposed future research.

5.1 Summary of Research Questions

The purpose of this thesis has been to generate insights on digital employee advocacy that ultimately can help industrial organisations that seek to build such programs. Specifically, the aim has been to investigate and analyse the factors that could influence employees in industrial organisations to become digital advocates. Due to theories and conceptual models found in literature, employer branding was identified as a potential influential factor and thus it was of interest to further investigate that concept and its relationship with digital employee advocacy. The aim of the thesis thus became to answer the following research questions:

Research question 1:
What are the dimensions of employer branding in industrial organisations?

Research question 2:
Does employer branding lead to digital employee advocacy in industrial organisations?

Both research questions could be answered by developing and quantitatively testing a model based on previous literature that connected employer branding and digital employee advocacy. The findings of the thesis indicate that training and development, a healthy work atmosphere, ethics and CSR, compensation and benefits as well as work life balance are all dimensions of employer branding in industrial organisations. The findings furthermore indicate that employer branding leads indirectly to digital employee advocacy in industrial organisations. This indirect relationship goes through organisational commitment, which poses as mediator. The meaning of these findings will be further discussed in the following chapters.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

In order to evaluate the employer branding scale developed by Tanwar and Prasad (2017), a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. This resulted in the removal of four measurement items. The removal was done in order to reach a sufficient level of convergent reliability in the measurement model. Afterwards, six factors still had a low but, according to Hair, Hult et al. (2014), acceptable outer loading and since convergent reliability was already obtained, these were kept in the model. Even though the measurement model test indicates that the scale was good enough to proceed to the structural model test, some concerns need to be addressed. Tanwar and Prasad (2017) could show a Cronbach’s alpha that was above threshold for all constructs when testing the scale. However, in this measurement model test, three constructs had a Cronbach’s alpha that was not above the threshold value, which indicate that the scale can be improved and furthermore needs more testing. In conclusion, the scale is appropriate for measuring employer branding in the tested setting when excluding four indicators, but could benefit from further evaluations.

To test the dimensions of employer branding and the hypothesized relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy, a PLS-SEM analysis was conducted. The results indicate that all five dimensions have a significant influence on employer branding and thus that they can be seen as formative constructs of the concept. In other words does this thesis contribute to the generalisability of the employer branding model developed by Tanwar and
The findings also indicate that the constructs have varying effects on employer branding; training and development (0.422) and a healthy work atmosphere (0.339) are the most influential factors, followed by ethics and CSR (0.221), compensation and benefits (0.176) and lastly work life balance (0.111). It should be highlighted that this ranking does somewhat differ from Tanwar and Prasad’s (2017) results. Both studies do however agree on the two most influential factors, even though in reversed order. This difference could be due to several factors, such as the geographical and organisational differences of the samples; the first study was conducted with employees from the IT industry in India whereas this thesis is done with employees in a Swedish industrial organisation. It is therefore possible that the employees have different opinions on and experiences with the constructs in the model, which potentially could have affected the results.

The results from the PLS-SEM analysis furthermore indicate that the direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy is nonsignificant when organisational commitment is included in the model. In fact it can be concluded that organisational commitment has a full mediation effect, i.e. that it absorbs the direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy completely. This means that even though the employer brand is strong, an employee will not become a digital advocate if he or she is not committed to the organisation. A strong employer brand does however increase the possibility that a committed employee will become a digital advocate. Therefore, in this model, the hypothesized direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy is rejected. The indirect relationship can however be accepted as the results indicate strong significant relationships between employer branding and organisational commitment and between organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy.

In summary, the findings of this thesis provide novel insights and contribute to literature in several ways. Firstly, it contributes to literature by strengthening the theory that employer branding can be understood in terms of five dimensions. Secondly it contributes to literature by adding to the generalisability of the significant relationship between employer branding and organisational commitment, as well as providing new insights on the relationship between organisational commitment and digital employee advocacy. Lastly, even though this thesis could not confirm a significant relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy, the findings provide novel insights about how organisational commitment plays a mediator role and absorbs all the effect between the two concepts. Ultimately, this thesis contributes to filling some of the research gaps regarding digital employee advocacy that Tsarenko et al. (2018) identified.

