

Identifying the Dimensions of Employer Brand Attractiveness : Students' Perspective Vs. Employees' Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose : The purpose of the paper is to find out the most important factor for employer brand attractiveness from the perspective of the students as well the employees.

Data Collection : Data was collected from B-school students and middle level employees of Mumbai region . 406 respondents were chosen for the purpose. The data was collected by using an online questionnaire. About 177 responses were received in the students' category and 77 responses were received in the employee category.

Data Analysis : The data was analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics and Factor Analysis were used to analyze the data further. The data analysis revealed some interesting results.

Managerial Implications : The study would be of great use to the marketers in designing strategies for good employer brand attractiveness.

Limitations : The major limitation of the study was the limited sample size.

Keywords: Employee Perspective, Brand Attractiveness, Descriptive Statistics, Student Perspective

JEL Classification : M12

INTRODUCTION

Attracting a pool of talent is the most challenging task encountered by employers. One of the recent and best methods for attracting and retaining talent according to recent marketing theory is to opt for employer brand attractiveness. Employer brand attractiveness is the ability of the employer to attract and retain employees. In the Indian scenario, there is more flight of talent from one company to another, and employee retention is the most difficult task for any firm, large or small. Therefore, employee brand attractiveness seems to be the most effective strategy in retaining the employees and creating a competitive edge. An effective employer branding practice brings forth the following advantages :

- a) Creates awareness of the employer as a brand ;
- b) Builds competitive edge ;
- c) Acts as a motivating factor in retaining and sustaining the employees in the market.

Some of the Indian firms who have created successful employer brands are the Tata Group, the Birla Group and Godrej. The term employer brand attractiveness seems to have origin in the internal marketing concept and employer branding. According to the internal marketing concept, jobs are considered to be internal and employees are internal products. The term employer brand attractiveness is closely associated with employer branding. The term “employer branding” was first used by Ambler and Barrow (1996). They defined employer brand as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified by the employer company”. According to Lloyds (2002), “employer branding is described as the sum of co-efforts to communicate to the existing and prospective staff so that it is a desirable place to work”. Employer brand attractiveness is defined as the “envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in the working of the organization”.

Post graduate students who are potential job seekers and working employees differ in perception with regard to various attributes of employer brand attractiveness. This paper seeks to identify the dimensions of employer brand attractiveness on the basis of students' perception and employees' perception.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Berton et al. (2005) conducted a study to identify the various dimensions of employer brand attractiveness. They identified five important dimensions i.e. Social value, Development value, Application value, Interest value and Economic value. The study was of great use to identify and refine antecedents and consequences of employer brand equity.

Roy (2008) examined various dimensions of employer brand attractiveness using the Berthon scale. He identified eight dimensions: Application value, Interest value, Ethical value, Economic value, Psychological value, Career opportunity and Developmental values. He tested the relevance of these factors in the light of five companies. The study was of great use in analyzing the perception of current and potential employees.

Moroko and Uncles (2008) brought out the various characteristics of successful employer brand on the basis of data gathered from industry experts. The study identified two dimensions of employer brand attractiveness i.e. Attractiveness and Accuracy. For customer centric organizations, brand attractiveness emerged as the most important criteria, whereas for employers, brand accuracy appeared to be the most important criteria.

Maxwell and Knox (2009) made use of the social identity theory and made a comparative study of the employer brand attractiveness of four different organizations. The study identified few attributes which were identical, these included Employment, Organizational successes, Construed external image, Product and service characteristics.

Archchige and Robertson (2011) also identified the dimensions of employer brand attractiveness from the student's perspective by taking into consideration Sri Lankan students. The study highlighted eight factors including, Corporate environment, Job structure, Social commitment, Social environment, Relational personnel, Growth, Dynamism, and Enjoyment.

RESEARCH GAP

There seems to be lack of research in the Indian scenario in studying the difference between the students' perception and employees' perception with regard to employer brand attractiveness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To find out which of the following parameters strongly apply to students and which parameters strongly apply to employees.
- 2) To reduce the factors into two categories - Students' perspective and Employees' perspective.
- 3) To draw a comparison between the same.

