

Impact of Employee Branding on Talent Retention

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Abstract

This study is aimed to examine the Impact of employee branding on talent retention in the companies which are located in South Punjab region of Pakistan. Sample size of this study was 100 and convenience sampling strategy was used to collect the data from the 5 companies of FMCG sector of Southern Punjab region. Further, to analyze the data SPSS version 17 and AMOS is used. Findings of this study revealed the positive relationship between the employee branding and talent retention. Hence the conclusion of this study is investigated that employees are attracted to those organizations which enjoy a good reputation in the market, offer competitive salaries, and takes pretty good care of its image. Talented employees tend to scrutinize every aspect of the organization they want to be a part of.

Key Words: Employee Branding, Talent Retention

Introduction

Markets today have never been more complex, multifaceted, dynamic, fickle in nature, and multi-dimensional. In the same manner, companies increasingly look for creative and innovative ways to differentiate themselves completely or partially in order to attract customers by portraying a strong brand image (Bach & Edwards, 2013). Further, If you want to sell a product, present a strong brand image. If an organization wants to stay ahead of its competition and it wants to attract and, most importantly, retain an assemblage of talented employees, it must focus on its people by trying to enhance and improve employer's image as an employer (Losey et al, 2005). Therefore, organizations are at loggerheads with each other in an aggressively bellicose, cut-throat competition over attracting, recruiting and retaining the talented employees. Attracting and hiring is one thing, but retaining employees in today's environment is a challenging task but it is the only challenge which can guarantee success in the longer-run. Companies do that because it is important to retain talented employees for the purpose of building, gaining, and maintaining a competitive edge over rival companies (Berthon et al., 2005). The concept of employer branding has gained some strong, valuable currency in recent years. Employer branding is founded on the basic human resource management theory that "human capital brings value to the firm, influencing performance levels" (Tikoo and Backhaus, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005). Employer branding distinguishes the company's features as an employer from its competitors (Love and Singh, 2011; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). A good number of research studies suggest that organizations can gain sustainable competitive advantage over a long haul as well as employee's adapting firm's values is highly dependent on an effective employer branding (Love and Singh, 2011; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). In much the same manner, employees too like to associate themselves with a company whose name is synonymous with success especially in the way it treats, attracts, and retains its employees because in today's day and age of cut-throat competition having the right mix of talented employees could become the difference between success and failure for organizations. Companies that are able to maintain a competitive advantage over other companies are the ones which

know how to retain employees (Aaker, 1991). More often than not, for an organization that possesses a good brand name is good enough to attract and retain talented employees. However, most of the research has theoretically touched upon employer branding (Davies, 2008). Conversely, this paper is a novelty in a way that it aims at specifying those Employer Branding dimensions, aspects and angles which play an important role in retaining a pool of talented employees.

Problem Statement

The concept of employer branding as a strategic tool for attracting and retaining the right set of employable talent is gaining attraction in the developed and developing countries simultaneously. Despite growing popularity of the employer branding concept as a consummate business strategy, research on this exceedingly important topic is limited at best (Priyadarshi, 2011). Cable, D. M., & Turban, D. B. (2001) have manifestly alluded to the scarcity of empirical research on employer branding as a concept. Further, (Vella, Gountas & Walker, 2009) conducted research on the relationship between employer and employee and its importance and further how it's affects the organizations it's people behavior. Today the relationship between employer and employee is more important than ever before. Likewise, employer branding as a strategic tool has gained attraction in the developed and developing countries concurrently. In the same way, negligible study has done on this concept in Pakistan. To fill the gap this study aims to explore fundamental dimensions of employer branding within the Pakistani context. It aims to discover different forms and manifestations of employer branding that exists in Pakistan and how it is used as a strategic tool for attracting and retaining talented employees. It will explore the extent to which Pakistani corporate sector has absorbed and incorporated employer branding strategies for the purpose of attracting employees which in turn will improve organizational efficiency.

Research Questions

- How organizations envision employer branding?
- How employer branding variables help to retain talented employees?

Significance of Study

There is unlimited set of research accompanied in the area of Employer branding lately in other countries, however in Pakistan there is a gap exist in context of impact of Employer Branding on Talent Retention. In Pakistan the competition of talented workforce will increase because of the decrease in working-age population. Employer branding will become more prominent in the future when companies try to gain competitive advantage.

The study deals with the Employer Branding process in terms of theoretical point of view and the practical use. The study allows learning about the Employer Branding concept, importance, modern techniques used to make it more efficient.

