Employer Branding and Intention to Apply by Usage of Social Media in Banking Sector, Pakistan.

Summer Aslam

Abstract —**The endeavor of this survey was to examine the employer branding and intention to apply in recruitment function perspective to potential applicants. For that, respondents were contributed to survey from different universities who were near to initiate their vocations. Taken into account of employer branding and intention to apply, respondents were asked to answer about banking sector of Pakistan. In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that intention to apply is central for hale and hearty recruitment and employer branding is positive for intention to apply. In meticulous of direct effect, familiarity is significant with intention to apply. Furthermore, consistency in efforts of employer branding are proposed for organizations where employer attractiveness plays a role of different signals for individual perspective**.
Keywords: Employer Branding, Employer Familiarity, Intention to Apply, Social Media, Pakistan

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the present age, struggling with the inadequacy of man's capital, a demand for the skilled employees has been increased by organizations [1]. It is a massive challenge for organizations to attract potential employees [2]. With the minimization of capable applicants, hiring is getting difficult with respective to finding the right employees for the right jobs [3], [1]. The organizations are struggling for the competent employees because the demand for skill labor is continuously increasing.

Nonetheless, the sense of the battle for talent has changed as the culmination of organizations, moved from the selection to the attraction of employees. The reality is that a victory of an organization relies on its ability to attract. However, the term "attract" is persuaded by employer's branding [4]. Employer branding means such an ideology which is associated with marketing among the organizations and its positioning in the minds of current and potential associates [5]. Employer branding may be able to attain significant consequences in receipt of intention to apply for a job [5], [6].

The effectiveness of intention to apply for a job is greatly connected to the employer attractiveness in the starting attraction to the organization [7]. How are the applicants attracted to a particular organization? According to different studies, potential employees are supplementary attracted by those organizations that have the protection of familiarity and a silver bar of reputation [7], [8].

Familiar employees are envisioned and equate to a superior level of attractiveness [9]. Therefore, these familiar employers are paid more favorably. It is mainly essential for organizations to influence job seekers' application intention base on the familiarity because these organizations cannot be chosen from job seekers who do not have ini-

tial step "familiarity of the organization" [10]. Since attractiveness of employers swing to apply for a job [5], [10]. In the same way, employer familiarity (knowledge of the employer) has a parallel relationship with the intention to apply [10].

Indeed, employer attractiveness may be a sign of accessible information to an individual in a particular time especially if this available information is like the early image that can impact on probable applicant 's intention to apply. Admittedly, an initial image can become a cause of attraction that moves towards intention to apply. Potential applicants interpret this image as a signal in the early phase of recruitment. It deals with the same signaling theory that corresponds between individuals or parties as signals.

According to Celani & Singh [11] applicant attraction to an unknown organization is conceptualized as a signal. In marketing, different types of brand names have different signals for individual's perspective [12]. Similar is the case with the choice of employer to move further applicant's intention to apply for a job. However, the purpose of this study is to highlight the evaluation, what types of employers vary in signals perspective to branding. By considering this account, the banking sector was selected as the sector has been going through intense competition for many years [13]. Employee turnover is high in industry [14] and human capital availability is a serious matter [15] If efficiency level is needed to increase, banks need to hire young and educated employees [16]. It is primarily depending upon HRM department to hire competent and potential employees. Furthermore, consideration of the banking sector reveals a sluggish momentum in employer attractive survey, which is tabulated in table 1.0 and 1.1[17].

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employer branding is a catchy image for an organization that is closely related to employer attractiveness [18], [19]. A piece of evidence has been publicized that attractive employers are more able to recruit skilled employees [8], [20]. Being an attractive employer, can develop the power to engage their employees in expressive ways to attain dazzling results [6].

By function, "employer branding" is a pair matching term and its purpose is to establish a significant and differentiated existence in market that attract future associates and retains current ones well. However, by creating this competitive benefit with employer branding, organizations increase their chances to develop a wider applicant pool that moves towards the better selection. In addition, assembling a selection of prospective employees with profiles matching for organization's necessities is critical for competitive advantage in a boundless world.

