

# Employer Branding as a Promoter of Employees' Organisational Commitment

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of employer branding (EB) on employee organisational commitment (OC) among employees of various service sectors such as banking and financial institutions and health. The paper employed a cross-sectional survey research design consisting of a self-administrated questionnaire for collecting data from 260 employees. Data were collected using purposive sampling. A Partial Least Squares Structural Equation (PLS-SEM) was used to test the hypotheses. The findings show that EB positively and significantly affects affective commitment (AC), continuous commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC). As for practical implications, the study provides useful insights to both managers and organisations from the management standpoint about the essentiality of employee branding in an organisation.

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## **INTRODUCTION AND STUDY OBJECTIVES**

Human resources are one of the most important resources for any organisation. Managing employees have been a challenging task for managers in the

current scenario. Organisation regards Employer Branding (EB) as a crucial element of effectively handling people (Beraiss-Noaillesa & Viot, 2020). EB is the process of establishing a better image and reputation among the current and prospective workforce. It develops

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and conveys a vivid brand identity and culture so that employees can feel proud of being its member. Businesses always strive to acquire, train, develop, and maintain best personnel. They need to be engaged in creating employee value propositions among both present and prospective employees. EB aims to build pride and loyalty, which can lead to increase employee engagement, productivity, and retention. Studies reveal the inevitability of approach required for acquiring and managing employees since the EB is evolving (Maheshwari et al., 2017).

In recent years, businesses are facing many challenges among which attracting and retaining talent issue is the most critical one. Successful businesses persistently concentrate on talented employees and engage them to gain a long-term competitive advantage. However, there appears to be a deficit of competent employees in Nepali context. This is critical for developing countries such as Nepal, where the significant number of skilled workers are hired especially from India. According to Botella-Carrubi et al. (2021) and Pfeffer (2005), firms are attentive to employees' needs and interests to ensure commitment toward their members. Organisation's flexibility regarding how they organise, direct and manage talent determines the level of employee commitment (Derry & Jago, 2015).

Organisational Commitment (OC) is one of the most crucial and sensitive attitude employee forms toward their institution (Guzeller & Celiker, 2019).

It describes the degree of an individual how he/she identifies and engages himself/herself in a specific organisation. Ribeiro et al. (2018) found that affective commitment has a strong relationship with performance, indicating employee having high AC is accomplished by a strong sense of identification and belongingness with the firm. Employees may be more willing to stick with the firm even in challenging times if they feel being a member of a team. EB makes employees engaged in the work which creates a high level of commitment toward an organisation (Yousf & Khursid, 2021). This shows that various EB actions of an organisation can create a sense of employee commitment toward their firm. Hence, EB plays a vital role to retain and keep the committed human resource in the organisation.

In the western context, the importance of EB to achieve employee commitment towards organisation can be witnessed. EB and employee retention have been an area of interest among researchers and practitioners in Nepal too (Sthapit & Shrestha, 2020). EB concept is widely used by employers in developed economies, but it is rarely studied in developing countries like Nepal. Although, few studies exist relating to EB in Nepali institutions, prior studies investigating the relationship between EB and dimensions of OC in Nepali context were not found, proving the relevancy of the subject. This study determines how well Nepali employers understand the concept of EB and the role of EB in OC. Further, this paper also identifies the stages of development of the EB concept's use in Nepali

enterprises that should be implemented in the organisation to retain them.

### **Literature Review and Hypotheses** **Development Employer Branding (EB)**

EB is the process that employees internalise the intended brand image and are motivated to reflect it with the stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, and agencies (Greene, Walls, & Schrest, 1994). It is stated as the set of psychological, functional, and economic benefits provided by organisation (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). EB can be enhanced through educating employees about the firm's vision, mission, values, and culture along with providing opportunities for professional development for the employees. It aims to build and display distinct employer identity and representation (Ahmad & Daud, 2016). It attracts skillful and competent talent, increasing overall efficiency and effectiveness (Keefe, 2007). EB results in positive outcomes such as increased employee retention, engagement, and commitment (Barrow & Mosley, 2005), all of which are essential to achieve organisational objectives. In terms of strategy, EB is a key area that firms are concentrating their efforts on positioning themselves as concerned and involved with the employees (Edwards, 2010; Jones et al., 2014).

