

## Human Resource Marketing As A Driver Of Talent Competitiveness

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### Abstract

*In an era characterised by acute talent shortages, heightened employee mobility, and intensifying global competition, organisations are increasingly compelled to reframe how they attract, engage, and retain human capital. This study positions Human Resource Marketing (HRMkt) as a strategic driver of talent competitiveness, arguing that the principles traditionally associated with external marketing are now indispensable within the human resource function. Drawing on contemporary talent management and employer branding literature, the paper conceptualises Human Resource Marketing as an integrated approach encompassing employer branding, value proposition communication, internal engagement, and candidate experience management.*

*The study develops a structured analytical framework to examine how HR marketing practices influence organisational attractiveness, perceived employer value, and sustained talent advantage. By synthesising recent empirical insights and strategic perspectives, the paper highlights how digitally enabled HR marketing initiatives—such as social media employer branding, data-driven recruitment communication, and personalised employee engagement—enhance talent acquisition efficiency and retention outcomes. The findings underscore that organisations leveraging Human Resource Marketing not merely as a recruitment tool, but as a long-term strategic capability, are better positioned to secure, motivate, and retain high-quality talent in volatile labour markets. The paper contributes to the growing discourse on strategic human resource management by demonstrating that talent competitiveness is no longer driven solely by compensation or job security, but by the organisation's ability to market itself authentically and consistently as an employer of choice.*

**Keywords:** Human Resource Marketing; Talent Competitiveness; Employer Branding; Talent Management; Employee Value Proposition; Strategic Human Resource Management

### Introduction

The contemporary labour market has entered a phase of structural transformation in which talent scarcity, skills obsolescence, and shifting employee expectations have become persistent rather than cyclical phenomena. Organisations across industries are no longer competing solely on products, prices, or market share; instead, they are increasingly competing on their ability to attract, engage, and retain high-quality human capital. In this environment, traditional human resource management practices—largely administrative and compliance-driven in nature—have proven insufficient to sustain long-term talent advantage. As a result, firms are compelled to rethink how they

position themselves in the minds of current and prospective employees. It is within this context that Human Resource Marketing emerges as a critical strategic lever.

Human Resource Marketing refers to the systematic application of marketing principles to human resource functions, particularly in the domains of employer branding, recruitment communication, employee engagement, and retention management. Unlike conventional HR practices that focus primarily on internal process efficiency, HR marketing emphasises perception, experience, and value communication. Employees and job seekers are no longer passive recipients of organisational offerings; they behave increasingly like informed



consumers, actively evaluating employers based on reputation, workplace culture, growth opportunities, and alignment with personal values. Consequently, organisations that fail to market their employment value proposition effectively risk losing competitive ground in the talent marketplace.

The intensification of talent competition has been further amplified by digitalisation and the widespread adoption of social media platforms. Employer reputation is now shaped not only by official corporate messaging but also by employee-generated content, online reviews, and peer-to-peer networks. A single negative candidate experience can influence hundreds of potential applicants, while a strong employer brand can significantly reduce recruitment costs and time-to-hire. In such a transparent and interconnected environment, Human Resource Marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping organisational attractiveness and credibility. It bridges the gap between what organisations claim to offer and what employees actually experience, thereby influencing both attraction and retention outcomes.

Despite its growing relevance, Human Resource Marketing remains underexplored in comparison to more established constructs such as employer branding and talent management. Much of the existing literature treats HR marketing as a subset of recruitment branding rather than as a comprehensive strategic capability. This narrow perspective overlooks the broader role HR marketing plays in internal talent engagement, employee advocacy, and long-term competitiveness. In practice, leading organisations increasingly integrate HR marketing initiatives across the entire employee lifecycle—from pre-recruitment awareness and onboarding to career development and internal communication. This shift signals a movement away from transactional employment relationships towards relational and value-based exchanges.

Talent competitiveness, in this study, is conceptualised as an organisation's sustained ability to attract, retain, and deploy high-performing talent relative to its competitors. It is not merely a function of financial incentives or job availability but is deeply influenced by perceived organisational identity, psychological contract fulfilment, and the consistency of employer messaging. Human

Resource Marketing contributes to talent competitiveness by crafting and communicating a coherent employer narrative, reinforcing organisational values, and aligning employee expectations with organisational realities. When executed effectively, HR marketing transforms employees into brand ambassadors, strengthening both internal commitment and external employer reputation.

