

EMPLOYEE BRANDING-AN EXPLORATORY STUDY TO ANALYZE THE SET OF PREFERENCES OF EMPLOYEES IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES OF JODHPUR

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Abstract: A good employer brand would, and should, represent the personality, the soul of the company or an institution. Building such a brand requires a lot of introspection by the company.

Talking about the Leading educational institutions where offering the advanced technical courses has become the prime motto and in the series, more and more new institutions are making their path in the education sector. The brand image of an educational institution largely depends upon its students, administrative staff, and infrastructure and the academicians engaged to impart their knowledge and acts as a role model. The growing competition and the fast realization that the valued academicians are the key constituents for building the brand of the institute and it is also known that they are also free to make choices, to join, to engage, to commit, and to stay in an institution. It is required for the educational institutions to realise that to attract the right kind of faculties, to encourage them to remain loyal and to perform to the best of their abilities requires a far more focused, rational and benefit-led approach.

Employer branding draws on a discipline that has proven lasting value in the marketplace. The central tenets of the discipline includes: close attention to the needs and aspirations of the target audience; focus on benefits; competitive differentiation; are as central to brand management today as they have ever been. The foremost reason why employer branding is here to stay for educational institutions is that in driving and sustaining faculties commitment and loyalty there has been no more effective approach than brand management. Most of the educational institutions have woken up to the vital importance to the business of recruiting, retaining and developing the right people.

This paper focuses on the requirement of employer branding for educational institutions. The research is conducted to find out the factors or we can say the set of preferences, which can contribute in retention of talented faculties in the institution that result in Employer Branding.

Keywords: Branding, Educational Institutions, Institutional Culture and Environment, Academicians, Stability

Introduction

In the era where more and more educational institutions are exploring the opportunities in various branches of studies, these increasingly recognize that they cannot take the commitment and loyalty of their faculties for granted. Despite the desire to ensure that faculties are broadly satisfied with their working conditions, it has largely been taken for granted that if you give people a decent job they will gratefully do your bidding. This is not so. Talented academicians are the most demanding and most judicious in choosing the workplace where they share their brainpower.

Leading educational institutes are fast realizing that valued academicians are free to make choices, to join, to engage, to commit, and to stay. They are also beginning to realize that to attract the right kind of people, to encourage them to remain loyal and to perform to the best of their abilities requires a far more focused and benefit-led approach than institutes have been used to providing. Given the long term trend for institutions to treat their valued faculties for most will be to sharpen up the way in which they manage the brand that these people work for – the employer brand.

Most of the educational institutions have woken up to the vital importance to the business of recruiting, retaining and developing the right people. Employer branding draws on a discipline that has proven lasting value in the marketplace or in our case academics. Branding and brand management have evolved over time, but the central tenets of the discipline: close attention to the needs and aspirations of the target audience; focus on benefits; competitive differentiation; are as central to brand management today as they have ever been.

One significant lesson that institutions learned was that if you had a reputation for treating your faculty members well and offered stimulating, secure employment with the potential to progress, you stood a far greater chance of attracting, recruiting and retaining good academicians.

Therefore, this analysis becomes a predicament for the educational institutions that are not able to project themselves to match the standards of aspiration of the dynamic academicians. Out of this dilemma, there arises a need to trace out the factors, which can be held responsible to assemble talented pool of academicians.

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The paper presented here is a research-based paper, which comprises of a survey conducted on two categories of people: the fresher and the second set comprises of people who are already employed. To accomplish the objective data was collected from 40 respondents who rated their preferences about the choice of selecting an institute on various aspects like package, brand name, growth opportunities, time flexibility, location, etc. the result provides insight for institutions concerned thereby retaining and attracting the best talent available. An attempt has been made to detect various parameters that are considered integral by academicians, while choosing a job. A matrix named as employee choice matrix has been devised to interpret the results of the analysis made through survey.

The importance of talented faculty have been highlighted throughout the paper and link have been established between factors governing the choice decision of academicians because only a contended academician can give high delivery of the knowledge and intelligence.

Background

As the education institution brand attached to the students, give them an identity and a differentiation from the other students of other institutions exist in the place. It delivers a message about the institution's product in the form of students to the society; similarly, the internal brand of the educational institution depicts the institution's credibility, culture, uniqueness, transparency and moral values to its internal staff. Here staff refers to the people who are or who will be associated with the institution i.e. the 'prospective' and 'current' employees.