Literature Review

The Evolution of the Concept of Employer Branding: Impact and Historical Perspective
Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler were credited with putting forward the concept of Employer Branding for the very first time back in 1996 – a time in the history of business when the battle for acquisition for the best available talent raged on with full fury. Employer branding was a revolutionary idea and it still is in today's time and era. It has its own long term strategic value. The idea is to create, maintain, and sustain an image of the company on the canvas of the brain of employees. For the first time companies realized that they have the ability to create and control an image of themselves in the eyes of their employees which would definitely pay dividends in the longer run (Sullivan, 2004). Similarly, the need of the hour was to instill a brand spirit in the hearts, bodies, and souls of employees too which they can in turn instill into spirits of customers. Therefore, the new era of business strategies had ushered in. The concept of employer branding was finally born. The need for addressing the psychological, social, emotional, and softer needs of employees had given birth to employer branding as means for creating beautiful, hassle-free employee-organization relationship (Christiaans, 2013). Consequently, when this new approach came out, the war for the acquisition of the most talented employees got fiercer than ever before because for companies now

saving the most invaluable asset of the organization had assumed far greater importance. Therefore, more than ever before, finding, selecting, hiring, and most importantly, retaining talented people is the strategic end or objective of every organization that wants to continue drinking from the fountain of eternal success (Taylor, 2005).

The Core of Employer Branding

Branding is mostly about sketching out an unforgettable, easily recallable, measured image in the minds of people. Therefore, when people or the target audience catches the glimpse of that particular image, they can instantly recognize what exactly they are looking at. This is the power of a brand that is able to draw people to its fold with the greatest of ease. Employer branding aims to do just that but only this time it brings the talented people on board who can become an integrated part of an organization's overall brand image (Barrow & Davenport, 2009). Employer Branding is a three step process [1] "employer brand value proposition is industrialized, [2] externally branding employer branding, and [3] internally branding employer branding and shaping up organizational culture" (Lievens, 2007; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). In recent times, the Employer Branding has gained considerable traction in the sphere of research on business strategies geared towards creating value and meaning (Caligiuri et al. 2010). Employer branding is a tool utilized by HR managers in order to properly empathize with sub-ordinates that smooth working relationships can be established (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), by utilizing talented work force a firm can gain long term success and advantage among its rivals (Berthon et al., 2005). King and Grace (2008) defined employer branding as a reliable means to creating an organizational image which consequently completely alters the perceptions regarding the organization in the minds of employees based on the perceived value or meaning that EB brings to the table. The true purpose of employer branding is to engage positively the employees of the organization at all levels, which enhances organizational efficiency, attracts better talent, and retains the most important talent within the folds of the organization. Plus, employer branding gives birth to a culture of cooperation, positive work engagements,

and a sense of pride in the minds of those who work for that organization (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Love and Singh, 2011; Mosley, 2007).

Components of Employer Branding

Not many research studies have been conducted on explaining the concept of employer branding. Therefore, finding a standardized model for the execution of employer branding in the existing body of knowledge is still a difficult feat. According to Collins and Stevens (2002); Slaughter et. al., (2004), “an effective personnel’s discernment can be attracted by an effective employer branding and vice versa about how to perceive their professional success” (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). There exist many gaps within the concept of employer branding which must be researched into. They must be explored more vehemently. Following is the list of the components of Employer Branding.

1. Organizational culture (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Dooley et al, 2007; Lievens, 2007; Newell & Dopson, 1996; Hendry & Jenkins, 1997).
2. Working environment (Mangold & Miles, 2007; Burman et. al, 2007; Barrow & Mosley, 2006; Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005; Gaddam, 2008)
3. Employee Retention, Career Development (Mangold & Miles, 2007; Burman et. al, 2007; Barrow & Mosley, 2006; Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005; Gaddam, 2008; Newell & Dopson, 1996; Hendry & Jenkins, 1997)
4. Leadership style (Schmidt H., 2008)
5. Cooperation & Fairness (Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005)
6. Recognition (Mangold & Miles, 2007; Burman et. al, 2007; Barrow & Mosley, 2006; Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005; Newell & Dopson, 1996; Hendry & Jenkins, 1997)
7. Work life balance (Gaddam, 2008; Ccorporate Leadership Council, 1999; Baldry et al., 2010)
8. Reward system (Mangold & Miles, 2007; Burman et. al, 2007; Barrow & Mosley, 2006; Ambler and Barrow, 1996)

9. Compensation & Promotion (Berthon, Ewing and Hah, 2005; Ccorporate Leadership Council, 1999).

Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Definitions of EVP (Employer Branding Marketing, 2011).