Moreover, the post-pandemic workplace has fundamentally altered employee priorities, placing greater emphasis on flexibility, purpose, well-being, and meaningful work. These expectations cannot be addressed through policy changes alone; they require deliberate communication, storytelling, and engagement strategies. Human Resource Marketing provides the tools to articulate these values convincingly while ensuring alignment between organisational promises and practices. Firms that neglect this dimension risk reputational dissonance, employee disengagement, and increased turnover—outcomes that directly undermine talent competitiveness.

Given these developments, there is a pressing need for scholarly inquiry that positions Human Resource Marketing as a strategic driver rather than a peripheral HR activity. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how HR marketing practices influence organisational talent competitiveness and by proposing a structured framework that links marketing-oriented HR initiatives with key talent outcomes. By doing so, the paper contributes to the evolving discourse on strategic human resource management and offers actionable insights for organisations navigating increasingly competitive and volatile labour markets.

## Literature Review

### **Human Resource Marketing and the Evolution of Talent Competition**

The growing volatility of labour markets has prompted scholars to revisit how organisations conceptualise and manage talent competitiveness. Traditional human resource management frameworks, which largely emphasised administrative efficiency and control, have been increasingly criticised for their limited capacity to respond to contemporary talent challenges. Recent



literature suggests that organisations must adopt a more market-oriented approach to human resources—one that recognises employees and job seekers as discerning stakeholders rather than passive labour inputs. Within this shift, Human Resource Marketing has emerged as a hybrid construct that integrates marketing logic into HR strategy to enhance organisational attractiveness and talent outcomes.

Early studies in this domain positioned HR marketing primarily as an extension of recruitment communication. However, contemporary research argues that its scope is considerably broader, encompassing employer brand positioning, employee experience design, and internal value communication. Scholars contend that HR marketing enables organisations to articulate a coherent employment narrative that aligns organisational identity with employee expectations, thereby strengthening both attraction and retention mechanisms. This perspective marks a departure from transactional HR models and supports a more relational, long-term view of talent management.

### **Employer Branding as a Foundation of HR Marketing**

Employer branding has been widely recognised as a foundational pillar of Human Resource Marketing. Recent empirical studies indicate that a strong employer brand significantly enhances organisational attractiveness, reduces recruitment costs, and improves applicant quality. Researchers emphasise that employer branding is not merely a symbolic exercise but a strategic process that influences how potential and existing employees perceive organisational culture, leadership credibility, and career prospects.

However, the literature also reveals a growing scepticism towards superficial branding efforts. Scholars warn that misalignment between projected employer brand messages and actual employee experiences can result in reputational damage, psychological contract breach, and increased turnover. This critique has shifted academic attention towards authenticity and consistency in HR marketing practices. Effective HR marketing, therefore, requires not only persuasive external messaging but also internal alignment through

supportive HR policies, leadership behaviour, and organisational culture.

### **Employee Value Proposition and Internal Market Orientation**

The concept of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) has gained prominence as a central mechanism through which HR marketing influences talent competitiveness. Recent studies conceptualise EVP as a multidimensional construct encompassing tangible rewards, career development opportunities, work-life balance, organisational purpose, and social belonging. Scholars argue that a well-defined and clearly communicated EVP serves as a strategic differentiator in competitive labour markets, particularly when financial incentives alone are insufficient to secure talent loyalty.

From an internal marketing perspective, researchers highlight the importance of treating employees as internal customers whose needs and expectations must be understood, segmented, and addressed. This internal market orientation reinforces the role of HR marketing in employee engagement and retention, rather than limiting its function to attraction alone. Empirical evidence suggests that organisations adopting internal HR marketing practices—such as personalised communication, recognition programmes, and participative engagement strategies—experience higher levels of employee commitment and discretionary effort.

### **Digitalisation and HR Marketing Communication**

Digital transformation has significantly reshaped the execution and impact of Human Resource Marketing. The proliferation of social media platforms, employer review sites, and digital recruitment channels has increased transparency in employer-employee relationships. Recent literature highlights that job seekers increasingly rely on digital cues, peer reviews, and employee-generated content when evaluating potential employers. As a result, organisational control over employer image has become decentralised, amplifying both opportunities and risks associated with HR marketing.

