Content Analysis of the Excellence of Employee Performance: a Study of the Employer branding Models

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Abstract

Purpose – Review of literature provides number of models highlighting the perception of potential employees in context with employer branding. However, these models lack empirical investigation in different industries like insurance, tourism & travel, hospitality and banks. These frameworks have highlighted the perception of employers towards positioning their organisation image in the mind of potential employees.Six Online databases, namely, Emerald, JSTOR, Sage Publications, Science Direct, Springer Link and Taylor & Francis have been surfed to list the articles with title "Employer Branding" or with the title "Employer Attractiveness" and the total listed articles from databases of Taylor & Francis, Emerald, Springer Link, JSTOR, Science Direct and Sage Publications respectively have been thoroughly reviewed. The majority of studies on "Employer Branding" and on "Employer Attractiveness" have been carried out in different countries of the world that is in US, UK, China, Portugal, Netherlands, and in different service industries like hotels, banking, aviation and telecom sector. In theoretical terms, the researchers have remarked in their studies that employer branding terminology can be a strong basis for attracting the new talent and prospective candidate for the right job at right time in right place in various service industries. However, the focus has to be shifted in studying the employer branding terminology from current employee perspective.The study has provided basis for applying the models in different industries with the theoretical support. Future research should seek to give empirical evidence regarding the congruence between employer branding and employee performance. The conceptualized models can also be empirical investigated and may be employed in different industries to study the influence of various parameters on the service employees. The results from review of literature presented here should lead analysts to recognize that measuring and strategically managing employer branding may in fact become the most important managerial activity for driving organizational performance among current employees.The paper discusses the similarity and differences in the two models by [1]on employer branding from the perception of current employees towards their present organisation. The study provides a unique opportunity to understand the two models and their applicability in the banking industry. Moreover, these two models and its various perspectives were found to be more suitable and apt for the banking industry.

Keywords: Employer Attractiveness, Employer Branding, Employer Brand Loyalty, Employee Performance, Potential Employees, Current Employees.
Paper type-Review paper

1. INTRODUCTION

The terms internal advertising, internal marketing, internal branding, employer branding and employer attractiveness have been widely used in the marketing literature for explaining the value and worth of internal customers i.e. employees of the organisation. These concepts advertised the importance of employees for the organisation. The notion of internal marketing has put employees at the first place[2]. Whereas, researchers concluded that through internal branding, decision makers need to focus in highlighting the importance of current as well as new entrants to the employer. Further, employer branding has been defined as the initiative taken by company to promote, convince and communicate its internal brand to its existing and prospective employees that it is the desirable place to work[3].

The concept of employer branding has gained wide awareness in the recent times. Branding has become an important criterion for calculating the worth of the employer /organisation in the eyes of potential recruits and also their current employees. Authors like[4]came up with the notion of 'employer brand concept'. They observed that internal relationships and corporate performance can be improved if marketing and HR activities are integrated with brand management. This would help in measuring the performance of the individuals working in the organisation.

Branding has not been limited to the scope of physical and tangible product image. With the transformation in the scenario of market, people have started choosing service providers according to their goodwill and image in the marketplace. It has been used to create competitive advantage for the organisations[5].Employer branding has become a vast and widely talked about topic in the service industry. Many researchers and market experts have done indebted work in field of branding in telecom industry, hotel industry and other services industry. After emergence of the concept of employer branding by [4], [2]have come up with a validated scale on employer attractiveness that is used as a predictor for employer branding. They found out the five values i.e. social, interest, application, development and economic value that attracted an individual towards an employer. These dimensions act as predictor in creating an employer brand in the minds of potential candidates. But to understand the wide concept of employer branding and correlated parameters i.e. employee productivity and employee relationship has to be studied. It will help in highlighting the various other parameters also which help in maintaining the brand image of the organisation and thus resulting in positive employee attitudes.