METHODOLOGY

Data was collected from both students and employees through the online questionnaire method. The sample consisted of 406 respondents. The questionnaires were posted online, out of which the responses available were 177 for students and 77 for employees. Students from top B-schools from Mumbai were selected for the purpose. The respondents were aged between 21-25 years and were potential job seekers. Respondents were pursuing their MBA program and were well aware of the concept of employer brand attractiveness. The data was collected during the period from March - April 2011. Similarly, middle-level employees from different private companies were selected from Mumbai. These employees were aged between 30-45 years of age and had a minimum job experience of three years.

Table 1 : Reliability Statistics	
Category	Cronbach Alpha
Students	.773
Employee	.847
Source: Primary Data	

Table 2: Mean Score of the Employer Brand Attractiveness Items		
Factors	Mean (5-point Likert scale)	Mean (5-point Likert scale)
	Students	Employees
Recognition and appreciation from employees	4.18	4.00
Fun working environment	4.18	3.95
Provides opportunity for better jobs in the future	4.17	3.86
Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for the organization	4.25	3.82
Feeling more self confident as a result of working for the organization	4.33	3.82
Gain experience that will help your career	4.30	3.78
Supportive/ encouraging colleagues	4.14	3.83
Have a good working relationship with your colleagues	4.23	3.85
Working in an exciting environment	4.18	3.94
Innovative employer	4.12	3.98
The organization values and makes use of your creativity	3.92	3.82
The organization is known for high quality products and services	4.04	3.77
Good promotion opportunity within the organization	3.98	3.46
Socially responsible organization	3.83	3.38
Opportunity to teach others what you learnt at the university	4.10	3.56
Acceptance and belongingness	4.11	3.83
The organization is customer -oriented	4.10	3.76
Job security within the organization	4.18	3.78
Can gain experience in a range of Departments	4.06	3.58
Happy working environment	4.03	3.57
An above average basic salary	4.06	3.74
An attractive compensation package	4.08	3.56
A very profitable organization	4.008	3.57
A large company	3.952	3.56
The company is well known through ad media exposure	4.00	3.94
The type of products manufactured	3.94	3.96
The quality of the management	4.00	3.85
The organization is well known for honesty and fairness	4.00	3.93
Giving you greater respect from family and friends	3.93	3.80
Source : Primary Data		

The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire which included 30 questions on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was based on Brethon's scale. Pilot study was done before actual data collection by taking a small sample of 30 students and 10 employees. Data was analyzed using SPSS software. Reliability test was done before actual analysis . The data was separately analyzed for students as well as employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

❖ **Reliability Test :** The Table 1 shows that the Cronbach Alpha score in both the categories is .77 and .847, which is greater than .7. Hence, the data was capable for further analysis.

The Table 2 shows the comparison of means of various factors affecting employer brand attractiveness for students and employees. From the Table 2, it is clear that from the students' perspective, '*feeling more self-confident as a result of working for the organization*' (mean=4.33) emerged as the most important factor for employer brand attractiveness, whereas from employees' perspective, '*Recognition and Appreciation awarded to the employees*' (mean=4.00)

Table 3 : KMO and Barlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.687
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1468.986
df		378
Sig.		.000
Source : Primary Data		

Table 4 : Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.535	16.196	16.196	4.535	16.196	16.196	3.043	10.868	10.868
2	3.110	11.106	27.303	3.110	11.106	27.303	3.021	10.789	21.658
3	2.003	7.152	34.455	2.003	7.152	34.455	2.074	7.408	29.065
4	1.905	6.805	41.260	1.905	6.805	41.260	2.035	7.266	36.332
5	1.588	5.671	46.931	1.588	5.671	46.931	1.978	7.064	43.395
6	1.356	4.842	51.773	1.356	4.842	51.773	1.781	6.359	49.754
7	1.278	4.563	56.336	1.278	4.563	56.336	1.544	5.513	55.268
8	1.128	4.028	60.364	1.128	4.028	60.364	1.275	4.553	59.821
9	1.092	3.898	64.263	1.092	3.898	64.263	1.244	4.442	64.263
10	.961	3.432	67.695						
11	.832	2.973	70.667						
12	.811	2.895	73.562						
13	.760	2.716	76.278						
14	.732	2.613	78.891						
15	.679	2.425	81.316						
16	.620	2.216	83.532						
17	.585	2.090	85.621						
18	.557	1.989	87.610						
19	.522	1.866	89.476						
20	.437	1.560	91.036						
21	.412	1.471	92.507						
22	.377	1.347	93.853						
23	.370	1.323	95.176						
24	.339	1.211	96.387						
25	.319	1.141	97.528						
26	.282	1.008	98.536						
27	.257	.918	99.454						
28	.153	.546	100.000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					Source : Primary Data				

emerged as the most important factor. Other important factors from the students' perspective included '*Gaining experience that would help their career*' (mean=4.30), and '*Feeling good about themselves as a result of working for that organization*' (mean=4.25). From the employees' perspective, other important factors included '*Innovative Employer*' (mean=3.98) and '*Type of products manufactured by the organization*' (mean=3.96).

