

EMPLOYER BRANDING ATTRIBUTE PREFERENCES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION IN ATTRACTION AND RTENTION OF EMPLOYEES IN FAST FOOD CHAINS

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ABSTRACT

The concept of an effective employer brand lies in the overall benefits that employee identifies with it. The talented employee wants to work with good employer band. This empirical research tries to find out the preference level of various employer branding attributes from the employees working in the fast food chains and their role in attracting and retaining the employees. This empirical study explores the preferred employer branding attributes from employee's perspective in the fast food chains. The employer branding attributes were surveyed on a sample of 250 employees, working in different fast food chains (both QSRs (Quick Service Restaurant) & CDR's (Casual Dine Restaurant) of Gurugram, Faridabad cities of Haryana state.

KEYWORDS: Employer branding, employer brand, employee attraction, employee retention

INTRODUCTION

The retail chain market of Indian Food Industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 21% to reach INR 62,000 crore by 2022 from INR 23,500 crore in 2017. QSRs (Quick Service Restaurant) having maximum market share followed by CDR's (Casual Dine Restaurant). In the chain market, QSRs and the CDRs constitute 79% in 2017 and it is expected to grow to 83% by 2022. As per report, the indirect employment of this industry has grown at CAGR of 4% from 2013-2016 and expected to grow to 6% till 2021. The Industry is expected to have generated direct employment for 5.5-6 million people in 2016, likely to increase to 8.5-9 million by 2021, which implies that approximately 6,00,000 skilled manpower will be required in this industry every year. However, only 50,000 graduates pass out from government or private institutions join hospitality sector every year. This leaves a huge gap for talented manpower

requirement in Food Services industry which in-turn, gets fulfilled by unskilled manpower leading to poor service delivery. Given this shortfall of quality manpower and the industry's high attrition rate of 35-40%, the cost of manpower is high. With such a turnover, owner operators of fast food chain needs to make them- selves employer of the choice & for that matter, organizations require appropriate employer branding. The employee prefers an organization which provides them the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits and we have conducted a study exploring the preference level of attributes constituting these benefits for the employees for joining and remaining in the food chains. Employer branding is a valuable concept for both managers and scholars but negligible studies have been done in fast food chain domain on employer branding. This empirical study explores the preferred employer branding attributes and their role in attraction and retention of employees from employee's perspective in the fast food chains. The present study fill up the gap by exploring preference level of the employer branding attributes from the employees of fast food chains which is emerging as key sector of the Indian economy.

REVIEW OF LITRATURE

Review of literature is an essential part of any research work. I have consulted plethora of academic journals, studies, reports and books to present an exhaustive view of the existing literature on the research theme and other connected issues. A brief review of some of the studies is attempted here:

- 1) The term "employer brand" was first publicly introduced to a management audience in 1990, and defined by Simon Barrow, chairman of People in Business, and Tim Ambler, Senior Fellow of London Business School, in the Journal of Brand Management in December 1996. This academic paper was the first published attempt to "test the application of brand management techniques to human resource management". Within this paper, Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler defined the employer brand as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company".
- 2) As per the study conducted by Wentz & Suchard, 1993, brands and branding are not new ideas, firms are applying them to more diverse settings where the role of branding is becoming increasingly important.
- 3) According to the study done by Kotler & Lee, 2008, branding is "the process of developing an intended brand identity". Branding is often used to differentiate products and companies in order

to build economic value for both the consumer and the company. It is concerned with the attraction, engagement and retention initiatives targeted at enhancing a company's employer brand.

