



TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AS DRIVERS OF INTENTION TO STAY: A SERIAL MEDIATION ANALYSIS

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Abstract: One of the major issues of pharmaceutical industry in India is talent gap. A sample of 692 employees was chosen representing pharma companies in Sikkim using stratified sampling method. The causal relationships among the research variables -Talent Management (predicting variable), Employee value proposition, Employer branding and Employee engagement (mediating variables) and Intention to stay (outcome variable) are tested through regression analysis and Process Macro. The results revealed that that effective talent management practices lead to higher employee value proposition, which in turn will build strong employer branding, and a more engaged workforce with intention to stay with the company.

Key words: Talent Management, Employee Value Proposition, Employer Branding, Employee Engagement, Intention to Stay, Serial Mediation.

INTRODUCTION

Talent Management (TM) is attracting greater attention and focus amongst academicians, researchers, intellectuals and industry practitioners (Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Jyoti & Rani, 2014; Collings, 2015) and is gaining recognition as one of the crucial management activities by academicians and practitioners globally (Garrow & Hirsh, 2009). In this global knowledge-based economy, talent management is very pertinent and TM practices are found to be instrumental for the sustenance and success of the modern-day organizations (Kareem, 2016). TM is considered to be a strategic means to augment organizational success (Scullion & Collings, 2011; Jyoti & Rani, 2014). Many researchers asserted that talent is the main source that provides competitive edge to the organizations. It is strongly believed that 'the firms with the right talent win' (Huselid, Beatty, & Becker, 2005) and the most unique and unparalleled resources to firms are its human capital (Hitt, Bierman, Shimizu, & Kochhar, 2001). But the talented workforce is very hard to find. As employers work hard to find talented work force, they are also facing the problem of retaining knowledgeable employees and supplant the 70 million Baby Boomers retiring from the organizations (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004). Talent gap may arise due to retirement, specific skill shortage and employee turnover. As baby boomers are retiring, there is a talent gap in many industries. Among all the hindrances that restrict growth, talent retention is the main barrier confronting pharma companies in developing countries for the reason that requisite knowledge and skills are scarce in emerging markets. The major problem confronted by pharma companies in India is talent gap. Pharma industry is predominant in Sikkim and talent gap is one of the main issues as the companies face problems like shortage of skilled manpower and high attrition rate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Talent Management (TM)

'Talent management processes include workforce planning, talent gap analysis, recruiting, staffing, education and development, retention, talent reviews, succession planning, and evaluation' (McCauley & Wakefield, 2006). Talent management focuses on 'identification, development and retention of internal talent pools' (Hartmann, Feisel, & Schober, 2010). TM refers to 'Organization's ability to attract, select, develop, and retain key employees' (Stahl, *et al.*, 2012). 'The various aspects of talent management are recruitment, selection, on-boarding, mentoring, performance management, career development, leadership development, replacement planning, career planning, recognition and reward' (Bhatnagar, 2007).

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

EVP is defined as "the value or benefit an employee perceives by serving as a member of the organization and determines for themselves the extent to which this 'value' is competitive" (Heger, 2007). Employee Value Proposition terminology is widely being used to describe the overall experience perceived by an employee in terms of working conditions, rewards, opportunities, work commitment etc., derived in the organization (Lusch, Vargo, & O'Brien, 2007). The distinctive measures of the employment offer, or the 'package of reward features or employment advantages and benefits offered to employees', are considered as the 'employer value proposition' (Barrow & Mosley, 2011; Edwards, 2010).

Employer Branding (EB)

The term Employer Branding was coined by Ambler & Barrow in the year 1996, who defined it as 'the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company'. Employer branding is 'a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm' (Sullivan, 2014). Employer branding depicts the progression of fostering an exclusive and distinctive employer identity. More particularly it refers to 'the promotion of a unique and attractive image' as an employer (Backhaus, 2004; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Employee Engagement (EE)

According to (Kahn, 1990), engagement implies psychologically as well as physically present while performing the organizational role. Employee engagement is the positive feeling of employees towards their jobs coupled with motivation and their involvement (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Employee engagement is 'a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values'. 'The organization must work to develop and nurture engagement which requires a two-way relationship between employer and employee' (Robinson, Perryman, & Hayday, 2004).