### **Organisational Commitment (OC)**

Employees' dedication towards organisation's values, objectives, and overall organisation itself is stated as OC (Al-Jabari & Ghazzawi, 2019). It is the degree of effort and engagement

that team members employ for the organisation as a whole. OC provides a sense of ownership and belongingness toward the organisation.- Strong conviction, acceptance, and readiness to exert a high level of effort are all instances of OC (Dajani & Zaki, 2015). It consists of three dimensions: Affective Commitment (AC), Continuance Commitment (CC), and Normative Commitment (NC) (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

### **Affective Commitment (AC)**

It is an emotional connection with the firm that an individual identifies, gets engaged, and enjoys being its member (Allen & Meyer, 1990). AC creates a willingness that highly drives employees to achieve organisational objectives. AC is the employee's loyalty and emotional attachment to their employer. Employees' personal decision to stay loyal through some emotional identification with the firm determines the level of AC (Faloye, 2004; Mahal, 2012; Singh & Gupta, 2015).

### **Continuance Commitment (CC)**

Organisation-employee relationship is based on how an employee is compensated (both financially and non-financially) for their work and risk associated with leaving a job is depicted as CC (Singh & Gupta, 2015). Meyer and Allen (1997) reported that CC as an employee's cost-benefit analysis, such as the loss of financial earning and challenges of getting a new job. The perceived cost of leaving is considered to decide whether to stay or leave the job. Employees display CC when they feel like losing more if

they quit their job, which is affected by tenure, authority, and length of service given to the organisation (Faloye, 2014; Singh & Gupta, 2015). Similarly, an individual's affiliation is largely determined by an ongoing evaluation of the financial advantages of sticking with the organisation. Hence, CC is the individual's willingness to remain with the organisation based on the profit they make from their continued services.

### ***Normative Commitment (NC)***

NC is the internalisation of an individual's goals to align with organisational goals and values (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It is the degree of dedication employee has towards their firms based on a feeling of ethical and social obligations (Messner, 2013; Singh & Gupta, 2015). It is more of a widely held expectation within society than a personal commitment to the company that pays for the services rendered. NC is the way that people behave at work when they are motivated by a sense of duty, obligation, and loyalty to an organisation. No matter how much status or satisfaction the company offers over time, the normative committed employee stays in that organisation because they believe it to be morally right.

### ***Employer Branding and Affective Commitment***

Psychological Contract Theory (PCT) provides the basis for the relationship between the constructs. It explains the belief and expectations of an employee regarding their mutual obligation and commitment in a relationship. A

better EB leads to an increase in the AC among employees working in the firm. Some researchers claim that AC largely determines turnover intention (e.g., Delic et al., 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2018). Higher the AC, lower the chances of employee turnover. In the western context, several researchers found a significant positive relationship between EB and AC (e.g., Schwaiger & Zehrer, 2022; Zaraket, 2018). Similarly, it is found that a positive relationship between AC and EB in the eastern context too (Kim & Legendre, 2021). Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence, this paper applied PCT to investigate the relationship between EB and AC since a good EB will increase AC among employees. Therefore, it is hypothesised;

### ***Hypothesis 1: EB positively influences AC.***

### ***Employer Branding and Continuance Commitment***

Social Identity Theory (SIT) explain that individual requires belongingness and self-esteem derived from their group membership (Mittal et al., 2022). Individuals create a sense of social identity, based on their group memberships. Several prior studies indicate a positive relationship between EB and CC (Boselie et al., 2007), implying that the association between EB and CC is a crucial area of research to understand employee retention in the western context. A positive employer branding can lead to higher levels of CC among employees,

which can contribute to a more stable and committed workforce. Therefore, it is hypothesised;

**Hypothesis 2: EB positively influences CC.**

*Employer Branding and Normative Commitment*

Brand Equity Theory (BET) states that a brand's value is not only derived from its functional attributes, but also from its emotional and symbolic association (Aaker, 1991). EB and NC are strongly related as both influence employees' decisions to comply with the norms and expectations of an organisation. In the western context, prior studies have found a significant relationship between EB and NC (Chigeda et al., 2022). In the eastern context, numerous studies found EB is positively correlated with NC (e.g., Hadi & Tentama, 2020; Inam et al., 2021; Rasdi & Tangaraja, 2022). Thus, EB and NC are closely related since both can influence a worker's decision to abide by the standards and norms of

the workplace. Organisation can build a sense of NC improving their loyalty and engagement by promoting the company's values and fostering a sense of shared identity among employees. Therefore, it is hypothesised;

## RESEARCH METHODS

This paper applied a deductive research approach in which hypotheses are developed based on existing theories. It is a quantitative method that uses statistical tools to test the proposed relationship. The research used a correlation research design to examine the relationship between the variables.