Table 5 : Rotated Component Matrix (a)									
Particulars	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Recognition and appreciation from employees	.129	.223	.199	.056	-.089	.080	.052	-.487	-.195
Fun working environment	.366	.385	-.254	-.198	.115	.053	.458	-.025	.281
Provides opportunity for better jobs in the future	.687	.159	-.011	.342	.032	-.003	.097	-.039	.110
Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for the organization	.836	.018	-.004	.049	.091	.014	-.033	-.073	.020
Feeling more self confident as a result of working for the organization	.782	.211	-.188	-.120	.148	.109	-.029	.091	-.200
Gain experience that will help your career	.442	.473	.062	.062	.089	-.014	-.095	-.044	-.601
Have a good working relationship with your colleagues	.093	.713	-.003	-.012	.002	.039	-.037	-.165	.041
Supportive/ encouraging colleagues	.044	.706	.163	-.076	-.008	-.001	.192	.240	-.057
Working in an exciting environment	-.022	.811	-.113	-.090	.206	.036	-.081	-.074	.026
Innovative employer	.264	.673	-.076	.085	-.053	-.038	.186	.142	.027
The organization values and makes use of your creativity	.355	.470	.162	.315	-.228	-.154	-.178	.131	.166
The organization is known for high quality products and services	.278	.211	.001	.137	.210	.006	-.079	-.006	.734
Good promotion opportunity within the organization	.662	.082	.124	-.186	-.050	-.007	.082	.271	.239
Socially responsible organization	.322	.260	.103	.022	.047	.003	-.009	.725	-.148
Opportunity to teach others what you learnt at the univeristy	.091	.103	.081	.258	.631	-.036	-.278	-.080	.144
Acceptance and belongingness	.061	.021	.093	.081	.760	.118	.047	-.032	.055
The organization is customer -oriented	.044	.018	.071	.030	.700	.177	.087	.302	-.040
Job security within the organization	.099	-.039	.632	-.057	.438	-.096	.068	-.307	.097
Can gain experience in a range of Departments	-.064	-.005	.776	.010	.185	.198	.003	.017	-.081
Happy working environment	-.054	.030	.767	.017	-.069	.255	.122	.069	.017
An above average basic salary	.085	-.155	.357	.057	.054	.630	-.090	-.155	-.048
An attractive compensation package	.088	.093	.173	-.056	.086	.729	.108	-.069	.007
A very profitable organization	-.074	.021	.002	.215	.112	.768	-.010	.135	.027
A large company	-.145	.093	.122	.666	-.010	.190	.070	-.007	.083
The company is well known through ad media exposure	.118	-.080	-.079	.669	.066	-.024	.061	-.063	.028
The type of products manufactured	.041	-.067	-.041	.680	.206	.065	.140	.069	-.061
The organization is well known for honesty and fairness	.005	.006	.195	.414	.039	-.086	.616	-.188	.028
Giving you greater respect from family and friends	.003	.066	.071	.157	-.057	.073	.807	.061	-.065
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.									
A Rotation converged in 7 iterations.									
Source: Primary Data									

FACTOR ANALYSIS

In order to get a more concise view of the factors important from the students' and employees' perspective, the factor analysis was conducted.

❖ **Students' Perspective :** The Table 3 shows that the Kaiser Meyer Oklin value is greater than .687 and even the significance value of Barlett's Test of Sphericity is .000, which shows the data is capable for further analysis.