Scholars note that digitally enabled HR marketing allows for targeted, data-driven communication

strategies that enhance recruitment efficiency and candidate experience. At the same time, the literature cautions against over-reliance on algorithmic targeting without ethical safeguards. Concerns related to privacy, bias, and exclusion have prompted calls for responsible and transparent HR marketing practices. This strand of research underscores the need to balance technological sophistication with ethical and human-centred considerations.

## Human Resource Marketing and Talent Competitiveness

Talent competitiveness has been conceptualised in recent studies as an organisation's relative capacity to attract, retain, and develop high-performing employees in comparison to competitors. Unlike static measures of workforce quality, talent competitiveness is dynamic and perception-driven, shaped by employer reputation, employee advocacy, and labour market signalling. Scholars increasingly recognise Human Resource Marketing as a strategic capability that enhances talent competitiveness by influencing these perceptual and relational dimensions.

Empirical findings suggest that organisations integrating HR marketing into strategic decision-making demonstrate stronger employer legitimacy and resilience during periods of labour market disruption. HR marketing contributes to talent competitiveness by fostering emotional attachment, reinforcing organisational purpose, and strengthening employee identification with the employer brand. This relational advantage is particularly critical in knowledge-intensive and service-driven sectors, where employee commitment directly affects organisational performance.

## Research Gaps and Direction

Despite growing scholarly interest, the literature reveals several unresolved gaps. First, many studies continue to treat Human Resource Marketing as synonymous with employer branding, neglecting its broader strategic role across the employee lifecycle. Second, there is limited empirical integration between HR marketing practices and measurable talent competitiveness outcomes. Third, existing research often adopts descriptive approaches, with

insufficient emphasis on structured analytical frameworks that explain causal linkages.

Addressing these gaps requires a more holistic examination of Human Resource Marketing as a strategic system rather than a set of isolated practices. This study responds to this need by conceptualising HR marketing as a driver of talent competitiveness and by proposing an integrative framework that links marketing-oriented HR initiatives with key talent outcomes.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the premise that Human Resource Marketing (HRMkt) functions as a strategic mechanism through which organisations enhance their talent competitiveness. Rather than treating HR marketing as a peripheral recruitment activity, the framework positions it as an integrated system influencing both external talent attraction and internal employee retention. The framework draws on internal marketing logic and employer branding perspectives to establish a structured relationship between HR marketing practices and talent competitiveness outcomes.

At the core of the framework lies Human Resource Marketing, operationalised through four key dimensions: employer branding, employee value proposition communication, candidate experience management, and internal engagement communication. These dimensions collectively shape how organisations present themselves as employers and how consistently they deliver on those promises. Employer branding establishes external visibility and credibility, while EVP communication clarifies the tangible and intangible benefits offered to employees. Candidate experience management influences early perceptions during recruitment, and internal engagement communication sustains employee commitment post-hiring.

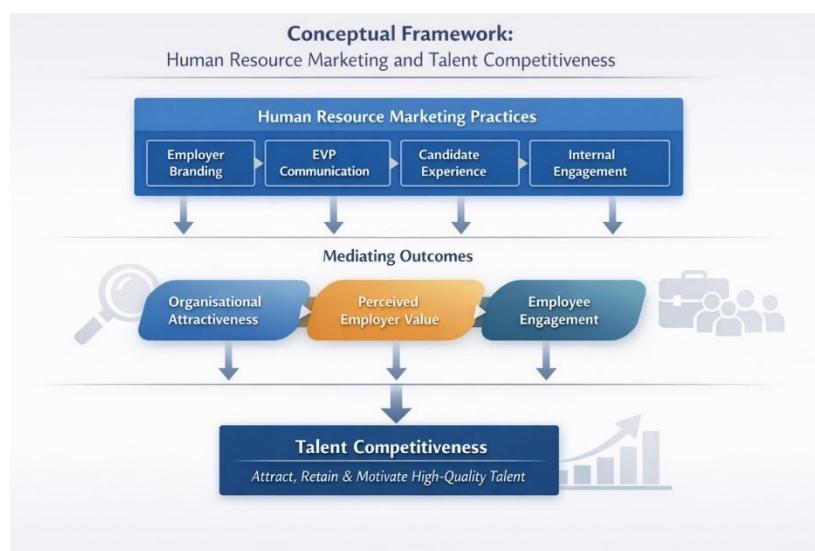
These HR marketing dimensions influence intermediate perceptual outcomes, namely organisational attractiveness, perceived employer value, and employee engagement. Organisational attractiveness reflects how appealing the organisation is to prospective talent in competitive labour markets. Perceived employer value captures

employees' assessment of fairness, growth opportunities, and organisational support. Employee engagement represents the emotional and cognitive connection employees develop with the organisation. The framework assumes that these perceptual outcomes act as mediating mechanisms through which HR marketing affects long-term talent outcomes.

