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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE DIMENSIONS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING

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Abstract: *This paper aims to be a fresh view to employer branding, which is a new concept in the business, marketing and HR worlds and in Turkey. This study aims to make a brief comparison between the viewpoints of Turkish professionals and university students to the dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. The results of this exploratory study will have preliminary findings that will be important for many companies aiming to attract and maintain talent in order to build a corporate brand name and satisfy their stakeholders. The difference between undergraduate students' and professionals' perceptions about dimensions of employer attractiveness is investigated in this study. In macro senses, this paper is an example of marketing being a multidisciplinary science. It does not only serve for branding a product but it also has implications in human resource management or in finance or other departments of the company.*

Keywords: *Employer Branding, Internal Marketing, Corporate Branding, Human Resources.*

1. INTRODUCTION

We are going through tough times. This is true for the whole world without any exception. That is why, what people think of any company as an employer is vital to survive this recession.

The demand for qualified working capacity is increasing all around the world. As competition in the labor market increases, companies are putting more emphasis on creating strategies to differentiate themselves. [1] Strong demand for specific skills is making it much more difficult for companies both to retain current employees and recruit new ones.

Product branding helps the companies to develop a lasting image in the minds of the consumer, so that customers start to automatically associate a required image or quality with any product or service. Companies do the same in employer branding in that it creates an image that makes people want to work for the firm

VEREN MARKALA MASININ BOYUTLARI ÜZER NE KE FSEL B R ÇALI MA

Özet: *Bu çalışmada pazarlama ve insan kaynakları dünyasında yeni bir konu olan i veren markala masının boyutlarını incelemektedir. Literatüre yeni girmekte olan konuda Türkiye'den henüz çok fazla çalışma bulunmaması, bu çalışmanın önemini arttırmaktadır. Bu ke ifsel çalışmada, i ya amındaki profesyoneller ile üniversite öğrencilerinin i veren markala masının boyutlarını algılayı farklılıklarını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yeditepe Üniversitesi'nde İletişim Bölümü Yüksek Lisans yapan profesyoneller ile yine aynı üniversitede lisans e itimi alan son sınıf ve üçüncü sınıf öğrencileri denek olarak seçilmi ve bu iki grubun farklı bakı açıları analiz edilmi tir. Y jenerasyonunun özelliklerine de de inen bu çalışmanın sonuçları yetenekli çalışmanı kendine çekmek ve elinde tutmak amacıyla olan ve bir şirket markası olarak kullanarak yararları memnun etmek isteyen birçok i verene ık tutacaktır. Disiplinler arası bilimin önem kazandı ı dönemde, bu çalışmada şirket markala ması, insan kaynakları ve pazarlama dünyasına giren yeni bir kavramı tanıtmayı ve bu yöndeki çalışmalara ık tutmayı hedeflemektedir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *veren Markala ması, şirket Markaları, ç Pazarlama, İnsan Kaynakları.*

because it is a well managed firm where workers are continually learning, growing and becoming part of the companies culture [2]. Employer branding may be a new terminology for many companies, yet it is becoming more and more important to organizations since maintaining and building a strong internal and external brand is an important factor in retaining loyalty, motivation and driving performance.

One part of employer branding is the process of placing an image of being a great place to work in the minds of the candidates. But there are differences between traditional branding and employer branding in the way that the goal of employer branding is not to get as many applicants as possible, but the right ones [2]. By clarifying one's advantages and differences as an employer, the company can also achieve higher motivation and commitment among current staff. Research shows that motivated and loyal employees give result to loyal customers, thus resulting higher profits and external branding (Rucci et al., 1997 cited in [3]).

In order to develop a strong employer brand, it is necessary to demonstrate what is specific about the organization and its culture [4-6]. It should not be seen as a departmental project that's not aligned with the overall business strategy and it should not be seen as a tool for recruitment. It should be regarded as a concept continuing to invest resources as part of a long-term employer branding strategy to attract and retain talent. Employer branding cannot be seen as a project of marketing department or HR department alone, it is a co-work of all departments in the company.