- 4) Ambler & Barrow (1996) have defined employer branding and treated it as combination of the economic (salary and perk etc.), functional (skill development, job related knowledge etc), psychological (recognition, appreciation) that employee identifies with. Further make employer brand desirable and unique by promoting the employer branding attributes internally and externally.
- 5) Turban and Cable (2003) study revealed that the organization that have high corporate social performance have competitive advantage in attracting the employees and regarded as highly reputed.
- 6) According to Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) in their study explained the three step process of employer branding. First step involves developing value propositions to be conveyed to the potential and existing employees. Then marketing value proposition externally to the prospects applicants is the second step. In third step, the organization incorporates the brand "promise" as organizational culture.
- 7) Sullivan (2004) study revealed that employer branding is a focused and long term strategy through a firm manage the awareness and perception of its stakeholders and employees and showcasing itself as "good place to work".
- 8) Priyadarshi (2011) observed that employer branding is an important tool for an employer for conveying its value propositions are better off from its competitor. The study also explains that by highlighting difference of existing and preferred level of attributes for existing employees the employer brand image can be managed. Further to this, the study also highlights the relation and impact of employer branding attributes with regard to attitude of the employees towards their job.
- 9) Dawn and Biswas (2011), in their review paper revealed that it is important to have effective employer brand image for competitive advantage. A good employer brand can attract and retain talented employees, appear high in quality to its customers and can keep goal of gaining global recognition in a sustainable manner.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore preference level of various employers branding attributes from employee prospective in the fast food chains.
- To find role/contribution of employers branding attributes in attraction and retention of employees in the fast food chains.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the major objectives of the study, it addresses major issue and concern relating towards finding out main attributes and their role in attracting and retaining employees which will help retail stores to establish itself a brand from employer perspective and to create observations conducive to further study. Hence **descriptive -cum -analytical research design** is used in this study. **Descriptive**, in the sense this study directed towards describing attributes which will help fast food chain to establish itself as renowned brand from employer perspective. **Analytical** because the study has categorized employer branding attributes of the fast food chains into three categories firstly extremely important, then moderate important and lastly not important. In addition to that, the research carried out to find role/contribution of employer branding attributes in attracting and retaining the employees from the respondent employees working in the fast food chains and categorized the response in three categories firstly high contribution, then moderate contribution and lastly least contribution. The respondents were asked to rate all the statements on a 5 point Likert scale. The employer branding attributes and their role/contribution were surveyed on a sample of 250 employees, working in different fast food chains both QSRs (Quick Service Restaurant) & CDR's (Casual Dine Restaurant) of Gurugram city, Faridabad of Haryana state. The sampling method was convenience. The data was analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics .i.e. Simple average, Std. deviation, frequency distribution and descriptive statistics.

The **cumulative analysis** of the **statements related with employer branding** is calculated with the help of weighted average plus standard deviation formula i.e. $3.8583 \text{ (WtAvg.)} + 0.312062722 \text{ (StDev.)} = 4.170362722$. The values from 4.170362722 & above are classified as **extremely important**. Similarly the value weighted average minus standard deviation formula calculated i.e. $3.8583 \text{ (WtAvg.)} - 0.312062722 \text{ (StDev.)} = 3.546237278$. The values from 3.546237278 and below are categorized as **not**

important. The values ranging between highest calculated i.e. 4.170362722 & lowest calculated i.e. 3.546237278 values are categorized as **moderate important.**

The **cross sectional descriptive statistics** is used for the analysis of the statements related with employer branding contribution in attraction of the employees. The weighted average plus standard deviation formula is used & the value are calculated i.e. 3.848666667 (WtAvg.) + 0.398623244 (StDev.)= 4.247289911 . The values from 4.247289911 & above are considered to have **High contribution** in attraction of the employees. Similarly the value weighted average minus standard deviation formula is used to calculate lowest value i.e. 3.848666667 (WtAvg.) - 0.398623244 (StDev.) = 3.450043422 . The values ranging from 3.450043422 and below are considered to have **least contribution.** The values ranging between highest calculated i.e. 4.247289911 & lowest calculated i.e. 3.450043422 values are considered to have **moderate contribution** in attracting the employees.

In the same way, the cross sectional descriptive statistics is used for the analysis of the statements related with employer branding contribution in retention of the employees. The weighted average plus standard deviation formula is used & the value are calculated i.e. 3.976 (WtAvg.) + 0.835593722 (StDev.)= 4.811593722 . The values from 4.247289911 & above are considered to have **High contribution** in retention of the employees. Similarly the value weighted average minus standard deviation formula is used to calculate lowest value i.e. 3.976 (WtAvg.) - 0.835593722 (StDev.) = 3.140406278 . The values ranging from 3.450043422 and below are considered to have **least contribution.** The values ranging between highest calculated i.e. 4.811593722 & lowest calculated i.e. 3.140406278 values are considered to have **moderate contribution** in retaining the employees.

RELIABILITY STATISTICS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The table no. 1 shows the Cronbach's Alpha of questionnaire used for conducting this pilot study is .885, which is considered acceptable evidence of reliability and internal consistency of the scale.

Table No.1:

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.885	65

Source: Researcher's calculations

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

With the help of review of literature 40 statements constituting the attributes of employer branding and 25 statements related to contribution of employer branding attributes in attraction and retention of the employees were selected for drafting the questionnaire. The responses of the respondents rated by using five-item Likert scales. Over a period of about four months, a total of 262 questionnaires were distributed and collected. A response rate of 95 per cent was achieved i.e. 250 valid and usable questionnaires. The educational background of the respondents is given in the table no. 2. Out of the total 250 respondents, 81 (32.4%) maximum number of respondents having educational background as BHM (Bachelor of Hotel Management), 53 (21.2%) second highest no. of respondents belong to MHM, 34 (13.6%) third highest no. of respondents have done DCHMC, 31 (12.4%) third lowest no. of respondents have done MBA, 28 (11.2%) 2nd lowest no. respondents have done BBA, 23 (9.2 %) lowest no. of respondents have done BA.