Intention to Stay

Intention to stay refers to an employee's long-term plan to remain with their current employer (Johari, Yean, Adnan, Yahya, & Ahmad, 2012). The complementary concept, intention to leave (or intention to quit), is defined as an individual's estimated likelihood of permanently departing the organisation in the near future (Vandenberg and Nelson, 1999). Research indicates that both 'intent to stay' and 'intent to leave' are predictors of employee retention and turnover (Vandenberg and Nelson, 1999), though their specific predictive accuracy varies across studies.

Talent Management, Mediators (EVP, EB & EE), Intention to Stay and their Interrelations

Talent management practices have a positive impact on employees' intention to stay. Talent Management has been observed to be significant predictor of Employee Value Proposition which suggests that TM can facilitate EVP (Tajuddin, Ali, & Kamaruddin, 2015). EVP can be tapped as a valuable means for employment branding as it delineates the preferred and suitable prerequisites of employees concerning employment (Goswami,

2015). Employee Value Proposition steers to employer branding. The organization leaders and the human resource professionals are assigning excessive premium to employer branding as a key success factor for the companies in the pursuit to gain winning advantage in the context of talent war (Cheese, Thomas, & Craig, 2007; Crous, 2007; Minchington, 2006). This is corroborated in a global survey conducted by (Deloitte Consulting LLP, 2010) which established the significance of employer branding as the focus of companies. In the pursuit of winning the talent war, the companies across the globe are realigning their employer brand initiatives in an attempt to alleviate the problems relating to talent shortage (Deloitte LLP, 2010; Minchington, 2006).

Target group needs, a differentiated Employer Value Proposition (EVP) influence employer brand (Botha, Bussin, & De Swardt, 2011). Employer Brand management encompasses 'managing the firm's communication, which facilitates the company to get in touch with their preferred target group with the EVP' (Barrow & Mosley, 2011). EB Management is regarding management of perceptions (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998).

Employer branding is 'a three-step process consisting of (i) the development of an EVP that incorporates the basic message of the brand, (ii) the external marketing of the value proposition to its target group(s), and (iii) the internal marketing of the employer brand to foster an engaged workforce established on firm values and goals' (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Edwards, 2010).

In order to be a factual depiction of what the company presents to its employees, the EVP gives the principal message that is communicated by its brand (Eisenberg, Kilduff, Burleigh, & Wilson, 2001). Employee value proposition plays a vital part in employer branding. Distinctiveness is the significant component of branding and the EVP provides that distinction to the brand (Fatima & Sheikh, 2017).

Talent management is a significant predictor of employee engagement (Wahba, 2015). Talent management has many positive consequences such as enhanced employee engagement, employee retention, and many more (Ballesteros & Inmaculada, 2010; Hughes & Rog, 2008). TM by facilitating EVP shuns the intention to leave and helps in increasing the retention rate (Tajuddin, Ali, & Kamaruddin, 2015). The dimensions of talent management significantly influence employee retention (Hafez, AbouelNeel, & Elsaid, 2017). Fierce competition and scarcity of talented employees have resulted in identifying and retaining talented employees a top priority for the companies (H.J. Hejase, A.J. Hejase, Mikdashi, & Bazeih, 2016). According to Heger (2007), EVP predicts employee engagement and retention. Unique EVP provides a concise and clear-cut essence of what places a firm unique as an employer, and is described as the distinctive group of features and gains that will induce existing employees to continue working and stay in the organization (Sartain & Schumann, 2006). The major consequence of employee engagement is intention to stay in the organization which in turn increase retention rate (Gubman, 2003; Saks, 2006; Truss, *et al.*, 2006; Wilson, 2009; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Mortimer, 2010; Kumar & Swetha, 2011; Mehrzi & Singh, 2016; Kang, 2014).