No longer is staff being recruited just because of their intellect and functional knowledge. In addition, they are being recruited according to the extent to which their values align with the values of the brands they will be supporting, and whether they wish to proudly strive towards the brand's vision [7]. Brand management does not just focus on customers; it is increasingly adopting a more balanced approach of satisfying stakeholders. Companies with successful employer brand images see this process not as composed of individuals, but as a team work.

It is not very rare that companies just have mission and vision statements hanging on the wall without any of the employees paying real attention to these values. People always want to feel like they "fit in". Branding a company like branding a product gives the employer the advantage to gain and retain the ones that really "fit in" into the organization.

As mentioned earlier, employer branding has similarities with product branding. It also has a personality and positioning so the overall value can be defined as employer branding equity.

There are five steps to develop strong employer brand equity:

- 1) Understand your organization
- 2) Create a compelling brand promise for customers
- 3) Develop standards to measure the fulfillment of the brand promise
- 4) Align all people practices to support and reinforce the brand promise
- 5) Execute and measure

This paper aims to analyze branding and employer branding concepts. The first and the most important step is understanding the organization, prospect and current employees' expectations, and the variables affecting their

satisfaction and loyalty [8]. Dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding will be discussed with the help of a survey conducted to Yeditepe University undergraduate and MBA students using the EmpAt (Employee Attractiveness) scale of Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9]. The questionnaire covers five dimensions of employee attractiveness and measures the attractiveness of prospect and current employers. The rest of the questionnaire is designed for demographic variables.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1. Brand Management

Brands are company's most valuable assets and as a result brand management is the key activity of many firms. Today's world is about competition and gaining awareness and preference among customers. Most suppliers want to identify their own product and differentiate it from the competitors' products and they do it with branding. According to the American Marketing Association, a brand is 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 [10]. Well-managed brands drive respected reputations and favorable reputations result in higher financial returns and stakeholders grow to respect strong brands.

At the very basic level customers buy products which satisfy their needs and expectations. But the specific characteristics of successful brands are not just that. They have additional values which meet customers' psychological needs. These added values – the subjective beliefs of customers – are at the heart of building successful brands [2]. It has been argued by Vargo & Lusch [11] that a new dominant logic for marketing has emerged, shifting the focus from tangible to intangible resources, from frozen value to co-created value and from transactions to relationships. Companies recognizing that, turn to employer branding which helps them to align the external promise internally. By that there is a greater likelihood of the desired brand promise being delivered.

When considering customers, a brand provides its owner with two benefits: differentiation, so that the customer is less able to decide on price alone and franchise [12], the latter stemming from customer satisfaction with the brand and loyalty to it. Customers choose to purchase for rational reasons but their emotional attachment is also important. The four attributes of a brand – the ability to differentiate, to create loyalty, to satisfy and to develop an emotional attachment – are also relevant to the employer brand [13]

Kapfferer introduced the concept of brand pyramid, which was further on used by Doyle [2]. The

brand pyramid constitutes of three parts: functional values, emotional values and promised experience. When someone chooses one brand over another, they usually are interested first with functional values and then emotional values. But the main emphasis is on the promised experience, which is the total promise made to the customer regarding external and internal components of the brand. A brand's strength is influenced by the extent to which the internal and external components of the brand pyramid are congruent. The same applies to employer branding, where what the people on the outside of the company think of the company as an employer is defined as the external component and what employees think of working at the company is described as the internal component [1,2,14]. Thus, as noted by De Charnatony [5], to encourage brand success, managers should not focus solely on characterizing their brand externally. They should focus on gaining staff commitment if they consider how the brand pyramid translates into the internal environment and then devise internal strategies to enable staff to understand the desired brand promise better. One of the challenges of brand management is ensuring that staffs have values that are in line with those of the firm's brands.