“Employee value proposition is a unique set of offerings, associations, and values that will positively influence the most suitable target candidates to choose an employer” (Duraturo, 2011).

Further, “An employee value proposition is the sum of everything people experience and receive while they are part of a company – everything from the intrinsic satisfaction of the work to the environment, leadership, colleagues, compensation and more. It is about how well the company fulfills people’s needs, their expectations and their dreams” (Kupfernagel, 2010). The most amazing thing about EVP is that it works in a humble manner. Organizations that are creative often create certain benefit (both tangible and otherwise) which employees find really attractive. It is the ability of an organization to provide employees with that value which draws employees into the fold of that organization. It can be made either making the environment congenial or competitive, beneficial or socially rewarding etc. (Christiaaans 2012).

VALUE: The Magical Beans of Employer Branding

It is the game of value-creating, value-generating, and value-consuming processes. Each value created in the process of establishing a brand name would go a long way in maintaining and sustaining the integrity of that brand identity.

The word value is a key word here. It is often the ability of the mind of a person to judge the usefulness of a particular thing with regards to his preference which determines the values of something in his mind (adapted from Investopedia, 2015). Accordingly, it is the perceived value of the summation of experiences at the workplace which determine or regulate the extent to which an employee is going to fall in love with the place where he works.

Talent Retention (Elements of Employee Retention)

Employee retention means the number of employees which do not leave and stay with the company over a given length of time. It goes without saying, that first attracting and then retaining talent is not an easy task by any sense of imagination. This is important because it has the ability to directly impact the standing of that organization in terms of competition by quite a significant margin. Therefore, careful handling of talent is an utmost priority of talent managers (Taylor, 2002).

Talent is described as an inborn ability or ability nurtured otherwise which an employee brings to the fore but that talent is never fully utilized until or unless the management through its effective HR policies creates an environment in which such talent can be allowed to prosper freely. Employer branding proves to be a magic potion in this regard that it handles talent with ease and empathy (Davis et al., 2007). This is important because talented people can create competitive advantage. They can bring enthusiasm and self-confidence to the table. Their zeal is contagious. Organizations need them because they can do what others cannot. But they are rare. Their loyalty cannot be won over easily. Therefore, they are to be handled with care or else the company can face talent crisis (Rothwell & Kazanas, 2003).

Employee retention is not that easy. It requires a lot of hard work. The management has to look into many things and take into consideration a thousand other things. For example, these are some of the elements which could be added into the equation for retaining employees as identified by Wagner & Harter (2006):

1. Instilling a sense of pride in the employee that he or she works in a great place.
2. The job responsibilities must be clear to the employee. He should know what is expected of him.
3. The management should always fulfill what is expected of her.
4. The employees should know what the company is trying to achieve so much so that employees at all levels can work in unison towards achieving the shared goals.

5. The communication between the management and employees should be smooth and hassle-free. Ensuring smooth communication is important because it keeps the bugs of confusion at bay.
6. He should be happy about where he or she works.
7. Ensuring that the company's dealings are fair, transparent, and honest with employees, stakeholders, and the public.
8. The compensation package must be competitive. And salary is received on time without undue delays.
9. The management should always give what it promises to give. Or it should not make promises at all.
10. The atmosphere should be secure, and the safety parameters must be in place.
11. The workplace atmosphere should be described by friendliness, motivation, and ease of mobility.
12. Every input from employees should be encouraged and appreciated duly.
13. The equipment required for carrying out the job responsibilities must be in place so that cost effective operations can be ensured.
14. Employees are encouraged to voice out their concerns.
15. The management should listen. They management should respond to employee's call quicker than it responds to market calls.
16. The employee-management engagement should be positively encouraged.

Benefits of Employer Branding

Generally, employer branding results in increased “employee retention, better recruitment, and positive employee engagement” (Van Mossevelde, 2010). These expansions do not necessarily represent business benefits, but can add significantly to the overall business performance (Barrow and Mosley, 2005). An organization which have stronger employer brand they can easily achieve their objectives like lower cost, increased customer satisfaction and higher return on investment and profitability (Mosley and Barrow, 2005). There are several other elements that enforce a firm focus on external and internal aspects of EB in order to maximum fallout (Barrow & Mosley,

2005). External benefits include a better and more positive corporate image, attraction of potential employees, increased organizational value, competitive edge and better reputation. While internal benefits include increased employee performance, increased employee-organization fit, better learning environment, shared goals and objectives, increased financial performance, retention of employees (Mangold & Miles, 2007; Burman et. al, 2007; Barrow & Mosley, 2006).