Table No. 2

Educational Background of respondents:

Educational Background	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BHM	81	32.4	32.4	32.4
BBA	28	11.2	11.2	43.6
BA	23	9.2	9.2	52.8
MHM	53	21.2	21.2	74.0
MBA	31	12.4	12.4	86.4
DCHMC	34	13.6	13.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher's calculation

Table No: 3

Descriptive analysis of the employer branding attributes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Innovative product and services	250	3.98	.714
Ability to differentiate itself from competitors	250	3.90	.856
Organization's website is informative, attractive and interactive	250	3.98	.771
Focus on high quality product and services	250	4.02	.763
Organization's presence in international/Global Market	250	3.88	.886
Leading player in the market	250	3.97	.852
Positive image & reputation of the organization in general public	250	4.00	.816
Employees convey positive image about the organization	250	3.97	.833
Ethics based governance of the organization	250	4.01	.831
Organization's country of origin	250	3.93	.833
Well-known for good corporate social responsibility	250	3.86	.905
Technology enabled recruitment process	250	3.27	1.263
Recruiting through social media	250	2.87	1.206
Culture of recognition & appreciation	250	2.70	1.170
Adopt novel practices for doing its business operation/process	250	3.70	.979
Employees initiatives & idea's are encouraged in the organization	250	3.90	.748
Culture of ethnic diversity	250	4.04	.746
Opportunities of performing diversified assignment	250	3.90	.743
Good policy on health & safety	250	4.05	.693
Pleasant and friendly atmosphere in the organization	250	4.06	.810
Flexibility of workplace & in working hours	250	4.06	.810
Give importance to work- life balance culture	250	3.92	.844
Offers homely working environment	250	3.95	.832
Culture of promoting team spirit among employees	250	3.85	.822
Supportive and encouraging colleagues	250	3.95	.832
Retirement benefits (gratuity, leave encashment, pension)	250	3.96	.825
Takes care of well being & welfare of its employees	250	3.96	.796
Provide job security	250	4.04	.798
Opportunities of Global assignments	250	3.96	.798
Opportunities of continuous improvement through Objective evaluation & constructive feedback about work and behavior	250	4.14	.794
Culture of mentor and coach approach for knowledge management	250	4.14	.792
Considered good for future employability	250	4.06	.773
Training opportunities in the organization	250	4.06	.761
Autonomy & empowerment in performing assigned task/job	250	4.04	.796
Development opportunities to accept higher responsibilities/ leadership role	250	4.07	.773
Opportunities to make use of knowledge, skills & creativity of employees	250	4.05	.846
Offers more basic salary than the industry average	250	3.53	1.219
Offers an attractive overall compensation package	250	3.39	1.178
Social security benefits for its employees during service (PF, ESI, insurance, LTC	250	3.74	1.149
Performance linked financial incentives	250	3.50	1.290

Source: Researcher's calculation

The table no. 3 explains the mean average value of all statements with regard to employer branding attributes. This study has observed that employer branding attributes namely Focus on high quality product and services, Positive image & reputation of the organization in general public, Ethics based governance of the organization, Culture of ethnic diversity, Good policy on health & safety, Pleasant and friendly atmosphere in the organization, Flexibility of workplace & in working hours, Provide job security, Opportunities of continuous improvement through Objective evaluation & constructive feedback about work and behavior, Culture of mentor and coach approach for knowledge management, Considered good for future employability, Training opportunities in the organization, Autonomy & empowerment in performing assigned task/job, Development opportunities to accept higher responsibilities/ leadership role, Opportunities to make use of knowledge, skills & creativity of employees as average value of all the statements was found 4 or more then 4. In other words employer should give due emphasis in their HR policies so they can attract and retain talent in their organization. In the era of popularity of social media, the respondents gave low importance to social media in Recruiting through social media. However they also did not give much importance to Culture of recognition & appreciation. In other words they are more concerned about other aspects of career growth and development.

IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYER BRANDING ATTRIBUTES

Table No 4:

Importance of Employer Branding				
	Extremely Important	Moderate Important	Not Important	Total
Frequency	38	176	36	250
Percent	15.2	70.4	14.4	100.0
Valid Percent	15.2	70.4	14.4	100.0
Cumulative Percent	15.2	85.6	100.0	

Source: Researcher’s calculation

The cumulative analysis of all the statements related with employer branding is shown in the table no. 4. The highest and lowest value of all the responses with regard to the statements calculated with the help of weighted average plus standard deviation formula and classified as extremely important and weighted average minus standard deviation were categorized as not important. The values between highest and lowest values were categorized as moderate important for employer branding. The summarized results of the above mentioned statements/ variable is shown in the table no.4. The majority of the respondents i.e. 85.6% have considered the employer branding statements as important.