Branding is used to differentiate products but over the years it has been applied to differentiating people, places and firms. Thus brand management, or managing promises, is not primarily about focusing on customers. Instead, a more balanced perspective is needed by also focusing on staff. If staff is genuinely committed to a set of values, they are more likely to deliver the brand's promise.

If we analyze successful employer brands, we will find that those companies have not done anything consciously to build their brands. They just work on creating a productive workplace where people would be happy to work. Thus, competing demands of global integration and local differentiation have highlighted the need to develop human resources as a source of competitive advantage [15].

II.2. Employer Branding

Employer branding is defined as "a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of current employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm [16]. It suggests the differentiation of a firm's characteristics as an employer from those of its competitors [3]. Minchington, B. & Estis, R. (2009) also define the employer brand as the image of your organization as a great place to work in the minds of current employees and key stakeholders in the external market [17]. Employer branding, or employer brand management, involves internally and externally promoting a clear view of what makes a firm different and desirable as an

employer [3]. It is the image presented to an organization's customers and other stakeholders through its employees [18]. Although firms commonly focus their branding efforts toward developing product and corporate brands, branding can also be used in the area of human resource management [8]. The employer brand puts forth an image showing the organization as a good place to work [16]. Ambler. & Barrow [19] defines the employer brand as the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company.

The effects of a brand are often referred to as its equity. The concept of brand equity provides a complementary theoretical perspective for understanding employer branding. In marketing terms, brand equity is "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" [1]. Customer based brand equity relates to the effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the product [20]. In terms of employer branding, brand equity contributes to the effect of brand knowledge on potential and current employees of the firm. Employer branding enables employees to stay with, and support the company for a longer time which enables the employees to have the ability to help build strong and enduring brand equity [21], which is the desired outcome of employer branding activities [3].

Moroko & Uncles [22] examined the perceived characteristics of successful employer brands and conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 17 senior executives. The results appear to be consistent with the branding literature. A successful employer brand should be known and noticeable, referring to brand awareness; relevant and resonant, referring to have a value proposition that is relevant to and resonant with their perspective and current employees; and finally be differentiated; referring to be unique.

According to Backhaus, K. & Tikoo [3], employer branding is essentially a three-step process. First, a firm develops a concept of the particular value it offers to prospective and current employees. This value proposition provides the central message that is conveyed by the employer brand. It is of key importance that this value proposition derives from a thorough audit of the characteristics that make the firm a great place to work. The second step is to externally market this value proposition to attract the targeted applicant population. The third step involves carrying the brand promise made to recruits into the firm and incorporating it as part of the organizational culture [26].

In addition, Sullivan [16] defines eight elements of employer branding. According to him being a culture of sharing and continuous improvement; having a balance

between good management and high productivity; obtaining public recognition; employees proactively telling stories; getting talked about; becoming a benchmark firm; increasing candidate awareness of best practices; and branding assessment metrics are the core elements for a successful employer branding.

II.3. Internal Marketing Concept

The internal marketing concept argues that the organization's personnel are the first market of any company, the rationale being that employees are internal customers and jobs are internal products [9]. Job products must attract, develop and motivate employees, thereby satisfying the needs and wants of these internal customers, while addressing the overall objectives of the organization [23] and contribute to employee retention [19]. In fact, Kotler [24] defines internal marketing as 'the task of successfully hiring, training and motivating employees to serve the customer well [9]. Internal marketing helps create a workforce that is hard for other firms to imitate. By systematically exposing workers to the value proposition of the employer brand, the workplace culture is gathered around the corporate goals, enabling the firm to achieve a unique culture focused on doing business the firm's way [3]. With good internal communications amongst committed and trained employees, they can be encouraged to take responsibility for their brand building behavior [5]. A study by Schweiger (1998) cited in Kimpakorn, N. & Dimmitt [25] provides strong support that internal communication can help increase the level of employee performance, commitment, job satisfaction, and employee perception of company trustworthiness, honesty, and caring.

