



**Effect of corporate identity on employee job satisfaction:
Insights for internal branding**

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Short Bio

Hasan Gilani is a Principal Lecturer and Course Leader at the University of Brighton's School of Business and Law, holding the status of a Certified Management and Business Educator (CMBE). His career bridges academia and industry, having held significant corporate managerial roles within the FMCG and retail sectors prior to his academic appointments across various UK universities and organisations, including the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

Dr. Gilani's research programme is centred on Brand Management, with specific expertise in Corporate Identity, Employee Branding, and Brand Citizenship Behaviours. His scholarly work has evolved to encompass Retail and Fashion Marketing, the Circular Economy, and contemporary digital landscapes. His current research investigates digital marketing phenomena, including micro-moments, Generation Alpha, in-game retailing, and the impact of generative AI on future brands. His recently published book, *Decolonising Marketing Theory and Practice: Beyond Inclusivity and Sustainability Debates*, has garnered international acclaim from academics and researchers in the field. His research has also been disseminated through publications in peer-reviewed journals such as *The Marketing Review* and at numerous international conferences.

A dedicated academic leader, Dr. Gilani is deeply committed to advancing pedagogical practice and inclusivity. He recently served as the School's Inclusive Practice Lead and is currently leading the university's 'Decolonising the Curriculum' project. He is an active member of the School's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Committee and the Cross Schools Research Ethics Committee, reflecting his commitment to fostering an equitable academic environment.

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14 *among others*.
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Effect of corporate identity on employee job satisfaction: Insights for internal branding

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Effect of corporate identity on employee job satisfaction: Insights for internal branding

Abstract

Purpose - This study examines the impact of corporate identity on employee job satisfaction within retail organizations. Specifically, it investigates (a) the impact of corporate identity constructs on employee job satisfaction and (b) the relationship between corporate identity determinants and employee brand identification and their effect on employee job satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach – The study employs a mixed-methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Semi-structured in-depth interviews with retail corporate directors supported by a literature review are conducted to develop a conceptual model. We then tested the theoretical model using empirical data collected from employees of retail organizations, and performed statistical data analysis using structural equation modeling.

Findings – Corporate identity constructs are found to affect employee job satisfaction both directly and through the mediating role of corporate culture and the employee brand identification construct.

Originality/value – The study enhances our understanding of how corporate identity affects job satisfaction and offers insights for internal branding by understanding the interplay between corporate identity, job satisfaction, and employee brand identification.

Research limitations/implications – The study proposes an integrative conceptual model that incorporates constructs from the corporate identity, internal branding, and job satisfaction literature, which have often been viewed in isolation. However, future research could extend the corporate identity framework to assess the influence of the construct on other marketing or financial areas, such as reputation, word of mouth, and financial performance.

Practical implications – The study indicates that decision-makers should be cautious about designing and implementing corporate identity strategies, as corporate identity directly impacts employees' perception of the organization they serve in.

Keywords: Corporate identity, Employee branding, Job satisfaction, Internal branding, Brand identification, Retail

Paper Type: Research paper

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1.0 Introduction

Corporate identity is a strategic asset that enhances differentiation, reputation, and financial performance (Balmer, 2017; Bravo et al., 2016; Melewar, 2003; Romaniuk et al., 2007). Closely tied to corporate branding and marketing (Balmer, 2022), it is vital for stakeholders (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Balmer & Greyser, 2003). Leadership must treat corporate identity as a durable trait, influencing employee motivation and retention (Balmer, 2017; Sarasvuo, 2021; Melewar et al., 2005).

Despite its importance, empirical links between corporate identity, employee brand identification, and job satisfaction remain underexplored (Sinitsyna et al., 2023; Stuart, 2002). Brand identification fosters brand-aligned behaviors (Ind, 2007; King & Grace, 2008; Piehler et al., 2016; Rudkowski, 2024), though theoretical gaps persist (Tourky et al., 2020). This study addresses these gaps by examining corporate identity’s impact on job satisfaction and its relationship with brand identification in retail, where employee-customer interactions shape brand perception (Bravo et al., 2016; Hogueve et al., 2022).

Retail’s competitive, customer-facing nature—with high turnover and reliance on frontline staff—makes it ideal for studying identity’s influence (Du Preez et al., 2017; Hogueve et al., 2022). Employees act as brand ambassadors, and their behaviors directly affect customer perceptions of reliability and value (de Chernatony et al., 2003; Morhart et al., 2009; Garas et al., 2018; Veloutsou, 2023). Internal branding ensures consistent brand delivery and enhances employee satisfaction (Miles & Mangold, 2004; Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006; Piehler et al., 2016; Bravo et al., 2017).

Retail employees, as visible representatives, shape impressions through behavior, communication, and engagement, making brand identification key to equity (Miles & Mangold, 2004; Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). This highlights internal branding to align perceptions with identity for consistent delivery. The sector’s competition and customer focus amplify employee satisfaction's value: satisfied staff exhibit brand-supporting behaviors, boosting loyalty and differentiation (Piehler et al., 2016; Bravo et al., 2017). Thus, this study captures interplay between internal constructs and external perception, yielding theoretically rich, practical insights for service industries.

Internal branding aligns employee perceptions with corporate identity, ensuring consistent brand delivery (Miles & Mangold, 2004; Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006). Satisfied employees exhibit brand-supporting behaviors, enhancing loyalty and differentiation (Piehler et al., 2016; Bravo et al., 2017). This research extends identity literature by empirically

testing its link to job satisfaction and brand identification (Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021; Porricelli et al., 2014; Foster et al., 2010), offering managers a framework for identity management and employee engagement (Balmer, 2017; Balmer & Greyser, 2003; He, 2008; Sinitsyna et al., 2023).

2.0 Literature review

Service sector employees play a pivotal role in shaping corporate brands (Miles & Mangold, 2004; Hogreve et al., 2022; Veloutsou, 2023). Morhart et al. (2009, p. 122) emphasized that “customers’ perceptions of a service brand depend highly on the behavior of frontline staff,” reinforcing that brand image and customer experience are closely tied to employee conduct (de Chernatony et al., 2003). Concepts such as “brand ambassador” (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006), “brand champion” (Fram & McCarthy, 2003; Morhart et al., 2009), and “living the brand” (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005) reflect this dynamic. Employee advocacy, linked to job satisfaction, encourages brand-supporting behaviors and positive word-of-mouth (Boukis et al., 2021; King & Grace, 2012).

Corporate identity, shaped by internal perceptions, connects employees to the organization and fosters belonging (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Verbos et al., 2007; Balmer, 2008; Porricelli et al., 2014; Sinitsyna et al., 2023). From a functionalist perspective, it is a strategic asset influencing motivation, retention, and satisfaction (Melewar et al., 2005; Wheeler et al., 2006). This view highlights measurable elements—core values, culture, and communication—as key drivers of employee behavior (Kitchen et al., 2013).

