

ORGANISATIONAL BRAND PRIDE AND THE EMPLOYEE ATTITUDE IN SME'S IN IKEJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA LAGOS STATE

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Abstract`

Research Objectives: This study examined the influence of organisational brand pride on the employee psyche in selected small and medium enterprises (SMEs) located in Ikeja, Lagos State. The study assesses the degree to which organisational identification, brand-aligned behaviour, and employee advocacy influences the psychological well-being and mental involvement of staff members.

Methodology: The study employed a quantitative research technique, which involved gathering data from five SMEs through structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were used to evaluate the data.

Findings: The results showed that organisational identification significantly and positively affects the employee psyche, therefore employees who strongly link with their organisation tend to exhibit higher psychological engagement. Brand-aligned behaviour had significant effect on the employee psyche, suggesting a need for a fair approach in promoting brand-conforming actions. Although showing a negative impact, employee advocacy was not significant on the employee psyche. The research finds that enhancing employee morale and mental health depends on developing a high feeling of organisational belonging.

Recommendations: It recommends that small enterprises provide supportive environments that encourage identification with company values while also guaranteeing staff members are not overworked by unattainable brand expectations. These results offer SME managers workable ideas on how to use internal branding to improve employee engagement, therefore adding to the body of knowledge on organizational behavior.

Keywords: *Brand-Aligned Behavior, Employee Advocacy, Employee Psyche, Organizational Identification*

INTRODUCTION

Organizational behavior studies have increasingly focused on the idea of employee psyche, which comprises the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns affecting job attitudes and actions. It mirrors employees' perceptions of their organizational context, including motivations, self-esteem, and job satisfaction (Mihaela et al., 2022). Increased engagement, production, and general that is link to positive employee attitude (kouretal.,2019). On the other hand, a disturbed or unfavorable mental state could cause low morale, subpar work, and high turnover. Understanding employee psychology becomes crucial for promoting a helpful and performance-driven organisational culture as contemporary workplaces change with rising demands and expectations (Pougajendyet al., 2024).

Employee outcomes are greatly shaped by several psychological theories including emotional intelligence, psychological empowerment, and perceived organizational support. Employees that feel appreciated, trusted, and in touch with their workplace are more likely to show discretionary effort and organizational citizenship behavior (Marinova et al., 2019). Organizational image and employees' internalization of the values, vision, and mission conveyed by the employer influence these psychological reactions in turn. Thus, the workplace is a dynamic arena for psychological interaction that influences employee identity and motivation, not only avenue for task completion.

Organisational brand pride, which is the feeling of pride and emotional fulfillment workers get from being connected with their company's brand, is a developing field of interest within this domain. Employees who take pride in the brand of their company might experience improved psychological well-being, enhanced dedication, and more supporter behavior (Kim et al., 2019). This interaction implies that psychological motivator organisational brand pride is not only a branding result. Hence, exploring the relationship between organisational brand pride and the employee psyche is critical for understanding how internal branding influences employee attitudes and performance.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's economic growth depends greatly on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), particularly those in Ikeja, Lagos State. Still, many of these companies struggle constantly with psychological well-being, motivation, and employee morale. Inadequate job security, lack of

career advancement, insufficient recognition, and poor working conditions all contribute to affecting the employee psyche in SMEs (Masamba & Kajongwe, 2024). Low employee engagement increased turnover rates, and lower production resulting from these problems all ultimately slow down business sustainability and expansion.

Though a positive employee psyche is well acknowledged as being important, many SME owners and managers in Ikeja ignore the psychological demands of their employees and instead concentrate on operational and financial issues (Parast & Oke, 2022). Employees may become disconnected from the organizational mission and feel undervalued as a result of this neglect. Moreover, there is little study on how internal branding techniques, specifically organizational brand pride, might be used to enhance the psychological experiences of staff members working in SMEs in this area. Neglecting the psychological aspects of work, small and medium enterprises could keep having problems with human capital retention and organizational commitment. Hence, this study aims to investigate the relationship between organisational brand pride and employee psyche in small and medium enterprises with the goal of spotting means of improving employee well-being and performance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine organizational brand pride and the employee psyche: A study of organizational branding effects on self-worth. This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To determine the effect of employee advocacy on employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.
- ii. To examine the effect of brand-aligned behaviour on employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.
- iii. To investigate the effect of organizational identification on employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.

Literature Review Organisational Brand Pride

Organizational brand pride is the emotional connection and sense of pride employees have toward the brand, values, and reputation of their organization (Ilyas et al., 2019) . It develops when workers' identification with the brand's goal and success promotes good attitudes toward their work and the company. Often linked to this pride are more organizational commitment, better employee performance, and more job satisfaction (Anh&Tri,2022).Employees who take pride in the brand are more likely to exhibit behaviors supporting the brand and promote its values, hence helping the company to run well both internally and outside.

