Employer Branding as a Talent Management Tool: A Systematic Literature Revision

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to present a systematic literature revision (SLR) that shows the relationship between the concept of employer branding (EB) and talent management (TM). Based on the EB model proposed by Backhaus and Tikoo in 2004, and the macro-contingent model for talent management introduced in 2019 by King and Vaiman, we intend both to analyse the theory correlating the EB concept and TM, and to identify TM dimensions that are reflected on the EB concept. A systematic literature revision was carried out using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) protocol in order to identify and sum up the most relevant studies of the last 10 years concerning these topics. Findings show that scientific literature on the subject grew considerably in the last four years, reflecting the rising concern over the creation of an employer brand at the organisational level. EB explores talent attraction and retention particularly, though, unexpectedly, is also becoming a concept explored by nations to attract a qualified workforce. Analysing selected articles, we may conclude that EB is clearly considered as a tool within the largest process of talent management.

Keywords: employer branding; talent management; systematic literature revision

1. Introduction

The market paradigms in existence have suffered a radical change since the 1980s following the changes in the economic paradigm due to the evolution from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy [1]. Consumers have become more demanding, and that rapidly resulted in shorter and shorter product and process life cycles. Markets that were, until that point, part of more or less stable economies suffered the impact of globalisation, and 'turbulence, disorder and unstable balance became the main features of the new competitive landscapes' [2] (p. 17).

This background of fast changes and the global economy leveraged by technological evolution provided an unprecedented focus on the importance of people possessing knowledge within organisations. Attraction and retention of talent by organisations became consequently more and more strategic and vital to organisational success and sustainability. As mentioned by Michaels, Handfield-Jones, and Axelrod, [3] the biggest organisational competitive advantage is the ability of the organisation to develop and maintain (i.e., manage) talent both in turbulent and stable times. The search for tools capable of managing talent has assumed great relevance over the last decade. EB has emerged as one of the most complete tools based on the culture and reputation of each organisation.

EB provides employer value proposition (EVP) and emerges as a differentiation tool, as well as an identification and employees' commitment mechanism [4] towards each organisation: 'the employers' brand role and impact rise to a new relevance within talent and employees 'careers management' [5]. Therefore, the present research aims to show evidence of the importance of the EB concept to talent management, especially as a tool

to attract and retain the best employees within the organisations. In order to do so, the research concerning the correlation of these two topics on the last 10 years was systematised, and the EB models identified throughout this revision were listed.

1.1. Talent Management

The new challenges organisations are facing force them to distinguish themselves from one another to accomplish competitive advantage in the market. This advantage is reached through new work forms and structures, more flexible and more able to achieve agility when addressing markets, human resources practices that improve internal organisational creativity [6], and particularly by investing in 'the right employees' [7]. According to Klein [8], these employees possess traits, skills, values, and experiences that match the intellectual capital, and form the organisational competitive differential, that also contributes to organisational success or failure.

In this view, talent emerges as the central key of organisational strategy—talent is considered a key factor to organisational success and sustainability, and talent management assumes the central role becoming an imperative of human resources management rather than just a best practice. Organisations must therefore design and apply specific strategies concerning the attraction, retention, and development of their talents [9].

Talent is per se a complex concept, not always consensual amongst the authors addressing it. Michaels et al. [3] (p. 12) define talent as the 'set of skills of a person— gifts, capabilities, intelligence, insight, attitude, character, and innate impulses, as well as the ability to learn and self-improvement'. The authors understand talent as something focused on knowledge, skills, innate and acquired abilities, behaviour, values, and the potential for development.

On the other hand, Câmara, Guerra, and Rodrigues [10] explain that talent consists of good interaction between three dimensions: action, passion, and vision. Action is defined by the authors as the set of competences that enable the employees to execute their tasks. Passion concerns both the enthusiasm revealed by workers when executing their functions, and the commitment and sense of respect towards the organisation. Finally, the vision matches the workers' sense of anticipation, allowing them to perceive the potential they might achieve in the projects they are involved in.

According to Tansley and Tietze [11] (p. 1802), talent management encompasses the 'attraction, identification, development, retention, and deployment strategies and protocols' of employees that reveal high levels of potential, adding value to the organisation. According to Henriques [12], however, these authors show a 'transversal functional perspective', meaning they only mention individuals with high levels of potential. Therefore, in order to include all employees, Henriques [12] defines talent management as a mechanism to assure that the workers are properly prepared to execute the functions attributed to them while maintaining their development.

A model of talent management derived from a macro-contingent approach was introduced in 2019 (see Figure 1). This model provides the macro-contingent vision of organisational talent management and is intended to illustrate the dynamic relations between talent systems at both micro and macro levels, therefore enhancing the overview of organisational talent management considering the broader landscape of the macro system(s) in which the organisation is integrated [13].
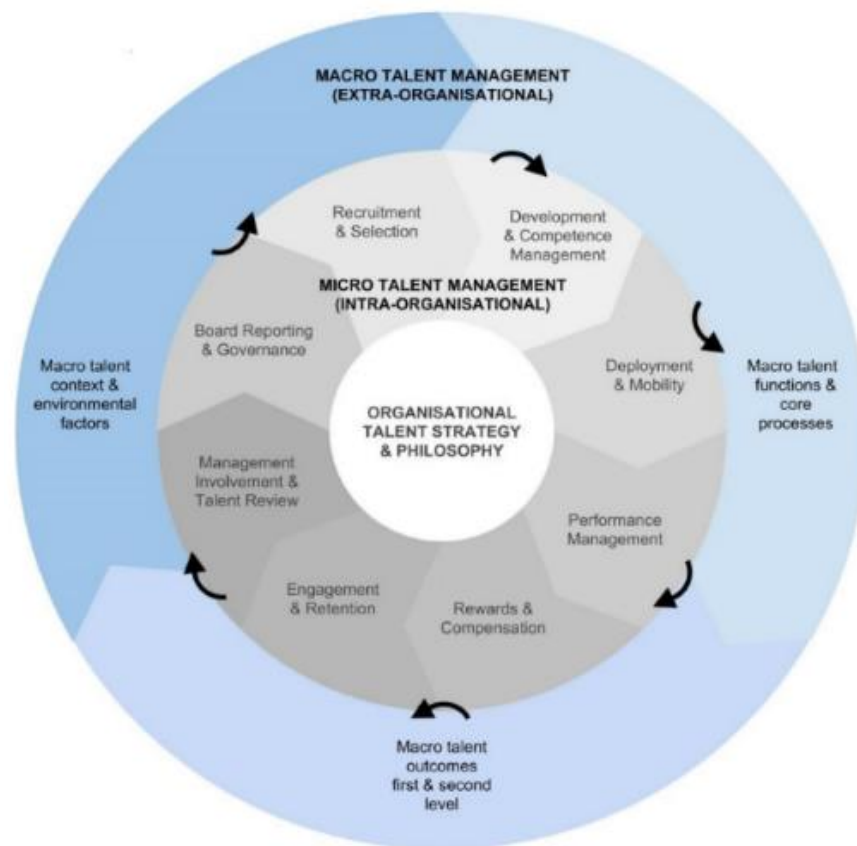
Figure 1. Talent management macro adaptive approach. Source: King and Vaiman (2019) [13].