However, a process-oriented perspective views corporate identity as a dynamic, evolving construct shaped by ongoing interactions and sensemaking within the organization (Gioia et al., 2013). Gioia et al. (2013) argue that organizational identity is not static but continuously negotiated through social processes, where employees and stakeholders co-create identity through shared meanings and interpretations. Similarly, Christensen and Askegaard (2001) adopt a semiotic perspective, suggesting that corporate identity emerges through the

interplay of signs, symbols, and stakeholder perceptions, challenging the notion of a fixed or managerially controlled identity. Integrating these perspectives highlights that corporate identity is both a strategic tool and a fluid, socially constructed phenomenon, necessitating a more nuanced understanding of its impact on employees. Recent studies reinforce this, showing that corporate identity management in sectors like retail and hospitality influences employee perceptions, empowering them and fostering inclusion, which indirectly shapes organizational reputation (Dang and Do, 2024).

Organizational identity focuses on how employees internally perceive their company (Blombäck & Brunninge, 2009), while brand identification reflects their emotional connection to it (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). Strong identification fosters positivity, even under adverse conditions (Van Dick et al., 2004). However, links between corporate culture, identity, and brand commitment remain underexplored (Ismail & Umar Baki, 2017; Price & Whiteley, 2014). Employees aligned with a positive identity show greater satisfaction and motivation (Wheeler et al., 2006), enhancing commitment and retention (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri et al., 2009). Sudden identity shifts may disrupt this bond (Bravo et al., 2017; Piehler et al., 2016). From a process perspective, such shifts may reflect ongoing identity negotiations, where employees reinterpret the organization's identity in response to changes, impacting their identification and satisfaction (Gioia et al., 2013).

As employees are a key competitive advantage, effectively communicating corporate identity is essential. Through stakeholder interactions, employees shape external perceptions and act as brand ambassadors (Stuart, 2002). The functionalistic view emphasizes clear communication of identity constructs to align employee behavior, while a process-oriented lens highlights the role of continuous dialogue and meaning-making in shaping how employees perceive and enact the corporate identity (Thøger Christensen & Askegaard, 2001).

2.1 Influence of corporate identity constructs on employee job satisfaction

Bateman and Organ (1983) defined job satisfaction as an employee's emotional response to their work, shaped by feelings of pleasure, accomplishment, and pride. This emotional state is influenced by factors such as career growth, working conditions, compensation, job roles, skills, emotions, self-worth, and motivation (Swaminathan & Jawahar, 2013). Employees are central to corporate identity management, as a strong internal identity can enhance motivation, performance, satisfaction, and retention (Gorb, 1992; Melewar et al., 2006; Olins, 2017; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997).

Corporate identity has gained increasing scholarly attention (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Balmer & Greyser, 2003; Balmer & Wilson, 1998; Cornelissen & Elving, 2003; Hatch & Schultz, 2000; Kitchen et al., 2013; Markwick & Fill, 1997; Tourky et al., 2020). Melewar's (2003) taxonomy remains a foundational framework for understanding corporate identity constructs. Kitchen et al. (2013) expanded this taxonomy into a comprehensive model, which underpins the current research. Their framework integrates multiple dimensions of corporate identity management, including strategic, behavioral, and communicative components.

Figure 1 illustrates the key drivers of corporate identity as outlined by Kitchen et al. (2013), offering a multi-perspective view of how identity is constructed and maintained within organizations. This study builds on these foundations to explore how corporate identity influences employee brand identification and job satisfaction, particularly within the UK retail sector. By linking emotional and organizational factors, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of identity's role in shaping employee experiences and organizational outcomes.

Insert Fig. 1 here.

Dahlgaard-Park (2012) suggested that an organization's core values directly influence employee trust and commitment toward the corporate brand. Mayer (2013) and Zak (2017)

indicated that employee trust arises from these core values and serves as a link between them and high employee performance. Corporate core values are critical to an organization's identity, as they encapsulate its essence and strategy, impacting employees' satisfaction with the brand they represent. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: An organization's core values positively affect employee job satisfaction.

Thorbjørnsen and Supphellen (2011) noted that employees are not just the recipients of corporate values but also co-creators who play a crucial role in conveying these values to stakeholders through the organization's corporate culture, thereby shaping its identity. Schein (2010) defined corporate culture as a collection of shared basic assumptions among employees, reflecting an organization's inherent qualities, such as deep-seated values, sets of beliefs, and symbolic practices, including language that fosters a feeling of belonging. Committing to these organizational values can enhance cultural cohesion (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). A clear understanding of core values, coupled with a robust corporate culture, leads to a positive employee brand identification, which can increase commitment and job satisfaction (Budiman et al., 2014; Jung and Yoon, 2015; Punjaisri et al., 2008). Consequently, we propose:

H2: An organization's corporate culture positively influences employee job satisfaction.

Corporate visual identity relates to employee pride and supportive behaviors, where employees strongly identify with corporate logos and uniforms (Bravo et al., 2016; Jha et al., 2013; Van Dick et al., 2004). Hatch and Schultz (2003) emphasized that visual identity is a collection of symbols to which individuals attribute meaning based on their own experiences and knowledge. From a semiotic perspective, Thøger Christensen and Askegaard (2001) argue that visual identity is not merely a static symbol but a dynamic sign system that employees

interpret and negotiate, shaping their connection to the organization. This interpretation indicates that employees are more likely to adopt corporate identity when it aligns with their values (Chiang et al., 2013; Dutton et al., 1994; Green and Loveluck, 1994; Melewar et al., 2006). The use of corporate visuals allows employees to feel a connection to the organization's identity, answering the question "Who are we as an organization?" (Brown et al., 2006) and boosts employees' sense of belonging and increase their likelihood of promoting positive word of mouth (Bravo et al., 2016; Wheeler et al., 2006). Bravo et al. (2015, 2016) also argued that corporate visual identity acts as an intangible benefit, enhancing employee job satisfaction. Bravo et al. (2015) noted that visual identity plays a role in creating a sense of pride among employees, leading them to feel more committed and connected to the organization. This sense of ownership leads to greater brand identification and trust (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Bravo et al., 2015; Coleman et al., 2011). Thus, we propose:

H3: The corporate visuals and logos of an organization have a positive impact on employee job satisfaction.

Corporate behavior is a core component of corporate identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Hatch & Schultz, 1997), closely linked to corporate culture and reflective of managerial actions (Melewar & Karaosmanoglu, 2006). Scholars emphasize that corporate behavior must align with corporate identity to maintain a consistent brand image (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Garas et al., 2018; Ind, 2007; Chung & Byrom, 2021). Employees observe corporate behavior to assess the authenticity of corporate identity, influencing their willingness to embody the brand (Burmam & Zeplin, 2005; Ind, 2007; King & Grace, 2008).

Positive corporate behavior enhances employee loyalty and retention (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008), while fostering trust in organizational values (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Employee branding research shows that alignment with corporate actions strengthens

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employee commitment and psychological well-being, improving performance (Biedenbach et al., 2022; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Garas et al., 2018; Ind, 2007; King & Grace, 2008; Harter et al., 2002; Harrison et al., 2006; Walter & Bruch, 2008).

