Reliability of Employer Branding Stricture with reference to IT Industry Employees

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ABSTRACT *Employer branding is defined as a targeted long-term strategy to manage awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm (Sullivian, 2004). This includes direct and indirect experiences of dealing with the firm. Like actual product branding, organizations have started to invest employer branding as employees are the internal customers of the firm. The employer brand builds an image confirming the organization as a good place to work. Today, an effective employer brand is essential for competitive advantage. With the liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991 and subsequent economic reforms, Indian companies are becoming internationally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent which leads to expansion and growth of the business. This paper gives some concept on employer branding and the factors consider for Employer Branding measurement in an organization. It also studies the influence of demographic factors on Employer Branding Classification. This focuses to explain the importance, applicability, outcome and creating an effective employer branding strategy of Indian companies.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's labour market, there is a greater need to find the right person for the right job than there has been before, and the specific competencies of the individual employee are becoming more significant. At the same time, people with in demand competencies have greater possibilities to choose between different jobs. In order to tempt the most competent individuals, firms therefore need to position themselves as attractive employers. This positioning is broadly termed employer branding. The term employer branding was first coined by Ambler and Barrow in 1996, when they defined an employer brand as "The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". In order to work effectively with an employer branding strategy, it is important to be able to evaluate how well the strategy achieves its targets. To do this, we must have a method for measuring how attractive an employer is. It is important to know how attractive the employer is among the company's current employees. This could be called internal employer attractiveness.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

An Employer Brand is a company's image as seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires. Just as a well-known consumer brand can generate trust, approval, even the intent to purchase with customers, an Employer Brand encourages pride and job satisfaction with associates. It can also create a desire to learn more on the part of potential hires. A strong Employer Brand can turn a company into an Employer of Choice, an organization where the best and brightest want to work. The Employment Experience, or what it's like to work at a company, is the underlying foundation of the Employer Brand. The employment experience includes tangibles such as salary and benefits, but also extends to intangibles such as a company's culture and values, opportunities for learning and career pathing, reward and recognition, as well as management style. The employment experience is what ultimately creates job satisfaction and loyalty. In strong economic conditions, associates seek an employment experience that best suits their needs, and will change companies in order to find it. A good match between associates' needs and the employment experience can also help keep associates at their current employer. In uncertain times, the employment experience provides confidence for associates, and can assist with keeping motivation levels high. It can also help companies attract key talent from the larger pool of labor that becomes available through workforce reductions.

Employer Branding provides a method for developing and marketing a unique, positive employment experience to current associates and potential recruits. When companies implement Employer Branding successfully, associates believe in and embody the brand, carrying it through to their interactions with customers. For the customer, this experience fulfills the promise of the consumer brand and reinforces his or her purchase decision (experience before the brand). Doing business with the company also becomes a positive experience for the associates, which in turn makes a positive impact on retention, recruiting and associates' loyalty. Though its monitory value may be hard to quantify, the Employer Brand can be a real asset to companies in all types of business climates.

The major benefits of employer branding include:-
- Increased Productivity and Profitability.
- Increased Employee Retention.
- Highly ranked for Employer Attractiveness.
- Increased level of staff engagement.
- Lower Recruitment Costs.
- Minimized loss of talented employees.
- Employees recommending organization as a - preferred - place to work.
- Maintenance of core competencies.
- Employees committed to organizational goals.
- Shorter Recruitment time.
- Ensured long term competitiveness.
- Improved employee relations.
- Decreased time from hire to productivity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ambler and Barrow (1996), in their paper made a case for the usefulness of employer branding, and reported the findings of semi-structured depth interviews with respondents from 27 companies about the relevance of branding to human resource management. The authors found that employees in the workplace have more experience in deconstructing any communications of the organization. These have made them masters of skepticism when it comes to the normal parade of internal communications messages and tools. They conclude that branding has relevance within the context of employment.

Sandra and Glynn (2004), proposed a conceptual model of the employee branding process in which the employee brand image is driven by the messages employees receive

and the mechanisms within employees' psyches that enable them to make sense of those messages. The model identifies various sources through which messages are delivered and describes the contributions of those sources to the employee branding process. The psychological contract is identified as a perceptual mechanism central to the employee branding process. The model specifies the consequences of the employee branding process and describes a feedback loop through which managers can monitor the process.

Moroko and Uncles (2009), in their study on mechanisms that shape and perpetuate the employer branding process, reported an investigation of the mechanisms that shape and perpetuate the employer branding process. Various mechanisms have been suggested in the employer branding literature, mainly based on normative principles. The contribution of this paper is to provide an empirical study in which these mechanisms are validated. The data presented in this paper describes that the employer branding process is inherently multidisciplinary in nature. This process encompasses functional and theoretical roots in marketing, human resources, organizational management and strategy.

Study by Dawn and Biswas (2010), gives some concept on employer branding and also examines how Indian organizations with a positive corporate reputation can attract and retain employees. It also focuses to explain the importance, applicability, outcome and creating an effective employer branding strategy of Indian companies. An effective employer brand is essential for gaining competitive advantage. Increasingly, Indian corporations are becoming intentionally strategic to utilize the employer brand to attract and retain talent for their expansion and growth. The increasing focus on competitive advantage is leading many Indian firms to rethink their employer brands.

OBJECTIVES:
1. To study the influence of demographic factors on Employer Branding Classification
2. To determine the most reliable factors among the Stricture of Employer Branding.