1.2. Employer Branding

EB is not a new concept; back in 1996, Ambler and Barrow [14] (p. 8) described the employer brand as the 'functional, economical and psychological package given by a job matching the employer company'. Nevertheless, the concept has been growing to a more relevant role concerning talent management [5]. The designers of the first EB model (see Figure 2), Backhaus and Tikoo [15] point out three vital assets to create the employer brand: organisational culture, organisational identity, and differentiating value proposition.
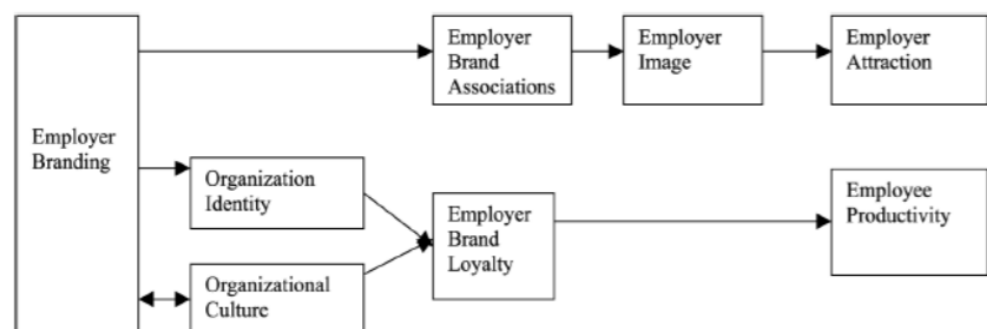
Figure 2. Backhaus and Tikoo framework (2004). Source: Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) [15].

With the conceptualisation of this model, the authors intend to make the comprehension of the dynamics associated with the concept easier, as well as the importance of the narrow relationship between marketing and human resources to the implementation of an EB process.

Since the expression 'war for talent' was created by Mckinsey—one of the most important human resources consulting companies in the world—in 1997, EB processes have assumed a central role in organisational strategy because organisations realised that they would have to fight this 'war' on the following years if they wanted to attract and retain the talents relevant to their sustainability. Although brands and branding are not a recent topic, organisations are now applying the concepts to new management areas [16]. Branding, according to Kotler and Lee [17] (p. 215), is 'the identity developing process of an intended brand'. EB is the expression used to refer to the applicability of brand elements to human resources management. Sullivan [18] advocates that EB expresses the notion that designates a company as a good environment to execute functions.

It is of the utmost importance to clarify the concept and systematise its models due to the relevance the concept has been developing over the years, and because the introduction of EB within the organisation is becoming more and more a necessity and no longer an option. Therefore, one of the goals of the present systematic literature revision is the clarification of the concept and its dimensions.

2. Methods

Conceptualisation and reflection on talent management and EB concepts lead to the question that guides this research: Which dimensions of talent management are reflected in the EB concept?

The proliferation of academic studies and the speed of concepts evolution in recent years demand a systemic approach to access and aggregate these research results to grasp a coherent and integrated sum of investigation results. This supports the choice of a systematic literature revision (SLR) according to the protocol currently accepted by the scientific community.

Bryman [19] lists the following steps to perform an SLR: (a) defining the revision goal and scope; (b) researching studies relevant to the revision scope and aim; (c) analysing and subsequently summarising the results of each study.

We believe that three specific goals operationalise the investigative question mentioned above: (1) analysing the most important studies that link the two concepts, EB and TM, in the last decade; (2) identifying the EB dimensions introduced in those studies; (3) comparing dimensions that emerge from our research with the TM model based on a macro-contingent approach presented in 2019, which includes both macro and micro levels.

2.1. Strategy and Research Sources

This research follows the guiding lines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) protocol, a development regarding the QUOROM protocol [20] whose aim is to guarantee that systematic revisions are conducted in a complete, clear, and replicable way [21]. In August 2009, the PRISMA protocol introduced the PRISMA Statement [20] that clarified several phases of this type of research (see Figure 3). All the mentioned phases were accurately followed in our research, as was a checklist whose aim is the identification of all the items to be included in this type of literature revision. These items were an essential guide to investigators and formed a road map of the present study.

In the present study, data were collected using the B-On website. B-On is a research tool for scientific data that provides simultaneous research in several data resources managed by the Portuguese Consortium B-On, working as a browser that helps to consult the most reputable databases and those with higher impact on the academic and scientific communities. We chose Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus as sources to the most relevant editors—Emerald, Wiley, Elsevier, MDPI, or Sage. The scope and reach of the selected sources allowed us to find credible results and suitable data concerning the proposed systematic revision.
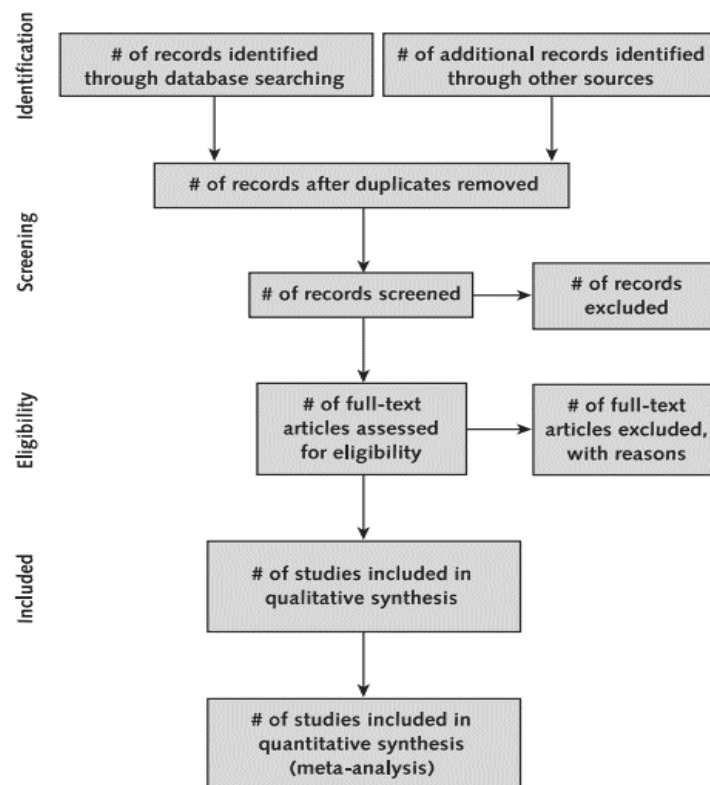
Figure 3. PRISMA protocol phases. #, identify each stage that should be followed by researchers. Source: The Prisma Statement, Moher et al. (2009) [20].

2.2. Studies Eligibility Criteria for Analysis

Eligibility criteria aim to match the data collection with really relevant studies concerning the goals of this SLR. In order to do so, the following five criteria were selected:

1. Scopus or ISI (Web of Science) indexed articles;
2. English language;
3. With peer revision;
4. With these keywords: talent management and employer branding (together and also employee attraction and retention) or the employer branding models (EB Models) present in the abstract;
5. Dated between 2010 and 2020.

2.3. Data Collection

Data collection was formally performed on January 2021 and encompassed the time period ranging from 2010 to 2020. It was conducted using a virtual private network (VPN) connection to the University of Évora. Keywords and data filters were applied to WoS and Scopus. Afterwards, these eligibility criteria were used to select the final corpus used in this research, excluding non-proper articles, articles in languages other than English, and repetitions found in both databases.