Employee Advocacy

Employee advocacy is the ability of employees supporting and promoting the brand, values, and reputation of their company internally and outside (Thelen, 2020). It includes workers serving as ambassadors, highlighting good experiences and helping with company aims. Employees' emotional connection to their company drives this behavior, which Yao et al. (2019) argue could boost their loyalty and dedication. When workers support the brand, it can enhance the public perception of the company, raise customer trust, and draw interestingly talented people. Strengthening external contacts and organizational identity depends critically on employee advocacy.

Brand-Aligned Behaviour

Brand-aligned behavior is defined by Xiong & King (2019) as the actions and attitudes of employees that reflect and support the brand of their organization's values, mission, and identity. It ensures consistency between the external brand image of the firm and internal processes by means of employees leaving the brand in their everyday work. When staff members act consistently with the brand, they help to strengthen the brand's authenticity and create a unified, powerful organizational identity (Lim et al., 2024). This conduct not only improves customer happiness but also increases staff involvement and organizational performance.

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification is the psychological process whereby people match their own values, goals, and self-concept with those of their company (Afshari,2023). Employees who see their

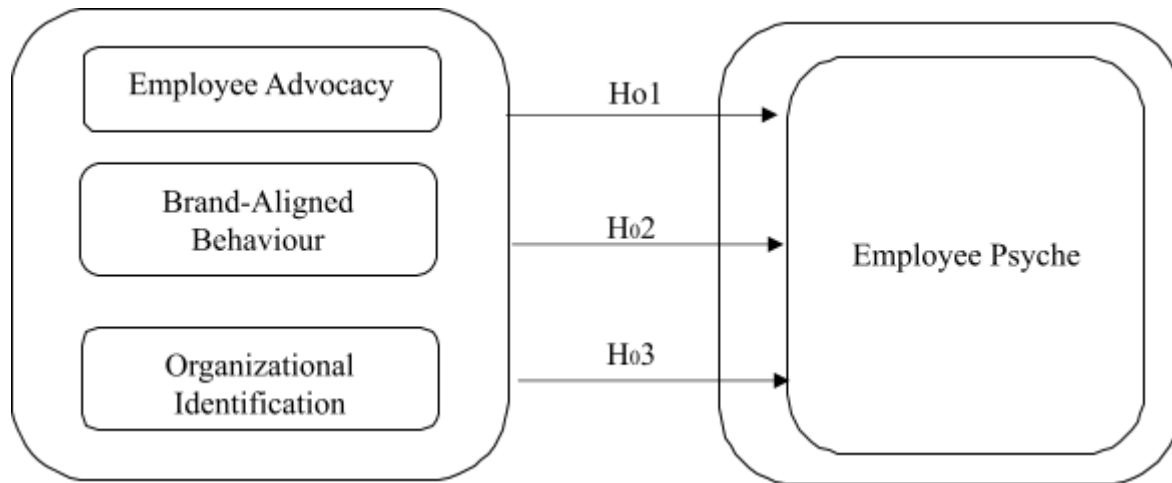
Company as an extension of themselves become more loyal, devoted, and engaged is (Abroretal. 2020). This feeling of belonging boosts their motivation to help the company meet its goals. De-Kerpel & Van-Kerckhove (2023) asserted that organizational identification also promotes brand pride and employee advocacy as employees internalize the organization's brand values and advocate for them both within and outside the organization.

Employee Psyche

Employee psyche, that is, the mental and emotional state of employees includes their thoughts, feelings, and psychological well-being in the workplace (Loonetal.,2019). It comprises elements like job satisfaction, motivation, stress, and emotional attachment of the organization, all of which affect general performance (Irabor & Okolie, 2019) According to Kour et al. (2019), a positive employee psychology correlates with increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, and improved job commitment. On the other hand, unfavourable psychological conditions can cause turnover, disengagement, and burnout. Improving organizational performance and improving workplace dynamics depend on an awareness of employee psychology.

Conceptual Framework





Source: Researcher Compilation (2025)

Theoretical Review

The theoretical review focus on the social identity theory and organizational support theory.

Social Identity Theory

In 1979, Henri Tajfel and John Turner introduced Social Identity Theory (SIT), which aims to determine how people group themselves and others according to their membership in a particular group. According to the theory, individuals' self-concept is partly based on their perceived membership in social groups, such companies or workplaces (Tang&Vandenberghe,2022).This classification enhances self-esteem and motivates people to behave in accordance with group norms by fostering in-group favoritism and a sense of belonging. SIT's fundamental premise is that people want to keep a good social identity. This is accomplished by looking at their in-group preferences versus out-groups (Hitlin et al., 2021). Workers who really relate to their company tend to show pride, allegiance, and psychological involvement in the job, therefore enhancing performance.