METHODOLOGY:
Descriptive research design was used for the study. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaire having closed ended questions. The questionnaire was administrated to a sample of 52 respondents working in IT sector in Chennai. Convenience non-probability sampling method was used to select a sample.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
Demographic Factor Analysis:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Factors	No. of Respondents	Percent
Gender		
Male	35	67.31%
Female	17	32.69%
Age		
Less than 25 years	9	17.31%
25 – 35 years	23	44.23%
36 – 45 years	14	26.92%
46 – 55 years	6	11.54%
Above 56 years	0	0.0%
Marital status		
Single	20	38.46%
Married	32	61.54%
Educational Qualification		
Graduate	8	15.38%
Post Graduate	28	53.85%
Professional Qualification	15	28.85%
Other Specify	1	1.92%
Total Working Experience		
Less than 2 years	7	13.46%
2 to 5 years	20	38.46%
5 to 10 years	7	13.46%
10 to 15 years	8	15.38%
15 to 20 years	5	9.62%
Above 20 years	5	9.62%
Salary in Rupees		
Below 20,000	9	17.31%
20,001 to 30,000	23	44.23%
30,001 to 40,000	6	11.54%
40,001 to 50,000	7	13.46%
51,001 to 60,000	4	7.69%
Above 60,001	3	5.77%

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 exhibits demographic factors of the respondents working in IT industries. 67.31% of respondents are male and majority (44.23%) of them belongs to 25 – 35 years age group. As noticed in the table 61.54% of them were married and majority (53.85) of respondents were found to be post graduates.

Employees who have work experience up to 20 years were considered for the study and majority 38.46% of the respondents were having 2 – 5 years experience. Similarly their monthly salary which was also consider for the research states that 44.23% of respondents were earning Rs.20,001 – Rs.30,000 per month.

There are 23 factors consider for Employer Branding measurement and Likert's five point scaling technique is used as Very Important, Important, Neither Important nor Unimportant, Unimportant, and Very Unimportant. Employee profile is mandatory to evaluate the reliability of their feedback. In order to evaluate the relationship between demographic factors and Employer Branding (EB), we have used chi-square analysis. Employer branding feedback is optimized as Less, Moderate and More through standard deviation classification of the scores. The classification states that 28.85% of feedback represents as less important & moderate important and majority (42.3%) of feedback represents more important given to EB.

The subsequent analysis shows chi-square analysis between demographic profile of the respondents and Employer Branding Classification.

H_0: The demographic factors have no significant influence on Employer Branding Classification.

H_1: The demographic factors have significant influence on Employee Branding Classification.

Table 2: Demographic Factors and EB Classification

Demographic Factors	P-Value	S / NS
Gender	0.450	NS
Age	0.424	NS
Marital status	0.365	NS
Educational Qualification	0.138	NS
Total Working Experience	0.502	NS
Salary in Rupees	0.360	NS

The above result exhibits Pearson's chi-square test's p-value and its significance status. It is noticed from the table that all p-values are greater than the level of significance 0.05, and hence it is not significant. The null hypothesis is accepted and concluded as demographic factors have no significant influence on employee branding classification. Thus it confirms the opinion as general, irrespective of demographic factors.

Employer Branding Factor Analysis:
Table 3: Factor Analysis – Employer Branding (EB)

Employer Branding	Initial	Extraction
Having a good relationship with my colleague	1.00	0.82
Having a good relationship with my superiors	1.00	0.73
Felling more self-confident as a result of working for the organization	1.00	0.83
Working for an organization that both values and makes use of my creativity	1.00	0.87

A happy working environment	1.00	0.72
Working for an organization that produces high quality goods or services	1.00	0.84
Working for an organization that produces innovative products and services	1.00	0.58
An attractive overall compensation package	1.00	0.60
An above average basic salary	1.00	0.84
Working in an exciting environment	1.00	0.57
Working for an organization that i felt i could belong to	1.00	0.64
Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for the organization	1.00	0.84
Working for an organization in which i would be accepted	1.00	0.72
Working for an innovative employer with novel work practices and forward thinking	1.00	0.64
Gaining a career-enhancing experience	1.00	0.76
Working for an organization that is customer orientated	1.00	0.65
Good promotion opportunities within the organization	1.00	0.71
Working for an organization that would provide me with job security	1.00	0.71
A springboard for future employment	1.00	0.70
Opportunity to teach others what i have learned	1.00	0.74
Opportunity to apply what i learned at college	1.00	0.79
Working for an organization would give me hands on inter- departmental experience	1.00	0.78
Working for a humanitarian organization – one that gives back to society	1.00	0.57

Further, factor analysis with principal component analysis is used to find the most reliable factors among the list of employee branding features considered for this paper (Table 3). The preceding table exhibits the communality index of employer branding, which contains list of factors, initial and extraction value.

As a general specification, an extracted value greater than 0.5 is considered valid. It is noticed from the result table that all extraction values are greater than 0.5. Hence no feature is listed for omission. Among the list we would like to emphasize the highly reliable factors (which is greater than or equal to 0.7). Out of 23 factors, 17 factors were identified as highly reliable for employee branding.

CONCLUSION

Employer brand denotes an organization's reputation as an employer (Barrow, S. and Mosley). The term was first used in the early 1990s, and has since become widely adopted by the global management community. Minchington (2005) defines employer brand as "the image of your organization as a 'great place to work'". Employer branding is concerned with enhancing a company's employer brand. In this paper twenty three factors were considered to measure the employer branding. The result states that employee feedback towards employer branding is common irrespective of demographic factors. Reliability of the factors was also found high is most cases. Hence, factors considered in this paper can be used for measuring employer branding strategies.

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