The bibliometric analysis was applied to the final selection (see Figure 4)—60 articles fulfilling the previously mentioned eligibility criteria. In total, 63 articles were excluded due to repetition, showing us that WoS and Scopus clearly display similar exigence and acceptance levels and are the most widespread and trusted databases within the scientific community in the study.
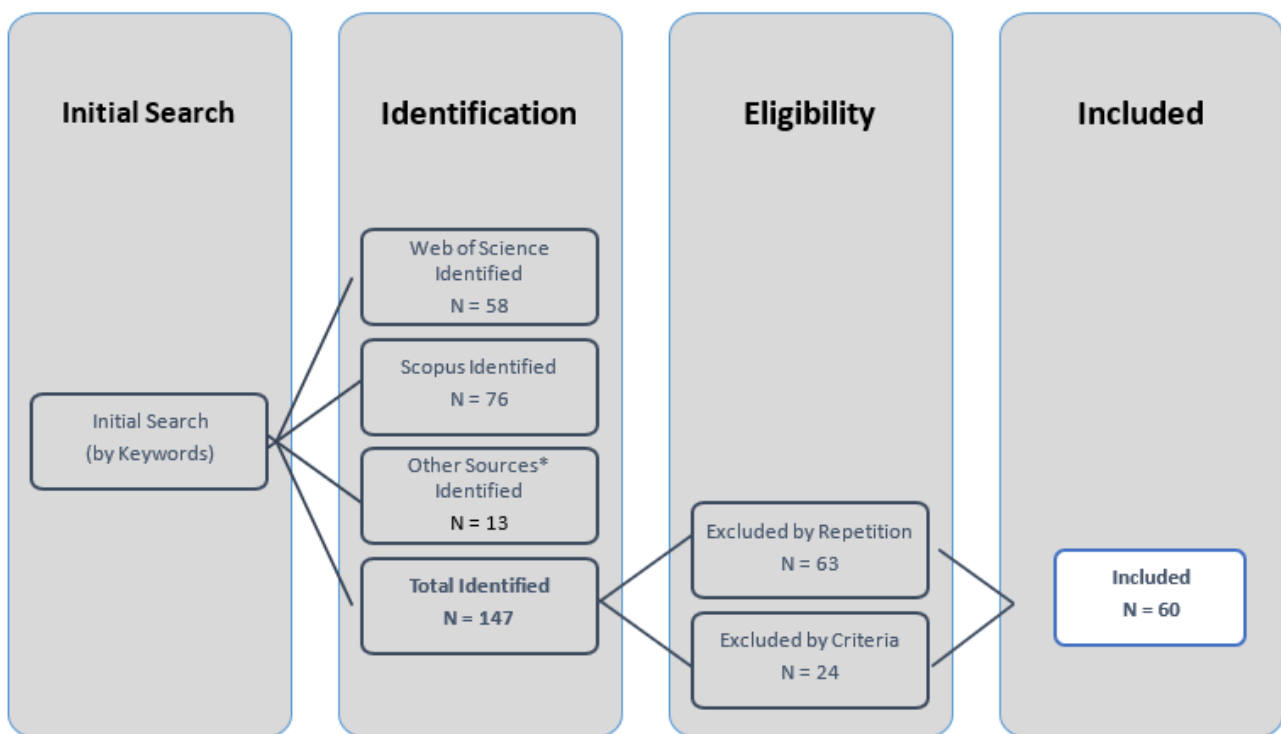
Figure 4. Articles choice process schematics. Adapted from PRISMA Statement, Moher et al. (2009) [20]. Developed by the authors. * Directly from authors.

2.4. Collected Data Analysis

The collected data were submitted to two distinctive analyses, as carried out lately for authors on RSL analyses [22]. This method seems to be adequate to achieve relevant conclusions in this kind of research. First, a bibliometric analysis was conducted; its metric results were analysed and interpreted—publication year, sources, quotation number, or countries where research in this study was performed. Second, a content analysis was performed; as intended, the aim was to identify the dimension of EB focused on studies that link EB to TM so that we could conclude about the TM dimensions that reflected EB.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Publication Date

During the first half of the decade in the study, only around 2 articles per year were published (see Figure 5). From 2015 onwards, an annual growth of publications concerning the subject becomes clear, except in 2019. The most prolific year for publications concerning the connection between EB and talent management was 2020—17 articles. Overall, 17% of the scientific production analysed is from 2016 to 2020. Comparing 2018 and 2020 it is clear that the interest in the subject has unequivocally risen in the last 3 years, matching the perception of the growing importance of the subject in the academic arena; dealings of the organisational world have penetrated scientific discussion.
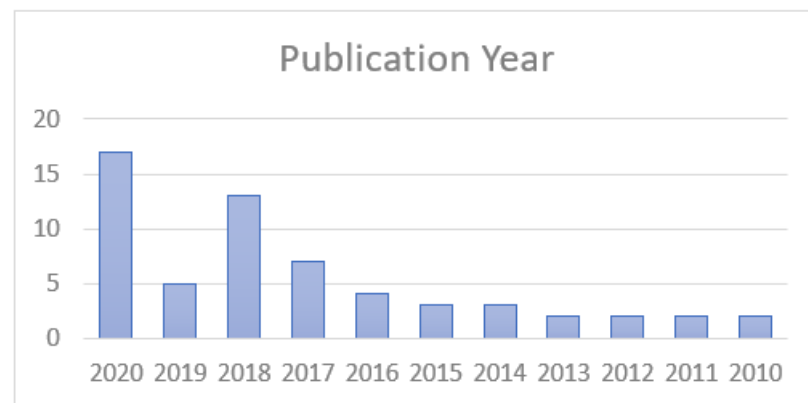
Figure 5. Publication date. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

3.2. Sources: Editors and Scientific Journals

Concerning sources, editors were analysed first (see Table 1). There are 18 editors in general, but Emerald Group Publishing has a clear advantage, accounting for 30 of the total 60. In other words, one editor accounts for 50% of the total sources, and none other is even remotely close. In fact, Emerald Group Publishing alone reveals the same number of published articles as all the other 17 editors combined; this alone underlines the weight of this editorial group on scientific publications in general.

Table 1. Editors. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

Editors	Number of Published Articles
Aosis	1
Assoc Computing Machinery	1
Associated Management Consultants Pvt. Ltd.	2
Vilnius Tech Journals	2
Elsevier	3
Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.	30
Igi Global	2
Jagannath Int Management Sch	1
Kaunas Univ Technol	1
MDPI	2
Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft Mbh & Co Kg	1
Philosophy Documentation Center	1
Routledge Journals, Taylor & Francis Ltd.	2
Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.	3
Sloan Management Review Assoc, MIT S SchManag	1
Syarif Syarif Hidayatullah State Univ Jakarta	1
Univ Tomase Bati & Zline, FakManagEkonomiky	1
Wiley	5

Then, the selected articles published in scientific journals were analysed (see Figure 5). From a total of 47 journals, the *International Journal of Organisational Analysis* (Int J Organ Anal) stands out, with 4 published articles. Not surprisingly, this journal is part of the aforementioned Emerald Group Publishing. Based in the United Kingdom, the journal shows an H index of 25 and in 2018 it was already a Q2 journal. Next come two journals with 3 published articles: *Thunderbird International Business Review*, from Wiley, based in the United States, with a Q1 classification in business and international management in 2018 although falling to Q2 in 2020; and *International Journal of Organisational Analysis*, from the Emerald Group Publishing, based in the United Kingdom, with a classification between Q3 e Q2 (depending on the subject area). Again, the weight of the Emerald group is quite