5.3 Practical Implications
The results from this thesis can be interpreted as practical implications for managers in industrial organisations who seek to either enhance their employer brand, increase organisational commitment among their employees or turn their employees into digital advocates. The thesis shows that by working with employer branding, an increased organisational commitment can be obtained and furthermore that organisational commitment can encourage digital employee advocacy behaviours. Managers who seeks to encourage digital employee advocacy behaviours should therefore recognise organisational commitment as a necessity and employer branding as an instrument for achieving it.

In order to improve employer branding, it can be helpful to understand and work with the five dimensions that constitute the concept. The findings of this thesis suggest that training and development and healthy work atmosphere are the most influential dimensions. This implicates
that industrial organisations who seeks to strengthen their employer brand could focus on these two dimensions primarily. This could be done by for example investing in online training courses or making sure that employees can enjoy a group atmosphere. In table 1, the organisational definitions of each dimension can be found, which can be used for more detailed implications of how to strengthen each dimension.

In addition to investigating the relationships in the model, a literature study was conducted in order to find already acknowledged success factors for digital employee advocacy programs. The findings from the literature study implicate that it is important that employees are engaged in their organisation, which according to Anitha (2014) can be obtained with the help of a pleasant work environment and good relationships with colleagues. This is very much in line with one of the most influential dimensions of employer branding found in this thesis; healthy work atmosphere. Hence, a healthy work atmosphere does not only strengthen the employer branding but could also influence digital employee advocacy through employee engagement. The literature study furthermore suggests that advocating behaviours are more likely to take place when the values of the organisation and the employee are aligned, i.e. when employees identify with their organisation (Tsarenko et al., 2018).

Looking at the more practical side of the success factors identified in the literature study, it can be acknowledged that tools and channels used for digital employee advocacy need to be simple and available for all employees. It can also be acknowledged that providing employees with brand related content facilitates sharing. Furthermore, knowledge about how to use social media is necessary for digital advocating behaviour and thus social media trainings should be an ongoing activity. These could focus on for example how different social media platforms work, the risks of social media or corporate policies. This goes hand in hand with some of the underlying items of the training and development dimension of employer branding. It can thus be concluded that this factor has an impact on employer branding and potentially on digital employee advocacy as well. In addition to these factors, literature highlights gamification as suitable tool for creating engagement within a digital advocacy program since it often increases participation and motivation among employees. Lastly, it is important that managers and executives participate in digital advocacy programs as a strong commitment from the top could help advocating behaviours to become a part of the organisational culture.

Finally, the demographics of the respondents can provide insights about the personal social media usage in industrial organisations. The majority of the respondents have Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts, which implies that these are the platforms on which organisations should concentrate when developing advocacy programs. However, the platforms should be further evaluated in order to identify which ones that are the most suitable for advocacy, as the platforms might not be used with the same intentions, e.g. LinkedIn is used for more professional purposes while Instagram is used for self-expressions and social interactions (Florenthal, 2015; Moon et al., 2016). Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn are furthermore the platforms which employees use most often and the majority are active on social media at least on a daily basis. This strengthens previous research stating that industrial organisations do have employees that are active on social media and thus they are in possession of the key resource for a successful advocacy program (Huotari et al., 2015).

5.4 Limitations and Future Research
This thesis, as all other research, has several limitations. These limitations can however be used to identify possible future research. The first limitation that is associated with this thesis is related to the fact that the model is tested in only one industrial organisation and thus the sample
might not be representative for the whole population. This means that the results cannot be
generalised to other industrial organisations, instead the model has to be tested further in order
to be able to draw any conclusions regarding the generalisability. As the model has only been
tested for industrial organisations specifically, it could furthermore be of interest to apply it to
other industries. This would also contribute to the reliability and generalisability of the model,
but could in addition generate interesting insights regarding differences between industries. The
first suggestion for future research is therefore to test the model in additional settings, both in
industrial organisations and in other industries.

The employer branding scale that was used and evaluated in this research also needs to be
further tested in order to strengthen its reliability. In this thesis, some indicators were used even
if the Cronbach’s alpha was below the desired level, which as discussed could be due to the low
number of items, but it could also be due to the suitability of the items themselves. Therefore,
the scale needs to be further tested, both in the same setting and in additional ones.