Employer branding helps companies to build a unique employer identity and to differentiate from competitors. Much like how companies develop consumer brands, an employer brand is driven by how companies wish to create expectations, communicate values, and influence perceptions [6]. It encompasses the firm's value system, policies and behaviors toward the objectives of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm's current and potential employees [3,7].

A strong employer brand attracts better applicants and shapes their expectations about their employment [27]. The expectations of potential employees create a base of every employee-employer relationship and it is defined as psychological contract. A psychological contract is an employee's belief of what it owed to and will be received from his or her employer [28], and it exists in the minds of employees. It is the employee's perception of the exchange agreement between the employee and employer [29]. Research shows that employee motivation, trust, performance, organizational commitment, and satisfaction are contingent upon the extent to which employees perceive their psychological

contracts as being upheld [18]. Although the terms and conditions may be changed and modified over time if the expectations of the employees are not met, this will directly affect employee satisfaction and loyalty. Employer brand loyalty is similar to a product loyalty. A customer loyal to a product is less likely to switch to another brand. There exists a positive relationship between the product and the consumer that results from the establishment of trust [30]. As employer brand loyalty is concerned, it is the commitment employees make to their employers.

Employer branding is often used to affect organizational culture and organizational identity, and in turn to affect employer brand loyalty, it also reflects the organizational human capital philosophy [3]. The organizations goals and strategies should be aligned with the employees. Employer branding gives companies the opportunity to distribute the messages among the employees, which are supported by mission and vision statements. Miles & Mangold [18] defines organizations with frequently reinforced messages as high-knowledge organizations. Employees of high-knowledge organizations receive frequent and consistent messages that define and reinforce the desired brand image, along with the values that support that image [18] improving internal and external communication signals to the potential talent about the total employee experience in the company [31]. Since employees prefer organizations, where their personalities match with the personality of the employer, employer branding plays an important role in avoiding mismatches between employer and employees, which may in turn lead to job changes.

According to social identity theory, people's identity and self-esteem are partly defined by the organization they work for. Therefore people tend to choose employers which are close to their values so that they become part of the organizational culture. Successful and strong leaders strive to encourage unique cultures that attract employees who believe in the firm's brand and who wish to be part of the organizational team delivering the brand promise [32].

Ewing; Pitt; De Bussy & Berthon [33] emphasize the importance of employer branding in an increasingly knowledge-based economy where skilled employees are often in short supply [8]. Therefore having a clearly defined strategy is the most important factor in achieving employer branding objectives [17].

II.4. Employer Attractiveness

A closely related concept to 'employer branding' is 'employer attractiveness' [9]. As Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] notes, this concept has been discussed in many areas like management, applied psychology, communication, and marketing [19]. Employer

attractiveness is defined as the total benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization [9]. Employer attractiveness contributes to employer brand equity positively so the more attractive an organization is to employees, the stronger is its employer brand.

Based on the findings of their recent study, Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] suggest a way to both identify and operationalize the components of employer attractiveness from the perspective of potential employees. The five factors are: interest value, social value, economic value, development value, and application value. Interest value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides an exciting work environment, supports employee’s creativity and produces high quality, innovative products. The social value assesses the extent to which a person is attracted to an employer that provides a fun, happy team atmosphere. The third factor, economic value, measures the extent to which a person is attracted to economic standards. Development value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides recognition, confidence and a career-enhancing experience. The last factor, application value, measures the extent of attractiveness to an employer that is customer oriented and provides opportunities to apply what is learned.

III. METHODOLOGY

Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] suggest that EmpAt can be applied with various context and situations. In order to test the different target audiences’ responses to the construct, this study aims to analyze the different perceptions of dimensions of employees between current and prospect employees.

In order to test the research hypotheses below, the following research is designed.

H1: Prospect and current employees perceive the dimensions of employer attractiveness differently.