evident. The remaining journals reveal mainly just 1 published article, and they are all indexed to Web of Science and/or Scopus, as defined by the chosen criteria (see Figure 6).
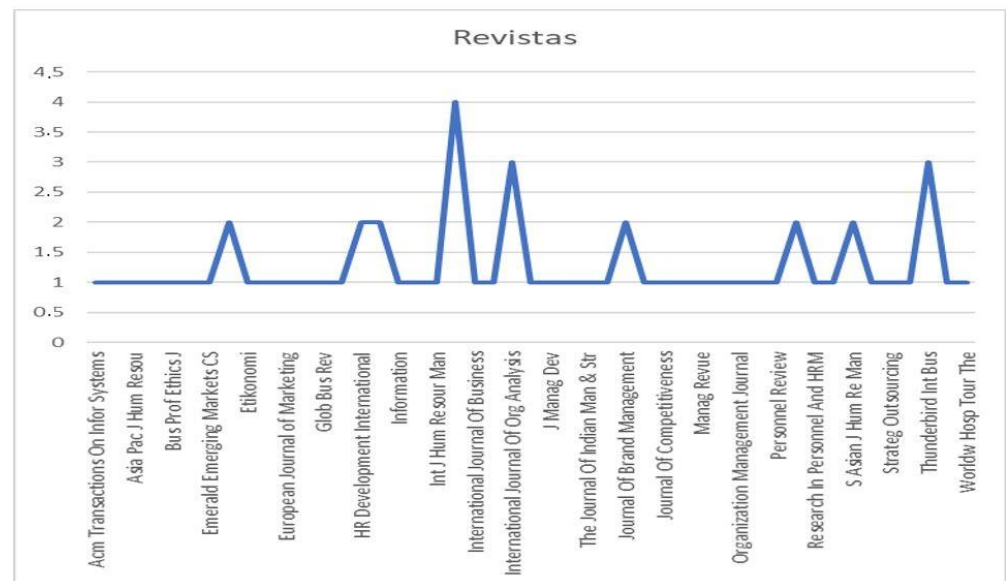
Figure 6. Scientific journals. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

3.3. Countries

The included articles were published in 22 countries (see Figure 7). India stands out with a third of all publications: 20 published articles. Worthy of mention is the fact that the African continent only provided 7 articles (slightly above 10%), and 2 of those were published in Mauritius, an eastern African archipelago with a population of less than a million and a half. On the other hand, the Asian continent shows a contribution close to 47% with 28 articles. The second most expressive value is not a country but scientific multinational collaboration; with 10 published articles, it represents about 17% of the total. From the total of 9 published articles on the European continent, a third were published in Portugal.
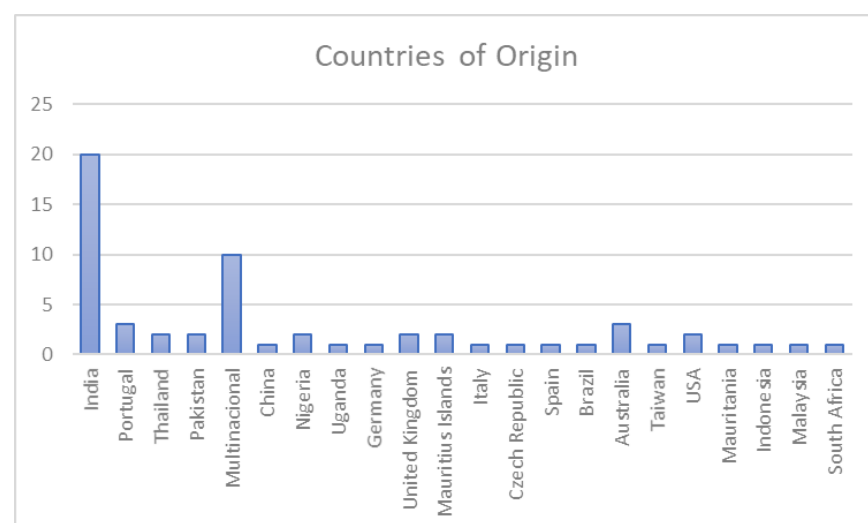
Figure 7. Countries of origin. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

3.4. Citations

In terms of citations, 1166 are present in the total 60 articles under analysis (see Figure 8), in plain terms, an average of 19.43 citations per article. However, a more detailed analysis reveals that both the mode and the median correspond to the interval 0–50. Therefore, we know that most articles contain relatively few citations per article, but 6 articles contain more than 50 citations; this means that 10% of the total published articles contain more than 50 citations. In this case, both mode and median tend to be more reliable because extreme values do not affect them, unlike the mean which is very permeable to this influence. The article with the highest number of citations is also the oldest one, 'Employer Branding and its Influence on Managers' published in the *European Journal of Marketing* from the Emerald Group Publishing. Next, with 174 citations, the article 'Six Principles of Effective Global Talent Management', published in the *MIT Sloan Management Review* in 2012.
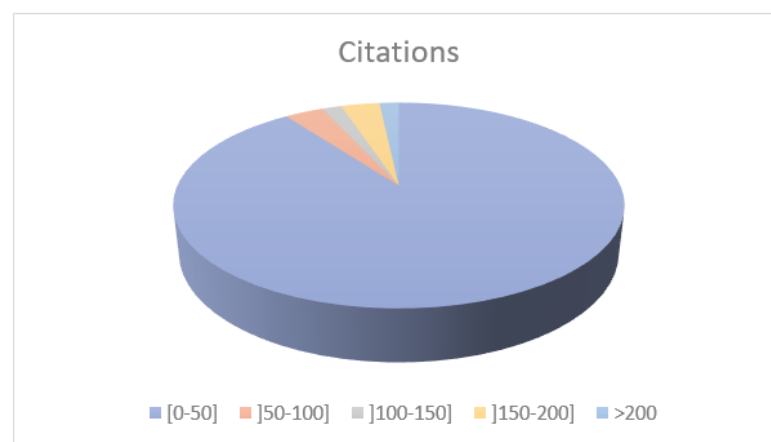
Figure 8. Number of citations. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

3.5. References by Article

Concerning references, the mode is in the interval of 60–80; almost a third of the articles are on this interval (see Figure 9). Only 1 article presents more than 200 references, and 6 others reveal up to 20 references. Considering references values between 40 and 100, 43 articles were found, which means that these values accommodate most of the studies' references choice to develop their research. We conclude concomitantly that the scientific production itself is fueling new research, but no other inference can be made regarding this selection of articles. This suggests that the quality of the studies is beyond the references upon which the authors based their research.
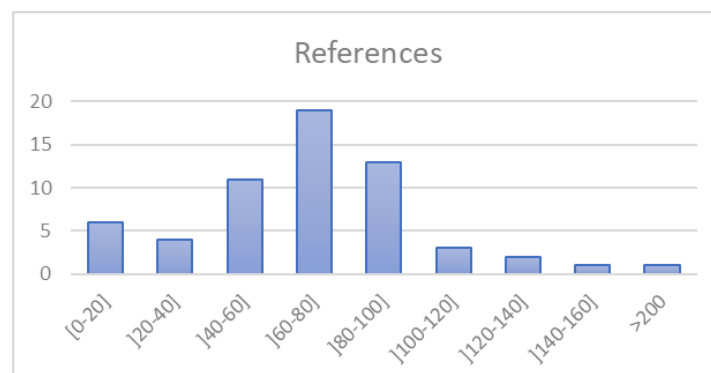
Figure 9. References per article. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