Research Methodology

The current study is aimed at measuring the influence of employer branding on employee retention. The conceptual framework of the research study is derived from an extensive review literature; on the basis of review literature a research statement has already been formulated. It has been deduced from the research statement that the research study will use descriptive research tools and aims to determine a measure of association. Creswell (1994) says that descriptive research is employed when a phenomenon is to be described into different locations. It is done when the body of knowledge is known but new dimensions are to be explored into a new territory. This relationship will be explored and verified within the Pakistani context especially those companies which maintain a presence in the Southern Punjab region of Pakistan. In order to gather information for the purpose of determining the relationship, a set of questionnaires which will be consisting of open-ended and closed ended questions.

Research Design

The research design can be defined as the overall plan which helps to relate the conceptual framework of the research problem with the relevant and empirical research in the most useful manner possible (Ghauri et al, 2002). This study is purposed at examining the dependent and independent variables. Dependent variable is employee retention whereas independent variable is employer branding. I have opted to study for the purpose of carrying out this research the retail companies currently operational in the Southern Punjab region. It will be qualitative study backed up quantitative evidences or empirical results.

Population

The population for this study includes companies which are national in nature but also maintain a presence in the Southern Punjab region. According to Polit and Hungler (1999), an assortment criterion has been defined along with the all members of the population have definite features in order to be included in the study. The participants in this study had to be employees and managers from Fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector of southern Punjab region. The following 5 companies are selected from FMCG sector of Southern Punjab region;

- Shamim & Co (Multan)
- Multan& BWP (Pepsi)
- Coca Cola (Multan &BWP)
- Uniliver foods (BWP& Multan)
- Shan foods (BWP)

Sample

There are two types of sampling in social sciences i.e. purposive and non-purposive. Non-probability purposive sampling should be used in this study and that is convenience sampling. Hence non-probability or convenience sampling technique has been adopted as a sample selection technique. De Vas (1998:191) argues that “convenience sampling is the rational choice in races where it is impossible to identify all the members of a population”.

Sample Size

It was suggested that each item should be represented using 5 samples. Since, this study intends to use 13 attributes which represent the IV and DV; therefore, the sample size would be 100. It was suggested by Field (2005) that a sample of 15 units representing every independent variable will be appropriate. The sample size for this study is 100 which are going to take questionnaires.

The sample size for this study is well-diversified along the lines of different companies, different hierarchical levels, and different industry in order to get a most comprehensive picture and valid results which can be said to be true for the area in which this study is

being conducted. The reason for this diversification of sample size is that employer branding affects employees at different levels in different organizations and different industries.

The sample size has a mix of female and males employees which has added more dimensional flexibility to the research study.

Data Collection Technique

The questionnaire will be used in this study to collect data related to objectives and research questions of the study. The questionnaires used in this research study are using a 5 Likart scale for the research.

Data Analysis

EB (Employer Branding) is the independent variable (IV) whereas ER (Employee Retention) is the dependent variable (DV). These statistical analyses have been conducted with a view to determine the correlation between the IV and DV, which are Employer Branding and Employee Retention.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Deviation	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
EB (IV)	4.25	.58911	-.195	.207	-.166	.411
ER (DV)	4.33	.59750	.041	.207	-.751	.411

Descriptive statistics are used to check the representation of sample with respect to population. In this approach, quantitative analysis is conducted and Skewness and

Kurtosis are found to confirm the normality of data. The results are encouraging indeed.

This table indicates the descriptive statistics of the main study. The central tendency of the data in question is 4.25 for IV and 4.33 for DV respectively. They are moving in the same direction, which also goes to highlight that the IV positively affects the DV. It means when there is a measure of improvement in employer branding, employee retention will also improve. IV and DV in this relationship are positively correlated.

The values of Skewness and Kurtosis given in the table testify to the fact that they fall within acceptable range, which consequently renders the data normal. Therefore, the results drawn from such data will be considered normal and acceptable by all means and purposes

CRONBACH'S ALPHA: INTERNAL RELIABILITY TEST FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Reliability Statistics EB

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.877	15

Reliability Statistics ER

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.818	25

Cronbach's Alpha is said to be a reliable tool for measuring the scale of reliability. It tells how closely the items in a set are related. It tells about the internal reliability of the questionnaire. It is a test for consistency. Here the Cronbach's Alpha has been recorded at 0.877 and 0.818 for EB and ER respectively. 0.818 and 0.877 are closer to 1 which means that they clearly exhibit a relatively high internal consistency. The recorded values exude great internal consistency. It means that our questionnaire is good.