### Population and Sample

The target population consists of employees from various Nepali service sectors such as banking and financial institutions (BFIs) and health sectors. Purposive sampling was used to collect data from the respondents. Sample was collected from 260 employees working inside Kathmandu Valley

*Hypothesis 3: EB positively influences CC.*

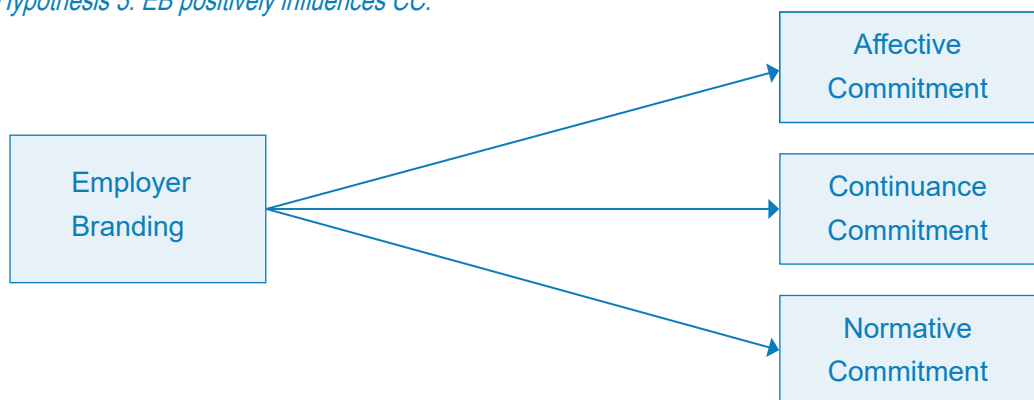


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of EB and OC.

consisting of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur districts. Respondents from different sectors with varying levels of experience, education, hierarchy, and gender were included to increase the representativeness of sample.

### ***Instruments/ Measurements***

The study employed six measures to capture different variables related to this study. First, demographic variables were measured by six items and later were measured by using Likert scale. EB was measured using Employee Branding Actions Questionnaire (EBAQ). The

dimensions of OC were measured using scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and subsequently modified by Lee et al. (2001). The scale was anchored with a 7- point Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 7 (Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Somewhat Disagree=3, Neutral=4, Somewhat Agree=5, 6=Agree, Strongly Agree=7).

### ***Data Analysis and Results***

Table 1 shows that females made up the majority of responses (n=260, 50.4%). Most of the respondents were between age group of 21 and 30 (n=260,

Table 1  
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	127	48.8
Female	131	50.4
Others	2	0.8
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	4	1.5
21-30	183	70.4
31-40	63	24.2
Above 40	10	3.9
<b>Education Level</b>		
Below Bachelor	26	10
Bachelor	120	46.2
Masters	109	41.9
Above Master	5	1.9
<b>Work Duration</b>		
Less than 6 months	37	14.2
6 months-1 year	60	23.1
1-3 years	63	24.2
More than 3 years	100	38.5