An employer brand concept with reference to educational sector communicates the image that an institution wants to portray to its target employees (academicians). In this way the academicians of the institutions becomes their "brand ambassadors" who can create a strong internal brand value so that the same can be reflected in the "external brand".

Corporate leadership council in (1999) has discovered five major components of employee branding:

1. Organization's brand strength.
2. Compensations and benefits.
3. Organization culture and environment.
4. Work environment.
5. Work life balance.

Besides the above five major factors another integral aspect is 'employee engagement' i.e. the degree to which an employee is involved and how far the decision-making authority rests with him. Employee engagement becomes very crucial because it not only breaks the monotonousness of the job, by

involving the employee at every stage and installing a sense of pride in him about the bigger achievement, but it also defines the parameters of his growth.

Kotler & Fox (1995) state, "The best organization in the world will be ineffective if the focus on 'customers' is lost. Primarily is treatment of individual students, alumni, parents, friends, and each other (internal customers). Every contact counts!"

Significance

Growing importance of the qualified and learned faculties in educational institutes has brought in a standard shift in conduction of institutional working. A talented faculty is among one of the critical success factor of an institute in creating core competency that in turn creates a competitive advantage. Thus it become very crucial for an educational institute to build a loyal employee base because committed employees have a substantial impact on profits in meeting and exceeding students expectations.

Institutes have now become hyper sensitive while attracting best talent available in academic line and for that they started treating their students as customers and this trend has given birth to the term "employer branding in educational institutions" which have now become as a hallmark of successful education institutions. There is a shortage of really competent and loyal academicians. Institutions leave no effort in order to attract and hire the best academicians.

As educational institutions work hard to build its brand to attract the pool of talented academicians so that their students could been successful in their life as well as best fitted at their workplace. An employer's brand is the personality of the institution perceived by a prospective academician it helps in getting the real meaning of institutional culture. An academician before joining an institution think over the matter that whether his association with the institution bring benefit to him, and how far can this institute can take him. An individual before getting associated anywhere look towards various parameters besides finance. Non-monetary factors also at times prove influential in shaping up the final decisions. scholarly faculties today are not only persuaded by their packages but they also require plentiful amount of space for growth, brand name, appreciation for the work done, opportunities and challenges, security, interesting work, working conditions, institutional culture etc.

Due to this change in the attitude of the fresher (job seekers), educational institutions have changed too. Various institutions are work out with different attractive packages to secure the best talent.

Skilled people are in demand everywhere so they move to greener pasture fast. Every institution

represents itself as the best place to work. Every institute must work on the lines of empowering, respecting and rewarding the faculties so that they make sure that:

- Every employee must add value to the front-end operations.
- Performance management system is transparent and objective.
- Performance is always rewarded.
- They instill a sense of pride throughout the institution.

Thus, the employer turnover has become a major cause of concern for the educational institutions and the most important attributes that contributes to this practice are due to:

- The changing lifestyle.
- Lack of motivation at work place.
- Increased expectations.
- Increasing opportunities.
- Decreasing loyalty towards the institution.

All of the above factors indicate the significance of employer branding. Employer branding symbolizes the promise that an organization makes to its existing and future employees in terms of organization's content, culture practices, etc. and the service delivery on the job should try to reflect the brand promise.

Research Methodology

Objective

The principal objective of our study is to detect the factors that influence the perception of an educational institution in the minds of the potential academicians, which are job seekers as well as job hoppers. The study also focuses on different choices according to age and sex.

Scope of study

The study is limited to the students of professional courses and academicians employed professional.

Sampling technique: - convenience sampling (within stratum)

Methodology

We had divided the population group into two categories:

1. Fresher
2. Employed

Amongst the total population, we had taken a sample of 40 respondents. The sampling technique utilized is convenience sampling after making the stratum of fresher and employed. Even under fresher, we had divided the complete population into several stratum according to their professional qualification

like MBA, BE, etc. the questionnaire method is used for data collection and hence all the findings and analysis is based on primary data. The statistical tools and techniques used are pie charts, correlation and tabular comparisons of data values collected. The data analysis and findings are elaborated further in the paper.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Brand proves to be very important dimension of employment branding as in both the cases either fresher or employed. Employed professionals do not treat brand as negligible but 10% fresher are still grading brand to be negligible factor. Thus, the educational institution should always try to keep its brand very high to retain good academicians with it.

Package is the another important aspect treated as the most important factor as 60% experienced professionals grade package as high whereas fresher ratio is 50% with reference to package.