The thesis also investigated a limited number of indicators, constructs and mediators. It did
furthermore not analyse each specific indicator’s contribution to the relationships. Therefore,
future research could expand the model and explore how other indicators, constructs or
mediators would impact the relationships or analyse which ones that have the most influence.
For example did the findings of this research show that organisational commitment plays an
important role in the model, and it could therefore be of great interest to investigate which
employer branding construct that actually contribute to organisational commitment the most.

Furthermore, in order to obtain a greater understanding for organisational commitment and the
related relationships, the concept should be studied more thoroughly than it has been in this
thesis. As discussed in 2.4 Organisational Commitment, can organisational commitment for
example be divided into two parts: active and continuance commitment. As this thesis only
focuses on active commitment, it could be of value to investigate continuance commitment and
its effects as well.

Lastly, this thesis did not investigate what type of social media platforms that would be the
most suitable for digital employee advocacy programs or what content that would be the most
appropriate to share. These areas should therefore be further analysed in order to for example
understand which social media platform that employees would prefer to use for advocating their
organisation, what information they would like to share or what information that would attract
talent.
6 Discussion
In this final chapter, the results of the thesis will be discussed. Firstly, a general discussion regarding the findings will be presented. Secondly, the thesis will be discussed from an ethical and sustainability perspective.

6.1 General Discussion
The findings of this thesis show that employer branding leads to organisational commitment and that organisational commitment leads to digital employee advocacy. This is in line with previous research, and thus the acceptance of the related hypotheses might not be too surprising (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Hanin et al., 2013; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Previous research has however not investigated digital employee advocacy in particular, only employee advocacy in general. This indicates that the relationship between organisational commitment and employee advocacy could be significant regardless of if it is digital or not. This would be in line with the definition of employee advocacy which does not specify where the behaviour is expressed.

Tanwar and Prasad (2016) could in their conceptual model show an indirect relationship from employer branding to employee advocacy through organisational commitment. This thesis could however in a quantitative way show that this path might be of more interest than what their study indicated. It could be shown that organisational commitment plays a full mediator role, which indicates how important this concept is for explaining the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy. This has not been discussed in previous research, which could be due to that no one has connected these three concepts before.

Accordingly, the hypothesis regarding the direct relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy was rejected, even though Tanwar and Prasad (2016) suggest that this relationship exist. It can therefore be discussed how well their conceptual relationship was anchored in literature and empirical data. All the hypotheses regarding the dimensions of employer branding were however accepted, which indicate that these, in contrast to the relationship between employer branding and digital employee advocacy, are much more well grounded. This can furthermore be observed in the study as Tanwar and Prasad (2017) did not only conduct a thorough literature study, but also included opinions from experts, several interviews and both experimental and confirmatory analyses.

6.2 Ethics and Sustainability
The ethical aspects of this thesis should be discussed as well. Most importantly, this thesis considers an organisational strategy, i.e. digital employee advocacy, that in one way presumes that organisations should take advantage of their employees’ personal lives. This opens up for a discussion whether or not it is ethically correct to advocate these strategies. For example, is it ethically correct of an organisation to push their employees to use their personal platforms in order to be able to harvest benefits for themselves? Personal social media accounts are often not used with professional intentions and by asking employees to advocate on these platforms, the line between what is professional and personal becomes blurry. These types of ethical concerns need to be addressed by organisations before developing and implementing digital advocacy programs.

The topics of this thesis can furthermore be discussed with regards to sustainability. As of today, the most common definition of sustainability divides the topic into three dimensions: ecological sustainability, economic sustainability and social sustainability (Pope, Annandale & Morrison-Saunders, 2004). The ecological dimension refers to the environmental impact, e.g. the carbon
footprint of an activity, the economic dimension refers to earnings being sustainable over time and lastly the social dimension refers to the treatment of employees and external individuals. For example can social sustainability be obtained by an organisation if it provides equal opportunities, encourages diversity, ensures life quality and has democratic processes (Gimenez, Sierra & Rodon, 2012).