EB and ER

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
ER	71.6800	16.98120	100
EB	45.9300	9.47112	100

The mean value of ER is 71.6800 and its standard deviation is 16.98120. The mean value of EB is 45.9300 and its standard deviation is 9.47112

Correlations

		ER	EB
Pearson Correlation	ER	1.000	.982
	EB	.982	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	ER	.	.000
	EB	.000	.
N	ER	100	100
	EB	100	100

The Pearson correlations analysis is produced in above Table. Results indicate a positive relationship among all the variables. Correlation shows degree of association between two variables. It measures the strength and direction of a correlation. Its value ranges from positive 1 to negative 1. The value of correlation obtained is 0.982 which is positive and close to 1. It shows that both variables have strong uphill value of other corresponding dependent variable will also experience a surge, which indicates the presence of a strong positive linear correlation between independent variable and dependent variable.

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.982 ^a	.964	.963	3.25098	.964	2603.109	1	98	.000	1.941

a. Predictors: (Constant), EB

b. Dependent Variable: ER

This model is a good fitted model as the P value of significance of this model is .000 which is less than .05.

The Durbin-Watson value falls between the range of 1.5 and 2.5, which means that there is no multi-correlation. It signifies that a correlation exists between IV and DV.

R square measures coefficient of determination and it gives the proportion up to which independent variable explains variability in the dependent variable. In this model the r square is 96.4%. It means EB explains 96.4% of the changes in the dependent variable (ER).

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	27512.008	1	27512.008	2603.109	.000 ^a
	Residual	1035.752	98	10.569		
	Total	28547.760	99			

A. Predictors: (Constant), EB

B. Dependent Variable: ER

The table of ANOVA is a source of variance. The total variance is divided into variances which be explained by independent variables and the variance which is not explained by independent variable. It shows the variance explained by regression is equivalent to the value of 27512.008 and change in variables due to other factors is equivalent to the value of 1035.752.

The F-value is the Mean Square Regression (27512.008) divided by the Mean Square Residual (10.569), yielding F=2603.109. The p-value associated with this F value is very small (0.0000) and hence it is concluded that independent variables reliably predict the dependent variable.

The F value shows model fitness between IV and DV and in this the significant level is less than 0.5.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
	1 (Constant)	-9.162	1.618				-5.664	.000	-12.372	-5.952
EB	1.760	.034	.982	51.021	.000	1.692	1.829	.982	.982	.982

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1 (Constant)	-9.162	1.618		-5.664	.000	-12.372	-5.952			
EB	1.760	.034	.982	51.021	.000	1.692	1.829	.982	.982	.982

a. Dependent Variable: ER

The fitted regression equation is

$$Y = -9.162 + 1.760x$$

The p value of EB variable is .000 which is less than .05 which makes it a significant variable of the study.

The t value given in the table is within in and it also indicates that the relationship between IV and DV is acceptable.

The null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted.

Conclusion

In the end, it must be said that employees are attracted to those organizations which enjoy a good reputation in the market, offer competitive salaries, and takes pretty good care of its image. Talented employees tend to scrutinize every aspect of the organization they want to be a part of. They view the atmosphere with a keen eye. They Compare compensation packages. They also look at the reputation that certain companies enjoy in the market. They try to learn about the management employee relationship in organizations where they would like to go. Personal growth, prospects for career advancement, and the organizational atmosphere are some of the factors which talented employees study first before deciding to choose an organization of choice. The point at which the aspirations of employees and the employer intersect each other; the point at which there is a beautiful working relationship is established between employees and the employers, the retention rate is always high. This is the place where employee wants to go. This is a great place to work.

Future Research

The study is significantly important as it provides rich insights to managers and practitioners as well as to researcher on employer branding and talent retention. However, the study is restricted to Southern Punjab region of Pakistan and only few companies of FMCG sector were selected. Another research can be undertaken on other organizations. Furthermore, to ensure the generalization of this construct, the sample size can be enhanced. Additionally, the current study threw light on employer branding. Only the relationship of Employer branding and Talent retention had been discussed. Thus, further research could absorb deeper into the qualities of the company that uses EB and also attract and retain their employees.

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