

Factors Influencing the Employer Brand Perception of Campus Recruits: An empirical evidence from India

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Abstract — There is an increasing growth of the talent in the job market, especially in campuses and it has become a necessity for organizations to attract right talent from this talent pool. Understanding campus recruits' perceptions of employer brand and brand building strategies would help organizations leverage this knowledge to be able to build a strong employer brand for them. A lot of research is being conducted in the area of campus recruits' perception of employer branding; however there exists very limited literature that talks about the factors influencing campus recruits perception of employer brand in the Indian context. The aim of this study is to find those factors that influence the campus recruits' perception of an organization's employer brand and brand building strategies the most, and the campus recruits' intention to apply to the organization in an Indian context. The variables considered in this study are corporate image, pre-recruitment process, CSR activities, intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards, internship activities, seminars and workshops, social media and online portals and official website.

Keywords— *Employer Branding, Campus Recruits, Perception, Employer Brand Building Strategies.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Employer branding has become an important necessity in India for most organizations and the extent to which the process is relevant here is another question that some researchers are toying with. Studies have been conducted to ascertain the relevance of employer branding in India and to find out if Employer branding is merely a fad or if there is anything innate to it. The dramatic changes in the workforce trends and the growing, intense competition in the Indian labor market have made it vital for organizations to develop strategies to create for themselves a USP. The solution for this problem has been without any doubt, found to be employer branding. (Kapoor, 2010)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Establishing the importance of employer branding

Prayag (2006) noted that organizations that used employer branding as the first movers, managed to whisk away the best talent to themselves much better than their competitors. Dawn and Biwas (2010) conducted a study on how Indian organizations with a positive reputation are successful in attracting and retaining highly talented employees and on the

importance, applicability, outcome of an effective employer branding strategy in Indian companies. The study concluded that an effective employer brand gives a competitive advantage to organizations since most Indian Corporations have begun implementing employer branding strategies to attract and retain top talent. Rajkumar *et al* (2015) attempted to answer questions such as, what the important employer branding dimensions in employer branding are, with respect to campus recruitment; and the discriminating branding dimension in the choice of a company and perception of students in campus recruitment. The branding dimensions were found to act as discriminating dimensions for the students in selecting a particular company. The study also confirmed that Compensation is no longer a top ranked dimension. Basu (2015) reported the results of an Aon Hewitt research on hiring trends in India. The report showed that 60% organizations are planning to increase budgets for employer branding. More than 70% organizations structure talent acquisition teams as business units to address end to end hiring needs. 50% large organizations have campus hiring teams.

B. The study of perceptions among prospective employees.

Kanar *et al* (2008) conducted a study to understand if by using high information practices during the recruitment process, the HR of the said organization could change the perceptions of the prospective employees. (Purdue) University students' perceptions of compensation and benefits offered by companies that they seek to work for upon graduation was studied by Adler and Ghiselli (2015). The study revealed that items related to compensation and benefits were related to brand image but the most important factors to the (Purdue) University students/prospective employees were good medical benefits, above average retirement plans and tuition reimbursement.

C. Factors influencing perceptions of prospective employees and attributes of employer branding

A study conducted by Agarwal (1996) on set of management students in India revealed that “skills, competencies and abilities” of the prospective employees was one of the most significant factors that help them decide on a career choice while father was the most significant individual. Agarwal and Swaroop (2009) examined the effect of employer brand on the application intention of undergraduate students (prospective employees) in a business school and found that, among various job attributes that were considered, responsibility and empowerment inherent in the job influenced the prospective employees’ intention to apply for a particular organization. Other significant factors were found to be compensation and locational considerations. Agarwal (2016) has studied the increasing importance of internships in building a positive employer brand which shows that internships act as a leeway between interns (students) and corporates. Kumar (2016) understood the importance of understanding candidate experience during interviews and how it can create a negative impact on the candidate if not done with great care and planning.

D. Impact of social media on employer branding strategies

Sivertzen *et al* (2013) conducted a study to understand the factors that need to be considered while building their employer branding strategies. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a huge role in contributing to the Indian Economy. SMEs are taking up after the larger corporates and are looking to strengthen their Human Resources function. Kaur *et al* (2015) carried out a study to understand the influence of social media on the employer branding efforts pursued by the SMEs. The results revealed that social media did play a significant role on the organizations’ employer brand along with social, application and economic values that were included in the employer branding strategies. Bondarouk *et al* (2014) studied the impact of social media on employer branding in the near future from the point of view of both HR practitioners as well as academicians by using the Delphi method. They found that while HR professionals consider social media as a tool that would portray an organization’s employer brand and responsiveness, the academics consider social media as way to identify their target prospective employees. Carrilatt *et al* (2014) undertook a study of how firms go about recruiting good job prospects by using social media sites Facebook. They found that active processing of messages posed by employers played a huge role in attracting job prospects. The results yielded showed that more the employers connected their messages to their brands, more did the prospective employees show interest in the event or job

posting in this case. Madia (2011) studied the best way in which social media can be used for effective talent search. Job searchers and recruiters were aware of the use of social media for cost-effective and competitive means of recruitment however, it was highly necessary for organizations to gear up and use social media in their strategies.

III. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

H1: There is a significant relationship between corporate image (employer brand) and the variables (employer branding strategies) pre-recruitment process, CSR activities, intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards, internship activities, seminars and workshops, social media and online portals and official website

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Sample

This study mainly focuses on the perception of campus recruits on the employer brand attributes and branding strategies used by organizations. Thus, my population includes all final year students in engineering and management colleges across the country. However my sample includes final year students from engineering and management only from specific regions in South India. I have received close to 271 responses. I followed convenient sampling due to time constraints and other restricting factors. After the detailed literature review, followed by some exploratory research, which consisted of talking to final year students about employer brand attributes and employer branding strategies that they thought were important, hypotheses were drawn up for relationship between corporate image, pre – recruitment process, CSR activities, student – interactive activities, social media and online portals and organization’s official website. The hypotheses was supported by relevant items from the literature as well as from the exploratory research. These items were then used to construct the questionnaire that was floated for the study, to campus recruits, or final year students in engineering as well as other management institutes in a few regions in the South of India.

	N=270	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
Female	134	49.63%
Male	136	50.37%
AGE		
21 to 24 years	132	49.1%
25 to 27 years	84	31%

28 years and above	17	6.30%
Less than 21 years	37	13.70%
PRESENCE OF PLACEMENT OFFICE		
No	27	10.00%
Not aware	9	3.33%
Yes	234	86.67%
FREQUENCY OF INTERACTION WITH SENIORS/ALUMNI		
No interaction	12	4.44%
Often	77	28.52%
Rarely	22	8.15%
Sometimes	61	22.59%
Very often	85	31.48%
Very rarely	13	4.81%

B. Measures

Employer brand was measured by the campus recruits' intention to apply to the organization based on the pre-recruitment process, CSR activities, intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards, internship activities, seminars and workshops, social media and online portals and official website. The respondents' perception of employer branding was measured by a five-point Likert scale based on the study conducted by Berthon *et al* (2005)

Pre-recruitment process:

The formalities like pre-placement talk conducted and carried out by the organization before the selection process officially starts makes up the pre-recruitment process.

CSR:

Corporate Social Responsibility is the set of activities that organizations carry out for the betterment of the society or the environment as a whole.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic rewards:

Intrinsic rewards are the intangible rewards like recognition whereas extrinsic rewards are tangible rewards like monetary benefits offered to employees.

Internship activities:

Activities or training that a student undergoes, sometimes on pay, in order to gain experience in a particular task, field or industry.

Seminar and workshops:

Seminar is a meeting, conference or a discussion, usually one-on-one, is undertaken for the benefit of the audience.

Workshop is training or an activity session for a group of people usually conducted by an expert in the activity, field or industry.

Social media and online portals:

Social media are channels of communication that help in connecting with participants irrespective of distance and boundaries.

Online portals are platforms where information from diverse sources regarding jobs in organizations (in this case) that are specifically designed on web.

Official website:

Web pages that officially belong to the organization and a place where the public can view information relating to the organization forms the official website of the organization.

V. ANALYSIS

The analysis of the sample data is as given below:

Table 1 :

Models	R ² Value	Adj. R ² Value	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t value	Sig.
Pre-recruitment process	0.417	0.398	.129	2.101	.037
Intrinsic rewards			.069	1.135	.257
Extrinsic rewards			.108	1.726	.086
CSR			.133	2.275	.024
Internship activities			.087	1.351	.178
Competitions			-.001	-.013	.990
Social media and online portals			.136	2.287	.023
Official website			.231	3.608	.000

Dependent variable: Corporate image

Excluded variable: Seminars and workshops

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

H1: The linear regression analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between the variables Corporate Image and Social media and online portals, official website, CSR and pre-recruitment process.

This shows that Social media and online portals, official website, CSR and pre-recruitment process have a strong influence on Corporate Image unlike the factors intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, internship activities and competitions do not have as much influence on corporate image or the employer brand of the organization as the above mentioned variables.

The results have been tabulated in Table 1 given above.

VII. IMPLICATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There is immense scope for further research that can be carried out keeping in mind the diverse streams that the respondents are currently pursuing, the age and experience of the respondents and so on. Further, there lies a scope in constructing a scale for the current talent market to understand how employer brand perceptions of campus recruits can be effectively measured. It would entail a completely different process; however, it would help organizations immensely. The study done here is just a primary, exploratory work.

VIII. CONCLUSION

From the results and discussions it is evident that organizations would be more successful in attracting talent for recruitment if they concentrated more on their social media presence. Social media, online assessments and building employer brand need to become top priorities for recruiters Basu (2015). There needs to be an increase in the importance that has been given to employer branding strategies in order to keep up with the competing organizations to lay hands on the best talent in the market especially keeping the above factor in mind. Maintaining an up-to-date website, implementing innovative and interacting pre-recruitment strategies as well as engaging in CSR activities that make an impact on society may act as leverage in creating a highly positive employer branding strategy. This would eventually lead to an effective talent pool from which to hire from.

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