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the direct effect of TM on EVP, EVP on EB, EB on EE, EE on IS and TM on IS.
2. To test the serial mediating effect of EVP, EB and EE on the relationship between TM & IS.

Hypotheses

- H_{1a}: Talent management is positively related to employee value proposition.
- H_{1b}: Employee value proposition is positively related to employer branding.
- H_{1c}: Employer branding is positively related to employee engagement.
- H_{1d}: Employee engagement is positively related to intention to stay.
- H_{1e}: Talent management is positively related to intention to stay.

H₂: Employee value proposition, employer branding & employee engagement mediate the relationship between talent management and intention to stay.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

The population for the study comprises employees working in pharma companies in Sikkim. There were 21 pharma companies in Sikkim (including five sister concerns) at the time when this study was conducted. Two criteria are used for selection of the companies – 1. Minimum one year of functioning and 2. Exclusion of sister concerns. Out of 21 pharma companies, two companies are less than one year old and five companies are sister concerns which are excluded from the purview of the study. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, 14 companies are considered out of which 11 pharma companies are situated in East District and three companies are situated in South District of Sikkim. Sample respondents were chosen from six companies in East District and two companies in South District. There are 3760 employees working in six select pharma companies in East District and 770 employees working in two select companies in South District. A sample size of 692 employees was chosen representing six companies in East Sikkim and two companies in South Sikkim using stratified sampling method.

Participants' Demographic Characteristics

73% of the respondents are male and 27% are female. 57% of the respondents are in the age group of 20-30 years, 30.6% are in the age group of 30-40 years, 5.2% are aged 40 & above and 7.2% are below 20 years. 50% are married and remaining 50% are single. 45.9% of respondents have 1-5 years of experience, 30.3% have put in 5-10 years of experience, 12.3% are more experienced with 10 years & above and 11.5% have less than one year of experience. 60.3% of the respondents are graduates and 20.8% of the respondents are post graduates.

Survey Instrument

Initially, the researcher interacted with HR managers of four pharma companies. Based on the insights drawn from literature review and interactions with HR managers, questionnaire was designed which comprised six sections encompassing demographic details, talent management construct, employer branding, employee value proposition, employee engagement and intention to stay. In order to ascertain the responses of the employees towards various constructs of the study, seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree) was used. Pilot study was conducted with 60 employees in order to validate the survey instrument. The reliability of the constructs was evaluated Table 1 using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha values ranged from 0.732 to 0.950 and all the coefficients exceeded the recommended cut off of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1: Reliability of Constructs

Construct/ Dimension	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Talent Management	40	0.955
Employee Value Proposition	22	0.967
Employer Branding	8	0.925
Employee Engagement	12	0.914
Intention to stay in the organization	4	0.732

Source: Developed by the author

The causal relationships among the research variables -Talent Management, Employee Value Proposition, Employer Branding, Employee Engagement and Intention to Stay were tested through regression analysis. The serial mediation analysis was performed with the help of Process Macro and AMOS. Statistical significance of the model in the present research was tested through the software developed by Hayes (2012, 2013), the approach grounded on ordinary least-squares regression, and the bootstrap method. Before

proceeding to analysis, variables were scrutinized for any missing values, accuracy of data entry and outliers. After cleaning the data, valid responses were 653 which were used for further analysis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