3.6. Methods

Figure 10 shows that the qualitative methodology is preferred in 35 articles when compared to 21 using the quantitative methodology. Therefore, 58% of the total published articles are guided by qualitative analyses. It makes sense, in fact, that the interpretive approach is mainly used in studies in this field of knowledge developed over the last decade because the qualitative perspective entails that the relationship between subject and results cannot be interpreted through numbers and is, therefore, characterised by descriptive research [23]. All the phenomena are interpreted inductively [23], finding dimensions previously unknown. The preponderance of qualitative approaches is consequently pertinent. A mixed methodology can only be found in 4 of the selected articles.
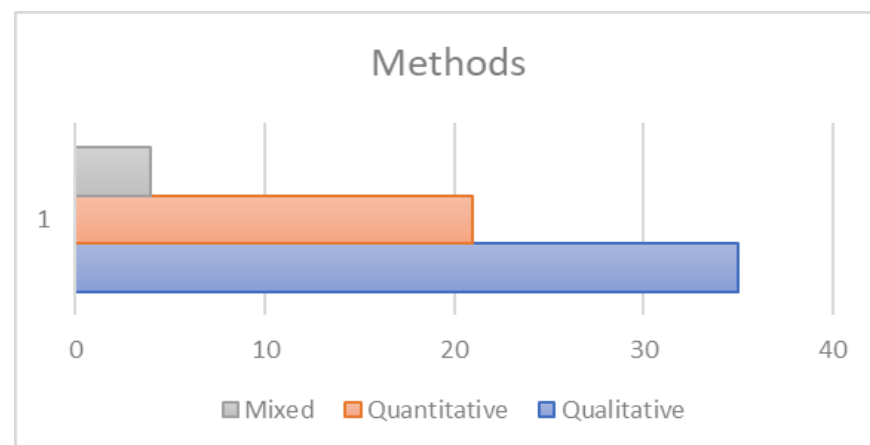
Figure 10. Research methods. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

When considering only quantitative and mixed methods (see Figure 11), we realise that most (76%) use multivariate statistics or structural equations. In total, 14% of the articles make equal use of factorial analysis and multiple regression, each represented by 3 articles that use these methods as their main statistical analysis.
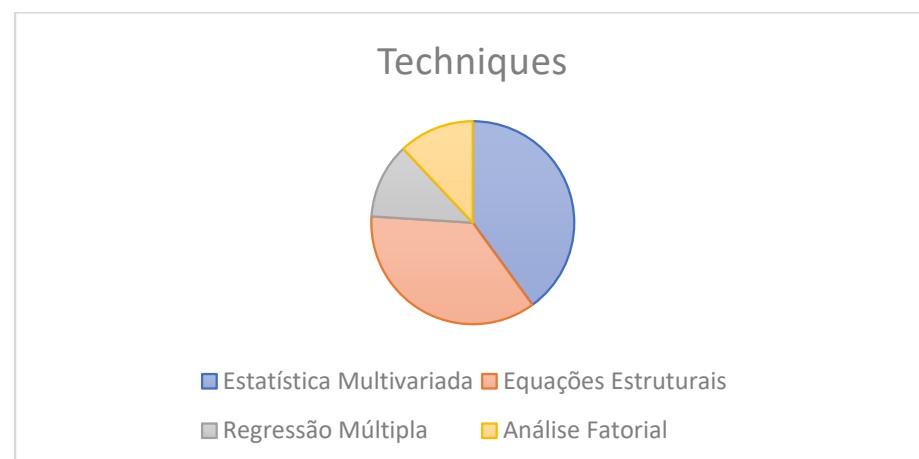
Figure 11. Main statistical technique. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

3.7. Keywords

Both the mode and the median values for this criterion are on interval three to five keywords given by the authors per article in a majority of 36 articles, i.e., 60% of the total selected articles (see Figure 12). There are 21 articles between six to eight keywords. It seems worth noting that there is 1 article with 10 keywords and 2 articles without keywords.

We conclude that 10 keywords are perhaps too many, as they widen the analysis field too much rendering the interpretation unpractical.
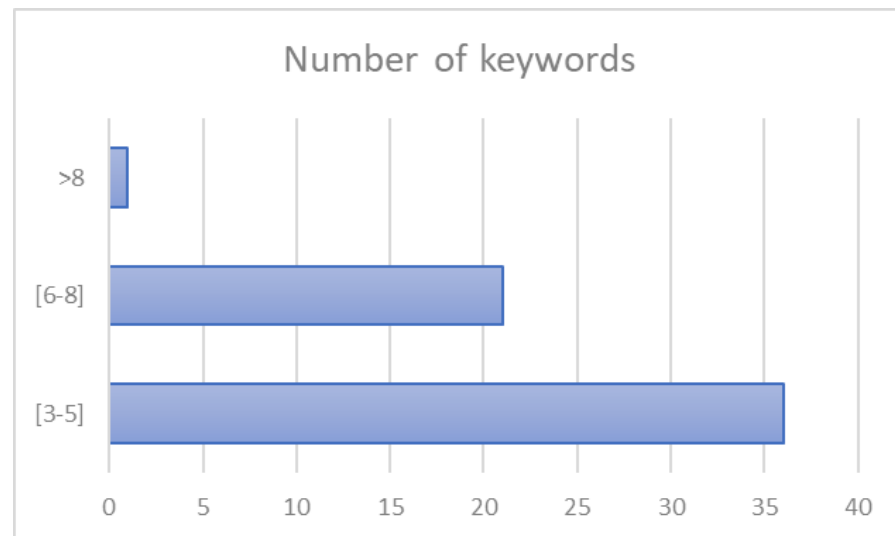
Figure 12. Number of keywords. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

The boxplot on Figure 13 shows the detailed outliers (0 and 10) that almost extrapolate the series, and the median, or second quartile, that stands on interval 3 to 5, on 4 to be precise.
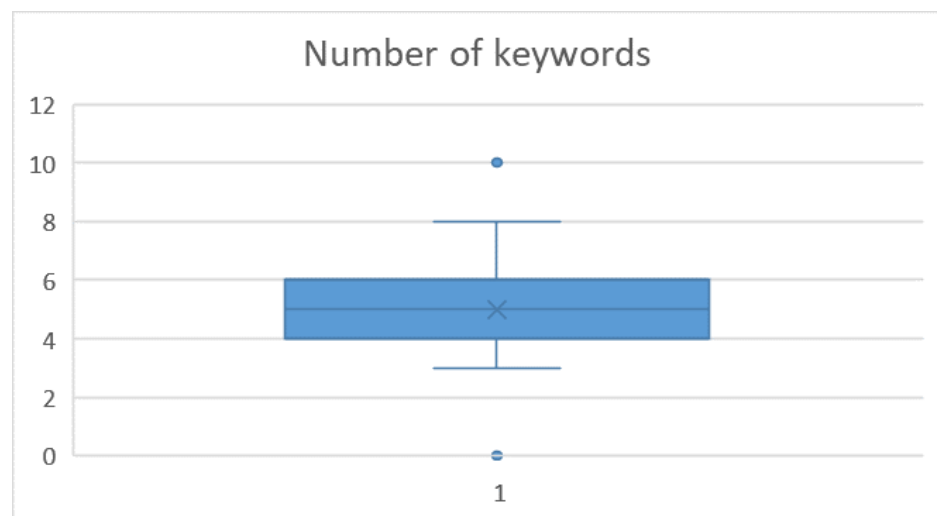
Figure 13. The boxplot showing the number of keywords. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

A content analysis of the keywords was performed using the word cloud, shown in Figure 14. As we can see, the subject of this SLR is absolutely present in the selected articles, with both talent management and EB—the basic concepts guiding our research—standing out. Additionally, interesting are the concepts standing out next—brand, recruitment, employee, human resources management—all of them considered key in our analysis. The word 'talent' alone also reveals a decisive weight in our content analysis. The words 'attraction' and 'retention' also entail a similar weight.

Figure 14. Keywords word cloud. Source: WoS and Scopus (27 January 2021).

Another relevant aspect is the appearance of 'qualitative' with more weight than 'quantitative'; this is relevant because it matches the results obtained on the analysis of the methods used on the articles that compose the corpus of our SLR. This word cloud confirms in more than one aspect the bibliometric interpretation conducted on this research.