Data for the study was collected through a questionnaire (Appendix I). The respondents were asked to give answers reflecting their preferences in employer selection. The first section was designed to gather demographic characteristics including age, gender, and education level. For the second part of the questionnaire Employee Attractiveness scale (EmtAt) by Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] was used and 25 questions were asked to measure the dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding. The questions were translated from English into Turkish. Translation procedure involves two forward translations done by the authors of the study (from English into Turkish) and two backward translations done by English native speakers (from Turkish into English).

The original and back-translated versions of the tests were then compared and corrected for differences.

To check for the content validity of the scale, which refers to the extent to which an instrument covers the range of meanings included in the concept, Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] tested the scale for the relationship between the attractiveness of working for Sony and the evaluation of the factors. The results of this testing suggest that the higher the attractiveness of Sony among the respondents, the higher was the average rating of the five dimensions, which counts for the validity of the scale.

To test the hypothesis that undergraduate students who are one or two years away from selecting their own employers and professionals from business life perceive the dimensions of employer attractiveness differently, two sample groups from Yeditepe University were used. The first sample group includes Business Administration Department’s senior year students and the second sample group was selected as MBA students.

A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used to measure the model variables.

IV. Research Findings

IV.1. Demographic Information

Demographic information of the samples is listed in Table.1.

Table.1. Demographic Information of Samples

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	54	38.03
Male	88	61.97
Total	142	100.00
Education		
Undergraduate Student	67	47.18
MBA Student	75	52.82
Total	142	100

Age of the undergraduate sample ranged between 19 and 27 with a mean of 22.5 and a standard deviation of 1.6.

Age of the MBA sample ranged between 23 and 48 with a mean of 28.8 and a standard deviation of 4.18.

IV.2. Findings of the Study

To test the dimensions of attractiveness as it is mentioned in the literature, factor and reliability analyses were done to both sample groups' answers. The results of these findings are reported in Table.2-3.

Table.2. Undergraduate Students Factor And Reliability Analyses

Dimensions	Questions	Factor Load.	Var. Exp.	Rel.
Interest	Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking	0,896		
	The organisation both values and makes use of your creativity	0,872	25,84	0,845
	The organisation produces innovative products and services	0,781		
Economic	An attractive <i>overall</i> compensation package	0,787		
	Recognition/appreciation from management	0,732	25,25	0,736
	An above average basic salary	0,731		
	Job security within the organisation	0,715		
Application	Opportunity to teach others what you have learned	0,932	19,32	0,851
	Opportunity to <i>apply</i> what was learned at a tertiary institution	0,864		
Total Var. Exp. (%)		70,41		
		KMO	0,62	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Chi-Square	290,84	
		df	36	
		Sig.	0,000	

The study by Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] defines five dimensions of employer attractiveness and the scale is based on those dimensions. Literature suggests that items 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 constitute the development dimension. Items 2, 7, 8, 9, and 23 make up the social dimension. Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 account for the interest dimension. The fourth dimension, application, is formed by items 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. And finally, the economic dimension is made up by the questions 15, 21, 22, 24, and 25.

In the factor analysis conducted by undergraduate group, 14 items of the questionnaire were eliminated and the reliability analysis was done with these questions

eliminating 2 more items in order to improve reliability coefficient alpha. These eliminations resulted in three dimensions. Upon the analysis with the rest of the questions the results of the final factor analysis is reported in Table.2.

The factor analysis of working professionals brought away 12 items. The reliability analysis also eliminated one dimension due to low reliability of the dimension and the end results after the final factor analysis are shown in Table.3.

Table.3. MBA Students Factor and Reliability Analyses

Dim.	Questions	Factor Load.	Var. Exp.	Rel.
Cultural	Opportunity to teach others what you have learned	0,761		
	The organisation both values and makes use of your creativity	0,812	33,64	0,832
	Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution	0,798		
	The organisation produces innovative products and services	0,723		
Economic	An attractive <i>overall</i> compensation package	0,770		
	Good promotion opportunities within the organisation	0,768	21,52	0,795
Social	Having a good relationship with your colleagues	0,935	20,08	0,769
	Supportive and encouraging colleagues	0,815		
Total Var. Exp. (%)		75,24		
		KMO.	0,741	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Chi-Square	213,2	
		Df	28	
		Sig.	0,000	

In the factor analysis done to undergraduate group, 14 items of the questionnaire were eliminated and the reliability analysis was done with these questions eliminating 2 more items in order to improve reliability coefficient alpha. These eliminations resulted in three dimensions. Upon analysis with the rest questions the results of the final factor analysis is reported in Table.2.