The Table 4 shows that nine factors were identified with eigen values greater than 1, which accounted for 64.263% of the variance. This implies that from students' perspective, the factors identified can bring about changes upto 64.263%. The Table 5 shows that the rotation of the variables was done to get the significant factors and as per the Table 6, the components of nine factors were identified using rotated component matrix. Principal component analysis and varimax rotation was used for the analysis. The Table 7 shows the list of nine factors. These factors

Table 6 : Showing Important Components of Factors								
Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8	Factor 9
Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for the organization	Having a good working relationship with your colleagues	Can gain experience in a range of depts.	A large company	Acceptance and belonging -ness	An attractive compensation package	The organization is well known for honesty and fairness	Socially responsible organization	The organization is known for high quality products and services
Feeling more self confident	Working in an exciting environment	Happy working environment	The company is well known through ad media exposure	The organization is customer oriented	A very profitable organization	Giving you greater respect from family and friends		
Provides opportunity for better jobs in future	Supportive/encouraging colleagues		The type of products manufactured					
Good promotion opportunity within the organization								
Source: Primary Data								

Table 7 : Various Factors Labeled	
Factors	Label
1	Self Development
2	Relationship
3	Work Environment
4	Company Aspects
5	Customer Orientation
6	Compensation
7	Moral Values
8	Social Responsiveness
9	Quality Aspects
Source : Primary Data	

Table 8 : KMO and Barlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.578
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1103.179
df		406
Sig.		.000
Source : Primary Data		

include Self Development, Relationship, Work Environment, Company Aspects, Customer Orientation, Compensation, Moral Values, Social Responsiveness and Quality aspects.

❖ **Employees' Perspective :** The Factor Analysis was also done to find out the important factors from the employees' perspective. It can be inferred from the Table 8 that the Kaiser-Meyer Oklin score is .578 and Barlett's test of

Table 9 : Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.811	20.037	20.037	5.811	20.037	20.037	3.265	11.260	11.260
2	2.702	9.317	29.354	2.702	9.317	29.354	2.960	10.207	21.467
3	2.639	9.099	38.453	2.639	9.099	38.453	2.362	8.146	29.612
4	2.090	7.206	45.659	2.090	7.206	45.659	2.354	8.118	37.730
5	1.941	6.692	52.350	1.941	6.692	52.350	2.208	7.612	45.343
6	1.520	5.243	57.593	1.520	5.243	57.593	2.001	6.901	52.243
7	1.233	4.252	61.845	1.233	4.252	61.845	1.881	6.487	58.730
8	1.167	4.024	65.869	1.167	4.024	65.869	1.709	5.893	64.623
9	1.093	3.769	69.639	1.093	3.769	69.639	1.455	5.016	69.639
10	.990	3.415	73.054						
11	.873	3.009	76.063						
12	.794	2.738	78.801						
13	.748	2.579	81.380						
14	.694	2.393	83.772						
15	.618	2.130	85.903						
16	.592	2.042	87.945						
17	.521	1.796	89.741						
18	.413	1.422	91.163						
19	.399	1.375	92.538						
20	.370	1.275	93.813						
21	.344	1.187	95.000						
22	.330	1.137	96.138						
23	.245	.843	96.981						
24	.225	.776	97.757						
25	.172	.594	98.352						
26	.157	.541	98.892						
27	.139	.478	99.371						
28	.114	.394	99.765						
29	.068	.235	100.000						
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Source: Primary Data									

sphericity is .000, which means that the data is capable of further analysis. The Table 9 identified nine factors which accounted for 69.639% of the variance. The percentage of variance as explained for the employees (69.639%) is better than that of the students (64.63%) . Therefore, the nine factors identified were more influential in case of employees rather than for the students. The Tables 10 and 11 show the rotated factor matrix. Varimax rotation was used, and the extraction method was Principal Component Analysis. The rotation identified various components in each of the factors, which are shown in the Table 11.

The Table 12 shows the various factors which are labeled as Self Development, Application Value ,Product Quality, Relationship, Job Experience and Job Security, Customer Focus, Work Environment, Compensation, Recognition and Appreciation. On analyzing the table, it can be seen there are certain factors which are similar to both employers and students; these include Self Development, Relationship, Customer Focus and Compensation.