To test the direct effect hypotheses, a linear regression was run in SPSS version 23. Table 2 demonstrates the results which indicate that talent management is a significant positive predictor of the employee value proposition ($b = .314$, $SE = .007$, $p < 0.001$). Since the coefficient is positive, these results indicate that good talent management practices in the organization would lead to higher employee value proposition, supporting the positive effect hypothesis. This finding is consistent with prior studies (Tajuddin, Ali, & Kamaruddin, 2015; Tajuddin, Hassan, Nasir, & Ali, 2016) finding that talent Management is a significant predictor of Employee Value Proposition (EVP) which suggests that TM can facilitate EVP. The results also indicate that employee value proposition is a significant positive predictor of the employer branding and the coefficient is high ($b = .785$, $SE = .023$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is in line with previous studies that employee value proposition drives employer branding (Goswami, 2015; Pawar & Charak, 2015; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Botha, Bussin, & De Swardt, 2011; Eisenberg, Kilduff, Burleigh, & Wilson, 2001; Fatima & Sheikh, 2017; Kochanski, 2004; Tajuddin, Ali, & Kamaruddin, 2015; Mossevelde, 2014; Elving, Westhoff, Meeusen, & Schoonderbeek, 2013; Barrow & Mosley, 2011).

Table 2. Direct Effect Results

Direct Effect	B	SE	t	p
TM→ EVP	0.314	0.007	42.846	***
EVP→ EB	0.785	0.023	34.352	***
EB→ EE	0.791	0.028	27.886	***
EE→ IS	0.771	0.025	30.443	***
TM→ IS	0.306	0.009	33.122	***

(Source: Developed by the author)

Abbreviations: TM= Talent management, EVP= Employee value proposition, EB= Employer branding, EE= Employee engagement, and IS= Intention to stay, *** $p < 0.001$, b-unstandardized beta coefficient, SE- standard error, t- critical ratio.

Employer branding is a significant positive predictor of the employee engagement and the coefficient is high ($b = .791$, $SE = .028$, $p < 0.001$). As the coefficient is positive and high, it can be inferred that strong employer branding in the organization would lead to more engaged employees, supporting the positive effect hypothesis. This is in line with the finding (Kunerth & Mosley, 2011) that the organizations are deploying employer brand management to facilitate internal employee engagement, as an add-on to its more general usage in fostering external image and acquisition of talent. 'In companies which have developed employer brand, employees are more actively engaged' (Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2011). The results also indicate that employee engagement is a significant positive predictor of the intention to stay and the coefficient is also high ($b = 0.771$, $SE = 0.025$, $p < 0.001$). The results of the study are in line with the findings of the previous studies. The major outcome of employee engagement includes intention to stay in the organization and engaged employees have a lesser tendency to quit the organization (Sonntag, 2003; Saks, 2006; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Truss, *et al.*, 2006; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wilson, 2009; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Mortimer, 2010; Kumar & Swetha, 2011; Mehrzi & Singh, 2016; Kang, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Takawira, Coetzee, & Schreuder, 2014; Gubman, 2003).

The results connote that talent management is significant positive predictor of the intention to stay ($b = 0.3060$, $SE = 0.009$, $p < 0.001$). Since the coefficient is positive, these results indicate that good talent management practices in the organization would lead to intention to stay by the employees thereby increase the retention rate. The results are in conformity with the earlier findings (Ballesteros & Inmaculada, 2010; Hughes & Rog, 2008; Heinen & O'Neill, 2004; McCauley & Wakefield (2006)) that good talent management practices increase intention to stay by the employees and leads to employee retention. Talent management practices are

negatively related to employees' intention to quit the company (Darvish, Najafi, & Zare, 2012); Theron, Barkhuizen, & Du Plessis, 2014; Allen, Shore, & Griffeth, 2003). The effective talent management strategies augment the retention rate in organizations. (Hughes & Rog, 2008; Hussain, Yunus, Ishak, & Daud, 2013; Deros, Khamis, Rahman, & Ismail, 2009; Rani & Joshi, 2012; Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008).

H₂: Employee value proposition, employer branding & employee engagement mediate the relationship between talent management and intention to stay.

The serial multiple mediation analysis allows to explain and report multiple mediators and their individual as well as combined effects in the model. As depicted in Figure 1 framework, 'a' paths represents the association between the predictor and mediating variables, a₁ to a₃. The 'b' paths represents the association between mediating variables and outcome variable, b₁ to b₃. The 'd' paths represents the association between the mediating variables, d₁ to d₃. And finally the 'c' path represents the direct effect of talent management on intention to stay. The indirect/mediation effects are defined by 'a' X 'b' and 'a' X 'd' X 'b'.