Growth opportunity is been graded as the prime factor by different people to select or to retain in an institution. As amongst fresher 60% treat it as high and amongst experienced professionals 70% treat high. It can be easily understood from a survey that growth opportunities overshadow the package and brand and should be treated as the point of concern by the companies to retain or attract the best talent.

Stability though not very highly graded factor for job-hopping and selection of educational institution by fresher but still a prime factor to remain in the institute and/or selecting the institution.

(See figures 1 - 4 in last page)

The other factors that are treated important are time and location flexibility, organization culture, work life balance, power influence, etc.

Another aspect of survey shows that there are few dimensions, which are affecting each other to some or other extent.

Employed female prefer time flexibility to other dimensions. Survey shows that out of 10 candidates surveyed 3 are females. All the 3 females prefer that their institute should give them time flexibility, whereas out of 7 males surveyed only 2 prefer time flexibility rest have no concerns with time flexibility.

Table 1: Time Flexibility and Sex

Time	Female	Male
Prefer	3	2
No concern	0	5

Location flexibility is another criterion, which has been taken into consideration by females.

Females prefer their institutions to be nearby or provide them.

Table 2: Location Flexibility and Sex

Location	Female	Male
Prefer	2	1
No concern	1	6

Conclusion

1. Survey shows that in case of experienced professionals brand and package are highly correlated (0.80). This indicates that people who prefer to go for brand also grade package as important criteria to remain or select company. Wherein in case of fresher this coefficient is much lower (0.50) which indicate that fresher prefer brand or package.

2. In case of experienced people growth opportunity, overshadow rest of the dimensions. Brand and growth opportunity are positively correlated to each other whereas in case fresher the brand and growth opportunity goes hand in hand with a positive correlation of 0.80.

Based on the above discussions it can be inferred from the survey that there are four kinds of people. They are as follows:

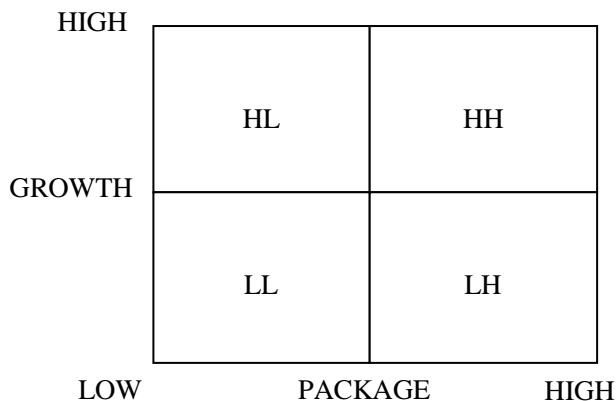


Figure 5: Four Kinds of People

Quadrant-HL: This quadrant contains employees who are highly inclined for growth, but not towards the package. These employees since not inclined towards package are less afraid of losing job. These employees generally give true feedback and useful suggestions to management. Thus, educational institutions should try to keep these employees with them and try to attract these kinds of employees.

Quadrant-HH: This quadrant contains employees who are highly inclined towards package and growth. These employees are again assets to organization as they aspire highly for growth so they perform efficiently. The major concern is to retain

these employees as they hop very frequently due to package.

Quadrant-LL: These employees just want to remain in one organization and perform routine and daily task. These employees are not at all motivated to perform nor by growth nor by package. Company should try to either motivate these employees or should retrench these employees.

Quadrant-LH: These are highly money-oriented employees, who hop the job just on small increase in money. These employees are less inclined towards the growth. To retain these employees is not a tough task but to trust and throw responsibility on their shoulder is not advised

