

The Impact of Prudence of Employer Branding Over the Healthcare Organisation

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Abstract

A clear and definite employer brand can suggest important benefits to the health care organisation. It can considerably improve application rates and put the health care organisation in the desirable position of having a pool of talent to choose from. A strong employer brand may provide competitive and sustainable advantages when it comes to attract and retain employees. In tight recruitment markets, where competition for the best talent is fierce, it can also help to keep the health care organisation top of mind, make the health care organisation stand out in a crowded market and provide compelling reasons to join the health care organisation rather than going elsewhere. The health care organisation believes that their ability to attract appropriate employees depends upon their reputation and image as an employer. In the war for talent, it is essential for health care organisation to overtake their rivals and brand their health care organisation as the best place to work.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Healthcare Service, Engagement level, Organisation

Introduction

A brand can be defined as, 'a name, term, sign, symbol or design or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors', Kotler¹. Stride and Lee² defined branding in the non-profit context as 'a method for developing the organization's visual identity in a consistent manner'. According to Waraas³ hospitals, universities, and various government and regulatory agencies seek to express their identities and their values through vision and mission statements, core values, slogans and logos. According to Ambler and Barrow (1996)⁴, the pioneers of employer branding, there are two factors that annual reports praise as companies most important resources; people and brands. In their article, the authors bring two concepts relating to these assets, human resources and marketing, under a single conceptual framework – employer branding.

Reviews of literature

Jiixin Luo (2017)⁵ The present study aims to investigate the instrumental-symbolic framework as a package for analyzing employer branding under Chinese context, a non-Western culture. Specifically, we examine the relative importance of perceived instrumental and symbolic attributes as an employer in public hospitals between two groups of individuals (211 final-year students and 200 current employed doctors). First, results show that instrumental and symbolic attributes are significantly related to hospital's attractiveness as an employer, while symbolic trait inferences can explain incremental variance in employer attraction beyond instrumental attributes. Second, although attributes explain similar portions of the variance in two groups, the significant variables within the dimensions perform divergently. In addition, potential applicants have more favorable perceptions of both instrumental and symbolic attributes than current employed doctors. Finally, implications for employer branding practices and limitations for future researches are discussed.

Daniel Jönsson (2012)⁶ Sweden and the Western World are facing large retirements in the near future. This will lead to a shortage of people with expertise in specific areas, where the shortage will become the largest in the healthcare sector. Employer branding can help an organization to attract and retain employees if it provides employees with valuable benefits. However, limited research has been done in how an organization's brand can attract employees, and every organization will most likely have its own set of attributes. The purpose of this study is to examine the attributes that are important to make an organization's employer brand attractive to employees. The method used in the research was a quantitative study where 160 respondents answered a survey in six different units in a health care organization in Sweden. The results from the empirical study showed that the attributes; Strategic Vision, Organizational Culture, Stakeholders' Images, Internal Branding, Functional Benefits, Symbolic Benefits, Organizational Successes, Work Environment, Type of Work and Services' Attributes all were important to make the organization's employer brand attractive to its employees. However, some of the attributes varied in importance among some of the units in the organization. This research provides managers with a guideline for what attributes they can start working with in their own organizations' employer brands.

Statement of the problem

Organizations should understand what potential employees expect from the company, what are the attributes the company has that these individuals find appealing and what employees seek for. It is also important to know what the competitors of the organization are offering to the same potential employees the organization itself is after. After this, the organization can start building its employer value proposition that follows the overall business strategy, that is unique and what differentiates the company from its competitors. The value

proposition establishes what the company is, what they have to offer and what they expect from their employees. Talented employees are also seen to be the key to growth (Mandhanya & Shah 2010) and to create competitive advantage which pushes companies to pay more interest in their personnel. The necessity of employer branding is thus evident and the employer brand can be seen as an intangible asset for organizations. Employer branding is a process where organization builds a unique and identifiable employer identity. Through employer branding organization differentiates itself from its competitors who require employees with similar skills and attributes, try to attract potential talent as well as retain their current employees. Employer branding creates an image about the company as a great place to work in the minds of potential employees. So that study focus on prudence of employer branding over the healthcare organization.

Significance of the research

Branding is an important area in the services sector as there is a high level of interaction between employees and customers. It is important for an organisation to align the customer and employees. Such alignment emphasizes matching external brand image to internal views and values. If customer facing employees share a positive view of the organisation with customers, then a positive interaction between them is more likely to occur. The interaction can be assessed in a number of ways including that of employer branding.