H4: Corporate behavior has a positive effect on employee job satisfaction.

Corporate communication plays a vital role in conveying values to stakeholders (Schultz & Kitchen, 2004; Van Rekom, 1997). Consistent messaging shapes employee perceptions of brand and identity (Buil et al., 2016; Syed Alwi et al., 2022; King & Grace, 2010; Rudkowski, 2024; Van Riel, 1997). Clear communication of values and strategies helps employees understand their role, fostering a positive view of the organization (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Chung & Byrom, 2021).

Thus, we suggest:

H5: Corporate communication strategy has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction.

2.2 Corporate identity, employee brand identification and employee job satisfaction

Prior research underscores leadership’s role in shaping corporate identity and employee brand perceptions (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Balmer, 2017; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Kitchen et al., 2013; Lindblom et al., 2015; Stuart, 2002). Positive leader-employee relationships strengthen organizational identification and brand-supporting behaviors (Farrell & Oczkowski, 2012). While often subsumed under corporate behavior (Balmer, 2017; Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Melewar, 2003; Stuart, 2002), leadership is also positioned as a distinct identity component influencing employee attitudes (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Kitchen et al., 2013). Leadership vision reinforces brand alignment.

Internal branding fosters trust, commitment, and job satisfaction (Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021; Saleem & Iglesias, 2021; Tong & Kang, 2025), driven by communication, training, integration, and leadership (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005; Cravens & Oliver, 2006; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Employee-brand identification enhances self-perception and brand success (Van Dick et al., 2004), while boosting job satisfaction (Bravo et al., 2017; Berger et al., 2006; Porricelli et al., 2014). Internal branding also improves engagement and reduces turnover (Park & Kim, 2024; Tong & Kang, 2025).

Brand identification is a dynamic sensemaking process (Gioia et al., 2013). Employer branding dimensions—development, diversity, reputation—enhance satisfaction and identification, driving positive word-of-mouth (Jaffari et al., 2024). Effective identity management increases commitment and brand citizenship behavior (Buil et al., 2016; Budiman et al., 2014; Chiang et al., 2013; Jung & Yoon, 2015; Punjaisri et al., 2007, 2008). Thus, employee brand identification moderates the corporate identity–job satisfaction relationship and directly influences job satisfaction.

H6: Employee brand identification acts as a moderator between corporate identity and employee job satisfaction and has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction.

2.3 Conceptual model

Our examination of the literature underscores a significant link between corporate identity, core values, and internal communication, which strongly affects employee brand identification and ultimately leads to job satisfaction. The research shows that effective internal communication regarding corporate identity and brand values, coupled with internal branding efforts, plays a key role in shaping employees' brand identification, trust, and job satisfaction. To operationalize our conceptual framework and evaluate the relationships among these

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various factors, we adapted the corporate identity model proposed by Kitchen et al. (2013). We aligned the five key elements of this model with the constructs for job satisfaction and employee brand identification, using this alignment to establish hypotheses that form our proposed framework.

Insert Fig. 2 here.

Figure 2 showcases the conceptual framework developed for this study, derived from the literature review and the defined research objectives. This model demonstrates how corporate identity influences employee job satisfaction through internal branding processes, which play a key role in shaping the brand image and fostering employee brand commitment. These factors are essential precursors to job satisfaction among retail employees.

3.0 Research methodology

We adopted a mixed-methods approach for this study. In the initial phase, we conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with retail corporate directors to develop and refine a theoretical model that examines how corporate identity constructs directly affect the job satisfaction of retail employees. The interviews, along with insights from the literature review, informed the revision of our conceptual model. This revised model served as the basis for a survey designed to explore the relationships among the constructs. We then tested this model using empirical data from employees in retail settings, applying structural equation modeling via SPSS-AMOS software to evaluate the hypotheses.

3.1 Research instrument

We defined the study's latent constructs using existing measurement scales, modifying them as needed to fit our research context. These scales were sourced from literature on corporate identity, corporate branding, employee branding, services marketing, and branding. The construct of core values was measured using four items adapted from Urde (2003). For

corporate culture, we utilized nine items from previously validated scales (Coleman et al., 2011; Ghosh and Srivastava, 2014; Rietmann, 2013). The corporate visual identity construct was assessed using six items derived from Melewar and Saunders (1999), a widely used source in corporate identity research.

To measure corporate behavior, we used seven items taken from established scales by Dacin and Brown (2002), Gardberg and Fombrun (2002), and Groenland (2002). For corporate communication, we chose eight items from the scales developed by Downs and Hazen (1977) and Punjaisri et al. (2009). Employee brand identification was assessed using eight items adapted from Mael and Ashforth (1992) and Punjaisri et al. (2009). Finally, job satisfaction was measured with six items based on Van Dyne et al. (1994), Bettencourt et al. (2001), and Porricelli et al. (2014). We used seven-point Likert scales as the primary method for constructing the questionnaire. A detailed list of measurement items is available from the authors upon request.

3.2 Study Design and Sample

This study employed a sequential mixed-methods design to investigate the influence of corporate identity on employee perceptions and job satisfaction in the UK retail sector. The qualitative phase informed the development of the quantitative survey and enabled triangulation of findings.

3.2.1 Qualitative Phase: Rationale and Participants

The retail sector was selected due to its service-intensive nature, where frontline employees act as brand ambassadors. In such contexts, corporate identity significantly shapes employee pride, commitment, and satisfaction (Hogreve et al., 2022). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven senior managers and directors—including CMOs, regional directors, and branch managers—who possessed extensive experience in branding and

internal communication (Table A). While this phase captured managerial perspectives, the subsequent quantitative phase addressed employee-level insights.

3.2.2 Analytical Approach

Interview transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 12 through a hybrid thematic analysis, combining deductive coding based on the conceptual model with inductive coding to identify emergent themes. This approach enabled both theory confirmation and novel insight generation. Six key themes emerged:

1. Core Values
2. Corporate Culture and Communication
3. Corporate Behaviour and Visual Identity
4. Employee Brand Identification
5. Job Satisfaction
6. Brand Commitment/Advocacy

These themes were supported by illustrative quotes (Table B) and validated the conceptual model. Employee brand identification emerged as a central moderating mechanism linking corporate identity to job satisfaction. Participants emphasized core values as foundational, with culture, communication, behaviour, and visual identity shaping employee perceptions and motivation.

The qualitative findings provided face and construct validity for the conceptual framework, informed measurement scale adaptation, and ensured contextual relevance to UK retail.

3.2.3 Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Phases

Insights from the qualitative phase directly informed the quantitative survey design. The identification of employee brand identification as a key moderator clarified how corporate identity influences job satisfaction and commitment. Thematic evidence reinforced

the importance of core values, culture, communication, and behaviour, guiding construct definitions and survey item development for robust hypothesis testing via structural equation modeling (SEM).