The keywords were also submitted to the VOSviewer software to map the correlations between them, thus allowing a view of the network nets between several bibliometric dimensions. In this particular case, we are able to understand that only 10 of all the keywords used by the authors in the analysed articles represent a stronger link (see Figure 15), meaning they appear simultaneously more often in the defined keywords.

Figure 15. Links between keywords. Source: VOSviewer.com, (25 August 2021).

Figure 15 highlights as expected the research criteria: talent management and EB. The link between the concept of EB and both 'recruitment' and 'innovation' must be pointed out, emphasising that attraction is the dimension of talent management mostly explored by EB. As the literature shows, though being in the market since 1996, EB is also an innovation factor [24], contributing to the notion that EB is an innovative tool used by

talent management concerning the dimension 'workers attraction'. It is also interesting to analyse that the word 'strategy' is related to the two concepts under analysis on the same level, as well as talent retention.

3.8. Content Analysis

In order to address the objectives of the present study, a content analysis of the selected articles was performed (see Table 2) concerning two aspects—on the one hand focusing on the main conclusions, and on the other hand, identifying the EB dimensions focused on each study.

Table 2. Sum of the selected articles. Source: created by the authors.

Article Title	Main Conclusions	EB Dimensions Mostly Explored (D)
'Employer branding and its influence on managers' [25]	Results highlight the importance of EB although likewise suggesting its management complexity because none of the aspects reveals dominant influence over the relevant results from the employer perspective; the authors conclude that the area within the organisation that should be responsible for EB is unable to be defined.	D: EB Strategy
'Employees' commitment to brands in the service sector: Luxury hotel chains in Thailand' [26]	This study explores EB variables as an explanation for workers' commitment to their organisations and defines those that are directly connected with said commitment.	D: Workers Retention
'Is there a bigger and better future for employer branding? Facing up to innovation, corporate reputations, and wicked problems in SHRM' [27]	Three research EB areas can aggregate significant value, and convey important implications to HR practices: Focus on authenticity and on EB. Local and employer's brand's privilege. Focus on the EB role in social capital development.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Rebranding employment branding: Establishing a new research agenda to explore the attributes, antecedents, and consequences of workers' employment brand knowledge' [28]	Organisational attraction measures usually combine attitudinal measures (i.e., affection towards an organisation), intentional measures (i.e., the intention to find a job), and behavioural measures (accepting a job).	D: Workers Attraction
'Six Principles of Effective Global Talent Management' [29]	The article presents six key principles in which successful companies focus to manage talent: alignment with strategy; internal consistency; cultural management; management involvement; balance between global and local needs; and distinctive EB strategies.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Industry branding: attracting talent to weaker profile industries' [30]	Research suggests that most of the students who took part in the study consider economical and developmental factors and other benefits more important. Interesting and innovative projects in which state-of-the-art technology can be used are also considered relevant.	D: Workers Attraction
'How to attract applicants in the Atlantic versus the Asia-Pacific region? A cross-national analysis on China, India, Germany, and Hungary' [31]	Comparing students (future applicants) from the four countries being analysed (China, India, Hungary, and Germany), the authors concluded that concerning organisational climate and career prospects the level of importance is similar to all. The balance between professional and personal life is rather important in India and Germany, though much less in Hungary. Functional contents are more appealing for German students but show almost no influence over the Hungarian.	D: Workers Attraction
'Recruiting gen yers through social media: Insights from the Italian labour market' [32]	Research findings reveal the 'limited' popularity of social channels/networks as a recruitment tool among the Y Generation. These channels though offer attraction and involvement opportunities among younger generations.	D: Workers Attraction
'What do best employer surveys reveal about employer branding and intention to apply?' [33]	Several organisations invest more and more in research about better employees in order to establish themselves as optimal work environments, hence attracting bigger and better talents. Results suggest that the companies that took part consistently or recently in these research efforts obtain a significantly stronger intention of a bigger number of applications.	D: Workers Attraction

Table 2. *Cont.*

Article Title	Main Conclusions	EB Dimensions Mostly Explored (D)
'Leveraging employer branding, performance management and human resource development to enhance employee retention' [34]	This article defends that, from the talent point of view, the biggest winners in the emergent economic environment are the organisations providing positive EB, performance management strategies that help employees to develop knowledge, able to maximise their potential, and innovative approaches to design and implementation of HRD strategies.	D: Workers Retention
'Employer branding: Strategy for improving employer attractiveness' [35]	Among the students that participated in this study, the preferred organisational attributes were organisational culture and brand, and remuneration. Students selected the employment portal as the privileged channel for employer attractiveness. The study also revealed a positive correlation between a strong brand image and the likelihood of application.	D: Workers Attraction
'Employees or Consumers? The role of competing identities in individuals' evaluations of corporate reputation' [34]	In well-established market economies, individuals tend to reveal very distinct identities as workers and consumers; according to the chosen identity, individuals evaluate differently the reputation of organisations. On the other hand, in transitional countries, the consumer's identity prevails over the worker's identity. Therefore, applicants to a job tend to 'follow' their consumer's values when forming judgements about the companies' values.	D: Workers Attraction
'Employment preferences of job applicants: unfolding employer branding determinants' [36]	Research findings identified the private as the preferred sector among most of the potential workers.	D: Workers Attraction
'Higher educational institutes as learning organisations for employer branding' [37]	This article introduces a conceptual analytic frame for high education institutions to become learning organisations. An organisation that learns can establish a strong employer brand, widening employees' emotional engagement, and especially talents, attraction, and retention.	D: Workers Attraction/Retention
'An empirical study on employee's attrition and retention in BPO industry: a tool to employer branding' [38]	This study presents a workers retention model, as well as a model that lists the main causes of turnover in the outsourcing sector.	D: Workers Retention
'An exploratory study on the impact of recruitment process outsourcing on employer branding of an organisation' [39]	Outsourcing the recruitment process economises the organisation time, helping it to focus on the business main activities rather than spending precious time searching for qualified candidates. The research also emphasises the importance of outsourced employees and EB in this context.	D: Workers Attraction
'New Strategic Role for HR: Leading the Employer-Branding Process' [40]	HR in general regard recruitment, integration, training, performance management, and rewards processes separately at a tactical/executional level. However, the HR strategic role consists of regarding these processes as a whole to promote a positive employer brand.	D: Workers Attraction/Retention
'BCA's employer branding—the challenge ahead' [41]	This article presents a case study on the Central Bank of Asia. The Bank's goal to deliver a positive perception to its employees as 'a fun working place with an environment focused on family and commitment towards workers' development' as not yet been strongly felt within the job market. The article suggests guidelines to create a strong employer brand to achieve the desired goal.	D: Workers Retention
'An exploratory study on the impact of employer branding process of an organisation' [39]	Research highlights the importance of both outsourced employees and EB in the analysed context.	D: Workers Attraction

