



# A Study of HR Branding as a Guideline for Application in the Thai Public Sector: A Case Study of Japan

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**Abstract-** Today, the role of human resource (HR) managers is no longer limited to just one function. HR professionals must be ready to deal with constant change and take on new roles, one of which is HR Branding. This concept focuses on building a positive image of an organization to attract, retain, and develop talented people. This study aims to explore HR Branding and apply this modern role of HR managers to improve the image of Thailand's public sector. Using Japan as a case study, the research highlights how building a strong organizational image can help attract skilled people. Key strategies include creating mutual trust within government organizations, promoting transparency, encouraging public participation, and organizing modern activities aligned with young people's lifestyles—like sharing stories on social media to improve public perception and attract new talent.

**Keywords:** HR Branding, Thai Public Sector, Japan Public Sector.

## I. Introduction

In recent years, human resource management has taken on an increasingly strategic role in enhancing the performance of the public sector. One such approach is HR Branding, which focuses on building a positive organizational image to attract, retain, and motivate talented individuals. In Thailand, however, the public sector is struggling with negative perceptions particularly among the younger generation who often view government work as rigid, outdated, and uninspiring. These perceptions are compounded by deep-rooted structural problems such as inequality, inflexibility, and corruption, which continue to erode public trust and deter high-potential youth from pursuing careers in civil service (Srisuk, 2021; Khongsila, 2021; Hasanagrim et al., 2023). The private sector, by contrast, has become more attractive due to its modern image, flexible work culture, and strong employee value proposition (WorkVenture, 2024).

To address this gap, HR Branding offers a promising solution that aligns with global best practices. Case studies from Japan such as the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy and initiatives by the National Personnel Authority (NPA) demonstrate how public sector organizations can rebuild trust, promote transparency, and design systems that nurture career growth and work-life balance (openyokohama, 2025; National Personnel Authority, 2025). These examples show that government organizations can become competitive employers when they communicate clearly, invest in human capital, and respond to the values of new generations. Therefore, this article aims to study the challenges of HR Branding in the Thai public sector, using Japan as a case study, and apply principles such as employer value proposition, internal branding, and modern communication strategies to enhance Thailand's ability to attract and retain high-quality civil servants (OECD, 2023; JOBTOPGUN, 2024; Backhaus et al., 2004).

## II. HR Branding Concept

HR Branding, or sometimes called Employee Branding, is the idea that human resource (HR) managers are responsible for creating a positive image of the organization. This image includes the values of the organization, its culture, and the benefits employees receive when working there (Employee Value Proposition). It also involves promoting this good image to the public, so that outsiders are more aware of and interested in the organization. In this way, HR Branding helps attract talented individuals to apply for jobs (empeo, 2025). It is similar to how marketing works, but instead of selling products, HR managers are "selling" the organization's image. HR Branding is not only about



making the organization look good on the outside. It also helps the organization to attract, keep, and motivate employees inside the company (Q HUNTER, 2025).

The meaning of HR Branding, or employer branding, has become more popular today. This is because it is important in human resource management, especially in a fast-changing and competitive business world. Ambler and Barrow defined HR Branding as building a special identity for the organization as an employer, one that stands out from others. (Berthon et al., 2005) It focuses on what makes the work environment and job offer unique. It also includes real benefits—financial, practical, and emotional—that employees receive when they work there. In addition, it helps employees feel connected to and involved in the organization.

Similarly, The Conference Board explained HR Branding as a process of building both the image and identity of the organization as an employer. This includes not only how people see the organization from the outside, but also its core values, rules, and how it treats employees. The purpose is to help the organization attract talented workers, motivate people inside the company, and keep good employees now and in the future (Backhaus et al., 2004). Because of all these reasons, HR Branding is a very important tool today. As the business world changes quickly and competition becomes tougher—especially for skilled workers—HR managers who understand HR Branding can help their organizations stand out. This can make it easier to attract good job applicants, create a strong and unique identity, and lower hiring costs by making the recruitment process more effective.

HR Branding is especially important for organizations today because the world is changing so fast and there is a lot of competition between companies. If HR managers understand the idea of HR Branding well, their organizations will have a better chance of attracting talented candidates. They can also make their company stand out and be more appealing than others. At the same time, they can save money during the recruitment and selection process and help employees feel more motivated to stay with the organization (workventure, 2023). However, to understand why HR Branding is important for development, the next section will explain its main components.