Table 10 : Rotated Factor Matrix (a)									
Components	Component								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Recognition and appreciation from employees	.065	.134	.051	-.082	-.112	.149	.113	.163	.751
Fun working environment	-.171	.213	-.343	.231	.033	.030	.465	.291	.353
Provides opportunity for better jobs in the future	-.158	.090	.177	-.020	.164	.717	.318	.024	.111
Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for the organization	.041	-.112	-.037	.166	.257	.534	.093	-.143	.515
Feeling more self confident as a result of working for the organization	.861	-.102	-.040	.132	-.045	-.011	.019	.017	.080
Gain experience that will help your career	.148	-.032	.251	.665	.200	.127	.098	.189	-.005
Have a good working relationship with your colleagues	.119	.038	.086	.761	.087	-.182	-.309	-.017	-.060
Working in an exciting environment	.564	.542	-.086	.192	-.046	.181	-.072	-.200	.062
Supportive/ encouraging colleagues	-.030	.452	.221	.703	.034	-.043	.107	-.256	.034
Innovative employer	.219	.583	-.156	.213	-.124	-.050	-.503	.163	-.021
The organization values and makes use of your creativity	.066	.495	.063	.249	.430	.015	.281	.172	-.093
The organization is known for high quality products and services	.571	.438	.159	-.096	.228	-.073	.064	.127	.228
Good promotion opportunity within the organization	.551	.436	.076	.008	.430	-.033	.014	.294	-.141
A socially responsible organization	.006	.612	.222	.491	.175	.080	-.109	-.177	.011
Opportunity to teach others what you have learnt at the university	.128	.742	-.012	-.064	.035	.051	.141	-.025	.118
The organization is customer oriented	.190	.066	.139	-.103	-.065	.720	-.142	.034	.082
Job security within the organization	-.004	-.020	.128	.126	.735	-.053	-.088	.043	.233
Acceptance and belongingness	.470	.330	-.324	.020	-.020	.440	.187	-.084	-.267
Can gain experience in a range of Departments	.114	.094	-.130	.057	.753	.190	.110	-.055	-.191
Happy working environment	.098	.079	-.039	-.055	.026	.117	.768	.106	.052
An above average basic salary	.059	-.013	.011	-.086	.075	-.035	.125	.802	.174
An attractive compensation package	-.082	.025	.104	.121	.584	.037	.049	.479	-.123
A very profitable organization	.253	-.209	.406	.312	.179	.320	.097	.412	-.114
A large company	.555	.024	.258	-.122	-.002	-.161	.576	.096	.112
The company is well known through ad media exposure	-.055	.422	.553	.096	-.234	.204	.156	.196	-.167
The type of products manufactured	.161	-.046	.702	.212	-.027	.258	-.058	.187	.050
The quality of the management	.064	.056	.788	.229	.171	-.041	.014	-.138	.055
The organization is well known for honesty and fairness	.629	.330	.363	.010	.036	.140	.010	-.156	.028
Giving you greater respect from family and friends	.565	.089	.138	.247	.046	.228	.003	.227	-.318
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.									
a Rotation converged in 18 iterations. Source : Primary Data									

Table 11 : Components of the Important Factors								
Factor1	Factor2	Factor3	Factor4	Factor5	Factor6	Factor7	Factor8	Factor9
Feeling more self confident as a result of working for the organization	Opportunity to teach others what you have learnt at the university	The type of products manufactured	Have a good working relationship with your colleagues	Can gain experience in a range of Depts.	The organization is customer oriented	A happy work environment	An above average basic salary	Recognition and appreciation of employees
		The quality of the management	Supportive and encouraging colleagues	Job security within the organization				
Source : Primary Data								

Table 12 : Rotated Factor Matrix	
Factor1	Self Development
Factor 2	Application Value
Factor 3	Product and Quality
Factor 4	Relationship
Factor 5	Experience and Job Security
Factor 6	Customer Focus
Factor 7	Work Environment
Factor 8	Compensation
Factor 9	Recognition and Appreciation
Source : Primary Data	

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation of the study is the limited sample size. The study covered only Mumbai region for the analysis. Hence, it has limited application. Another limitation of this study are the limited tools that were used for the analysis.

CONCLUSION

Self confidence was rated as the most important factor for brand attractiveness according to the students' perspective, whereas Recognition and appreciation from the employees' perspective was rated as the most important factor. Employers should include these factors while attracting a pool of talent for their organization. High level of employer brand attractiveness paves the way for high level of brand equity for the organization.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is of great use for the Managers as it would aid them in designing strategies to increase the brand attractiveness of the employers. The Managers can design separate strategies for students and the current employees to attract them to an organization. Concentrating on these factors can help to enhance the brand equity of the organization.

This research opens doors for future research. An inter-state study can also be taken up. A good analysis of brand attractiveness can be done by drawing a comparative study between various levels of employees across different sectors.

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