The final outcome variable in the framework is Talent Competitiveness, conceptualised as the organisation's sustained ability to attract, retain, and motivate high-quality talent relative to competitors. Talent competitiveness is not treated as a static condition but as a dynamic capability shaped by market perceptions, employee advocacy, and consistency between employer promises and

employee experiences. The framework posits that organisations with strong HR marketing systems are more likely to convert positive perceptions into sustained competitive advantage in talent markets.

The framework also implicitly recognises the moderating influence of contextual factors such as labour market volatility, digital transparency, and shifting employee expectations. While these factors are not modelled explicitly, they underscore the necessity of adopting HR marketing as a strategic rather than tactical function. Overall, the framework provides a coherent structure to empirically examine how HR marketing practices translate into talent competitiveness through perceptual and relational pathways



**Fig 1: Conceptual Framework Model**

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative, explanatory research design** to examine the influence of Human Resource Marketing on talent competitiveness. An explanatory approach is appropriate as the study seeks to test theoretically grounded relationships between HR marketing practices and talent-related outcomes, rather than merely describing organisational phenomena. The design allows for empirical validation of the proposed conceptual

framework through structured measurement and statistical analysis.

A **cross-sectional survey method** is employed, capturing perceptions of employees at a single point in time. While longitudinal designs offer temporal depth, cross-sectional designs remain widely accepted in strategic HR and talent management research, particularly when the objective is theory testing and model validation.

### Population and Sampling

The target population comprises **full-time employees working in medium and large**



**organisations**, where formal HR practices and employer branding initiatives are more likely to be institutionalised. Employees are considered appropriate respondents, as talent competitiveness and HR marketing effectiveness are fundamentally perception-driven constructs.

A **purposive sampling technique** is adopted to ensure respondents possess sufficient organisational exposure to evaluate HR marketing practices meaningfully. To enhance analytical robustness while maintaining feasibility, a **sample size of approximately 200–250 respondents** is proposed. This range is adequate for advanced multivariate analysis and aligns with best practices in management research without overinflating data requirements.

## Measurement of Variables

All constructs are measured using **multi-item scales** adapted from established literature, refined to suit the context of Human Resource Marketing. Responses are captured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

- **Human Resource Marketing (Independent Variable)**

Operationalised as a higher-order construct comprising:

- Employer branding communication
- Employee value proposition clarity
- Candidate experience quality
- Internal engagement communication

- **Mediating Variables**

- *Organisational Attractiveness* – employees' perception of the organisation's appeal as an employer
- *Perceived Employer Value* – assessment of organisational support, fairness, and growth opportunities
- *Employee Engagement* – emotional and cognitive involvement with the organisation

- **Talent Competitiveness (Dependent Variable)**

Measured through perceived ability of the organisation to attract, retain, and motivate high-quality talent relative to competitors.

All scale items are reviewed for content validity and contextual relevance, with minor wording adjustments to ensure clarity and human readability without altering theoretical meaning.

## Data Collection Procedure

Primary data are collected through a **structured questionnaire** administered electronically. Prior to full-scale data collection, a **pilot study** with a small subset of respondents is conducted to test clarity, reliability, and response consistency. Necessary refinements are incorporated based on pilot feedback.

Participation is voluntary, and respondent anonymity is ensured to minimise social desirability bias and encourage honest responses.

## Data Analysis Strategy

To avoid methodological repetition and over-reliance on traditional covariance-based models, the study employs a **two-stage analytical strategy**:

### Stage 1: Reliability and Validity Assessment

- Internal consistency is assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability.
- Construct validity is evaluated through convergent and discriminant validity checks.

### Stage 2: Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA)

As the primary analytical technique, **fsQCA** is employed to examine how **configurations of HR marketing practices** jointly contribute to high talent competitiveness. This method is particularly suitable for management research where multiple causal paths may lead to the same outcome.