### **2.1 Components of HR Branding**

The first component is the Employer Value Proposition. This refers to what the organization agrees to offer employees in return for their work. These include financial benefits, such as salary, bonuses, and tangible welfare (Koyama yu, n.d.), for example, health insurance, annual health check-ups, compensation funds, life insurance, per diems, housing allowances, travel expenses, and special leave entitlements. It also includes emotional and developmental benefits, such as learning opportunities, training, support for career growth, a warm and friendly environment, happiness at work, and recognition from supervisors and colleagues (JOBTOPGUN, 2024).

The second component is the Employee Experience. This refers to all the work-related experiences employees go through while being part of the organization, starting from the day they apply for a job until the day they leave (JOBTOPGUN, 2024). The main factors in the organization that influence the employee experience include a convenient and supportive work atmosphere, an organizational culture that encourages collaboration and mutual respect, and opportunities for learning and career advancement (JobsDB Thailand, 2023).

The third component is Employer Communications, which refers to the communication and promotion of the organization's image. This is communicated both to employees and to people outside the organization in order to attract interest from potential applicants (JOBTOPGUN, 2024). The key aspects of employer communications include internal communication, such as sharing news and updates with employees; external communication, such as public relations through social media, websites, and events; and sharing stories about employees and organizational culture with the outside world. It also involves building good relationships with both current staff and those interested in the organization.

The fourth component is Internal Branding, or the management of organizational culture. Its goal is to embed the organization's core values into the behavior of employees at all levels. This is not just about communicating the company's message, but also about creating a deep sense of brand ownership among employees. As a result, employees are able to naturally reflect the organization's image and identity through their work, communication, and service to customers (Brzovska et al., 2019). The alignment between the organization's values and the behavior of its employees is the heart of internal branding and directly affects the organization's credibility and uniqueness.

The final component is Total Rewards Branding, which focuses on managing and communicating the value of rewards and benefits in a meaningful and motivating way. These rewards



are not limited to tangible things like salary, compensation, bonuses, or welfare, but also include intangible elements such as pride in one's work, recognition from the organization, and feeling a sense of self-worth in the role one performs. This approach plays a vital role in encouraging higher motivation, stronger engagement, and greater loyalty from employees. All of which are key to improved performance and long-term organizational sustainability (Brzovska et al., 2019).

As discussed above, the components include Employer Value Proposition, Employee Experience, Employer Communications, Internal Branding, and Total Rewards Branding. If organizations can carry out these components effectively, it will benefit the organization by increasing its ability to attract high-quality talent. Applicants will better understand and recognize the value and benefits of working with the organization. Employees will also have more positive and fulfilling work experiences, which increase engagement and job satisfaction, leading directly to improved organizational performance and productivity. Clear, sincere, and consistent communication will further enhance the organization's image and credibility in the eyes of both internal employees and the public. Moreover, it helps reduce turnover rates and build a strong organizational culture. As a result, HR Branding becomes a powerful and distinctive tool in the labor market over the long term. In conclusion, all of these components help shape a good organizational image in the eyes of both internal and external stakeholders (JOBTOPGUN, 2024; JOBSDBBYSEEK, 2025).

Therefore, the approach to HR Branding or Employee Branding in the Japanese public sector is particularly interesting to study and learn from, as it offers valuable lessons for building a positive image and attracting talented individuals into Thailand's public sector. The next section presents a case study of HR Branding in the Japanese public sector.

## **2.2 HR Branding in the Japanese Public Sector**

From the study of HR Branding approaches in the Japanese public sector, it was found that the core idea of Japanese HR Branding lies in building mutual trust between employees and the organization. This approach reflects the unique characteristics of Japanese organizational culture, which emphasizes stability, loyalty, and long-term human resource development. HR Branding in Japan is also people-centered. The evaluation system has shifted from seniority-based assessments to performance-based evaluations that consider the competencies and responsibilities of each job. This reflects the image of Japan's bureaucracy, where people are considered the heart of the system (koichiro, 2024). Additionally, the Japanese government fosters attitudes of ethics and public service among civil servants (Suzuki, 2020).