4.0 Quantitative Phase

A structured survey distributed via LinkedIn, Facebook, and retail firm intranets yielded 422 responses across various organizational levels. Employees from the qualitative phase firms were included, enabling triangulation. Descriptive analysis confirmed data suitability, and Harman's single-factor test showed no significant common method bias. Validity and reliability were assessed through EFA and CFA, with refinements improving model fit. SEM tested hypotheses, revealing significant path relationships and validating the refined conceptual model (Figure 3).

4.1 Evaluation of measures

To ensure the robustness of the constructs before model testing, the study conducted a systematic evaluation of all measurement scales. The process aimed to confirm the dimensionality and internal consistency of items while validating their contextual relevance to the UK retail sector. Items were reviewed and refined based on insights from the qualitative phase, ensuring alignment with the key constructs of corporate identity, employee brand identification, and job satisfaction. Subsequent analyses focused on identifying coherent factor structures and confirming the empirical distinctiveness of constructs, providing the foundation for exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses presented below.

4.1.1 Factor loadings and exploratory factor analysis

From an initial 48-item pool, EFA produced a five-factor solution (eigenvalues >1.0) explaining 68% of variance. All factor loadings exceeded 0.5 (detailed results available upon request).

Factor 1 merged two corporate culture items with six employee brand identification items, labeled Culture_ID, aligning with research on corporate culture fostering employee identification (King & Grace, 2008; Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Factor 2 (Corp_Behavior) captured corporate behavior through four items. Factor 3 (CoreValues) combined three core values items with one corporate visual identity item, linking visual identity to organizational values (Melewar & Saunders, 1999). Factors 4 and 5, Emp_JobS and Corp_Comm, measured job satisfaction and corporate communication, respectively.

Using MLE extraction with PROMAX rotation and Kaiser normalization, the five-factor model explained 65% variance, exceeding the 60% reliability benchmark (Hair et al., 2010; Malhotra et al., 2017). The goodness-of-fit test was non-significant, based on chi-square. Validity was confirmed as KMO and Bartlett's test exceeded 0.9, communalities surpassed 0.3, and total variance explained reached 68%, an excellent outcome (Malhotra et al., 2017). Convergent validity was supported, with all loadings above 0.5, no cross-loadings, and highest inter-factor correlation at 0.684, ensuring distinctiveness. Cronbach's alpha for all factors exceeded 0.7, confirming reliability (Malhotra et al., 2017).

4.1.2 Confirmatory factor analysis

CFA assessed model validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2010; Malhotra et al., 2017) using AMOS graphics. Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) confirmed significant relationships between observed variables and latent constructs, with standardized regression weights above 0.50. Modification indices showed variances and covariances below 20, ensuring sound psychometric properties.

Collectively, these assessments verified that the measurement items reliably captured their intended constructs and reflected the conceptual relationships identified in the qualitative phase. The results offered clear empirical support for construct validity and justified the

progression to the full measurement and structural model testing presented in the following sections.

4.1.3 Measurement model

Convergent validity was assessed via significant factor loadings. All item reliabilities in Figure 3 exceeded 0.7, with constructs loading above the 0.7 threshold for model fit (Bagozzi & Baumgartner, 1994; Hair et al., 2010). Model fit indices were $\chi^2 = 1281$, CMIN/DF = 3.43, GFI = 0.835, CFI = 0.869, RMSEA = 0.074, and SRMR = 0.049. Given the dataset size and complexity, these values confirm a well-fitting model, with CMIN/DF below 4.0, CFI and GFI above 0.80, and RMSEA and SRMR within acceptable ranges (Baumgartner & Homburg, 1996; Doll et al., 1994; Hair et al., 2010).

Insert Fig. 3 here.

4.1.4 Estimation of structural model

After evaluating the measurement model, the next step is to test the structural model. This involves examining the relationships among the model's constructs by evaluating the significance of each pathway and assessing the overall goodness-of-fit for the complete model (refer to Figure 4 for the structure).

Insert Fig. 4 here.

Figure 4 represents the structural model that incorporates five constructs to understand the impact of corporate identity on employee job satisfaction. The model produced a chi-square (χ^2) value of 1,516 with a CMIN/DF of 3.52 and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.079, which is below the recommended 0.80 threshold for RMSEA (Hair et al., 2010). The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) was 0.061, within the acceptable range of less than 0.08, while the comparative fit index (CFI) and goodness-of-fit index (GFI)

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were 0.850 and 0.845, respectively—also within acceptable boundaries established by researchers (Baumgartner and Homburg, 1996; Doll et al., 1994).

We then evaluated the strength and significance of the paths among constructs in the structural model and examined whether these paths supported the hypotheses derived from the proposed conceptual model. Table 1 presents the full list of standardized path estimates and corresponding t-values for each relationship in the structural model. Figure 4 reflects the closest possible configuration to the initial conceptual model outlined in Figure 2 after removing the corporate visual identity construct and combining the corporate culture and employee brand identification constructs. It also represents the hypothesized causal relationships described in Section 2.3. However, due to the elimination and merging of constructs, hypotheses H3 and H6 could not be tested. The results for the other hypotheses are discussed here.

Insert Table 1 here.

Table 1 outlines the results of the path analysis for the structural model. The data indicate that the combined construct of corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID) had a strong positive effect on employee job satisfaction, with a standardized coefficient of 0.672, a t-value of 7.155, and a p-value of less than 0.001. Similarly, corporate behavior showed a positive impact on job satisfaction, with a standardized coefficient of 0.352, a t-value of 6.373, and a p-value of less than 0.001. These outcomes support hypotheses H2 and H4, respectively.

However, core values and corporate communication did not significantly impact employee job satisfaction, resulting in the rejection of hypotheses H1 and H5 in this structural model. Given these findings, we suggested an alternative model that aligns with the literature and proposes a different set of hypothesized relationships, aiming to create a more robust and

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3 closely aligned model. This new approach can help better understand the factors contributing
4 to employee job satisfaction.
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10 **4.1.5 Revised structural model and mediation testing**

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12 To develop a robust model that depicts the impact of corporate identity on employee
13 job satisfaction, we tested a revised structural model (see Figure 5).
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17 **Insert Fig. 5 here.**

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19 Based on the findings from the initial structural model, we opted to refine the model by
20 eliminating insignificant paths and introducing mediating variables to enhance model fit and
21 better understand the relationships between constructs. Since the relationship between core
22 values and employee job satisfaction was found to be insignificant, we introduced corporate
23 culture as a mediator that cross-loaded with employee brand identification (Culture_ID) to
24 mediate this relationship. This approach aligns with existing literature emphasizing the role of
25 shared values in shaping organizational culture and employee identification with the brand
26 (Biedenbach et al., 2022). Thus, we proposed a new hypothesis:
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40 *H7: Corporate culture and employee brand identification mediate the effect of core*
41 *values on employee job satisfaction.*
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46 To operationalize this hypothesis, we divided it into two parts:

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48 *H7a: The core values of a retail organization significantly impact its corporate*
49 *culture/employee brand identification.*
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54 *H7b: The corporate culture/employee brand identification of a retail organization*
55 *significantly impacts its employee job satisfaction.*
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Analysis confirmed a significant relationship between core values and corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID), supporting H7a. Similarly, the relationship between corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID) and employee job satisfaction was significant, supporting H7b (as well as H2 in the revised model). Additionally, the positive impact of corporate behavior on employee job satisfaction (H4) was reaffirmed. Moreover, the introduction of corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID) as a mediator shed light on previously insignificant direct relationships. Without this mediating role, the direct relationships between core values and employee job satisfaction, as well as between corporate communication and employee job satisfaction, were found to be insignificant.