Despite the many challenges and concerns of adopting branding in the health care organisation many organizations still choose to adopt various marketing strategies, particularly in branding. The reason why branding is chosen in the health sector is that health sector organisation must appeal to several different publics, not merely consumers. A consistent brand is a means for communicating organisational values to each of these public. These organisations mostly provide services that are intangible in nature and difficult to verify, brands provide trust and reduce uncertainties. A strong brand will create goodwill and protect the organisation from the media and vagaries of public opinion. Branding helps organisations carve out a unique position for themselves in the public mindset, preventing negative images from other organizations spilling over to the individual organisations.

Branding plays a special role in healthcare services because strong brands increase trust in intangible products, enabling customers to better visualize and understand them. Brands offer some measure of assurance that the provider of the good or service will deliver consistently on its promises, and therefore worthy of trust. This helps to overcome barriers of uncertainty that might otherwise prevent people from becoming customers. In order to keep the brand successful, trust must be a standard that hospitals offer their patients. When patients complaint, both the hospital and its employees must do their best to respond to the complaints and thereby maintain or rebuild trust.

Objectives of Employer Branding

- To attract and recruit relevant employees in hospitals.
- To know the factors influencing employer branding in hospitals.
- To improve employee engagement, commitment and performance.
- To analyses the relationship between employer branding and employee performance.

Methods and Materials

The organization that was used in this study consisted of a population of approximately 50 employees on simple random sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2005⁷) and the employees worked under nine different centers within the organization of Venkateshwara Hospital, Tiruchirappalli. The nine main centers were; Emergency Center, Children and Women Center, Surgeon Center, Medical Center, Medical Service Center, Primary Health Care and Rehab Center, Psychiatry Center, Service Center and Dental care centre.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1
Association between personal variables and their overall employer branding

| Variables | Overall Employer branding | | | Statistical Inference |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------|-----------|---|
| | Low | High | Total (%) | |
| Designation | | | | |
| Surgeons | 4 | 20 | 24 (48%) | X ² =24.871 Df=3 P<0.05 Significant |
| Technicians | 1 | 11 | 12 (24%) | |
| Pharmacist | 2 | 6 | 8 (16%) | |
| Counselors | 1 | 5 | 6 (12%) | |

| Marital Status | Mean | SD | Total (%) | Statistical Inference |
|----------------|-------|-------|-----------|---|
| Married | 22.08 | 0.917 | 39 (78%) | t=1.734 Df=48 P>0.05 Not Significant |
| Unmarried | 23.42 | 0.876 | 11 (22%) | |
| Total | 8 | 42 | 50 (100%) | |

Research Hypothesis (H₁): There is significant association between designation and their overall employer branding. The chi-square test find out that the calculated value is less than table value (p<0.05). So the research hypothesis is accepted.

Research Hypothesis (H₂): There is no significant difference between marital status and their overall employer branding. The 't' test find out that the calculated value is greater than table value (p>0.05). So the research hypothesis is accepted.

Table 2

Karl Pearson Coefficient correlation relationship between employer branding and their employee engagement, commitment and performance

| Employee engagement | Commitment | Performance | Employer branding |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 0.873* | 0.916* | 0.631* | 0.873* |

Research Hypothesis (H₃): There is significant relationship between employer branding and their employee engagement, commitment and performance. Hence, the calculated value is less than table value ($p^* < 0.05$). So, the research hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3

Employer brand measurement

| Marketing measures | Brand measures | Performance measures |
|---|---|---|
| How effective and efficient are your marketing activities? | How well known and well regarded is your brand? | How much impact does your brand have on performance? |
| Targeting the right people with the right measures through the right media triggering the right response. | Brand awareness and familiarity Brand engagement and advocacy brand perception / Image Brand Perception and Loyalty | Quality / Diversity of talent pool, applications and hires Conversion rate and Premium Cost per hire/Time to hire |

Findings

- There is significant association between designation (48 per cent from surgeons, 24 per cent from technicians, 16 per cent from pharmacist and 12 per cent from counselor) and their overall employer branding. The chi-square test find out that the calculated value is less than table value ($p < 0.05$). So, the research hypothesis is accepted.
- There is no significant difference between marital status (Married = 22.08 ± 0.917 ; Unmarried = 23.42 ± 0.876) and their overall employer branding. The 't' test find out that the calculated value is greater than table value ($p > 0.05$). So, the research hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion

It's concluded that the healthcare sector is becoming a more competitive industry; as a result, how the organisation is perceived by both employees and external stakeholders is important to the organisation's success, to manage the sector and will contribute to the more efficient running of hospitals. It is essential for the

sector to uphold a positive reputation as the more positive view, the patients of the hospitals, the more likely we are to select one hospital over another if we have choice. It is also hoped that identifying how a healthcare organisation can maintain a positive reputation will lead to an increase in service user confidence and satisfaction. The more confident one feels entering the same hospital, the more likely their treatment will be successful through their reputation among them.

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