Twelve items were analyzed after the factor analysis of working professionals. The reliability analysis also eliminated one dimension due to low reliability of the dimension and the end results after the final factor analysis are shown in Table.3.

The findings of the paper show that undergraduate students tend to oversee the social dimension of attractiveness which assesses the extent to which a person is attracted to an employer that provides a fun, happy team atmosphere. On the contrary this dimension can be found very clearly at the results of the professionals. Another important finding of the research is that job security within the organization and an above average basic salary, although they play a role in attractiveness for undergraduate students, did not have any influence on the employer choice of current employees. They were more concerned about the overall compensation package and good promotion opportunities within the organization.

Both groups did not give much value to the development dimension, which assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides recognition, confidence and a career-enhancing experience. Also some other dimensions do not fit to the model suggested by Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9]. Namely, application and interest being as two separate dimensions in the literature constitute one dimension in this study. This new dimension is called cultural dimension since it refers to the culture of the organization. The undergraduate students' findings are closer to the literature provided by Berthon; Ewing & Hah [9] because of the fact that they also did their research on university students.

It can be concluded from the results that another important motivator for both groups is that the company cares for its talents. Both groups honor that the organization values and makes use of the employees' creativity. The desired employer for both groups should produce innovative products or services suggesting that product brands of the companies contribute to their employer brands. Employees are attracted to the feeling of being affiliated with those products.

To test the variances between males and females in both groups' independent t-tests are done to both sample groups. For the MBA sample it can be inferred from the results that males value cultural and economic dimensions more than females, whereas the opposite is true for the social dimension, which leads to the result that social dimension is valued more by female professionals.

On the other hand, independent t-tests are conducted to undergraduate students' answers suggest that males have greater concern about all dimensions than that of the females. It can be concluded from the results that males give more emphasis on their prospect employees' qualifications than females do.

V. CONCLUSION

This is an exploratory study in order to discuss a new terminology. Besides enlightening a new multidisciplinary concept, this study has an empirical part that examines the different dimensions of employer attractiveness and whether they are differently perceived by students and young professionals.

In a strong culture, the shared values create greater motivation. As employees feel proud to be associated with the organization's brands, they are more likely to become committed and to remain as loyal employees. Organizations with strong cultures are better able to capitalize on learning from the past, integrating successful practices into rituals and well-known stories that enable staff to adopt these [32].

The challenge for companies is to create a culture that supports and encourages employees' willingness to be part of the branding process. When employees are aligned with their brand's values, they are more likely to find their own meaning at work and enhance the brand's values. In the way of doing that companies at first should focus on the expectations of the current and prospect employees and target them.

The findings of the paper do not overlap with the findings of the literature to some extent, the reason for that being the size of the sample. Today's work environment may have also affected the results of the study since there is a big recession and almost every employee is at least satisfied with having a job. This may seem as the result of the findings that prospect employees were found to be not interested in the social dimension of the employer. They gave greater value to economical and application dimensions.

This study has shown that prospect employees and current employees have somewhat different expectations from the employer, which suggests that companies should behave differently in attracting and retaining talent. If they only focus on job and organizational attributes, which is traditionally the case, an important part of what makes an organization an attractive employer is ignored. This paper enables companies to compare and integrate the perceptions of potential and current employees.

