

2. EMPLOYER BRANDING: WHETHER HRM EMBRACES MARKETING TO ENHANCE TALENT ACQUISITION IN THE ERA OF JOB-HOPPING?

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ABSTRACT

*For years, employees have not been content to take jobs simply because of the attractive salaries and benefits offered to them. A good working atmosphere, an extremely positive image of the employer and an equal work life balance are becoming increasingly important when choosing an employer. One trend that has been observed is that companies with especially strong brands also top the rankings of the best employers. Bangalore IT firms like Infosys, Wipro and HCL as well as giants like HP, Google and SAP top the list of the most sought-after employers. These are exactly the same companies that lead the annual **Interbrand Best Global Brands Ranking** – the ranking of the 100 most valuable brands. In other words, the brand plays a decisive role in choosing an employer. As a result, it is all the more important for companies to clearly position their brands on the job market – brands that are truly unique, relevant to their target audiences and with promises that people can believe. A clear employer positioning sets the company apart from the competition and strengthens the overall image of the brand. But how can companies with strong brands communicate what they stand for as employers? And how can companies without strong consumer brands position themselves as attractive employers? The paper examines with an exploratory research approach to seek the answers from Bangalore-Based employees, whether there is really something called employer brand that affects their decision to seek a job under that employer's brand.*

Introduction: Employer branding is the process of promoting a company, or an organization, as the employer of choice to a desired target group, one which a company needs and wants to recruit and retain. According to *Christopher Van Mossevelde* the process facilitates the company's ability in attracting, recruiting and retaining ideal employees – referred to as Top Talent in recruitment – and helps secure the achievement of the company's business plan. An employer brand represents the image a company projects as a potential employer. If an employee has a strong employer brand and unique value proposition, then his/her company is considered a distinctive place to work, with attractive brand values and career prospects.

A study at SJBIT Bangalore found that today's young generation brings a brand new set of values to the workplace. The emerging workforce is not just looking for a high salary, or a successful career; young people want more. They want purpose. Today's students and recent graduates do not make the same distinction between work and spare time as previous generations did. Their careers are an important part of their identity and consequently an integral part of their life in general. In a recent global **Universum** study on career personalities, 85% of those surveyed said that their work is part of who they are, not just a way of making money, as per *Claes Peyron*. Establishing an appealing internal and external employer image, therefore, necessitates the understanding of both talent's and the company's needs and wants: What are Top Talent's career expectations? What are the company's strategic objectives? After gathering this information, the company can then begin to define its unique identity: What makes it an exceptional employer? In the employer branding discipline, this is known as the company's **Employer Value Proposition (EVP)**. In essence, the EVP is the set of unique employer offerings which are considered valuable to Top Talent.

Christopher Van Mossevelde also adds that in a nutshell, effective employer branding is the combination of market research, advisory services, communications and marketing to achieve both a credible and desirable brand position. Being a cyclical process, constantly measuring

performance and adjusting activities and strategies to continuously improve, it begins with understanding unique employer qualities and continues into sustaining the employer brand as a living, vibrant and attractive entity. The alternative to employer branding, and perhaps even catastrophic scenario, is to be considered as a generic employer, unspecific in offerings and unnoticeable to promising career seekers. Finally, through talent acquisition and retention, the end purpose of employer branding is to stimulate business growth and achieve strategic business goals.

Research Questions:

- Do employees feel motivated to work for a branded employer?
- What are the factors that drive employees to stick to branded employers?
- What are the perceived benefits for employees working for their employers?

Research Objectives:

- To find out whether employees feel motivated by their employer’s brand.
- To explore the top factors that drive employees to stick to branded employers.
- To examine the perceptions of employees towards getting benefits of working for their employers.

Research Methodology:

Research Design: The study is exploratory in nature.

Research Approach: e-Survey (Using Google Form Online)

Research Tool: Questionnaire (structured as well as unstructured questions)

Sample Size: 12 Professionals (All working in Bangalore in various organizations)

Sampling Method: Convenient

Location: Bangalore (India)

Data Collection Time-Frame: February-March 2014

Data Representation:

The first profiling was demographic in which the type of organization, respondents work in, was asked and the same is represented as under:

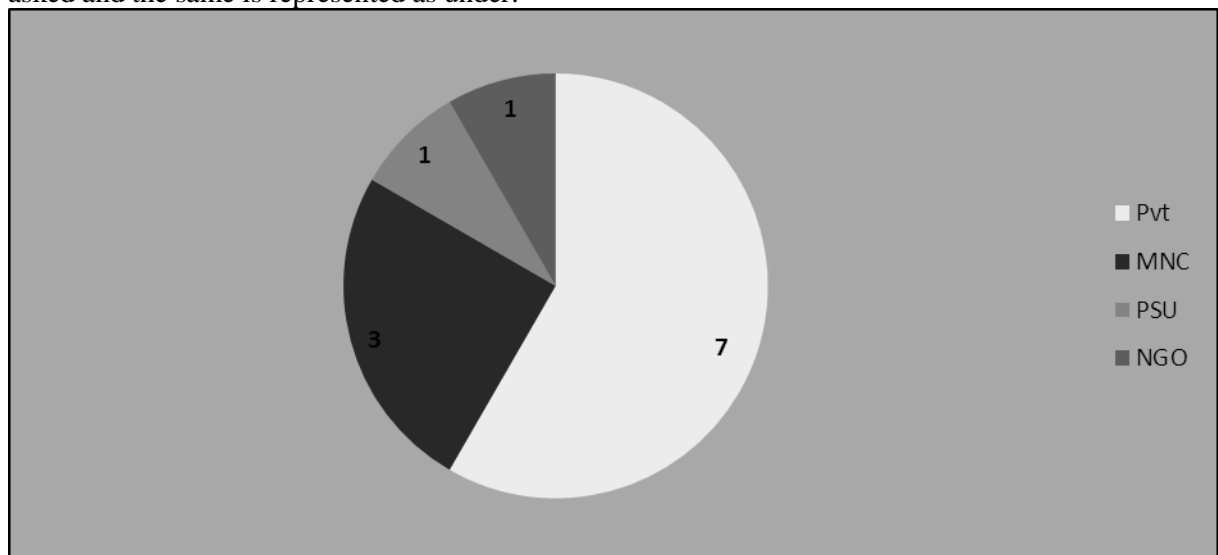


Figure 1: Organization Types of Respondents

In the next demographic profiling, the age-group was asked and the break-up of the same is given below:

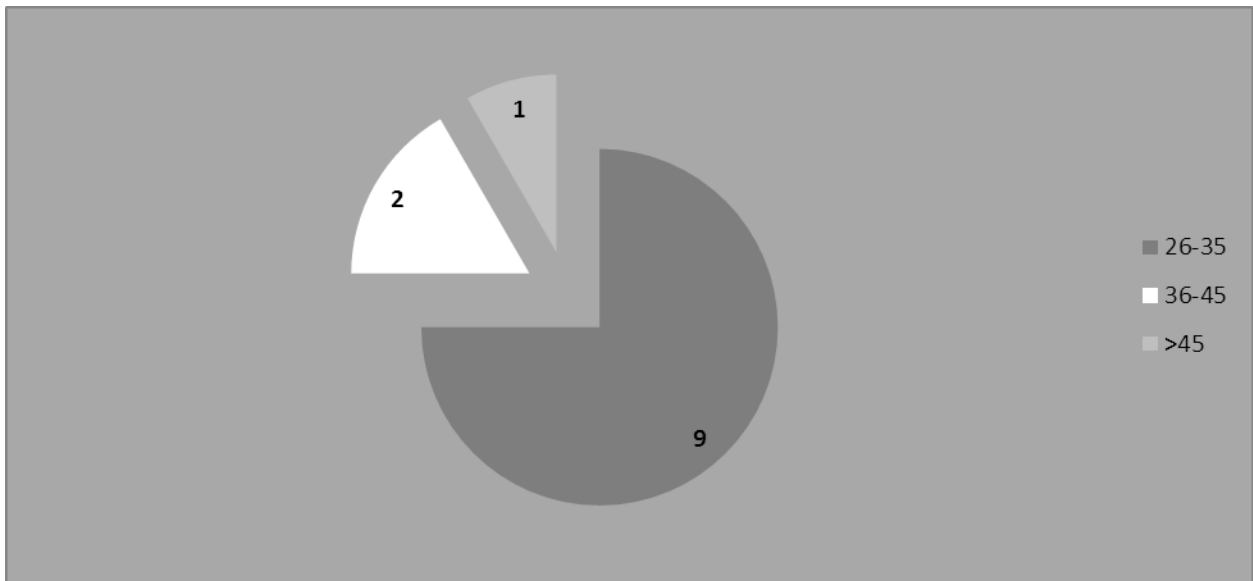


Figure 2: Age Group Break-Up

When asked if they feel their Organization’s Name adds any value to their image, the following result was found:

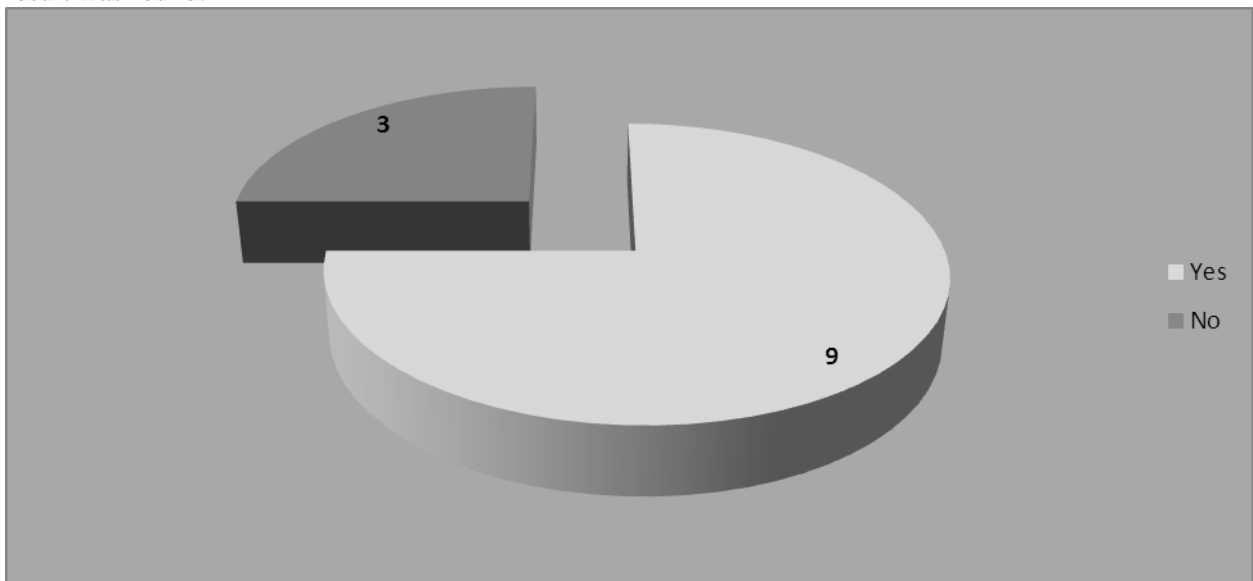


Figure 3: Whether respondents feel their employer’s name adds value to their image

A significant majority answered in the affirmative, signalling the true existence of the employer branding exercise and its valid reason to attract job goers.

A series of **Likert-Scale (5-Pointer)** queries were asked to determine employers’ perceptions regarding the branding of their employers which is tabled below.

Also, the table shows the **Central-Tendency Analysis** involving **mean, mode and median**:

QUESTIONS ASKED	MEAN	MODE	MEDIAN
Big brands add value to the image of an employee working there	4.25	4	4
If you get an offer from an established Brand, you can switch your job	3.25	3	3

A Big Brand, as an Employer, adds value to the CV	4.33	4	4
People working at Renowned Organizations are Happy	3.25	3	3
People working at Renowned Orgs have more social recognition / status / prestige	3.75	3	4
There is more exposure & learning if People work in Renowned Organizations	3.5	3	3.5

Table 1: Central-Tendency Analysis of Likert-Scale Ratings

Mean generally provides the average opinion and the ratings, well above 4, in the first question, indicates that on average, respondents gave positive response admitting that brands of employers do add value to the individuals’ image. Mode (4) shows that most people ticked 4 on the 5-Point scale. Middle-Value, indicated by Median, too shows that 4 is the value which is in the middle.

In the second question, people said they would jump to an established brand for job, if they receive an offer. But Average is around 3 (3.25), which does not specifically indicate that for brand itself, people are very much prepared to leave jobs. Mode 3 and Median 3 too shows that people are neutral on this issue of shifting from their employer to another new one only based on a brand value.

While, the question of big employer brands adding value to the CV, was answered very positively by respondents (Mean: 4.33, Mode: 4 & Median:4), rest of the questions again indicate that all central tendency values are around 3. This says that happiness, social recognition and exposure are not dependent on the brand of an employer. Only among these last three questions, in case of social recognition, Median is 4 and the Mean stands at 3.75 – indicating that respondents feel like having a perception that brand value of their employers do add positive feelings on this criteria. The next question on whether the respondents feel that employers give prominent advertisements in media (like Times Ascent) for employer branding, the following data was obtained:

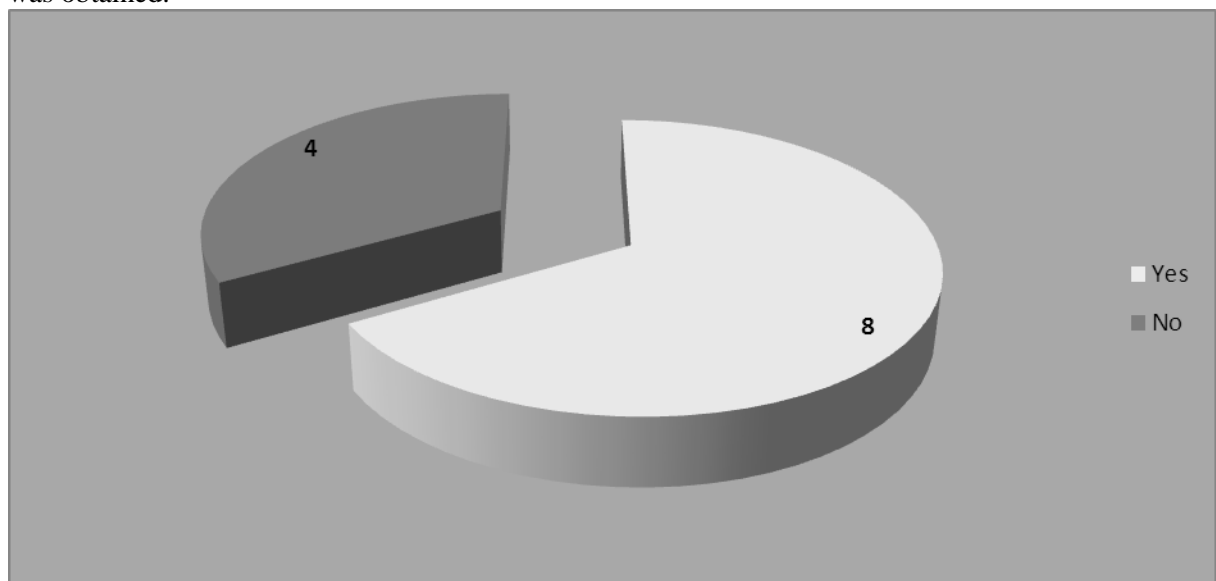


Figure 4: Employee perception – on whether employers’ advertisements for recruitment are part of employer-branding

The greater percentage of respondents indicating they do believe their employers give advertisements in the media regarding recruitment, to do employer-branding, gives an idea to us that their perception agrees with this concept. Whether the respondents perceive that a branded employer is preferred by job-seekers, the following data was obtained, where except 1 respondent, all others agreed that people do prefer applying for jobs at a well-established brand as their employer.

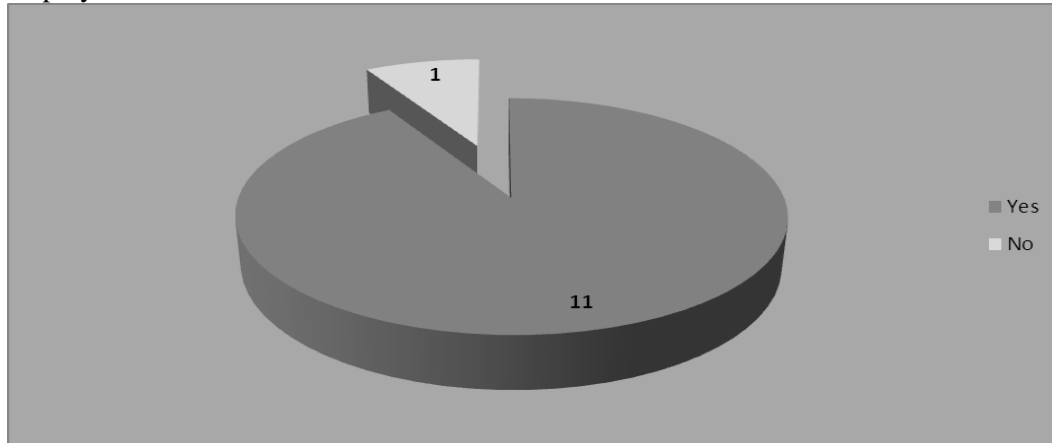


Figure 5: Whether respondents perceive that job seekers prefer a branded employer

Findings: The image, social status or recognition and also preference of applying for jobs – all do depend on a brand value of the employer firm. This is what majority of the respondents believe. However, except image or status issues, the very basic benefits like career prospects in terms of training, learning exposure etc. are not related to an established employer brand. Also, happiness or job satisfaction – does not depend on the brand value of an employer, which is clearly indicated by the respondents as they gave neutral responses.

Conclusion: After the interaction with the respondents, this stands clear that the first research objective is fulfilled and the inference is that employees do get motivated if they are with an established brand. Also, the second objective of finding the top reasons why employees get motivated to work under big employer brands, the factors like social recognition, image and status as well as value addition in their CVs are the top ones. As far as the third and last research objective is concerned, there is hardly any clear indication that career benefits are any outcome of brand value of the employer firms. So, they respondents were rather neutral towards agreeing or disagreeing whether there are any practical benefits of being employed by a branded employer.

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