*Note. From authors' survey*

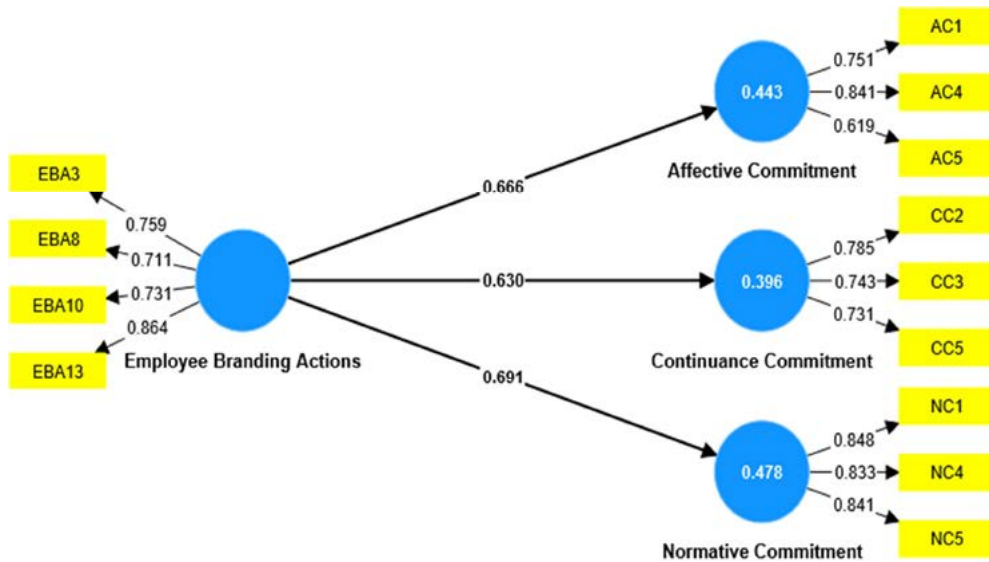


Figure 2. Measurement Model

or 70.4%). A bachelor's degree was the most common type of educational attainment ( $n = 260$ , 46.2%) and the maximum of employees' work duration was more than 3 years ( $n = 260$ , 38.5%).

### Common method biases

To investigate the common method bias issue, Herman's single factor test was employed, and the variance explained by an un-rotated single factor was 30.54%, which was less than the suggested threshold of 50%. This indicates that there are no issues of common method biases in this data.

### Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM is a second-generation statistical method that examines the cause-and-effect relationship between latent constructs in marketing and management research (Hair et al., 2016). Covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) and variance-based structural

equation modeling (PLS-SEM) are the two categories of SEM. This study employs the PLS-Based Structural Equation Model (SEM) to test the hypotheses. CB-SEM is the preferred method when the objective is to test a theory, confirm a theory, or compare different theories, whereas PLS-SEM can be used for exploratory research when the theory is less developed (Hair et al., 2016). Due to the aforementioned factors, the PLS-SEM model was also used in this study.

### Measurement Model

To establish reliability and validity, this paper applied three measurement model criteria, comprising reliability analysis, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Because of the poor factor loadings, this paper dropped 9 items from EB Construct (EBA 1, EBA 2, EBA 4, EBA 5, EBA 6, EBA 7, EBA 9, EBA 11, EBA 12), 2 items from AC (AC 2, AC3)

Table 2  
Validity and Reliability of Constructs

Construct	Indicators	Loadings	AVE	CR (rho_c)	CR (rho_a)	CA
AC	AC1	0.751	0.551	0.784	0.651	0.601
	AC4	0.841				
	AC5	0.619				
CC	CC2	0.785	0.567	0.797	0.633	0.624
	CC3	0.743				
	CC5	0.731				
	EBA10	0.731				
EB	EBA13	0.864	0.59	0.851	0.771	0.766
	EBA3	0.759				
	EBA8	0.711				
	NC1	0.848				
NC	NC4	0.833	0.707	0.878	0.805	0.794
	NC5	0.841				

(Note. AC=Affective Commitment; CC= Continuance Commitment; NC= Normative Commitment; EB= Employer Branding; AVE= Average Variance Explained, CR= Composite Reliability, CA= Cronbach Alpha)

and 2 items from CC ( CC1, CC 4) and 2 items from NC ( NC 2, NC 3). The measurement model is as follows;

### Reliability Analysis

This study used composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha with a cut-off value of 0.7 to assess reliability. The model's reliability is confirmed because all values of CR or Cronbach's alpha (CA) are higher than 0.70 (Ringle et al., 2015).

### Validity Analysis

To achieve adequate convergent validity, Item Loadings and AVE must be greater than 0.7 and 0.5, respectively (Hair et al., 2016). According to Table 2, the majority of factor loadings and AVE values are greater than 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. Thus, the result has validated the

convergent validity of measurement model.