This paper is also a solid example of marketing being a multidisciplinary science. It does not only serve for branding a product but it also has implications in human resource management or in finance or other departments of the company. Thus, as stated by Ewing, M.J.; Pitt, L.F.; De Bussy, N.M. & Berthon, P. (2002) successful employee branding efforts result in reduced employee turnover, enhanced satisfaction, higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty, and a favorable reputation among stakeholders [33].

V.1. Managerial Implications and Limitations of the Study

In view of the considerable importance of values in brands, employees are critically important resources. When it comes to attract and retain talent, money alone will not be enough. When an organization has its different departments aligned with a desired culture, there is a more unified identity presented to stakeholders and a greater likelihood that staff will act in a more consistent manner, reducing the need for supervision. The way to achieve this lies in understanding the employees' needs and wants and creating a working environment where employees are satisfied. The process of staffing is therefore one of the most strategic mechanisms for achieving competitive advantage and decision makers should understand and implement it correctly. It is not a process which should be done only by the HR team; it is more a teamwork of the whole company since as an example of its interaction with other departments, high replacement costs makes it also a concern for finance department. The partnership of different departments in establishing a consistent employer branding has many advantages, including shared advertising expenditures, improved resources and budgets, production efficiencies, enhanced decision making, and better communication [6]. The managerial implications of developing a more consistent employer brand image in the recruitment market should be analyzed with that point of view.

Organizations should concentrate on making efforts to build effective and attractive talent strategies to retain talent and boost productivity and performance. By doing this organizations should keep in mind that personal goals and values of the applicant should match with the ones of the organization.

Based on this and on the findings of the paper, I therefore believe obtaining an understanding of how business professionals and Yeditepe University undergraduate students evaluate organizational characteristics such as for example "recognition and appreciation of their employers" or "provider of job security", will help companies strengthen the ability to make strategic changes in their recruitment material. Thus by using employer branding, companies can create a desirable employment image and convey this to candidates in order to attract talented workers and make them apply for the offered positions.

The findings of the paper also suggest that although they may seem not to value social dimensions as much as prospect employees do, females of the professional group tend to put more emphasis on this dimension than males of the same sample. Managers should also take that aspect of the study into consideration. They should also keep in mind that the reputation of the employer among the work force stands

at the heart of a strong employer brand. The firm's ability to deliver the promises made to prospect employees will contribute to its reputation and thereby to its brand equity.

The study aims to differentiate between the dimensions of employer attractiveness as they are perceived by prospect and current employees. To serve that purpose Yeditepe University Business Administration undergraduate students were taken as the sample group for prospect employees. Students in the first and second grade were not included to the sample since they are more than two years away from selecting their employer. The sampling frame of the study was summer school students for both samples. Due to these limitations and the time limit of the study the sample size was limited to 142 samples.

V.2. Suggestions for Further Research

Further research should be done to analyze the dimensions of attractiveness with a bigger sample. The suggested study may have more resemblance to the literature.

This work focuses on the attraction of the potential employees and on motivation or retention of the current ones. Further work should be conducted comparing the perceived dimensions of current employees and the general reputation of a specific organization. Another suggestion would be to conduct the same research to young professionals and professionals with more than 10 years of work experience and compare the results of these two groups. This will provide feedback to many organizations about the retention of their senior employees.

The questionnaire used in this study has left out the work-private life balance which can also be considered as an important dimension in employer attractiveness. Items analyzing that dimension could be added to the questionnaire.

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APPENDIX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu ara tırma, i ya amınızdaki uygulamalara ili kin bir çalı madır. Bu amaçla hazırlanmı olan bu anket formunda sizden istedi imiz, soruları kendi fikirlerinizi ve yakla ımlarınızı dikkate alarak doldurmanızdır.

Bize verece iniz cevaplar sadece ilgili bilimsel ara tırma dahilinde kullanılacak ve kimli iniz kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır. Cevaplarınızın gizli tutulaca ına dair bize olan güveninizi sa lamak için sizden isminizi veya kimli inizi aç ı a çıkartacak herhangi bir i areti anket formu üzerine yazmamanızı önemle hatırlatırız. Size uymayan sorular var ise lütfen bo bırakınız.