Table 2. *Cont.*

Article Title	Main Conclusions	EB Dimensions Mostly Explored (D)
'Opportunity or Opportunism? An Examination of International Recruitment via Employer and Nation Branding Strategies' [42]	As employers struggle to present an image that will attract potential employees, and a distinctive 'package' of benefits at the job place, nations do the same in order to attract immigrants with high qualifications.	D: National EB
'A Comprehensive Framework for Implementing an Effective Employer Brand Strategy' [43]	This study provides evidence that a specific research method will be effective in capturing the perception of the pool of talent in potential or workers from an organisation, in order to achieve the EVP attributes. It introduces an analytical model to understand and implement EB strategies.	D: EB Strategy
'Management perceptions of a higher educational brand for the attraction of talented academic staff' [44]	This study shows the six attributes that must be present to form the core construction of a college institution EB for the academic staff: reputation and image; organisational culture and identity; strategic vision; corporative social responsibility; work and environment.	D: Workers Attraction
'Exploring HR practitioners' perspective on employer branding' [45]	This study underlines the need for an integrated multifunctional responsibility both for the development and management of EB.	D: Workers Attraction
'Exploring HR practitioners' perspective on employer branding and its role in organisational attractiveness and talent management' [45]	Findings show that it is paramount to have an internal market philosophy in which each and all employees are seen as an active internal customer-aggregating value. HR employees believe in the existence of a strong connection between EB and talent strategic management.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'The role of employer brand equity in employee attraction and retention: a unified framework' [46]	This article introduces a conceptual model for the role of EB value in attracting and retaining workers.	D: EB Strategy
'Leveraging Social Networking for Talent Management: An Exploratory Study of Indian Firms' [47]	Details assessed by specialists using social networks must be included in every personal archive of the applicant, and any screen capture of profile aspects that could have influenced triage or decision must be registered and printed. The fact that applicants should be aware of these practices is also important for HR specialists that choose to allow policies of public social media data research.	D: Workers Attraction
'Determinants of Success of Employer Branding in a Start-up Firm in Nigeria' [48]	This article refers to a case study of an incredibly successful startup in EB in its earlier six years. After that, the brand lost potency. Motives include toxic organisational environment, overbranding, failure in fulfilling promises, disconnection between EB and HR strategy, change of focus from people's management to production, and lack of a dynamic and distinctive value proposal.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Linking dimensions of employer branding and turnover intentions' [49]	This research concludes that EB dimensions correlate negatively with employees' rotation. Two specific dimensions—social value and development opportunities—are important predictors of rotation intention.	D: Workers Retention
'The employer-branding journey: Its relationship with cross-cultural branding, brand reputation, and brand repair' [50]	A positive employer brand is a key ingredient to organisational success due to its strong contribution to the brand's reputation, which helps the organisation to obtain competitive advantages. Employees become ambassadors of the employer brand.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Employer branding and talent retention: perceptions of employees in higher education institutions in Uganda' [51]	Three EB dimensions emerge—rewards strategy, focus on people, and leadership and development. Only people orientation and rewards proved to be relevant predictors of talent retention.	D: Workers Retention
'Employer Branding in B2B and B2C Companies in India: A Qualitative Perspective' [52]	This study lists four relevant categories for the EB suggested by the data: (a) the essence of a successful EB, (b) EB precursors, (c) employer's visibility, and (d) EB results.	D: EB Strategy

Table 2. *Cont.*

Article Title	Main Conclusions	EB Dimensions Mostly Explored (D)
'Building Employer Image Thanks to Talent Programmes in Czech Organisations' [53]	Findings clearly pointed out the main aspects of strategic EB: growing investment in organisational research and development; innovative practices; workers' motivation towards development; support by instructors and mentors in employees' development; managers' cooperation in workers' development. The authors emphasise the general impact of EB on talent programs and on HR strategy.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Organisational talent management and perceived employer branding' [54]	Organisational talent management is strongly and positively correlated with the perception of EB. The most effective predictors of a strong employer's brand are fair rewards and remunerations, balance between professional and personal life, and attraction and recruitment of talents.	D: Workers' Attraction
'A study on talent management practices for succession planning with reference to selected IT/ITES organisations in Coimbatore' [55]	There is a strong correlation between talent management practices (compensation plan, performance assessment, learning and development, and rewards and recognition), and talent retention and succession planning among the organisations under analysis.	D: Workers' Retention
'Employer Branding in the Indian Armed Forces Context: A Comparative Study of Potential Defence Applicants and Defence Employees' [56]	Results detect a significant difference between the potential applicants' perception and the actual employees in instrumental jobs within Indian Armed Forces. Potential applicants are more favourable to the instrumental roles. Perceptions about «symbolic roles» and 'Indian Armed Forces attractiveness as employer' were explained in similar proportions among both potential applicants and actual employees.	D: Workers Attraction
'Employer Branding as a strategy to attract potencial workforce" [57]	The study confirms the growing use of social networks as part of the HR organisational EB strategy and talents search, acquisition and retention, strengthening a stronger relationship with its employees.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'A study on talent management practices for succession planning with reference to selected IT/ITES organisations in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu' [55]	The study concluded that there is a strong connection between TM practices such as compensation, recognition, and performance management and talent retention.	D: Workers Retention
'Role of organisational career websites for employer brand development' [58]	This study explores the existence of career orientation and recruitment sites across the entire banking sector in the sample country. It suggests that HR specialists should reshape the banks' career sites to provide further triage guidance and bigger interactivity with internal and external talent pools.	D: Workers Attraction
'Digital employer branding for enabling gen Y in the ITeS sector in eastern India' [59]	This study shows how the forces of the digital world play a role in continuing to promote a strong employer brand to attract, motivate, and retain the best talents and to ensure a continuous, high level of performance.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Effectiveness of employer branding on staff retention and compensation expectations' [60]	Augmented perceptions of the employer brand are connected to employees with higher levels of retention and lower levels of remuneration expectations. Demographic factors were not relevant to the analysis, although potential tendencies in the employees' difference in age and total number of years were found: the research provides a model for a successful EB strategy.	D: Workers Retention
'Employer branding success through social media' [61]	The study concludes that social networks are the main channel used today by companies to disseminate EB messages.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Enticing the IT crowd: employer branding in the information economy' [62]	This research revealed that future IT workers are concerned about eight EB proposals: culture, functional contents, job relevance, rewards, style and management of development opportunities, work/life balance, and brand image. These dimensions are paramount to IT companies and sectors competing for IT qualified workforce.	D: Workers Attraction

Table 2. *Cont.*

Article Title	Main Conclusions	EB Dimensions Mostly Explored (D)
'Disentangling the strength of the HRM system: effects on employee's reactions' [63]	The authors found out two dimensions of HR management force: consistency and 'reputation' of the HR management system. The latter is a new dimension that combines distinction and consensus. The second set of findings show that the reputation of the HR management system influences positively organisational behaviour and the intention to stay on the job.	D: EB Strategy
'Employer Branding Applied to SMEs: A Pioneering Model Proposal for Attracting and Retaining Talent' [5]	This study introduces a new EB model for SMEs that focuses on the theoretical content based upon the dimensions emanating from the analysis in order to facilitate the attraction of needed talents to these companies.	D: Workers Attraction
'Strategic Talent Management: The Impact of Employer Branding on the Affective Commitment of Employees' [4]	There is a positive relation between EB strategies and employees' affective commitment.	D: Workers Retention
'How do MNCs translate corporate talent management strategies into their subsidiaries? Evidence from MNCs in Thailand' [64]	Following the research findings, this paper suggests that multinational companies within developed economies tend to face skills shortage challenges that affect the translation of talent management strategies at a subsidiary level. On the other hand, multinationals within emerging economies face the same processes in both skills shortage challenges and responsibility at the origin (i.e., a weak employer brand).	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Inconsistent organisational images of luxury hotels: Exploring employees' perceptions and dealing strategies' [65]	Organisational internal/external image inconsistency plays an important role in the formation of employees' perceptions regarding the attractiveness of the organisation as an employer. It also influences the levels of organisational ties.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'HRD indicators and branding practices: a viewpoint on the employer brand building process' [66]	EB significance and visibility are associated with consistent messages and provide employees a better understanding of the desired brand image. Employee's psychological behaviour to build a trust relationship with the brand is based upon distinctive features and HRD indicators.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Branding Yields Better Harvest: Explaining the Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in Employer Branding and Organisational Outcome' [67]	This study underlines employees' involvement as a mediating role between EB and both employees' performance and intention to stay on the job.	D: Workers Retention
'Much Ado About Little: A Critical Review of the Employer Branding Concept' [16]	The concept of EB lacks a profound innovation related to content. It must, therefore, be faced as no more nor less than a contemporary reformulation of what is and was known for a long time as 'Internal Marketing' or 'HR Marketing'.	D: Workers' Attraction | Retention
'Strategic talent management—contemporary issues in international context' [68]	The concept of EB was based upon the signalling theory, reputation, management, and HR strategic management, and it is directly connected with talent management.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Employer Branding Practices Amongst the Most Attractive Employers of IT and Engineering Sector' [24]	EB is an important part of the participant companies' responsibilities though not being faced as a priority. Despite its contributions to workers' attraction and retention, both top management and other departments devalue it compared with the founding areas, HR, and marketing. Moreover, according to the results, the process is not yet fully structured.	D: Workers Attraction | Retention
'Talent retention strategies and employees' behavioural outcomes: Empirical evidence from hospitality industry' [69]	Both training and development have a positive, direct, and significant effect on employees' commitment and performance on the job. Continuous research on policies and practices concerning HR management is paramount in all economic sectors, both local and global.	D: Workers Retention