The key principles of HR Branding in the Japanese public sector include the following. First is lifetime employment, where government agencies in Japan offer job stability, which is a strong selling point, especially for younger generations who seek security in their careers. For example, the system of lifelong employment is still offered. Second is continuous development. The Japanese government places great importance on regular training and skill development for employees to build an image of a workplace that supports employee growth. Third is the Japanese organizational culture, such as teamwork, mutual respect, and participatory decision-making. These elements help shape a positive image of public sector organizations (hrodthai, 2022).

Furthermore, the Japanese bureaucracy has a structured civil service system that covers job classifications, recruitment process improvements, performance evaluation systems, and salary structures. It supports performance-based organizational development, fast-track career paths for civil servants, and educational training systems to enhance knowledge and skills in the bureaucracy (Zuliansyah, 2020). These strategies have led to an increase in the number of knowledgeable and capable individuals joining the civil service.

One case study from the Japanese public sector is the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy, which is an HR Branding strategy applied comprehensively within the city's municipal government. Yokohama's strategy is one of the most advanced and modern local government human resource master plans in Japan. Its goal is to create a workplace where employees can grow continuously, face challenges, and take part in building one of the world's most livable cities. The central idea of this strategy is to build a "growth environment" where employees can fully develop their skills and potential. Yokohama has established Talent Management and Career Support systems that include specialized training, opportunities for graduate study, and mentorship programs to support employee development at all levels.

Another highlight of this strategy is the promotion of "challenge and mobility" through cross-departmental work systems (i-share) and opportunities for employees to work in external



organizations, such as NGOs or private companies, through a project called “Hamakatsu.” This allows employees to gain new experiences and bring those insights back to improve the organization. For performance evaluations and promotions, Yokohama has introduced a 360-degree evaluation system. This process collects feedback from multiple sources such as the employee, supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, and in some cases, customers or partners. It provides a broad and inclusive view of an individual’s behavior, communication, collaboration, and management skills. The promotion system is transparent and performance-based to create motivation and fairness in the workplace.

Additionally, the work environment has been updated with flexible working styles, digital technology, and anti-harassment measures. In terms of diversity, Yokohama promotes women’s roles, supports employees with disabilities, and encourages work-life balance, especially by promoting paternity leave for male employees—a practice not yet common in the Japanese public sector. For recruitment and employer branding, Yokohama has created the Yokohama City Staff Recruitment Concept website. In this platform, employees share their real-life work experiences through videos and interviews to build emotional connections with job seekers. The city also organizes activities like “Job Café” and “Pre-employment Programs” for university students to help them understand the organizational culture and role of civil servants more deeply (openyokohama, 2025 ; saiyo.city.yokohama, 2025).

As a result of implementing HR Branding under the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy, the number of job applicants has steadily increased, especially among young people. Yokohama also received the HR Award Japan in the category of “Public Sector Branding,” which confirms the success of this strategy (jinjibu.jp, 2025:).

Another case study is the National Personnel Authority (NPA) of Japan. The NPA works to build a good organizational image to attract younger generations to join the civil service. It emphasizes transparency and fairness in recruitment, using a strict and open competitive examination system. The agency clearly provides information on job roles, responsibilities, and career paths to help applicants prepare appropriately (National Personnel Authority, 2025:).

Moreover, it prioritizes work-life balance by supporting flexible work arrangements and offering policies for parental leave, child-rearing leave, and working from home. These initiatives aim to help civil servants balance personal and professional life (National Personnel Authority, 2025).

In terms of employer branding through modern media, the NPA uses social media, websites, and promotional videos to connect with young people. It also holds career guidance events at universities and job fairs to inspire and attract high-potential applicants.

From all of this, we can summarize that the HR Branding concept in the Japanese public sector is based on mutual trust between the organization and employees, transparency, credibility, and career advancement. These values are reflected in policies such as lifelong employment, seniority-based compensation, and continuous staff development. In particular, the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy focuses on creating a supportive environment for employee growth, using transparent evaluation systems, and encouraging diverse work experiences both inside and outside the organization. Meanwhile, the NPA focuses on transparent recruitment and sustainable work-life balance. Together, these efforts show that Japan’s public sector HR Branding success comes from addressing the needs of the younger generation—such as job security, professional development, and workplace inspiration—which allows the public sector to effectively attract high-quality talent.