For this thesis, the social dimension is the most relevant. First of all does this thesis suggest that digital employee advocacy, through organisational commitment, is enhanced by employer branding. Employer branding is in turn influenced by five dimensions that all can be connected to, and enhance, social sustainability. Work life balance, training and development, healthy work atmosphere as well as compensation and benefits can all be seen as factors that contribute to individuals’ wellbeing and to sustainable relationships with organisations. Working with ethics and CSR contributes mostly to social sustainability outside of the organisations and thus also contributes to a sustainable society. Based on these arguments, it can be proposed that working with employer branding does not only enhance organisational commitment, it can also enhance a sustainable development.

Furthermore, it can be argued that digital employee advocacy by itself can contribute to a more sustainable society as it encourages communication between stakeholders and thus transparency in and between organisations. Additionally, information shared by employees can have a large reach and impact (Sivertzen et al., 2013; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Therefore, if this information concerns sustainability in any way, it could enhance sustainability further. For example, if an employee shares information about how their organisation is working with sustainability, it could inspire employees at other organisations to take action themselves or encourage their organisations to do the same. Ultimately, this could lead to more individuals and organisations becoming more sustainable.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator No.</th>
<th>Indicator name in Smart PLS 3.0</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>q0012_0001</td>
<td>Work Life Balance</td>
<td>My organisation provides flexible working hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>q0013_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation offers opportunity to work from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14*</td>
<td>q0014_0001</td>
<td>Ethics and CSR</td>
<td>My organisation provides on-site sports facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>q0015_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation has a fair attitude towards employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16*</td>
<td>q0016_0001</td>
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<td>Employees are expected to follow all rules and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>q0017_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation is humanitarian and gives back to society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>q0018_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>There is a confidential procedure to report misconduct at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>q0019_0001</td>
<td>Training and Development</td>
<td>My organisation provides online training courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>q0020_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation organises various conferences, workshops and training programs on regular basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>q0021_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>Skill development is a continuous process in my organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>q0022_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation communicates clear advancement paths for its employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>q0023_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation offers opportunities to work on international projects</td>
</tr>
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<td>24</td>
<td>q0024_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation invests considerably in training and development of its employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>25*</td>
<td>q0025_0001</td>
<td>Healthy Work Atmosphere</td>
<td>My organisation provides autonomy to its employees to take decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>q0026_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation recognizes me when I do good work</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>q0027_0001</td>
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<td>My organisation offers a relatively stress-free work environment</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>q0028_0001</td>
<td></td>
<td>My organisation offers opportunities to work in teams</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>q0029_0001</td>
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<td>I have colleagues who are ready to share my responsibility at work in my absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>q0030_0001</td>
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<td>My organisation offers opportunities to enjoy a group atmosphere</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>q0031_0001</td>
<td>Compensation and Benefits</td>
<td>In general, the salary offered by my organisation is fair</td>
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<td>q0032_0001</td>
<td>My organisation provides overtime pay</td>
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<td>My organisation provides good health benefits</td>
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<td>My organisation provides insurance coverage</td>
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<td>Organisational Commitment</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>q0036_0001</td>
<td>I find that my values and the values of X are very similar</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>q0037_0001</td>
<td>I am extremely glad I chose X to work for over other companies I was considering at the time</td>
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<td>I really care about the future of X</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>q0039_0001</td>
<td>For me X is the best of all possible organisations to work for</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>q0040_0001</td>
<td>Digital Employee Advocacy</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>q0041_0001</td>
<td>I say positive things about X to other people on social media</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>On social media, I recommend X to people who seek my advice</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I encourage friends and relatives on social media to work at X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* These indicators were removed in the measurement model test.
Appendix B – Demographics and Social Media Questions

Gender
• Male
• Female
• Other/Prefer not to say

Age
• 18-34
• 35-54
• 55+
• Prefer not to say

Which of the following social media do you use for personal purposes?
• Facebook
• LinkedIn
• Instagram
• Twitter
• Blog
• Other (please specify)

Which social media do you use most often?
• Facebook
• LinkedIn
• Instagram
• Twitter
• Blog
• Other

How often do you check any of your social media accounts?
• Hourly
• A few times a day
• Once a day
• A few times a week
• A few times a month
• Less than a few times a month
### Appendix C – Fornell-Larcker Criterion Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Life Balance</th>
<th>Training and Development</th>
<th>Organisational Commitment</th>
<th>Healthy Work Atmosphere</th>
<th>Ethics and CSR</th>
<th>Digital Employee Advocacy</th>
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