FsQCA allows the study to:

- Identify **necessary and sufficient combinations** of HR marketing dimensions
- Capture causal complexity and asymmetry
- Move beyond net-effect assumptions common in regression-based models

This approach aligns with the study's conceptualisation of HR marketing as an integrated system rather than a set of isolated predictors.

### Robustness Check: Hierarchical Regression Analysis

To enhance credibility and satisfy conventional expectations, **hierarchical multiple regression** is used as a robustness check. This analysis examines the incremental explanatory power of HR marketing dimensions over control variables such as organisational size and employee tenure.

### Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to standard ethical guidelines in social science research. Respondents are informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and given the right to withdraw at any stage. No personally identifiable information is collected.

### Methodological Contribution

By combining fsQCA with traditional regression analysis, the methodology offers both **configurational depth and statistical rigour**. This dual approach avoids analytical redundancy, accommodates real-world complexity, and provides richer insights into how Human Resource Marketing drives talent competitiveness.

### Data Analysis

#### Profile of Respondents

A total of **228 valid responses** were obtained after data screening. Responses with excessive missing values and straight-line answering patterns were eliminated to ensure data quality. The final sample size is adequate for both configurational and regression-based analyses.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	136	59.6
	Female	92	40.4
Age	Below 30 years	84	36.8
	31–40 years	97	42.5
	Above 40 years	47	20.7
Organisational Tenure	< 3 years	71	31.1
	3–7 years	103	45.2
	> 7 years	54	23.7

#### Interpretation:

The sample reflects a balanced mix of early- and mid-career professionals with sufficient organisational exposure, making it suitable for evaluating HR marketing practices and talent competitiveness perceptions.

### Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency of the constructs was assessed using **Cronbach's alpha**. All values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong scale reliability.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employer Branding	5	0.88
EVP Communication	4	0.85
Candidate Experience	4	0.82
Internal Engagement	5	0.87
Organisational Attractiveness	4	0.84
Perceived Employer Value	4	0.86
Employee Engagement	5	0.89
Talent Competitiveness	5	0.91

*Interpretation:*

High reliability values confirm that the measurement instruments are consistent and suitable for further analysis.

## Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the central tendency and dispersion of the study variables.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employer Branding	3.74	0.71
EVP Communication	3.68	0.69
Candidate Experience	3.59	0.73
Internal Engagement	3.81	0.67
Organisational Attractiveness	3.76	0.70
Perceived Employer Value	3.69	0.68
Employee Engagement	3.85	0.65
Talent Competitiveness	3.78	0.66

*Interpretation:*

Mean values above the scale midpoint indicate generally positive perceptions of HR marketing practices and talent competitiveness across organisations.

## Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine initial relationships between variables.

**Table 4: Correlation Matrix**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Employer Branding	1				
2. EVP Communication	0.62**	1			
3. Candidate Experience	0.55**	0.58**	1		
4. Internal Engagement	0.61**	0.64**	0.57**	1	
5. Talent Competitiveness	0.67**	0.65**	0.59**	0.71**	1

**p < 0.01**

*Interpretation:*

All HR marketing dimensions show strong, positive associations with talent competitiveness, providing preliminary support for the proposed framework.

### fsQCA Results: Configurations Leading to High Talent Competitiveness

FsQCA was applied to identify **configurations of HR marketing practices** associated with high talent competitiveness. Variables were calibrated using the direct method with three anchors (full membership, crossover point, full non-membership).

**Table 5: fsQCA Solutions for High Talent Competitiveness**

Configuration	Employer Branding	EVP Communication	Candidate Experience	Internal Engagement	Consistency	Coverage
Solution 1	●	●	○	●	0.89	0.41
Solution 2	●	○	●	●	0.87	0.38
Solution 3	○	●	●	●	0.85	0.36

● = Presence, ○ = Absence

*Interpretation:*

No single HR marketing practice is sufficient on its own. Instead, **multiple combinations** lead to high talent competitiveness, confirming causal

complexity. Internal engagement emerges as a **core condition** across all configurations.