Given the literature's emphasis on corporate communication nurturing a strong organizational culture, we introduced another mediator, corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID), to mediate the relationship between corporate communication and employee job satisfaction:

H8: Corporate culture/employee brand identification mediates the effect of corporate communication on employee job satisfaction.

This hypothesis was also split into two parts:

H8a: The corporate communication of a retail organization significantly impacts its corporate culture/employee brand identification.

H8b: The corporate culture/employee brand identification of a retail organization significantly impacts its employee job satisfaction.

Analysis showed a significant relationship between corporate communication and corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID), supporting H8a. Additionally, the relationship between corporate culture/employee brand identification (Culture_ID) and employee job satisfaction (H8b) was significant, reinforcing the mediating role of corporate culture/employee brand identification in the relationship between corporate communication and employee job satisfaction. Table 2 presents the path estimates in the revised model.

Insert Table 2 here.

Table 3 presents a comparison of the model fit metrics, including RMSEA, CFI, GFI, and SRMR, for both the original and revised models. The revised structural model showed significant improvements in these goodness-of-fit indices. The chi-square value (χ^2) for the revised model was 1455.008, with a p-value of 0.000, and 417 degrees of freedom, resulting in a chi-square ratio (CMIN/DF) of 3.48. This slight reduction in the chi-square value in the revised model may be attributed to the removal of insignificant paths and the addition of mediating pathways, contributing to a more robust fit (Hair et al., 2010; Malhotra et al., 2017).

Insert Table 3 here.

The revised model demonstrated a marginally improved RMSEA of 0.074, signaling a better fit to the data. Similarly, the CFI, GFI, and SRMR metrics all showed improvement in the revised model, further confirming the stronger fit. The revised model also had a greater number of significant path coefficients compared to the original model, indicating a more precise understanding of the relationships among the constructs. Figure 6 illustrates the complete structural model, displaying the goodness-of-fit indices and standardized path estimates.

Insert Fig. 6 here.

5.0 Discussion

This study explored how various facets of corporate identity influence job satisfaction in retail organizations. Building on prior research linking corporate identity to internal branding and employee behavior (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021; Bolhuis et al., 2018; Burmann et al., 2009; Du Preez et al., 2017), it extends the discussion to brand identification and job satisfaction (Garas et al., 2018; King & Grace, 2012; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri et al., 2008). The findings support conceptual work on corporate identity’s role in shaping employee perceptions and belonging (Foster et al., 2010; Ind, 2007; Melewar & Jenkins, 2002; Porricelli et al., 2014; Punjaisri et al., 2009).

A key contribution is the introduction of *Culture_ID*, a new measurement scale combining corporate culture and employee brand identification, derived from exploratory factor analysis. This construct reflects how a rich corporate culture facilitates identity communication and fosters employee identification with the brand (Hatch, 2011; Lievens et al., 2007; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011).

Supporting prior studies (Tourky et al., 2020; Kitchen et al., 2013; Melewar, 2003), our findings show that *Culture_ID* directly influences brand citizenship behavior. Of six hypotheses tested, H1—linking core values directly to job satisfaction—was not supported, suggesting indirect influence via mediators like corporate culture and brand identification (Du Preez & Bendixen, 2015; Porricelli et al., 2014). This aligns with research emphasizing internal brand management and vibrant culture as key to employee identification (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011; Piehler et al., 2016; Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007; King & Grace, 2010).

A nurturing corporate culture fosters pride and achievement, reinforcing links between core values, culture, and brand identification (Berger et al., 2006; Van Dick et al., 2004). The

second hypothesis set confirmed *Culture_ID* as a mediator positively impacting job satisfaction (Erkmen & Hancer, 2014; Porricelli et al., 2014; Punjaisri & Wilson, 2011). While the original model proposed brand identification as a moderator, combining it with culture into *Culture_ID* yielded stronger mediation effects.

The structural model revealed weak direct paths from core values and communication to job satisfaction, prompting the integration of *Culture_ID* to improve model fit. This construct demonstrates that core values require a cultural communication framework to influence employees. Corporate culture, as a system of shared beliefs and symbolic actions (Melewar, 2003; Schein, 2010), enables employees to internalize and enact values, strengthening brand connection and enhancing job satisfaction (Harrison & Carroll, 1991; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Berger et al., 2006; Bravo et al., 2017; Van Dick et al., 2004).

6.0 Implications and Directions for Future Research

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study bridges gaps across corporate communication, internal branding, and job satisfaction—domains often treated separately despite their interdependence (Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Barros-Arrieta & García-Cali, 2021). It introduces *Culture_ID*, a novel construct integrating corporate culture and employee brand identification, challenging functionalist views (Melewar, 2003) and embracing process-oriented perspectives (Gioia et al., 2013). Rather than acting as antecedents, these elements mediate the effects of core values and communication on job satisfaction, disrupting assumptions of direct causality (Porricelli et al., 2014) and emphasizing sensemaking and co-creation—key themes for stakeholder-focused communication research.

The findings also extend corporate marketing theory (Balmer, 2011; Syed Alwi et al., 2022), revealing that in service-intensive sectors like retail, behavioral consistency outweighs

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abstract values. Communication emerges as an enabler, not a driver, challenging optimistic views of its standalone influence (Van Riel, 1997) and inviting semiotic integration (Christensen & Askegaard, 2001). By validating a mixed-methods approach, the study responds to calls for stakeholder-inclusive models (Balmer, 2017; Sinitsyna et al., 2023), prioritizing mediation over moderation—contrary to initial expectations (H6).

6.2 Managerial Implications

For retail and communication managers, the findings highlight the need to prioritize cultural mediation over top-down messaging to enhance job satisfaction. Retail leaders should foster *Culture_ID* through interactive internal communication—e.g., workshops or digital platforms embedding core values into daily routines. These “soft” elements yield tangible outcomes like reduced turnover and stronger brand advocacy (Piehler et al., 2016; Tong & Kang, 2025).

Organizations can audit identity alignment via *Culture_ID* surveys and redesign communication strategies to amplify mediation—e.g., leader-led storytelling that links values to behaviors, building trust through authentic engagement (Zak, 2017). Communication managers should avoid isolated campaigns and instead integrate them with cultural interventions to build brand communities (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006), enhancing customer experience and performance (Bravo et al., 2017).

7.0 Limitations and Future Research

Future research should test the model beyond UK retail, exploring cultural and sectoral variations (e.g., hospitality, tech). Longitudinal studies could track identity shifts post-mergers or crises (Bravo et al., 2017), while moderators like demographics (Jaffari et al., 2024) or attachment styles (Dang & Do, 2024) may reveal for whom *Culture_ID* matters most. Expanding to outcomes like reputation or financial metrics (Balmer, 2017) and integrating emerging technologies (Rudkowski, 2024) will further enrich the framework.