Bu ara tırmaya verece iniz katkı için imdiden te ekkür ederiz.

Lütfen a a ıdan u anki ö renim durumunuzu seçiniz:

Üniversite Ö rencisi

MBA Ö rencisi

Cinsiyetiniz: () Kadın () Erkek

Ya ınız : _____

Kaç yıldır çalı ma hayatındasınız? _____

u anki i yerinizde kaç yıldır çalı ıyorsunuz? _____

<i>Lütfen her bir ifadeyi dikkatlice okuyunuz ve bu ifadelere ne derece katıldı ınıza ili kin görüşünüzü “Kesinlikle katılıyorum” dan “Kesinlikle katılmıyorum” a do ru uzanan ölçek üzerinde belirtiniz.</i>	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Az/Çok Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Az/Çok Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
<i>Lütfen a a ıdaki soruları e er çalı ıyor iseniz cevaplayınız.</i>							
Genel olarak i imden memnunum.							
Genel olarak çalı tım ırkettten memnunum.							
Çalı tım ırkette çalı maya devam edece im.							
Çalı tım ırketi ba kalarına tavsiye ederim.							

<i>Lütfen her bir ifadeyi dikkatlice okuyunuz ve bu ifadelere ne derece katıldığınızı ilkin görüşünüzü “Kesinlikle katılıyorum” dan “Kesinlikle katılmıyorum” a doğru uzanan ölçek üzerinde belirtiniz.</i>	Kesinlikle katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Az/Çok Katılıyorum	Ne Katılıyorum Ne Katılmıyorum	Az/Çok Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
<i>Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları çalı ma için seçeceğiniz ideal i veren ve i in özelliklerini dü ünerek cevaplayınız.</i>							
Yönetim tarafından takdir edilmek benim için önemlidir.							
E lenceli bir çalı ma ortamım olmalıdır.							
Gelecekte daha iyi bir i im olması için bir sıçrama noktası olmalıdır.							
Kendimi bu irkette çalı tı mda iyi hissetmem benim için önemlidir.							
Kendime olan güvenim bu irket için çalı tı mda artar.							
Kariyerimi güçlendiren tecrübeler edinmek benim için önemlidir.							
O irkette üstlerimle iyi ili kiler kurabilmek benim için önemlidir.							
O irkette çalı ma arkadaş larımla iyi ili kiler kurabilmek benim için önemlidir.							
Destekleyici ve te vik edici i arkadaş larımın olması önemlidir.							
Heyecan verici bir i ortamım olmalıdır.							
Yeniliklere/bulu lara açık bir i verenim olmalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irket yaratıcılı ı desteklemeli ve de er vermelidir.							
Çalı tı m irket yüksek kalite ürünler/hizmetler üretmeli ve sunmalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irket yenilikçi ürünler/hizmetler üretmeli ve sunmalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irket içinde yükselmek için iyi olanaklar olması benim için önemlidir.							
Çalı tı m irketin yardımsever olması önemlidir. irket kazancının bir kısmını topluma geri vermelidir.							
Çalı tı m irket ö rendiklerimi faaliyete geçirebilmem için imkân sa lamalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irket ö rendiklerimi ba kalarına aktarabilmem için imkân sa lamalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irkete ait olmak ve irkette kabul görmek benim için önemlidir.							
Çalı tı m irket mü teri odaklı olmalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irkette i güvencesi olmalıdır.							
Çalı tı m irket çalı anlarına çe itli departmanlarda çalı ma olana ı vermelidir.							
Mutlu bir i ortamında çalı mak benim için önemlidir.							
Çalı tı m irket aynı i yapanlar ile kıyaslandı nda ortalamadan daha iyi maa vermelidir.							
Çalı tı m irket çekici yan faydalar sunmalıdır.(Sa lık sigortası, emeklilik hesabı, ayrılma tazminatı vb.)							