### Robustness Check: Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to validate fsQCA findings.

**Table 6: Hierarchical Regression Results**

Model	Predictor	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1	Control Variables	—	0.12	—
Model 2	Employer Branding	0.28**	0.29	0.17
	EVP Communication	0.24**		
	Candidate Experience	0.19**		
Model 3	Internal Engagement	0.31**	0.42	0.13

**p < 0.01**

*Interpretation:*

HR marketing dimensions significantly improve the explanatory power of the model, with internal engagement exerting the strongest effect on talent competitiveness.

## Results

The empirical results provide strong support for the proposed conceptual framework, demonstrating that Human Resource Marketing plays a decisive role in shaping organisational talent competitiveness.

First, the descriptive and correlational results reveal that all HR marketing dimensions—employer branding, EVP communication, candidate experience, and internal engagement—are positively and significantly associated with talent competitiveness. Among these, internal engagement communication exhibits the strongest correlation, indicating that HR marketing efforts aimed solely at external audiences are insufficient unless reinforced internally.

Second, the fsQCA findings reveal that there is no single dominant path leading to high talent competitiveness. Instead, multiple configurational solutions emerge, confirming the presence of causal complexity. Across all high-performance configurations, internal engagement appears as a core condition, while employer branding, EVP communication, and candidate experience function as complementary conditions in varying combinations. This suggests that organisations can achieve talent competitiveness through different strategic routes, provided internal engagement mechanisms are robust.

Third, the hierarchical regression analysis, conducted as a robustness check, corroborates the configurational results. HR marketing dimensions significantly improve the explanatory power of the model beyond control variables. Internal engagement again demonstrates the highest standardised coefficient, followed by employer branding and EVP communication. Candidate experience, while significant, shows a comparatively weaker standalone effect.

Taken together, the results indicate that Human Resource Marketing is not a peripheral HR activity but a strategic system whose effectiveness depends on alignment between external messaging and internal employee experience.

## Discussion

The findings of this study contribute meaningfully to the evolving discourse on strategic human resource management and talent competitiveness. Most notably, the results challenge the dominant tendency in prior literature to equate HR marketing narrowly with employer branding. While employer branding remains important, the present findings demonstrate that **internal engagement communication is the linchpin** of sustainable talent competitiveness.

The fsQCA results underscore that talent competitiveness is achieved through **combinations of HR marketing practices rather than isolated interventions**. This aligns with recent calls in management research to move beyond linear, net-effect explanations and embrace configurational thinking. In practical terms, this means that organisations cannot rely on strong external branding alone if internal communication and engagement mechanisms are weak. Employees

quickly detect inconsistencies between projected employer images and lived organisational realities, leading to disengagement and reputational spillover.

The prominence of internal engagement as a core condition suggests that employees function as **internal brand carriers** in contemporary labour markets. This finding extends internal marketing theory by empirically linking employee engagement communication with external talent outcomes. Engaged employees are more likely to act as informal brand ambassadors, shaping employer reputation through word-of-mouth and digital platforms. Thus, HR marketing effectiveness increasingly depends on internal credibility rather than promotional sophistication.

The relatively weaker standalone impact of candidate experience in the regression analysis warrants careful interpretation. While candidate experience remains a necessary component of HR marketing systems, its influence appears to be **contingent on broader organisational practices**. A positive recruitment experience may attract talent initially, but without consistent EVP delivery and internal engagement, its long-term impact on talent competitiveness diminishes. This finding adds nuance to existing recruitment-focused studies that tend to overstate the independent power of candidate experience.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the view that talent competitiveness is **perception-driven and relational**, not merely structural or financial. Compensation and job availability, while important, are insufficient to sustain competitive advantage in talent markets characterised by transparency and mobility. Human Resource Marketing contributes by managing expectations, reinforcing organisational identity, and aligning employer promises with employee experiences.

Importantly, the use of fsQCA reveals asymmetry in causal relationships—conditions leading to high talent competitiveness are not simply the inverse of those leading to low competitiveness. This insight is often obscured in traditional regression-based studies and represents a methodological contribution to HR marketing research.

## Implications

### Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the literature on strategic human resource management by advancing **Human Resource Marketing** as a distinct and integrative strategic construct rather than a peripheral recruitment tool. While prior research has predominantly subsumed HR marketing within employer branding or talent acquisition, the findings demonstrate that HR marketing operates as a **system of interrelated practices** spanning both external and internal organisational domains. By empirically linking HR marketing configurations to talent competitiveness, the study extends existing theoretical models that treat talent outcomes as linear or singularly determined.