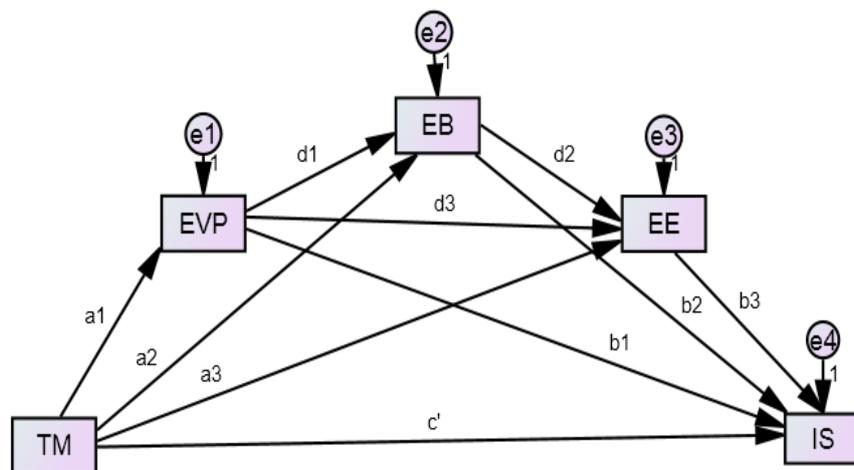


Fig. 1: Serial mediation path- analysis model of TM on IS through EVP, EB & EE

(Source: Developed by the author)

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP only= a_1b_1

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EB only= a_2b_2

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EE only= a_3b_3

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP & EB = $a_1d_1b_2$

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EB & EE = $a_2d_2b_3$

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP & EE = $a_1d_3b_3$

Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP, EB & EE = $a_1d_1d_2b_3$

Direct effect of TM on IS = c'

In this study, several indirect/mediation effects are defined such as: 1) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP only= a_1b_1 ; 2) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EB only= a_2b_2 ; 3) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EE only= a_3b_3 ; 4) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP & EB = $a_1d_1b_2$; 5) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EB & EE = $a_2d_2b_3$; 6) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP & EE = $a_1d_3b_3$; and 7) Indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP, EB & EE = $a_1d_1d_2b_3$, this is also called as total indirect effect represented by $(a_1Xd_1Xd_2Xb_3)$.

As it was established based on literature review and the results of the study that TM leads to EVP, EVP leads to EB, EB leads to EE and EE leads to IS, serial mediation is adopted. In the model (Figure 2) there are three mediators – EVP, EB and EE and it is the case of serial multiple mediation model. In order to determine the serial- multiple mediation of EVP, EB & EE in the relationship between TM and IS, the regression-based approach and bootstrap method as recommended by Hayes (2012, 2013) were used. The results obtained are presented in Figure 2, Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Mediation Model Results

Figure 2. TM, EVP,EB, EE & IS	B	SE	T	P	CI (Lower)	CI (Upper)
TM→ EVP	0.3142	0.0073	42.8456	***	0.2998	0.3286
EVP→ EB	0.5134	0.0430	11.9525	***	0.4291	0.5978
TM→ EB	0.1157	0.0157	7.3657	***	0.0849	0.1465
EB→ EE	0.1534	0.0386	3.9748	***	0.0776	0.2291
TM→ EE	0.0468	0.0161	2.9100	**	0.0152	0.0784
EVP→ EE	0.6541	0.0467	14.0140	***	0.5624	0.7457
EE→ IS	0.1599	0.0382	4.1856	***	0.0849	0.2349
TM→ IS	0.0793	0.0158	5.0347	***	0.0484	0.1102
EVP→ IS	0.3035	0.0518	5.8564	***	0.2018	0.4053
EB→ IS	0.3039	0.0380	7.9986	***	0.2293	0.3785

Source: Developed by the author

Abbreviations: TM= Talent management, EVP= Employee value proposition, EB= Employer branding, EE= Employee engagement, IS= intention to stay, *** $p < 0.001$, b - unstandardized beta coefficient; SE-standard error; t - critical ratio; CI (lower) - lower limit confidence interval; CI (upper) - upper limit confidence interval.