Although, branding is reputed sense in marketing yet there is less debate in human resource literature [1],[5]. Branding introduced perspective to human resource management in the late 1990s as an idea conceived by Ambler and Borrow [20].

There is a link between the area of "Employer attractiveness and intention to apply" with various factors, job characteristics, organizational attributes, and applicant perceptions. Moreover, there are certain areas regarding further work in future studies to be done.
In the most current studies of Adler& Ghisellin [18] & Khabir [4] only general perceptions of compensation and benefits were measured instead actual intentions. According to these writers [18],[4] the results of that study may not be generalized but also future proceedings should be included. Gomes and Neves [19] also recommended to further explore the association between employer familiarity and intention to apply. To date, it is remarkable that few studies have been at work on the idea of employer branding. These researches so far have focused on the impact of employer branding on employee performance [21] employer branding on retention of employees [22] factors that make an employer attractive [4] employer branding an analysis of corporate sector [23].

Most of these researchers have left a blank space to fill up with the need for added variables and also further explore the use of social media as a moderator. Khabir [4] also recommended gender as an important factor in finding out the differences in preferences of employer attractiveness.

Thus, for filling these gaps, the first purpose of this study is to put together the affiliation between employer branding and intention to apply for a job by adding more variables in the context of banking sector (Pakistan). Secondly, further exploration of social media as a moderator's perspective to employer branding and intention to apply and also look at the gender difference in preference to employer attractiveness.

3. EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENSS SURVEY

Employer attractiveness is getting well known in sight of job seekers. An enormous interest of job seekers for attractive employers has been seen in employer attractiveness survey. 87,000 students and 130,000 job seekers were participated from Asia and Europe. Ac-

cording to this survey report, the rated employers are shown in table 1.0 with a comparison of the years 2009 and 2010. In addition, a distinction is also viewed Asia versus Europe in table 1.2

The banking sector has been rated lower as table 1.0 shows that the banking sector attained 9th rank in 2010 instead of 7th in 2009. A decline seems continuous to backward perspective to attractive employers for the banking sector as table 1.1 also shows that rating of 18th and 17th in Europe (2014) and 15th and 10th rating in Asia (2014).[17]

Table 1.0 Employer Attractiveness Survey

	2009	2010	2014
Google	1	1	1
KPMG	8	2	8
Ernst & Young	5	3	2
PricewaterhouseCoopers	2	4	5
Deloitte	10	5	15
Procter & Gamble	6	6	10
Microsoft	3	7	9
The Coca-Cola Company	13	8	12
J. P. Morgan	7	9	18
Goldman Sachs	4	10	17

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	Asia (2014)	Europe (2014)
Google	1	1
KPMG	6	8
Ernst & Young	8	4
PricewaterhouseCoopers	7	3
Deloitte	2	15
Procter & Gamble	5	9
Microsoft	12	5
J. P. Morgan	15	18
Goldman Sachs	10	17

4 EMPLOYER BRANDING GLOBAL RESEARCH

Most organizations are in the premature stage of developing an employer branding strategy that builds competitive advantage. According to global survey report [24] only 16% have a clearly defined strategy. On the other hand, 3% are fully unaware about the strategy whereas 37% do not have a clear strategy. So the survey results (see Figure 1.0) grant some imperative guidance for organization leaders to ensure their investments in developing the employer branding strategy
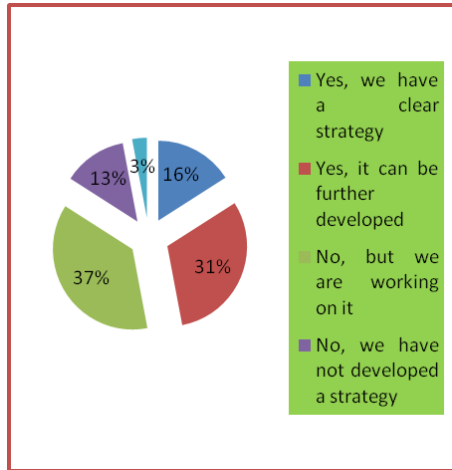
Figure 1.0[23].

5. EMPLOYER BRANDING & SOCIAL MEDIA

Communication is the core dealing of employer branding in the process of generating the appeal of an image [22]. The communication is helpful for an organization's needs while soul searching about its target audience to follow the market segmentation.