### Discriminant Validity

The degree to which one concept and its indicators differ from another concept and its indicators are measured by discriminant validity (Bagozzi & Phillips, 1982). Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria are used to test discriminant validity. Likewise, Henseler et al. (2015) proposed a method for estimating discriminant validity based on the multi-trait-multimethod matrix, known as the hetero-trait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). If the HTMT value is less than 0.90, discriminant validity between two reflective constructs has been established. The Table 3 shows the Fornell-Larcker Criterion has satisfied and HTMT ratio is below threshold level except in AC



Table 3  
Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT Ratio

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1. Affective Commitment	0.742	0.993	0.945	0.900
2. Continuance Commitment	0.619	0.750	0.891	0.711
3. Employee Branding	0.666	0.630	0.800	0.875
4. Normative Commitment	0.647	0.530	0.700	0.800

and CC. This validates the discriminant validity of the measurement model.

**Structural Model**

The structural model explains how latent variables interact with one another and assists the researcher in determining the degree of correlation. The structural models' main goals are to describe the relationship between the latent variables and to evaluate the proposed model.

The direct relationship between EB and AC, EB and CC, and EB and NC are shown.

H<sub>1</sub> tests whether EB positively affects the AC of employees and the result shows that EB has a significant (direct Effect) on AC ( $\beta=0.666$ ,  $t=17.843$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Thus, H<sub>1</sub> is supported. H<sub>2</sub> examines whether the relation of EB with CC is tested, and the result shows a positive relationship between EB and CC ( $\beta=0.63$ ,  $t=14.52$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Hence, H<sub>2</sub> is also supported. Finally, H<sub>3</sub> examined if EB affects NC and the test shows that EB has a significant effect (direct effect) on NC ( $\beta=0.691$ ,  $t=18.204$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Hence, H<sub>3</sub> is also supported.

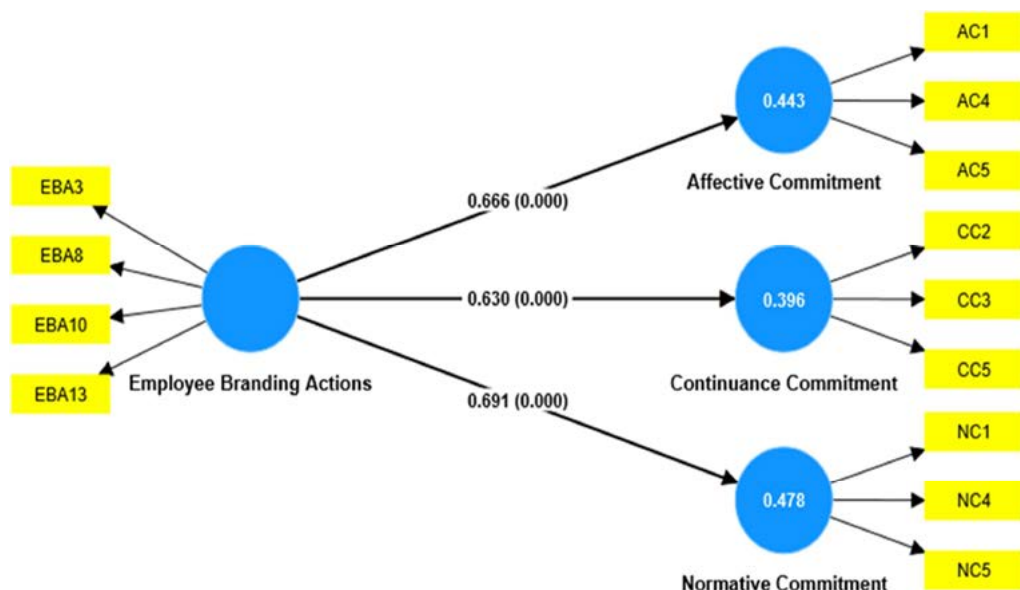


Figure 3. Structural Model

Table 4  
Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Beta( $\beta$ )	T statistics	p- values	Label
1. Employer Branding > Affective Commitment	0.666	17.843	0.000	Significant
2. Employer Branding > Continuance Commitment	0.630	14.520	0.000	Significant
3. Employer Branding > Normative Commitment	0.691	18.204	0.000	Significant

## DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study confirms a significant positive relationship between EB and dimensions of OC (AC, CC, and NC). EB factors serve as promoters of all three dimensions (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021). When employees feel employer attractive, they tend to have more job engagement which creates high level of commitment (Yousf & Khurshid, 2021). It reflects that EB significantly contributes to promote AC, CC, and NC, which would result in higher employee retention. It seems that AC directly envisages EB strategies, and AC is positively impacted by EB (Alves et al., 2020). This indeed might result in higher other organisational outcomes (job satisfaction, involvement, and positive workplace climate). It helps to minimise employee intentions to leave, increase attendance, reduce stress, and carry out activities beyond given responsibility. However, employee's work-life balance and professional benefits will help them to feel psychologically secure and have a feeling of belongingness towards the organisation (Raj, 2020). Thus, when people feel emotionally connected

with the organisation, they feel more committed to it.