2. EMPLOYER BRANDING: BASIS FOR RESEARCH

Employer branding is a widely discussed concept in research now-a-days. The effects of globalization, liberalization and modernisation have led employers to create a unique identity of their organisation in the market. From product-based branding to service-based branding; Indian service industry is moving towards establishing an exclusive brand for their services. Services industry from hospitality, health care, financial services, entertainment, tourism & travel and insurance have been working out effectively to build up the strategies to win the internal as well as external customer. From the review the few studies by [6];[7], [8], [9], [10]&[11]highlights some of the important work done in banking industry. Although great amount of work has been done on employer branding in the above mentioned services industry but it requires studying the influence of all parameters of employer branding with service employees. This study makes an attempt to make a comparison between two models

and gives suggestion for its applicability in different services industry specifically, banking industry. Given the transformation in banking sector, the need is to understand the importance of current employee segments that are related to employer branding components.

3. METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this bibliometric study has been to review the models conceptualised by [1]. Further, the objective of this study has been to gain underlying knowledge of various antecedents and consequents of employer branding. As first step, extensive literature review has been done to come up with essential perspectives inherited and conceptualised on the subject. All the related and important journals and articles related to the scope of the topic have been explored. The researchers have distinctively identified various variables in their research work. Each parameter has distinguished results, finding and implications in the respective study. The review on employer branding have unveiled two aspects i.e. how branding has emerged as an antecedent in retaining the existing employees and in influencing their performance. This paper brings a highlight for the researchers to apply the models in different industries in order to study the existing employee scenario within the organisations. The bibliometric study outlines four aspects that have been considered to come up with relevant support for the further study.

4. LITERATURE -ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENTS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING

From the literature studies, different predictors and outcomes of employer branding have been studied by separate researchers. After researching on diverse parameters, variables and construct, researchers has come up with the notion that employer branding alone cannot stand out as a sole parameter in creating an image of the organisation, attracting the potential employees and in retaining the existing employees. There are various parameters that merge with the predictor variable employer branding to result in positive employer brand, and an attractive organisation for the prospective candidates, a second home for current employees, loyal employees, positive employer-employee relation, increased performance and productivity. [2], validated employer attractiveness as a predictor for employer branding, and their 25-items Employer Attractiveness (EmpAt) scale has been used as a base scale in many studies in order to link it with other parameters. Authors had come up with various parameters like perceived organisational prestige and fit, realistic job previews and met expectations, psychological contract, organisational/brand commitment, organisational identification, employer brand loyalty, employee productivity and performance, perceptions of organisational support, organisational-based self-esteem (OBSE), organisational trust and cynicism, employer growth need strength (EGNS), leadership, job/employee satisfaction and life satisfaction; intention to quit; perceived stress levels and behaviour at work. These parameters have been used by the researchers to develop different theoretical models to do in-depth study on employer branding.

5. EMPLOYER BRANDING MODELS

Corporate firms have taken a great initiative in promoting their products in the eyes of consumers by enhancing their packaging, design and outer look. Similarly, services industry has also moved ahead in branding their service delivery ways in the mind of customers. While so much has done to attract and retain customers, little has been done on studying the

perception and attitude of the potential as well as current employees[12]. Many studies have been conducted in various industries from potential employees view point and many conclusions have come up. Various researchers have come up with different models that determined the terminology of employer branding. Term employer attractiveness has been used as an important dimension for attracting potential talent i.e. as a source of recruitment process and retaining the new entrants. When employer branding has been studied from the service organisation's point of view, it has been supported with theoretical background, which has provided that potential employees associate themselves with employer brand according to their views they have for the company. The person gets more influenced by the company if, he sees and observes some similar connection with the company. The employer brand image of the firm is the result of the image created by the employers in the mind of current employees and the prospective candidates.The conceptual models that have been proposed, makes an attempt to explain the perception of prospective individual towards the external image of the organisation of which they seek to become an employee. [4], known as the founder of 'employer brand management' concept, in their research work correlated employer brand with corporate culture and found out ways of measuring, maintaining and developing an employer brand image. Employees felt that awareness and psychological benefits helped the organisation to recruit and retain the best people and also these factors helped in deriving out healthy culture, reputation and performance for the firm. A strong human resource function with (strategies like segmentation, pricing, rewards, personal communication and relationship marketing) integrated with brand management strategies can help in improving internal relationships and corporate performance. But developing an employer brand image is not free of obstacles like lack of infrastructure, support, empathy of management and time. Therefore, it appears that employer brand management concept has just emerged in last few years and it needs critical implementation and execution and positive attitude by the top-level management. With the transformation of product centric approach towards service centric approach, service companies has adopted service branding as a tool for establishing a service image of the organisation. In creating the service brand of the organisation, their employees are considered as the best source of internally as well as externally communicating the brand promise. Service employees have been an essential figure for delivery of brand promise at each service encounter [13]. Further, customers who avail the service from the service employees becomes more loyal and retained by receiving the promised service delivery [14]. But the competition faced by service companies cannot be measured easily by the satisfaction of their customer in availing that particular service. The more critical role is played by the employees who help in building the brand image of the organisation.