- Who is the audience?
- Does the organization have any trouble holding on to desired employees?
- What are their requirements and expectations of the organization?

Organizations need to be communicating their EVP (Employer value proposition) so that they offer insight about their brand [22],[23]. In the present era, there are different media tools available in unifying the message to the audience. One of these, is the utility of social media to congregate information in human resources [24]. Since a greater part of youth is using social media. However, the fondness of social media is not limited to youth only. Generation X is also user of social media. The number of social media users is spending a substantial portion of time in different social sites.

Undeniably, employer branding is all about sending a message to the market/ target audience. Organizations use different media sources or marketing communication mix to reach out to their customers, raising their awareness, and driving sustained purchase of product and service offerings. Customers visit different social pages to attain information about products, services and access to special deals such as coupons and promotions. However, invasion of social media has been recently fresh in employer branding. There is not apparent understanding of the relationship between social media and employer branding[25]. Therefore, this study comes up with the model of as usage of moderator of social media between employer branding, employer familiarity and intention to apply for a job.

6. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK & HYPOTHESES

After going through the literature review and studying the concept of employer branding with the familiarity and social media, a research model was shaped as it is shown in figure 1.1.
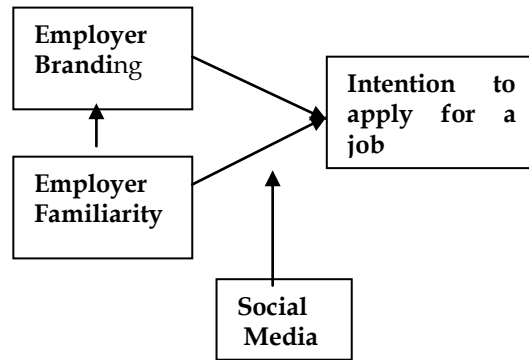

Figure 1.1

According to research model, the following hypotheses are developed that are listed down.

H1 There is a significant relationship between employer brand ing and intention to apply for a job.

H2 There is a significant relationship between employer familiarity and intention to apply for a job.

H3 Potential employees' perception of employer's use of social media positively moderates the relationship between employer branding and intention to apply fo a job.

H4 Potential employees' perception of employer's use of social media positively moderates the Relationship between em---ployer familiarity and intention to apply for a job.

7. METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

As the aim of this study was to look at the correspondence between employer branding and potential associate's intention aimed at moderation of social media. Behalf on the aim of the study and since the data collection started, university students were taken as for respondents and they asked for the banking sector. Lahore was taken as the most populated city of potential associates in Punjab. 250 respondents were studied and the random sampling technique was applied to approach the respective future employees who were studying in various universities. The quantitative study conducted having written 41 items by using seven point likert scales that were part of the survey. All constructs were adopted by different studies [7],[19] and satisfied to reliability and validity. All items were measured on a seven point likert scale and 0.869 reliability was attained for all

these. Reliability was also seen for a single variable as table 1.3 shows. Consistency was present for each variable in order to attain Cronbach's alpha. These values were satisfactory support by different author's recommendations in literature as according to them 0.50 and 0.60 are acceptable values in reliability. Data was coded and analysis in SPSS 20 version. 54 questionnaires were discarded in data coding as they were incomplete. Overall, 90% response rate was attained for the survey.

Table 1.2

Variable	Alpha
Employer Branding	.710
Employer Familiarity	.819
Social Media	.791
Intention to Apply	.667

For testing **H1 and H2 ,** a method "correlation" was performed and H1,H2 hypotheses were accepted. A parallel association was seen between employer branding and intention to apply, employer familiarity and intention to apply respectively that significant show at p<0.05. Social media was taken as a moderator, but a direct effect was also seen for intention to apply. It was insignificant at p>0.05.