Managerial researchers argue that relationship between EB and CC is an important area of research for understanding employee retention. The positive relationship between EB and CC is similar to the findings of previous studies result (e.g., Chigeda et al., 2022; Hadi & Tentama, 2020). Further, social exchange theory and agency theory supports the positive relationship between EB and CC. Social exchange theory views the relationship between employer and employee sustains as contingent on rewarding reactions from one another. Similarly, agency theory shows the principal-agent relationship in which different mechanisms such as commission, profit sharing, and efficacy wages are used for maintaining employer/employee relationships. This confirms that employees feel creation of distinct identity and recognition when their economic or financial rewards are fulfilled. However, reward and cost are distinct components, where commitment is solely based on reward rather than cost concerning identity (Burke & Reitzes, 1991).

Finally, several studies (e.g., Chigeda et al., 2022; Hadi & Tentama, 2020; Mokhtar et al., 2021) have found the existence of a positive relationship between EB and NC, which is consistent with the study's result. When an employee feels that organisation has done a favor, he/she feels obliged to return the favor (Aube et al., 2007). The favor provided can be financial or non-financial rewards, need fulfillment, and organisational support, especially at a time when an individual was in immense need of it. Drawing perceived organisational support theory, it is inferred that organisational factors promote the positive elucidation of NC (Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010). Professional development and benefits actions act as factors contributing to a better work-life balance that positively affects both normative and affective commitment (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study concludes that EB positively influences dimensions of OC (AC, CC, and NC). Organisations lack awareness regarding the importance of EB and its role to promote OC. Organisations need to face various difficulties to implement EB in the organisation as there must be strong strategies to implement EB so it could be applied in the organisation. Finally, in terms of professional development and benefits, their significant impact on commitment stands out, as the results show that it positively contributes to the development of the three dimensions.

### *Theoretical implications*

EB is considered a crucial aspect of employee attraction and retention in the western context. But, no prior research on the stated issue is conducted in Nepali context. Thus, the subjective nature of research on the formulated issue enriches the existing literature. This study further validates EB as an antecedent to improve OC. Previous studies establish that AC, CC, and NC play different roles in an organisation or have their unique impact on the same variable (Yuzbasioglu & Dogan, 2018). Meanwhile, this study has highlighted the importance of NC which was less prioritised relatively as compared to affective commitment. It provides valuable insights for future related research by exploring and comparing the influence of various factors on OC and its three dimensions.

### *Managerial Implications*

This paper reflects the importance of EB to maintain committed HR in the workplace. EB practices enable them to demonstrate their recognition of employee's contributions and their concern for employees' well-being. Thus, experts in human resources, marketing, and communication must comprehend how these EB practices affect employees' feelings and behaviors. EB is a new and important aspect of HR research because it provides insights into the formation of employee perceptions, which can lead to positive outcomes for organisations (Al-Qahtani & Ajina, 2017). It can create a positive image of an organisation, which can attract top talent, reduce hiring

duration, and save costs. The results obtained assist business planners and policymakers to direct their efforts toward employer brand for effectively motivating human resources. The study will be helpful to decide financial and non-financial benefits to be offered to the employee to increase commitment, which leads to improvement in productivity, performance, and retention rate.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study is based on a survey of employees working in service sectors inside Kathmandu Valley only, which may result in generalisation problems across different industries and locations. Thus, more research needs to be carried out in diverse fields and geographical regions. Likewise, this paper applied cross-sectional data that limits the

causality relationship between the variables (Aube et al., 2007). Further studies can be conducted to understand potential causal associations between the variables using longitudinal studies or triangulation approach. Moreover, Fast-changing economic and technological scenarios might bring various changes in the environment (Fu et al., 2020). This might result a shift in personal characteristics of individuals. Therefore, future research concerning personal variables such as age, gender, income and family responsibilities' effect on EB and OC dimensions could be performed (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021). Future studies might focus on the impact of EB on outcomes factors, such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, retention, and organisational citizenship behaviours.

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