Table 4. Path coefficients, indirect effects, and 95% bias-corrected confidence interval predicting intention to stay (N=653)

Path	Effect	SE	p-value	CI (Lower)	CI (Upper)
Total effect	0.3060	0.0092	***	0.2879	0.3241
Direct effect	0.0793	0.0158	***	0.0484	0.1102
				BootLLCI	BootULCI
Total Indirect effect	0.2267	0.0166	Significant	0.1950	0.2608
Indirect effects					
TM→ EVP→ IS (a_1b_1)	0.0954	0.0204	Significant	0.0564	0.1366
TM→ EB→ IS (a_2b_2)	0.0352	0.0094	Significant	0.0186	0.0553
TM→ EE→ IS (a_3b_3)	0.0075	0.0046	Significant	0.0001	0.0180
TM→ EVP→ EB→ IS ($a_1d_1b_2$)	0.0490	0.0094	Significant	0.0320	0.0687
TM→ EVP→ EE→ IS ($a_1d_3b_3$)	0.0329	0.0111	Significant	0.0110	0.0552
TM→ EB→ EE→ IS ($a_2d_2b_3$)	0.0028	0.0016	Significant	0.0005	0.0065
TM→ EVP→ EB→ EE→ IS ($a_1d_1d_2b_3$)	0.0040	0.0021	Significant	0.0008	0.0089

Source: Developed by the author

Abbreviations: TM= Talent management, EVP= Employee value proposition, EB= Employer branding, EE= Employee engagement, IS= Intention to stay, CI (lower)- lower limit confidence interval, CI (upper)- upper limit confidence interval, BootLLCI- bootstrapping lower limit confidence interval, BootULCI- bootstrapping upper limit confidence interval, SE- standard error.

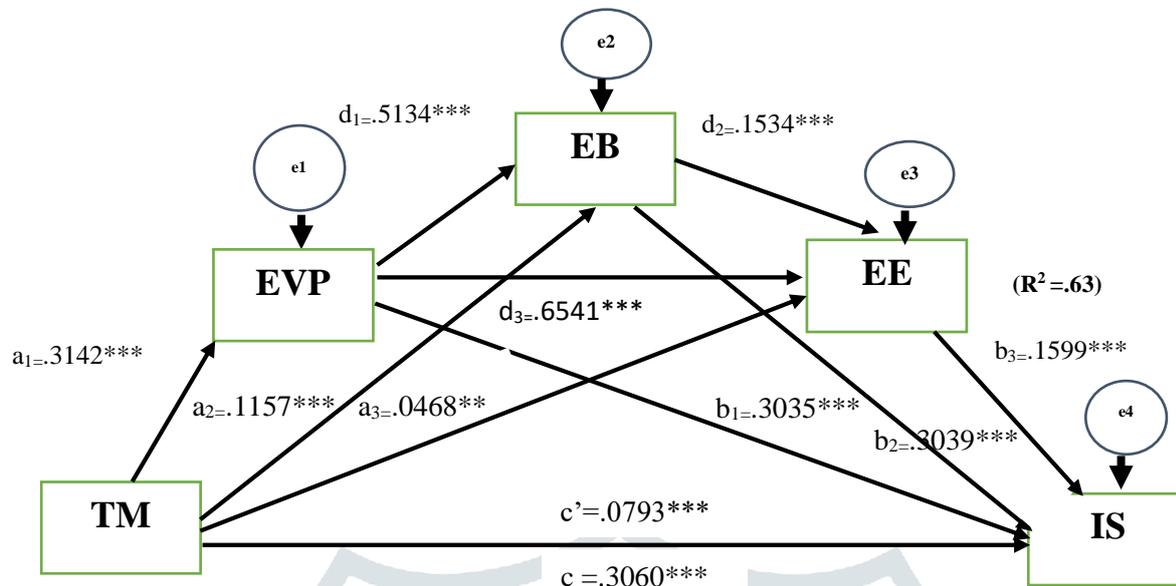


Fig. 2: Serial mediation model indirect effects of TM on IS through EVP, EB & EE

(Source: Developed by the author)