Article Title	Main Conclusions	EB Dimensions Mostly Explored (D)
'Perceived work–life balance and organisational talent management: mediating role of employer branding' [70]	All EB dimensions correlate positively with the affective component of organisational commitment. 'Mission, vision, and values' strategies are the EB strategies mostly impacting positively on COA. The strategy with the least positive impact corresponds to 'compensation and benefits'.	D: Workers Retention
'Factors Affecting Job Announcement Competitiveness on Job Listing Websites' [71]	This study introduces two models to explore the most relevant factors that affect job searching intentions regarding the rising interest in using social networks among HR activities.	D: Workers Retention
'Exploration of patriotic brand image: its antecedents and impacts on purchase intentions' [72]	In addition to the largely recognised impact of perceived quality on buying intentions, the patriotic brand image is considered effective in the improvement of local consumers' buying intentions towards domestic brand products.	D: National EB
'Enhancing Employer Brand Evaluation with Collaborative Topic Regression Models' [73]	This study suggests improving the employer brand using collaborative regression to grasp latent structural patterns of employer brands.	D: EB Strategy
'Impact on Employer Branding through Talent Retention and Motivation in Insurance Companies' [74]	Within the sample companies, most of the respondents declare they are satisfied with the working conditions as long as more efforts are applied to make their job challenging and interesting in order to improve the employees' satisfaction on the job.	D: Workers' Retention
'Top employer awards: A double-edged sword?' [75]	Concerning well-known companies, although rewards increase organisational attractiveness, they also reduce the person/organisation adjustment effect over organisational attractiveness.	D: EB Strategy
'The contribution of human resource development managers to organisational branding in the hotel industry in India and Southeast Asia (ISEA): a dynamic capabilities perspective' [76]	This research explores the significant contribution of HR managers in building hotel industry brands. It emphasises the HR function brand alignment with the organisational brand. Though many studies have already established the HRD's strategic importance to improve human capital, this study highlights that several dimensions are yet to be found.	D: Workers' Retention

4. Conclusions

The first goal of the present study was to analyse the scientific literature of the last ten years indexed to the two most reputed databases in the scientific arena—WoS and SCOPUS—regarding talent management and EB themes, using bibliometric indicators, and content analysis.

This analysis provided a broader understanding that, although the EB process is not clearly structured, some stages can be identified as common [24] and serve as indicators that bring light to the concept according to the most successful companies in practice. Authors suggest that EB is in fact a reformulation of the long-term used notion of 'internal or HR marketing' and still lacks a lot of innovation [16]. On the contrary, though the majority of findings point out that this is a simplistic approach because the concept has become extraordinarily important to organisational success, encompassing the employer brand proposed value and fundamental dimensions to employees' attraction and retention such as affective commitment [4], rewards strategies [70], commitment expectations [26], reputation [68], or employees' development [49].

While exploring the selected articles, we clearly understood the connection between talent management and EB; there are studies defending that organisational talents management is strongly related to EB perception [70] and that a positive employer brand is essential to attract and retain the best talents, conferring a competitive advantage to organisations [50], considering that HR employees believe in a strong connection between EB and talent strategic management [45].

Concerning our second goal—identify EB dimensions explored by the authors—we identified four main EB dimensions among the selected articles: employees' attraction (18 articles), employees' retention (16 articles), simultaneous employees' attraction and retention (17 articles), EB strategies (models, conceptual, analytical frames, 7 articles), and national EB (2 articles). Regarding the latter, the articles surprisingly establish an analogy between organisational EB and the way countries should apply the concept to nations in order to attract a qualified workforce. This shows how attraction and retention of talents have become major EB concerns; talent attraction alone is analysed in approximately one-third of the selected articles, a fact that underlines the notion that this is a tool used by organisations to enhance their attractability in the market; therefore, securing a talent pool grants them a quality of choice at the moment of selection.

The strength of the connection between the keywords analysed with VOSviewer also shows that EB is directly linked with recruitment, and talent management is connected with EB through strategy. This strongly reaffirms that EB is a tool included in the broader process of talent management regarding the promotion of the EB power of attraction enhancement.

Concerning the last goal of the study—identifying talent management dimensions contained within the concept of EB—from the analysis of the talent management model present in Figure 1, we conclude that some intra-organisational talent management dimensions are always explored by EB, having employee's attraction and retention in mind: recruitment and selection, engagement and retention, and rewards. We unexpectedly found out that EB is also starting to provoke impact at the macro (extra-organisational) level of the same model due to the creation of national EB. We were able to answer the question that guided this SLR and conclude that talent management is much broader than anticipated because of the dimensions that do not concern EB, but on the other hand, EB is a powerful tool to achieve talent management goals, as it addresses key dimensions of talent management.

It is in our opinion worth noting, considering the digital revolution we are living in today, that despite more recent years being those that clearly concentrate the largest scientific production in this field of research (70% of the selected articles range from 2016 to 2020), only four articles directly mention digital resources as a privileged mean of disseminating and reinforcing EB strategies. From a certain perspective, this can be interpreted as a gap that prevents the dialogue between organisations and the diverse generations nowadays in the market, some already born in the digital era. Gregorka, Silva, and Silva [24] defend that the EB process and its consequences have not yet been fully studied, despite the common use of the concept in the past 20 years. Many cited authors likewise refer to the need for innovation and larger consistency regarding the concept. Therefore, we conclude that though unquestionably being a major theme, the organisational world still has at present a long road ahead of it to improve the knowledge and definition of EB models and strategies that would enable the organisations to make better use of this tool on their 'war for talent'.

By providing a summary of the most relevant literature of the past decade and exploring its findings, the present study contributes overall to the continued scientific effort of knowledge enhancement in this field of study. The obtained results bear important guidelines to both academics and managers linked to talent management, suggesting new pathways for further investigation to shape the concept of EB more consistently and to clarify which are the truly relevant dimensions to build a positive and distinctive employer brand.

As with any other research, we have encountered limitations, especially concerning the non-compliance of some selected articles with language criteria and, above all, with the fact that many were not directly related with the subject though presenting the defined keywords because they focused on details not relevant for our research.

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