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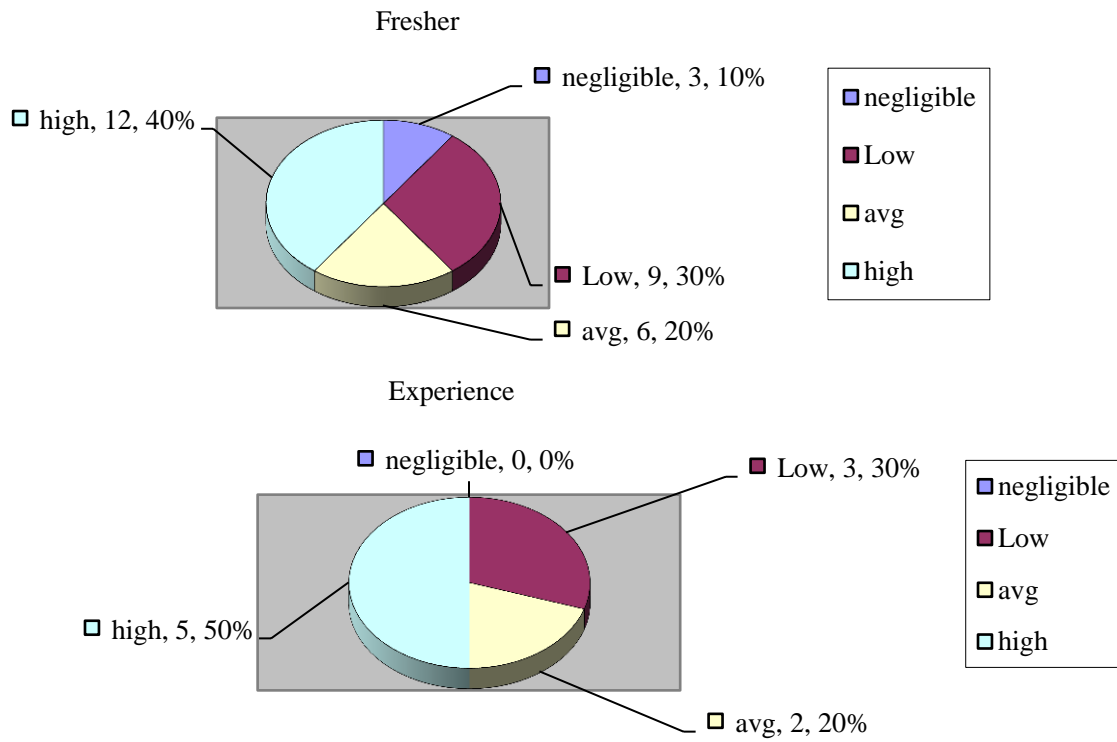