### III. The Current Image of the Thai Public Sector from the Perspective of the New Generation

From the author’s study, it was found that the image of the Thai public sector today is perceived as slow to adapt and unable to keep up with the constantly changing society. As a result, the Thai public sector is seen by the public as still having inequality in all aspects of society, and there is a common belief that the government always treats the wealthy or powerful better than the poor (Kongsila, 2021). Another major issue that damages the image of the Thai public sector is corruption. This is a deeply rooted problem that affects all areas of Thai society. Corruption occurs in various forms and has become increasingly complex, especially in large state projects that involve public interests. Corruption in the Thai bureaucracy has many contributing factors, such as Thai people’s attitudes, the bureaucratic system, and the efficiency of public administration. Evidence shows that corruption in the Thai public sector has existed since historical times. It can be traced back to the Sukhothai period, and it has evolved over time. Nowadays, corruption has become much more sophisticated and often





occurs in large-scale state projects linked to public interests. Civil servants are often involved in justifying these actions through systematic and careful planning, supported by others who are part of the wrongdoing (Pannasil, et al., 2025).

In addition, changing values among the younger generation have led to a growing disinterest in government careers. The perception of Thai civil service among young people includes several key concerns. First, the public sector is still seen as outdated and lacking flexibility. Government work is structured with strict hierarchies, slow decision-making, and a lack of transparency. These conditions fail to inspire pride or motivation compared to jobs in the private sector or in personal businesses (Srisuk, 2021). Furthermore, there are long-standing values within the Thai public sector that resist the adoption of technology in the workplace. These cultural norms are difficult to change. All of these factors make young people feel that they cannot fully show their potential or achieve growth.

Finally, the work atmosphere in the Thai public sector is also problematic. The study found that government workplaces lack flexibility, and operations often proceed very slowly. The working environment does not provide enough inspiration or motivation. As a result, the younger generation sees the government workplace as lacking in challenges and clear goals, with no room for expressing opinions or proposing new ideas (Thaneerat, 2023). This leads many young people to avoid government careers (Srisuk, 2021) and instead seek more open, modern, and supportive work environments that value their skills.

Based on the above, the image of the Thai public sector in the eyes of the younger generation can be summarized as outdated, inflexible, and slow to adapt. It is seen as incapable of responding to social change. Major structural problems such as inequality at all levels and deeply rooted corruption undermine public trust. The values within the public sector are not supportive of new technology adoption. Young people also feel that the civil service lacks motivation and has a work atmosphere that doesn't allow for expression or new ideas. As a result, many choose to avoid working in government, and the image of the Thai public sector continues to deteriorate in the eyes of the younger generation.

#### **IV. Guidelines for Applying Japan's Public Sector HR Branding to the Thai Public Sector**

From the study, it is found that the HR Branding approaches in Japan—both in the case of the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy and the National Personnel Authority (NPA)—are based on building mutual trust within the organization, ensuring job stability, loyalty, and transparency. The key success factors of the HR Branding practices from the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy and the NPA include creating an environment that promotes continuous employee growth through modern, transparent, and highly flexible personnel management systems. These approaches also emphasize employer branding communication that aligns with the expectations of the younger generation, such as providing challenging work, opportunities for personal development, and a healthy work-life balance. These aspects are important examples that the Thai public sector can adapt, especially in designing human resource management systems that focus on transparency, support for continuous career development, and the building of organizational branding through social media and official websites.

While the image of the Thai public sector today still appears outdated and does not match the expectations of the younger generation, especially in terms of slow adaptation, service inequality, and persistent corruption these factors have caused a lack of public trust. The rigid bureaucratic system, strict hierarchy, and resistance to new ideas result in an uninspiring and unchallenging work atmosphere. The younger generation thus views the bureaucracy as a space where they cannot express their full potential or grow professionally, and instead chooses to work in the private sector or organizations that value individual talent and career advancement more highly.

Therefore, in order to apply Japan's HR Branding approaches to the Thai public sector, it is necessary to deeply understand Thailand's social, cultural, and bureaucratic context. It is also important to focus on building trust, transparency, and growth opportunities for public servants, in order to meet the rapidly changing expectations of the younger generation. The following recommendations are proposed. First, job stability should be combined with fair career advancement. The Thai public sector should design clear career progression paths that are based on performance rather than seniority, and establish transparent evaluation systems, such as 360degree evaluations, to enhance trust in the system. Second, in terms of human resource development, the government should invest in continuous training, support further education at the graduate level, and create



mentoring systems to encourage employee development at all levels. It should also allow staff to rotate across departments or gain experience from private sector or NGO work, in order to broaden their perspectives and apply new knowledge back to the public sector.