Researcher that supported the theory which include Ficapal-Cusí et al. (2020) assert that social identification enhances cooperative behavior and stronger organizational commitment. Critics contend, however, that the idea ignores personal personality variations and could overstate group influence in more difficult working conditions (Zoromba et al., 2024). SIT is important for this study since it helps to clarify how staff members' identification with the corporate brand fosters organizational brand pride, therefore improving their workplace behavior and psychological well-being.

Organizational Support Theory

Organizational Support Theory (OST) was developed by Eisenberger et al. (1986) to clarify how people view the degree to which their welfare and value of contributions their organization values OST claims that employees who see great levels of organizational support are more likely to be dedicated to the company and show positive behaviors like higher job satisfaction and improved performance (Ridwan et al., 2020). Encouragement of a good worker mindset depends on this perceived support. OST's fundamental premise is that workers' interactions and level of feeling supported determine how they perceive the organization, therefore affecting their motivation and attitude towards the job. Employees that feel supported are more likely to grow organizational

pride and match the values of the company, therefore improving their mental and emotional link to the brand (Wang & Yang 2025).

Supporters of OST, including Albalawi et al. (2019) contend that a strong indicator of organizational commitment and job satisfaction is organizational support. Critics argue, though, that the theory could not capture the complexity of worker experiences in varied workplace situations (Spivack&Woodside,2019).OST is pertinent for this study since it assists in explaining how organizational brand pride may act as a kind of perceived organizational support, therefore promoting good psychological effects among workers.

Empirical Review

Abadi et al. (2021) explored the concept of employee brand pride in the context of organizational branding. He argued that employees' pride in the organization's brand directly influences their emotional attachment to the company, which, in turn, affects their psychological well-being and work-related behavior. This connection boosts employees' overall morale strengthens their commitment and enhances their organizational performance. The study emphasizes the importance of internal branding strategies in cultivating a sense of pride among employees. The study concluded that employees' psychological attachment to the brand fosters positive organizational outcomes, including greater job satisfaction, loyalty, and proactive behavior in promoting the brand to external stakeholders.

Durrahetal. (2019) examined the impact of organizational brand pride on employee behavior and organizational commitment. They used as sample of employees from various service industries and employed a quantitative research approach to measure the relationship between employees' perceptions of their organization's brand and their work attitudes. The researchers found a significant positive correlation between employees' pride in their company's brand and their levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. The studysuggestedthatemployeeswhoperceivetheirorganization'sbrandasprestigiousandaligned with their personal values are more likely to exhibit behaviors that contribute to organizational success, such as going above and beyond their job requirements and advocating for the brand.



Kraemeretal. (2020) extended the study of organizational brand pride by examining its influence

On customer-oriented behaviors in service employees. Their search focused on employees working in the hospitality industry, where customer interactions are vital for business success. The study found that when employees felt a sense of pride in their company's brand, they exhibited higher levels of customer orientation, which in turn enhanced customers at its faction and loyalty. The study highlighted how employees' psychological connection to their organization's brand directly impacted their attitudes toward customer service. Their findings suggest that brand pride not only influences internal work behaviors but also has far-reaching effects on the company's external performance.

Gordon et al. (2021) conducted a seminal study on organizational identification, which is closely related to organizational brand pride. They found that employees who strongly identified with their organization were more likely to experience a sense of pride and emotional attachment to the brand. This sense of identity and pride translated into increased organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The researchers argued that organizational identification was a critical factor in determining how employees perceive their work environment and how committed they are to the organization's goals. The study suggested that the extent to which employees internalize the values and image of the organizations insignificantly affects their psychological state, influencing their work attitudes and behavior.

Eisenbergeretal. (2020) explored the broader concept of perceived organizational support (POS) and its relationship to employees' psychological well-being and work outcomes. While not directly focusing on brand pride, their research provided insights into how employees' perceptions of organizational support can influence their job satisfaction and emotional attachment to the company. The researchers found that when employees feel supported by their organization, they are more likely to experience higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and engagement. This support can come in various forms, including recognition, fair treatment, and opportunities for professional growth. Eisenberger et al. suggested that perceived organizational support is an essential factor that shapes employees' emotional connection to the organization, which is a key precursor to brand pride.

Ridwanetal. (2020) conducted a comprehensive review of the concept to perceived organizational support (POS) and its effects on employee attitudes and behaviors. Their research synthesized

various studies and confirmed that POS is positively related to employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance. The authors argued that employees who perceive high levels of organizational support tend to develop positive emotional connections to the organization, which leads to enhanced work motivation and pride in the organization. This emotional connection fosters a sense of psychological ownership and pride, which enhances employees' psychological state and overall job satisfaction.