Figure 1: Brand

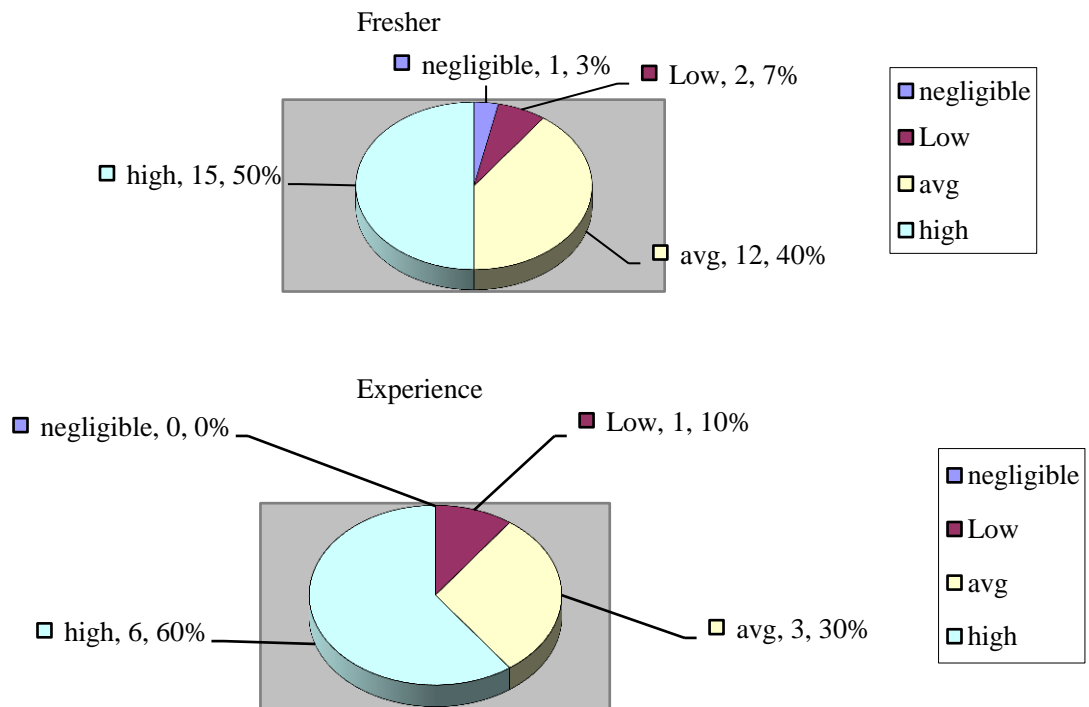


Figure 2: Package

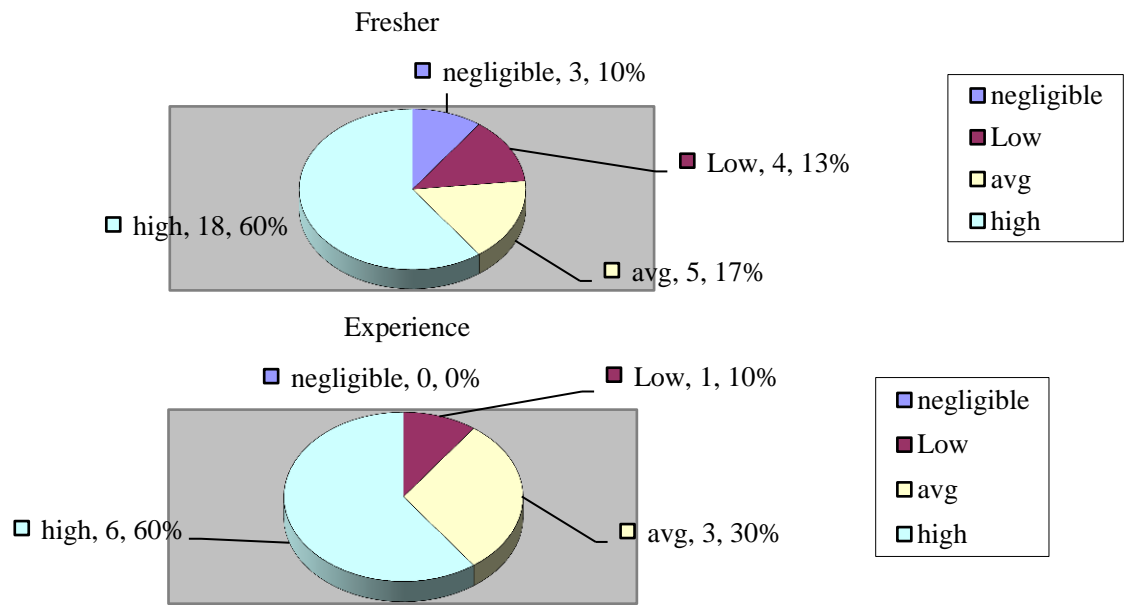


Figure 3: Growth Opportunity

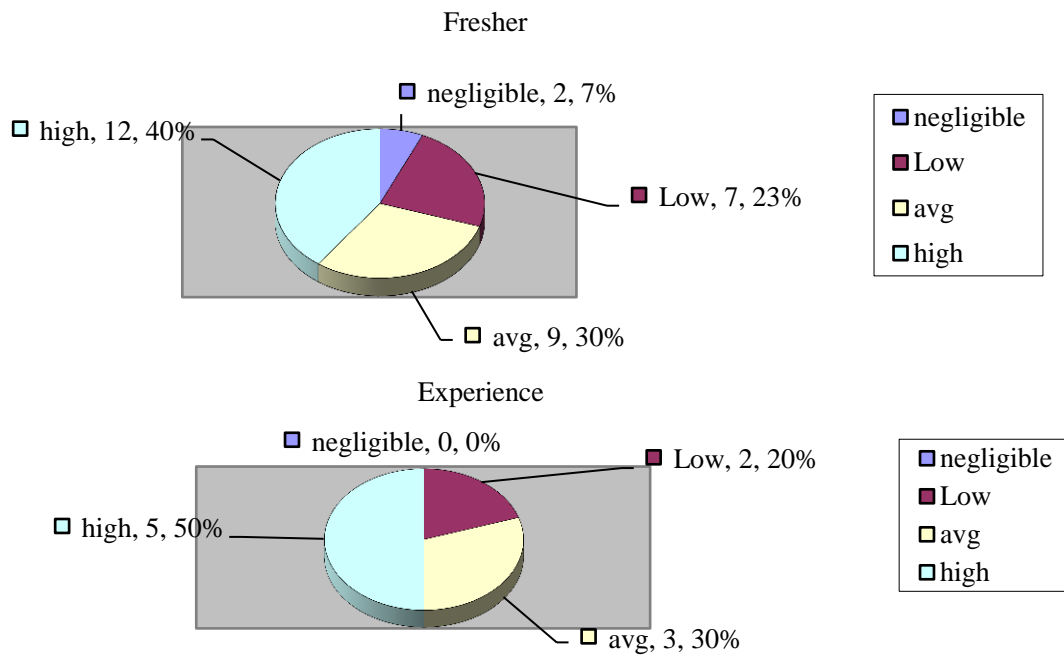


Figure 4: Stability