At the same time, adjusting the organizational culture is essential. The Thai public sector should reduce rigidity in its structure, shorten decision-making processes, and provide space for employees especially younger ones to share ideas, develop projects, and participate in shaping the organization's direction. Supporting flexible work practices, such as remote work, adjusted working hours, and family-related leave, would improve public servants' quality of life and reduce the outdated image of the bureaucracy. Regarding public image, the government should modernize its communication strategies by using online platforms, websites, and videos to present the positive sides of civil service through the real experiences of employees. Career guidance events such as job fairs or open house programs should also be organized to help the younger generation better understand and feel inspired to join the public sector.

To concretely evaluate the success of applying Japan's HR Branding to the Thai public sector, the Thai government must design clear indicators that directly reflect outcomes especially in attracting quality talent and building engagement. Key indicators may include the steady yearly increase in young applicants entering the civil service, which reflects the appeal of the new public sector image; employee engagement results from internal surveys; and a lower resignation rate among civil servants under the age of 35 compared to before the implementation of such strategies. It also includes tracking feedback from online public image communication such as follower counts and engagement rates on platforms like Facebook, YouTube, or the organization's website. These evaluations will help the organization measure the HR Branding strategy both quantitatively and qualitatively, and provide clear evidence that can be used to refine the approach or expand the strategy into national policy more effectively.

Lastly, solving structural problems such as inequality and corruption must go hand in hand. The government should use digital systems and increase transparency to allow the public easier access to information, while promoting the adoption of good governance principles. All of these efforts will help modernize the Thai public sector's image, build trust, and attract a greater number of high-potential young professionals to join the civil service.

In addition, the promotion of HR Branding should be clearly aligned with the national strategic framework to ensure systematic and sustainable change. In particular, it should be integrated with the 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037), especially in key areas such as human resource development, improving good governance in the bureaucracy, and enhancing the competitiveness of the public sector. The HR Branding approach, which emphasizes transparency, flexibility, and work inspiration, can naturally align with these national goals. Furthermore, the master plans under the National Strategy for Human Capital Development aim to equip public servants with skills to adapt to change and increase motivation, which clearly supports the core goals of HR Branding. Applying this concept within the national policy framework will help the transformation of the Thai public sector's image not only take place within organizations but also contribute to the country's long-term sustainable development.

## **V. Conclusion**

From the study, it is found that the concept of HR Branding is an important approach for improving the image of public sector organizations, especially in the context of Thailand, which still faces problems related to being outdated, lacking flexibility, and having a public image that does not match the expectations of the younger generation. Case studies from Japan both at the local level, such as Yokohama City under the Yokohama City Human Resource Growth Strategy, and at the national level through the National Personnel Authority (NPA) show that creating a good image for public sector organizations is achievable. This can be done through transparent and flexible human resource management that focuses on employee development, along with proper communication of the organization's image through modern media.

Therefore, the approach to applying Japan's public sector HR Branding to the Thai context should focus on creating job stability together with fair opportunities for career growth, continuous development of employee potential, and designing an organizational culture that supports participation, especially among the younger generation. In addition, the communication strategy for the public sector's image should be modern, easily accessible, and focused on inspiring people



through the real experiences of current employees. Career guidance activities should also be organized to explain the roles of civil servants to the public in a clear and credible way. At the same time, clear indicators should be established such as the rate of job applications from the younger generation, the resignation rate among young civil servants, and the level of employee engagement to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation in concrete terms.

Furthermore, improving the image of the Thai public sector in the long term must go hand in hand with solving structural issues, such as reducing inequality, preventing and addressing corruption, and promoting good governance. Digital technology should be used to increase transparency and allow citizens to more actively participate in public oversight. HR Branding strategies should also be clearly integrated into the national strategy to ensure that progress is systematic and sustainable. This would allow the Thai public sector to build a new image that is modern, transparent, and truly trusted by the public in the long run.

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### **Author's Biography**

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