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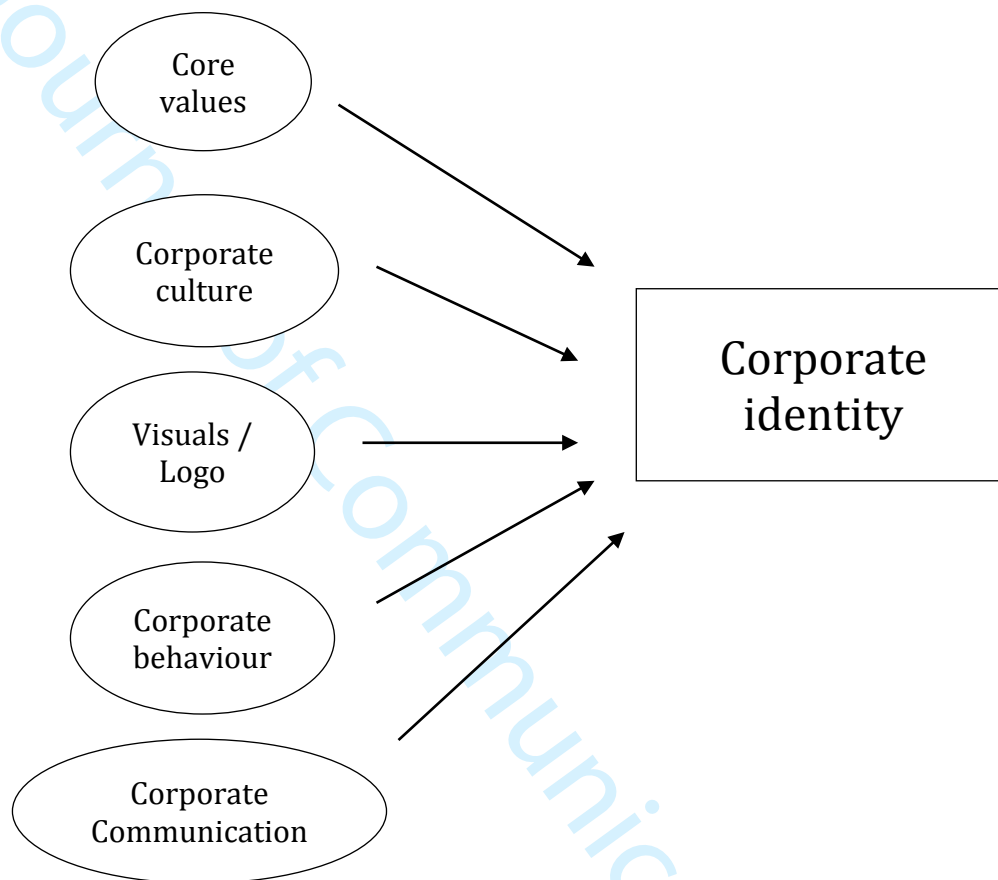
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Figures:**Figure 1: Determinants of corporate identity**

(Adapted from Kitchen *et al.*, 2013)

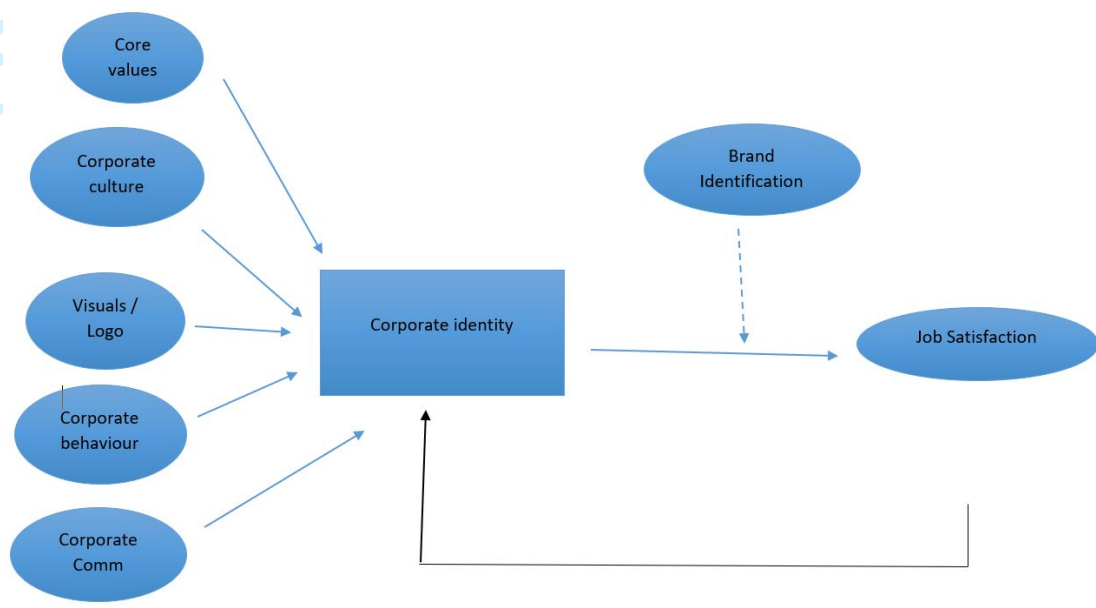


Figure 2: Proposed conceptual model representing impact of corporate identity on employee job satisfaction