Table 4 demonstrates the total effect (c) of TM on IS which is at a significant level ($b = 0.3060$, $SE = 0.0092$, $p < 0.001$) (Step 1). In addition, as depicted in Table 3, the direct effects of TM on EVP ($b = 0.3142$, $SE = 0.0073$, $t = 42.8456$, $p < 0.001$), EB ($b = 0.1157$, $SE = 0.0157$, $t = 7.3657$, $p < 0.001$) and EE ($b = 0.0468$, $SE = 0.0161$, $t = 2.9100$, $p < 0.001$) were at significant levels. The direct effect of EVP as the first mediating variable on the second mediating variable of EB ($b = 0.5134$, $SE = 0.0430$, $t = 11.9525$, $p < 0.001$) and EE ($b = 0.6541$, $SE = 0.0467$, $t = 14.0140$, $p < 0.001$) were significant. The direct effect of EB as the second mediating variable on the third mediating variable of EE ($b = 0.1534$, $SE = 0.0386$, $t = 3.9748$, $p < 0.001$) was also significant (Step 2).

Similarly, review of the direct effects of mediating variables on IS, showed that the effects of EVP ($b = 0.3035$, $SE = 0.0518$, $t = 5.8564$, $p < 0.001$), EB ($b = 0.3039$, $SE = 0.0380$, $t = 7.9986$, $p < 0.001$) and EE ($b = 0.1599$, $SE = 0.0382$, $t = 4.1856$, $p < 0.001$) were also significant (Step 3). When TM and all other mediating variables were simultaneously entered (Step 4), the relationship between TM and IS, in relation to direct effect (c') was reduced but was significant ($b = 0.0793$, $SE = 0.0158$, $p < 0.001$).

The indirect effect of TM on IS through EVP, EB & EE in the current research was examined over 10000 bootstrap samples. Using the bootstrap sample distribution through PROCESS Macro model 6, the results are presented in Table 4. The total indirect effect (the difference between total and direct effects / $c - c'$) of TM through EVP, EB & EE on IS is statistically significant ($b = 0.2267$, $SE = 0.0166$, 95% CI = 0.1950, 0.2608). Within the tested model, when considering the mediating variables separately and together in relation to the mediating indirect effects of TM on IS, single mediation of EVP ($b = 0.0954$, $SE = 0.0204$, 95% CI = 0.0564, 0.1366), single mediation of EB ($b = 0.0352$, $SE = 0.0094$, 95% CI = 0.0186, .0553), single mediation of EE ($b = 0.0075$, $SE = 0.0046$, 95% CI = 0.0001, 0.0180), serial-multiple mediation of EVP & EB ($b = 0.0490$, $SE = 0.0094$, 95% CI = 0.0320, 0.0687), serial-multiple mediation of EB & EE ($b = 0.0028$, $SE = 0.0016$, 95% CI = 0.0005, 0.0065), serial-multiple mediation of EVP & EE ($b = 0.0329$, $SE = 0.0111$, 95% CI = 0.0110, 0.0552), and serial-multiple mediation of EVP, EB & EE ($b = 0.0040$, $SE = 0.0021$, 95% CI = 0.0008, 0.0089), were found statistically significant. The direct effect (c') of TM on IS was reduced to 0.0793 but it was significant. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is significant partial mediation of talent management's effect on intention to stay through employee value proposition, employer branding and employee engagement at $\alpha = .05$. Since three mediators were considered for the study, six different causal order models were produced. All six models were compared in terms of significant path created by each different

causal order of the mediators. Based on these results, all three mediating variables were observed to partially mediate between TM and IS. The model explained 63% of total variance in intention to stay ($R^2 = 0.63$).