Table No.: 5

Contribution of employer branding in employee attraction based on educational background

Educational Background	High Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Least Contribution	Total
BHM	14	57	10	81
BBA	3	18	7	28
BA	7	14	2	23
MHM	9	35	9	53
MBA	3	21	7	31
DCHMC	5	27	2	34
Total	41	172	37	250

Source: Researcher’s calculation

The above table shows cross sectional analysis of the employer branding attributes with the educational background of the respondents and compare as how much employer branding attributes contributes in attracting the employees. Out of the total 250 respondents, 172 (68.8%) maximum number of respondents agreed that the employer branding have **moderate contribution** in attracting the employees and out of these highest number i.e. 57 respondents having educational background as BHM (Bachelor of Hotel Management), second highest respondents i.e. 35 having educational background as MHM (Masters of Hotel Management), least no. of respondents i.e. 14 have done BA (Bachelor of Arts). There are 41 (16.4%) respondents agreed that employer branding have **high contribution** in attracting the employees and out of these highest number i.e.14 having educational background as BHM

(Bachelor of Hotel Management). second highest respondents i.e. 9 having educational background as MHM (Masters of Hotel Management), least no. of respondents i.e. 3 have done MBA (Masters in Business Administration) & BBA (Bachelor in business Administration) each. There are 37 (14.8%) respondents considered that the employer branding have **least contribution** in attracting the employees and out of these highest number i.e. 10 respondents having educational background as BHM, second highest respondents i.e. 9 having educational background as MHM (Masters of Hotel Management), least no. of respondents i.e. 2 have done BA (Bachelor of Arts) & DCHMC (Diploma course in hotel management and catering) each.

172 (68.8%) Moderate contribution > 41 (16.4%) High Contribution > 37 (14.8%) Least Contribution

Table No. 6

Contribution of employer branding in employee retention based on educational background

Educational Background	High Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Least Contribution	Total
BHM	5	74	2	81
BBA	0	25	3	28
BA	3	20	0	23
MHM	5	45	3	53
MBA	2	29	0	31
DCHMC	2	29	3	34
Total	17	222	11	250

Source: Researcher’s calculation

The above table shows cross sectional analysis of the employer branding attributes with the educational background of the respondents and compare as how much employer branding attributes contributes in retaining the employees. Out of the total 250 respondents, 222 (88.8%) maximum number of respondents agreed that the employer branding have **moderate contribution** in retention of the employees and out of these highest number i.e. 74 respondents having educational background as BHM (Bachelor of Hotel Management), second highest respondents i.e. 45 having educational background as

MHM (Masters of Hotel Management), least no. of respondents i.e. 20 have done BA (Bachelor of Arts). There are 17 (6.8%) respondents agreed that employer branding have **high contribution** in retention of the employees and out of these highest number i.e.5, 5 having educational background as BHM (Bachelor of Hotel Management) and MHM (Masters of Hotel Management) each, not even single respondent having educational background as BBA (Bachelor in Business Administration) agreed to it. There are 11 (4.4%) respondents considered that the employer branding have **least contribution** in retention of the employees and out of these highest no. of respondent i.e.3 from each having educational background BBA, MHM, DCHMC agreed to it. not even single respondent having educational background as BA (Bachelor of Arts) & MBA (Masters in Business Administration) agreed to it.

222 (88.8%) Moderate contribution > 17 (6.8%) High Contribution > 11 (4.4%) Least Contribution

CONCLUSION

Brand essence of an organization must reflect with its employees, in this study we explored the preferred employer branding attributes from employee's perspective in the fast food chains. We found that respondents attributed the highest importance to "Opportunities of continuous improvement through Objective evaluation" & "constructive feedback about work and behavior & Culture of mentor and coach approach for knowledge management" (M= 4.14) of the employers for creation of employer brand. They attributed the least importance to "Culture of recognition & appreciation" (M = 2.70) of the employers in creation of employer brand. From this study it is also concluded that employees working for the fast food chains give more weight to overall image of the organization, work culture, flexibility, self/career development and job security. In other words employer should give due emphasis in their HR policies so they can attract and retain talent in their organization. In the era of popularity of social media, the respondents gave low importance to social media in Recruiting through social media (M=2.87). In other words they are more concerned about other aspects of career growth and development. From this study it is also concluded that employer branding attributes contributes in the attraction and retention of the employees as majority of the employees significantly agreed to this fact. Further analysis on contribution of employer branding in employee attraction and retention based on educational background revealed that out of these the highest no. of the respondents have done BHM

(Bachelor in hotel management). The study has limitations as questionnaire was filled through self-administered survey method which is not considered as reliable as personal interview method. This study was limited to two cities of Haryana state only and a nation-wide sample would ensure a more representative sample, so one should be cautious in generalizing the results to the whole industry. Despite these limitations, this study gave some insight of the differential preference level of employer branding attributes of employees of fast food chains which is emerging as key sector of the Indian economy.

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