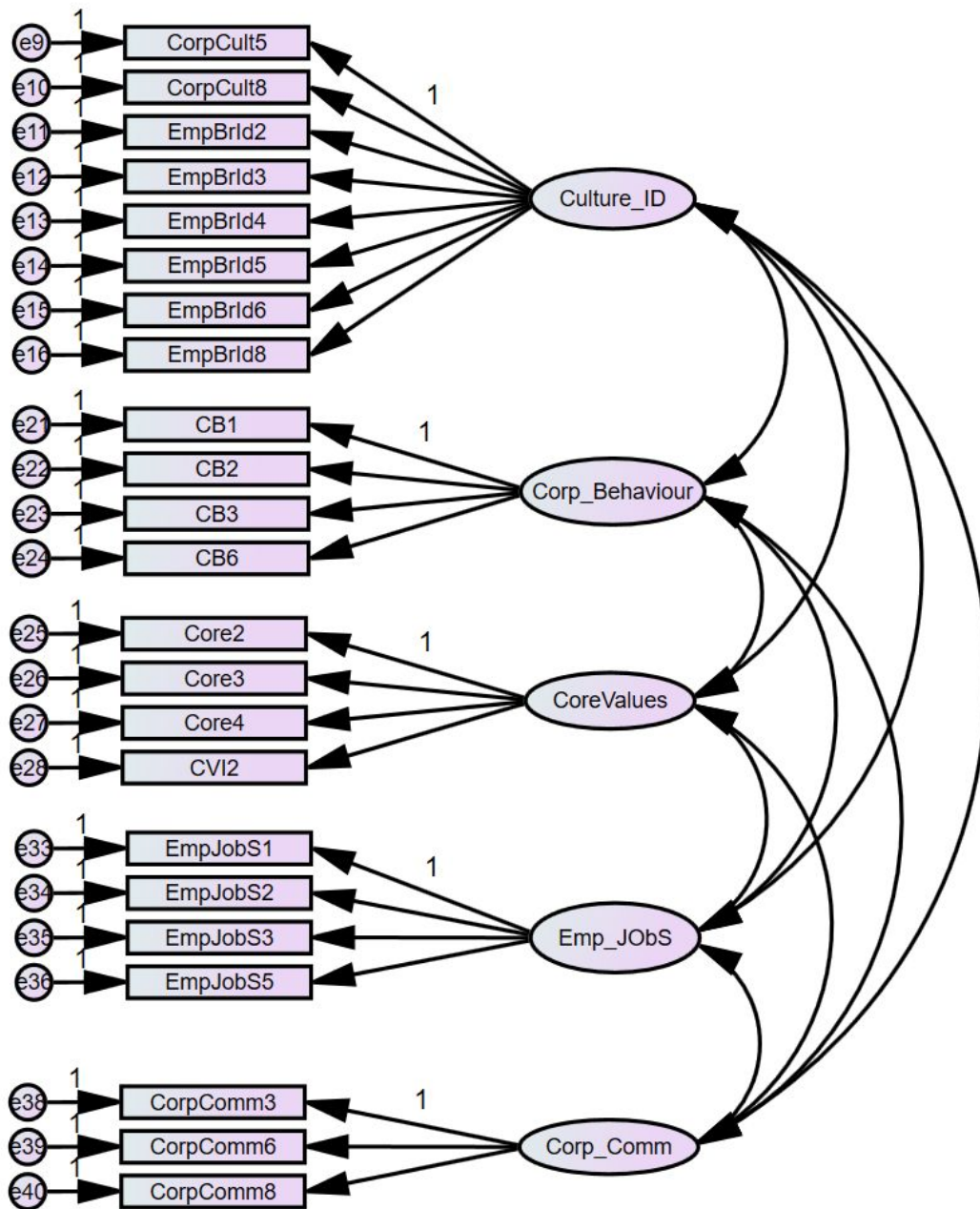


Figure 3 Standardised estimates of initial Confirmation Factor Analysis (CFA)