This implies that a company by investing in effective talent management practices relating to talent acquisition, talent development and talent retention will enjoy better EVP. Few examples of EVP features from which the employee perceives value relate to talent management practices such as 'job security, interesting work, career prospects, pay, training and developmental opportunities, job autonomy, flexible working hours, etc.' (Baum & Kabst, 2013; Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005; Chhabra & Mishra, 2008; Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010). Hence, it is quite apparent that effective talent management practices will lead to higher EVP. The results of the present study are in conformity with the earlier findings that Talent management is a significant predictor of Employee Value Proposition (Tajuddin, Ali, & Kamaruddin, 2015).

The findings also depicted that employee value proposition is a significant positive predictor of the employer branding. If the existing employees perceive that they are deriving better value or benefits by serving as a member of the organization, it leads to higher internal employer branding and when this is communicated externally it leads to building external employer branding. The previous studies also established similar results that if employees perceive higher EVP, it leads to better employer branding (Goswami, 2015; Pawar & Charak, 2015; Botha, Bussin, & De Swardt, 2011; Eisenberg, Kilduff, Burleigh, & Wilson, 2001; Fatima & Sheikh, 2017; Kochanski, 2004; Tajuddin, Ali, & Kamaruddin, 2015; Mossevelde, 2014; Elving, Westhoff, Meeusen, & Schoonderbeek, 2013; Barrow & Mosley, 2011; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

It is observed from the study that employer branding significantly predicts employee engagement though the degree of impact is low. The companies by strengthening employer branding enhance employee engagement. Employee engagement in turn enhances the employees' intention to stay with the company. The findings supports previous research findings (Sonnetag, 2003; Saks, 2006; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Robyn & Du Preez, 2013; Truss, *et al.*, 2006; Shuck & Wollard, 2010; Wilson, 2009; Mendes & Stander, 2011; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Mortimer, 2010; Kumar & Swetha, 2011; Mehrzi & Singh, 2016; Kang, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Takawira, Coetzee, & Schreuder, 2014; Gubman, 2003). Hence it can be inferred that employees will rely on employee value proposition that is derived from talent management practices adopted by the company, employer branding, conducive environment facilitating better engagement levels in order to decide whether to remain in the same company or move to other company.

In terms of the extent of the impact of mediators on the relationship between talent management and intention to stay, it is observed from the results depicted in Table 4 that in simple mediation model with single mediator the employee value proposition had relatively higher impact on the relationship between talent management and intention to stay as compared to other mediators. In case of two serial mediators influencing the effect of talent management on intention to stay, employee value proposition and employer branding found to be relatively stronger predictors for the indirect effect of talent management on intention to stay.

CONCLUSION

Over a period, talent management encompassing talent acquisition, development and retention, turned out to be the vital tool in strengthening competitiveness and augmenting organizational competencies. The dearth of talent has been a concern across the globe. Pharma companies are struggling to find competent staff and are competing in attracting the limited talent available in labour market (Anand & Lopes, 2015). In addition to this, the attrition rate is high in pharma industry. In the competitive era, retaining talented people acts as a catalyst for achieving organizational excellence (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011; Aksakal, Dağdeviren, Eraslan, & Yüksel, 2013; Gallardo- Gallardo, Dries, & Gonzalez-Cruz, 2013; Jyoti & Rani, 2014). The study revealed that good talent management practices facilitate higher employee value proposition, which in turn will build strong employer branding that will create engaged workforce and more inclination to stay with the company. The study also emphasized the critical role of talent management strategies in addressing the major

challenge of relatively high attrition prevalent in pharma industry. Pharma companies should assign top priority to talent management strategies as ‘they help in retaining high potential employees and this provides organization with competent staff that will impact on its performance’ (Deros, Khamis, Rahman, & Ismail, 2009). Rani & Joshi (2012) established that talent management practices are significant and help business leaders in formulating an appropriate retention strategy.

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