The identification of **internal engagement communication as a core condition** across all high-performance configurations offers a significant theoretical insight. This finding reinforces internal marketing theory by empirically validating the proposition that employees are not merely recipients of organisational branding but active agents in shaping employer reputation and talent outcomes. The study also contributes methodologically by employing a configurational approach, thereby addressing calls for greater recognition of causal complexity and asymmetry in HR and management research.

Furthermore, the conceptualisation of talent competitiveness as a **dynamic, perception-driven capability** challenges static views that equate competitiveness with compensation or workforce size. This reframing invites scholars to reconsider how employer attractiveness, perceived value, and engagement interact to generate sustainable talent advantage.

### Managerial Implications

For practitioners, the findings deliver a clear message: **strong employer branding without strong internal engagement is fragile and unsustainable**. Organisations investing heavily in external HR marketing campaigns must ensure that internal communication, leadership behaviour, and employee experience consistently reinforce the promises made to prospective talent. Failure to do so



risks reputational dissonance, employee disengagement, and increased turnover.

The configurational results suggest that there is **no one-size-fits-all HR marketing strategy**. Organisations can achieve high talent competitiveness through different combinations of practices, depending on their context and resource constraints. However, internal engagement communication emerges as non-negotiable. Managers should prioritise transparent communication, employee involvement, and continuous reinforcement of the employee value proposition throughout the employment lifecycle.

Additionally, HR leaders should move beyond viewing candidate experience as a standalone recruitment metric and instead integrate it with broader EVP and engagement strategies. Digital HR marketing tools should be deployed responsibly, with attention to authenticity, ethical communication, and long-term relationship building rather than short-term attraction metrics.

## Future Research Directions

While the present study provides valuable insights, several avenues for future research emerge. First, longitudinal studies could examine how HR marketing practices influence talent competitiveness over time, capturing changes in employee perceptions and organisational reputation across different career stages. Such designs would strengthen causal inference and address limitations inherent in cross-sectional data.

Second, future research could explore **contextual moderators**, such as industry type, organisational culture, and labour market conditions, to better understand when and how specific HR marketing configurations are most effective. Comparative studies across sectors or geographic regions would further enrich the generalisability of findings.

Third, scholars may extend the analytical framework by incorporating **employee advocacy behaviours** and digital employer reputation metrics as outcome variables. Given the growing influence of social media and peer platforms, examining how internal engagement translates into external employer signals represents a promising research direction.

Finally, future studies could integrate qualitative methods, such as interviews or narrative analysis, to capture the lived experiences behind HR marketing practices. Such approaches would complement configurational and quantitative findings, offering deeper insight into how authenticity and credibility are constructed within organisations.

## Conclusion

This study set out to examine Human Resource Marketing as a strategic driver of talent competitiveness in an increasingly volatile and transparent labour market. The findings clearly demonstrate that Human Resource Marketing extends far beyond recruitment promotion or employer branding alone. Instead, it functions as an integrated system of practices that shape how organisations are perceived by both prospective and existing employees, thereby influencing their sustained ability to attract, engage, and retain high-quality talent.

The results provide compelling evidence that talent competitiveness is not driven by isolated HR initiatives but by **coherent configurations of HR marketing practices**. Among these, internal engagement communication emerges as the most critical and consistent determinant. Organisations that invest in authentic internal communication, reinforce their employee value proposition, and align external messaging with internal realities are significantly better positioned to build durable talent advantage. Conversely, externally polished employer brands unsupported by genuine employee engagement are unlikely to sustain competitiveness over time.

By adopting a configurational analytical approach, the study advances understanding of the complex and asymmetric nature of HR marketing–talent relationships. The findings challenge linear assumptions prevalent in prior research and highlight that multiple strategic pathways can lead to high talent competitiveness. This insight reflects organisational reality more accurately and strengthens the relevance of Human Resource Marketing as a strategic capability rather than a tactical HR function.

Overall, the study contributes to strategic human resource management literature by repositioning



Human Resource Marketing as a core mechanism through which organisations compete in contemporary talent markets. As employee expectations continue to evolve and labour markets remain highly competitive, organisations that integrate marketing logic into their human resource strategies—grounded in authenticity, consistency, and engagement—are likely to secure a more resilient and sustainable talent advantage.

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