Independent t-test

Respondents of this study were both male and female. 230 were male whereas were 176 females. An independent t-test was performed to know whether they have differences against employer branding or they have the same. However, there was insignificant difference in groups (male and female).

$$Y=\alpha+\beta1x+\beta2x+\epsilon$$

In computation, linear regression was applied. To trial the indirect effects in the final model, Regression method was included in the study to know the moderation, β and F value for independent variables. Results exposed the positive effect of branding and familiarity on intention to apply. However, indirect effect, social media was slightly observed as a moderating effect for branding (β2.60,β3 .161) values were weakly supported. Similarly, results did not find an interface effect of the use of social media, familiarity and intention to apply for a job (β2=.110, β3=.153, p>0.05).

Descriptive study was also part of the study. Respondents were requested to tick to the most preferred employer. Thus, mean scores were observed and differentiated for preference (Foreign Banks, Islamic Banks and local commercial banks) of employers among respondents. Foreign bank was attained as the most preferred employer (Mean=86%) for respondents and local bank ranked least proffered employer (Mean=31%). While, a moderation was seen for employer of Islamic bank (Mean=81%).

Nonetheless, preference was not the same in groups ofMale and Female. Female mostly rated at Islamic bank (Mean=43%) foreign bank (39%). Unlike, foreign bank was still the first preference in minds of male respondents (Mean=46%) where as Islamic bank (38%) took second priority.

Keeping in view above the findings, it shows that fresh graduates, who are about to start their vocations, have priority image of their employers in their minds indicating their familiarity to those. Once the image has developed, its outcome is the surge of the applicant's intention to apply.

Foreign banks attained their position in labor market as prominent and meticulous HR practices such as rich organizational culture by having training and development. In the same form, Islamic banks also captured wider potential market based on free of interest banking in a country where previously the tendency of joining the banking sector has been low because of the existence of contradictory beliefs in society [26].

In consideration of signaling theory, employers (Foreign Bank, Islamic Bank and Local Bank) as senders of signals vary in order to attract potential employees. Employer image as a signal impact on respondent's intention to apply to preferred employers. Foreign Bank signals with growth opportunities and raise their visibility of brands in country (Pakistan).

Mean scores were seen as premier signals for work meaningfulness (Mean= 4.06) with regard to employer attractiveness. Job autonomy, training and development were also observed attractive signals for employer's characteristics and intention to apply. Summarizing the results, employer attractiveness depends on the characteristics of the sender's (the employer) signal (i.e. the HR practices) and receiver (potential applicant). However, employer characteristics that are signaled by organization chiefly depend on how they are perceived individually.

Moderation results of social media revealed that selected organizations have fewer tendencies to change the image and sharing information. Social media as an advertisement tool is a need of familiarity of employers. According to cable and turban(2001) employers need to be familiar with prospective employees that ultimately enhance employer image. Employer familiarity is a critical factor of an organization to recruit bright graduates.

The interaction term was slightly found between employer branding and intention to apply. Exposure to social media is not clear so far and considered to be in future study.

1.9 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The study scrutinizes the significant relationship between employer branding and intention to apply. Research model sheds light on the fact that familiarity of employer's impact on intention to apply. So, findings of this study show consistency from previous studies. The attractiveness of an employer of any organization executes a critical role in attracting qualified potential employees. It is noteworthy in

Pakistan that attractive employers are able to attract and recruit talented applicants in job market. Admittedly, attractive employers truly matter and organizations should be bothered about potential employee's motivation and reasons to apply such as growth opportunities, work meaningfulness, job autonomy and culture of the working place. Even though all organizations are not aware of terms employer branding, as all organizations wants to be best. This research makes recommendations to respective organizations to work on employer branding and to increase their familiarity to graduates. In Pakistan, organizations are in high need of person job fit that can be increased employer attractiveness and positive image. Advertisement is supportive here to develop the significant image as knowledge (familiarity) of employers increase the perception of applicants regarding person fit with future prospective workplace. Consequently, organizations will be able to leap and bond even in thick and thin days of economy.

The limitation of this study is that it is specific to the selected region of Pakistan. The replication of this study is highly appreciated in another country (e.g. Middle East) in consideration of categories (Multi banks, Local banks). Future study on banking sector based on categories is also suggested in European countries. There are scant studies on employer branding and intention to apply. Social media is also in its infancy phase in literature. So, further study should use social media as a moderator. It is also encouraged for future study to differentiate between generation X and generation Y in perspective to employer attractiveness.

Acknowledgment

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