5.1 Employer Branding Framework Model
[1]have conceptualised the employer branding framework model and gave theoretical implications for creating the importance of building an image of the organisation. The propositions used in the model explained the process of developing an employer brand image for the organisation. They used different terminologies keeping in mind the image of potential employees. Authors tired to explain the linkages between brand associations and brand image. They explained that brand evokes an idea and thoughts in the mind of the people, resulting in an association with the brand image. The pre-conceived image of the organisation by the employees as well as presented image of the employer by the organisation provides firms with set ideas of developing a brand image. Another proposition explained in the model is the linkage between employer branding and employer brand loyalty. The notion explained in the model is that employer branding impacts organization culture and organization identity that in turn contributes to employer brand loyalty. Employer branding communicates the information

about the organisational culture that affect the beliefs of applicants for choosing the organisation. Organisational identity has been used as a corresponding variable to organisational commitment. Later is defined as characteristics and connection of individuals with the firm, acknowledging the organisational goals, values and beliefs and working hard with the company[15]. On one-hand, these variables influence loyalty of employees towards their employer and vice-versa[1]. On other-hand, organisational culture and organisational identity serves as creator of the psychological impression of the employees towards the firm that bring a change in performance, productivity and profitability [16]. The elements organisational culture and organisational identity mediates the relationship between employer branding and employer loyalty. Whereas, the organisational culture is influenced by the employer branding and the, later organisational identity is strengthen by employer branding. The last proposition explained by the authors highlights the relationship between employer brand loyalty and employee performance/productivity. It explains that employer brand loyalty is positively related to employee performance. The previous studies have provided support that satisfied and loyal employees tend to give high level of performance. The authors in the model have not considered the importance of employer attractiveness dimensions of employer branding as a tool for retaining current employees. This model lacks to explain the value of skill and talent of existing employees who contribute in maintaining the image of the organisation in the mind of prospective candidates.

5.2 Employer Branding Process Model
The concept of talent management in the model of employer branding process originally conceptualised by [1]. According to the researchers, talented and skilled employees are the asset of the organisation. There is a need of retaining the right person at right place in the firms especially in the developing countries. The authors have used term employer branding as a tool for managing the scarce and talented resources efficiently in the organisation. [17] has penned down that employees stick to those organisations which have an ideal working environment and also the repute of the organisation makes them feel important and they prefer to stay and work in the firms. Moreover, existing employees are brand ambassadors for the company and they act as a source for attracting the new talent. The researchers have summarised the criterion of talent management in four phases i.e. concept phase, design phase, integration phase and evaluation phase. Employer branding process begins with determining the strength of the current employer and its relation with the organisational brand and its missions. Proceeding further with design stage, the employer brand strategy includes amalgamation of all the branding strategies with the corporate image of the concern and with the internal as well as external customers and stakeholders. The positive brand building can be done with the help of improving career website, company intranet, publishing brochures, newsletters, and using good advertisement strategies. The evaluation phase involved the need of understanding the importance of process and inputs that are required to build up an employer brand and its full utilisation which result in employee benefit. Further, the authors summed up the model by associating it with [1] model. They remarked that employer branding is a distinguishing and relevant option to increase employee satisfaction and happiness resulting in retention, performance and efficiency. It is nothing but a tool to manage the talented human resource of the organisation. It has become necessary to build up image of employer in the minds of the existing employees for the long run success and profitability of the organisation. In both the models authors have linked the prospective employees in building the brand associations with the image of the organisation. However, the current employees have not been considered who plays important role of brand ambassadors for the organisation.