Barros-Arrieta and García-Cali (2021) explored the role of internal branding in fostering organizational brand pride. Their study focused on how organizations can use internal communication and branding strategies to create a sense of pride among employees. They found that employees who are exposed to strong internal branding messages, which emphasize the company's values and mission, are more likely to develop pride in the organization's brand. This brand pride, in turn, led to improved work attitudes, including increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Sartori and Canestrari concluded that internal branding is a powerful tool for enhancing employees' psychological connection to the brand, which positively influences their work performance.

METHODS

The study involved conducting a descriptive survey on the relationship between employee psyche and organizational brand pride in Ikeja, Lagos State. This design was suited for recording employees' views, attitudes, and actions about their emotional connection to the brand of their organization and its psychological effects. Employees from chosen small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Ikeja Lagos State formed the study's population. These workers were engaged in several areas, including retail, hospitality, and services.

S/N	SMEs	Population
1	Ruff'n' Tumble	150
2	Halisi Consults	9
3	Simply Energy Solutions and Services Limited	8
4	Rejoice Forte Nigeria Limited	20

5	Zion Stream Limited	5
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TOTAL	192
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Source: Field Survey,2025

A sample size of 192 employees was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure that various SMEs were adequately represented, providing a diverse view of the population.

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, which was developed to assess employees' levels of brand pride and their psychological well-being. The questionnaire included Likert scale items that measured key variables such as organizational pride, job satisfaction, employee engagement, and emotional attachment. The completed questionnaires were distributed and collected from respondents either physically or electronically, depending on convenience.

For data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analysis, were used to determine the relationships between organizational brand pride and employee psychological outcomes.

Results and Discussions Table2: Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.244	0.382		3.255	0.001
	Employee Advocacy	-0.171	0.104	-0.155	-1.642	0.102
	Brand-Aligned Behaviour	-0.424	0.098	-0.517	-4.302	0.000
	Organizational Identification	1.329	0.105	1.477	12.641	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Psyche						
b. R =0.871 R ² =0.759AdjR ² =0.755 F-Stats= 197.215 P-value= 0.000						

Source: Author’s Compilation (2025) Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no relationship between employee advocacy on employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State

Employee Advocacy has a negative unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.171$) and a p -value of 0.102, suggesting that its influence on the employee psyche is negative and statistically insignificant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between employee advocacy on employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between brand-aligned behaviour and employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.

Brand-Aligned behaviour also shows a negative relationship ($B = -0.424$) but with a high t -value (-4.302) and a significance level of 0.000, indicating a strong and statistically significant negative impact on the employee psyche. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between brand-aligned behavior and employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between organizational identification and employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State

Organizational Identification has a strong positive effect ($B = 1.329$), with a highly significant p -value (0.000) and a large beta coefficient (1.477). This shows that employees who identify strongly with the organization contribute significantly and positively to employee psyche. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between organizational identification and employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of organizational brand pride on employee psyche in selected SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State. The research focused on understanding how employee advocacy, brand-aligned behaviour, and organizational identification influence the psychological engagement and mental well-being of employees. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, and the



results were analysed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that

while employee advocacy and brand-aligned behaviour showed varying degrees of influence, organizational identification had a strong and statistically significant positive impact on employee psyche. This suggests that employees who feel a deep sense of belonging and alignment with the organization are more psychologically engaged and emotionally connected to their work. The study concludes that fostering a strong organizational identity is essential for improving employee well-being. SMEs should prioritize initiatives that build internal brand pride to enhance employee morale, motivation, and long-term commitment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that SMEs in Ikeja, Lagos State should prioritize strengthening organizational identification among their workforces. When employees feel a strong sense of belonging and alignment with the organization's values and mission, they are more likely to experience psychological engagement and motivation. Management should create opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making processes, reinforce shared values through internal communications, and consistently recognize employee contributions to build a culture of identification and pride.

Additionally, while brand-aligned behaviour showed a negative significant relationship, it is important to re-evaluate how brand expectations are communicated and implemented. Overemphasis on brand conformity without adequate support may lead to psychological strain. Therefore, organizations should strike a balance by providing training, clarifying brand standards, and allowing some level of employee autonomy. This approach can encourage brand-consistent behaviours without harming employee psyche.

Although employee advocacy was not statistically significant, fostering a culture of voluntary advocacy should not be ignored. Encouraging authentic and organic expression of brand support through recognition programs, open communication, and a positive work environment can enhance overall morale and employee engagement over time. By integrating these strategies, SMEs can enhance organizational brand pride while safe guarding the mental well-being of their employees.

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