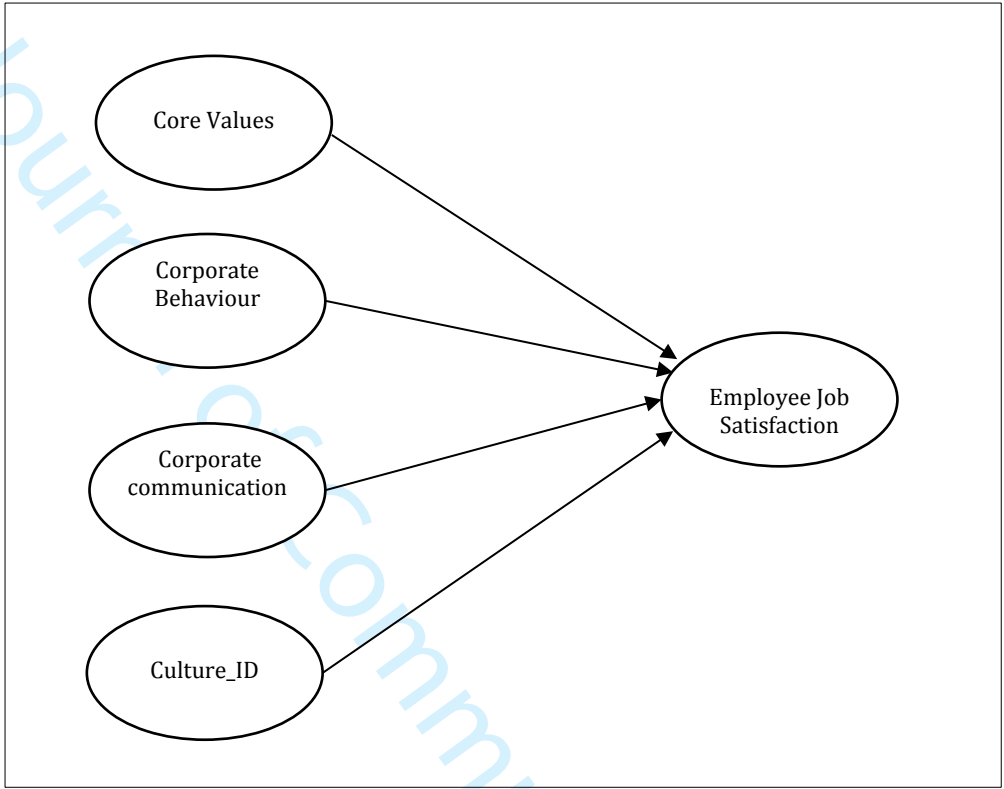


Figure 4: Full Path Research Model

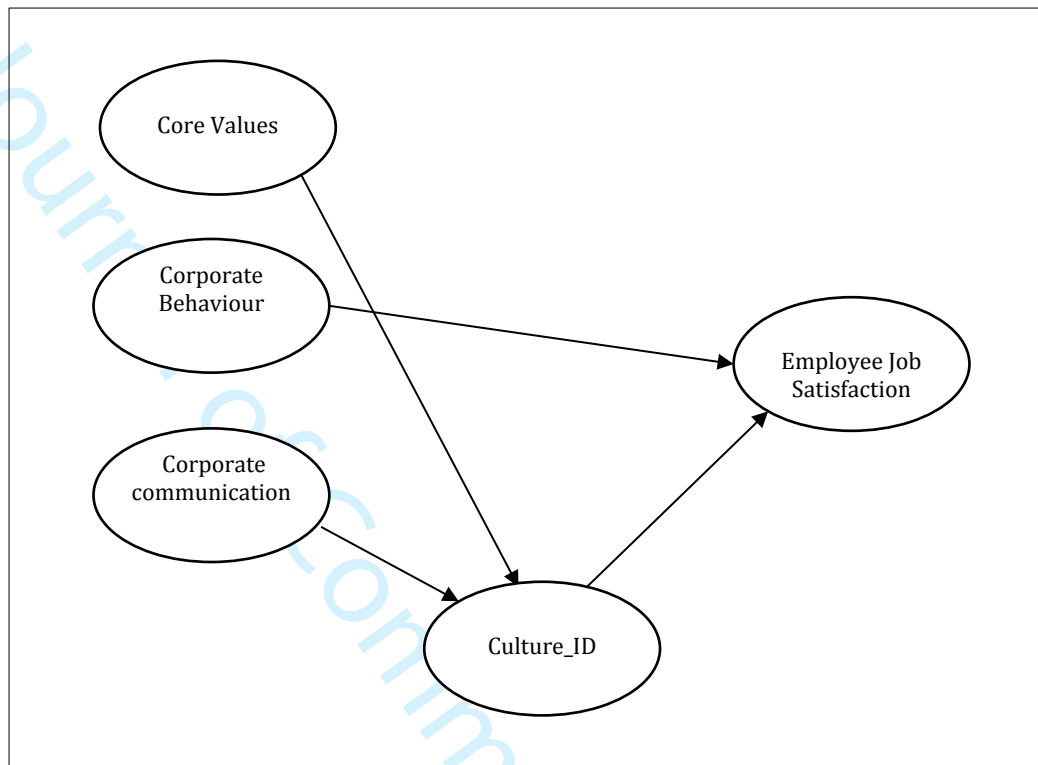


Figure 5: Revised structural model

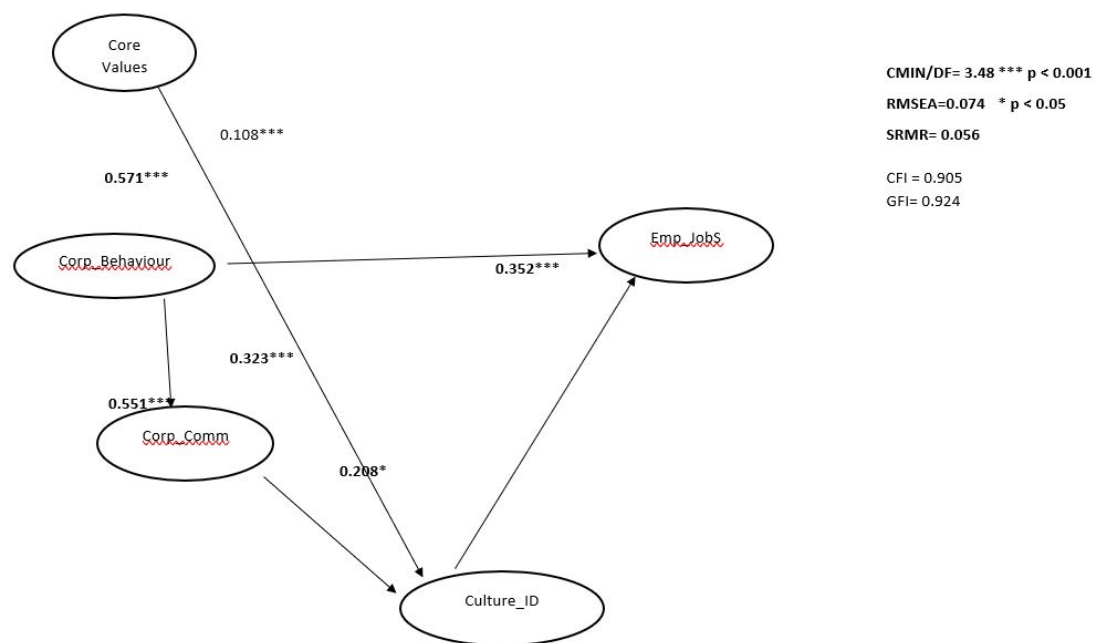


Figure 6: Structural equation model

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Causal relationship path</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Supported?</i>
H1	CoreValues => Emp_JobS	-0.006	-0.120	0.905	No
H2	Culture_ID => Emp_JobS	0.672	7.155	***	Yes
H4	Corp_Behaviour => Emp_JobS	0.352	6.373	***	Yes
H5	Corp_Comm => Emp_JobS	-.085	-0.953	0.341	No

* Supported at significance level $p < 0.05$, GFI = 0.845, CFI= 0.850, RMSEA= 0.79

*** Supported at significance level $p < 0.001$, GFI = 0.845, CFI= 0.850, RMSEA= 0.79

Table 1: Path analysis resulting from structural model analysis

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Causal relationship path</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Supported?</i>
H7a	CoreValues => Culture_ID	0.205	0.961	***	Yes
H2 (H7b, H8b)	Culture_ID => Emp_JobS	0.672	9.584	***	Yes
H4	Corp_Behaviour => Emp_JobS	0.352	6.373	***	Yes
H8a	Corp_Comm => Culture_ID	0.439	5.052	***	Yes

* Supported at significance level $p < 0.05$, GFI = 0.924, CFI= 0.905, RMSEA= 0.074

*** Supported at significance level $p < 0.001$, GFI = 0.924, CFI= 0.905, RMSEA= 0.074

Table 2: Path analysis for the revised model

Model fit measures	Original Model	Revised Model
CMIN	1516	1455
CMIN/DF	3.52	3.48
GFI	0.845	0.924
CFI	0.850	0.905
RMSEA	0.079	0.074
SRMR	0.061	0.056

Table 3: Overall model fits

Participant ID	Role/Title	Organization Type	Years of Experience	Areas of Expertise
P1	Chief Marketing Officer	Large UK Retail Chain	15	Corporate branding, internal branding, employee engagement
P2	Regional Director	Mid-sized UK Retail Chain	12	Employee management, corporate identity, brand strategy
P3	Branch Manager	Large UK Retail Chain	10	Frontline management, brand implementation, customer experience
P4	Senior Marketing Manager	Large UK Retail Chain	14	Brand communication, internal culture, employee motivation
P5	Operations Director	Mid-sized UK Retail Chain	18	Organizational behaviour, corporate culture, internal branding
P6	Regional Marketing Director	Large UK Retail Chain	16	Brand management, employee brand identification, internal communication
P7	Senior HR and Branding Manager	Mid-sized UK Retail Chain	13	Employee engagement, internal branding, corporate identity alignment

Table A- Interviewee Characteristics

Theme	Definition	Illustrative Quote
Core Values	Fundamental principles and beliefs that guide organizational decisions and behavior, forming the strategic foundation of corporate identity.	“Our brand values guide every decision—from how we recruit to how we treat customers. They define who we are as a company.” (P1)
Corporate Culture & Communication	The shared norms, practices, and communication strategies that reinforce corporate identity and influence employee perceptions.	“Culture is how we live the brand every day. It’s not just top-down communication; it’s in how we talk, share ideas, and celebrate success.” (P4)
Corporate Behaviour & Visual Identity	Observable managerial conduct and visual representations (logos, branding materials) that make corporate identity tangible to employees.	“Employees notice whether leaders actually embody the brand. If behaviour doesn’t match the message, people lose trust.” (P3)
Employee Brand Identification	The extent to which employees perceive alignment between their personal identity and the organization’s identity, fostering attachment and pride.	“When employees see themselves in the brand story, they feel proud to represent it—it becomes personal.” (P6)
Job Satisfaction	Employees’ affective responses to their role, work environment, and organizational support, influenced by the alignment of corporate and personal values.	“People are more satisfied when they believe the brand reflects their own values—it creates a sense of belonging and purpose.” (P2)
Brand Commitment & Advocacy	Employees’ willingness to promote and protect the brand internally and externally, reflecting engagement and loyalty.	“Our staff don’t just work here—they advocate for our brand because they genuinely believe in it.” (P5)

Table B - Themes with Definitions and Illustrative Quotes