5.3. Findings and Discussion

In theoretical terms, the researchers have remarked in their studies that employer branding terminology can be a strong basis for attracting the new talent and prospective candidate for the right job at right time and on right place in various services industry. Although the researchers have used same parameters in their model except the difference has been observed in the predictor variable. [1] in their model have laid emphasis on employer branding as a source of attracting the potential individual whereas The employer branding helps in attracting, hiring and retaining the right fit candidate for the position offered by the organisation. The former found that employer branding is an essential tool for the managers. They can use employer branding as an aid for channelizing different employee recruitment and retention activities. The later concluded that employer branding helps in managing the talent of the organisation. It is important to develop an effective employer brand image in the minds of the employees as it would help in long-run success. Researchers [18], [19]have also laid stress on creating a strong employer brand. They observed that building of an influential employer brand requires a strong and friendly organisational culture, clearly laid organisational strategies, competitive human resources and effective management of all the parameters. However, many researchers like[20], [16], [21] and [22]in their studies have conceptualised different models explaining the perception of potential employees. Their studies laid the emphasis on interpersonal communication between internal as well as external groups. Moreover, communication of brand image among the potential candidates helps in indicating a positive position of the organisation in the employment market. Further, [23], [24]&[21]in their studies have illustrated different attributes that employees consider to find an organisation attractive. These characteristics have been found to be different from organisation to organisation because of the difference in perception of individuals, difference in ways of understanding and difference in the importance level of various attributes. [23]have discovered following attributes that were found to be identical with the employees perception i.e. employment organisational success, construed external image and product or service characteristics that attracted the employees towards the organisation. In contrast, [21]has referred that expectation of potential employees is depended upon factors like demographic characteristics i.e. age and gender and attractiveness components of firms in employer branding concept i.e. integrated employer branding and competitiveness. Here, integrated employer branding refers to combining many alternatives in working environment i.e. possibility for advancement/promotion, task that mean bigger challenges, innovative solutions, strong clear company culture, market success, internal further education, inspiring colleagues, international career opportunities, work/life balance, project based work, good reputation and so on and competitiveness referred to level of attraction towards the employer that provides competitive work environment, competitive compensation package and the possibility of working from home.[24] in their study have identified accuracy and attractiveness as two key attributes in building an employer brand. However, the above models lack empirical application in various fields. Therefore, it requires in-depth understanding of the term employer branding and its various constructs in different nature of organisations. [2]has remarked that attracting and retaining of employees is very essential for the organisation. Integration of various factors that contributes towards employer attractiveness helps in developing an employment brand for the employer. The study of literature revealed that overall emphasis has been laid on the attraction of new and potential talent who are seeking job in the respective companies. The entire studies, models have laid emphasis on the recruitment and selection strategies. Literature review provides no evidence of researchers carried on studying the perception of current employees towards the employer

branding. The need is to empirically investigate the perception of existing workforce towards employer branding and its congruence with employee performance.

5.4. Concluding Remark and Future Research

It has been concluded from the studies by [25], [13], [26], [27], that employees have been the permanent asset for the organisation. They have been considered the most productive and profitable human asset for every organisation. Organisations cannot work alone so it has to amalgamate all its actions and activities with its current employees[12], as service employees are considered as the central factor in the delivery of brand promise at each service encounter[28]. Keeping them satisfied, contented, committed and loyal has become a critical and important task for every employer. It requires lot of effort by the organisation in fulfilling all the promises done to the candidates at the time of their recruitment. The further research is therefore needed to study the impact of employer attractiveness on current employees. Most of the previous studies have taken into consideration the potential employees. But the need is to assess the influence of employer branding on the performance of current employees. Taking into consideration, the constructs used in employer branding framework model by [1], the researchers should try to empirically test whether the existing workforce is able to work efficiently with loyalty for the organisation that is having good organisational culture and a unique identity. It should be explored, whether existing employees in different services industry like banking, hospitality, health care, entertainment, tourism & travel and insurance are satisfied with the attractiveness dimensions provided to them. Future research should seek to give empirical evidence regarding the congruence between employer branding and employee performance. Moreover, applying this model in different service industries and in different environment would determine the extent to which results can be generalized [27]. This would provide an insight to the employers for framing their branding strategies according to the values, beliefs and perception of employees. In addition, it will also help employers in making and implementing those strategies that would help them in retaining the existing talent.

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