A Multi-dimensional Scale for Measuring Employer Brand

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This study addresses the research gaps by attempting to design a conceptually grounded, psychometrically sound instrument to measure employer brand. A cross-sectional sequential mixed-method is used for the scale development process where exploratory qualitative study is followed by a conclusive quantitative approach. An iterative testing and refinement procedure using three field surveys on a sample of 425 prospective employees, leads to a final eleven-item scale of employer brand that exhibits adequate levels of reliability, and convergent, discriminant and, nomonological validity. Structural equation modeling is used to confirm the factor structure. Results prove employer brand as a multidimensional construct. Strong factor structures and reasonably good performance in all validity criteria indicate that the instrument offers value for future empirical research.

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Introduction

Although recent research is abundant with literature on war for talent (Ready et al., 2008), yet very little research attention has aimed at competitive talent management strategies (Bhatnagar, 2007, 2009) that can act as key differentiators in corporate success. Employer branding is one such long-term innovative HR strategy to attract and retain the best talent anywhere in the world (Wilden et al., 2010).

It is important for the organizations to focus on the pre-organizational entry stage, which is the first phase of recruitment (Murphy, 1986). Any information that prospective employees receive at the initial stage, builds their impressions of the hiring organization, which becomes an important cue for what it would be like to work for that organization (Turban, 2001). An employer brand benefits both the prospective employer and the prospective employees. It attracts the candidates with the right skills who also fit into the values, need and culture of the organization (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2008) and at the same time gives the prospective employees an assurance of the expected work experience. When a firm reaches a higher level of external recognition, it becomes much easier for it to attract new talent (Bouchikhi & Kimberly, 2008).

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Research has shown that decisions to apply for a job are related to prospective applicants' attraction to the organization (Barber, 1998). Hence, it is important to understand how applicants view the hiring organization from first impressions during the recruitment process. Researchers have initiated a systematic examination of a person's general impressions of a recruiting organization (e.g., Collins & Stevens, 2002; Highhouse et al., 1999; Lemmink, Schuijf & Streukens, 2003; Wilden et al., 2010). Scholars have called for research investigating whether organization-level variables affect applicant pool characteristics (Barber, 1998; Rynes & Cable, 2003). Employer brand could be one such variable with scope for exploration.

It is found that most of the research on employer brand is limited to conceptual papers which either identify and define the concept (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Ewing et al., 2002) or borrow the models on consumer behavior to explain brand equity (Andreassen & Lanseng, 2010). There is little research on scale development in employer branding (Joo & McLean, 2006; Moroko & Uncles, 2008).It is also essential to understand which important organizational characteristics or practices contribute most to workplace attractiveness (Fulmer, Gerhart & Scott, 2003). The dearth of an instrument to measure employer brand necessitates an empirical study to develop and validate a measurement scale since any theoretical progress is made possible only by adequate measurement instrument (Schwab, 1980).Thus, developing a scale to measure employer brand is the primary objective of this paper, which addresses the research gap pointed out by earlier research studies in this area (Roy, 2008)

Employer Brand

The term employer brand was coined by Ambler & Barrow (1996) and further conceptualized by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004). An employer brand is about giving an identity (Backaus & Tikoo, 2004), image and distinctiveness to the organization as a desirable employer (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) and message to the talent pool that the organization is 'a good place to work' (Ewing et al, 2002; Knox & Freeman, 2006) in order to attract its prospective employees and to motivate, engage and retain its current employees (Srivastava & Bhatnagar, 2010).

The employer brand also helps organizations in the process of profiling themselves in the labor market as an employer of choice for future employees as well as to ensure organizational identification among current employees. It brings familiarity with the organization (Heironimus, Schaefer & Schröder, 2005) and enables a quick mental shortlist of prospective employers (Martin & Hetrick, 2007). In the extant literature (e.g., Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004 etc.) an employer brand has also been referred to as a psychological contract between an employer and employee as it also shapes the expectations of employees from their employment (Collins & Stevens, 2002). Drawing from existing literature, we define employer brand as "a set of attributes that establishes the identity of the organization in the minds of the prospective employees as a distinct employer promising a certain employment experience. Thus, it helps in attracting those candidates who have the required competencies and also fit with the need and culture of the organization."

Existing Measures

Earlier, the scale used by Berthon et al. (2005) has been utilized to identify the dimensions of attractiveness of an employer brand (Roy, 2008). Here we would like to differentiate between employer attractiveness and employer brand. Employer attractiveness is the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization (Berthon et al., 2005).This attractiveness is also the degree to which a respondent would personally seek a company as an employer (Turban & Greening, 1997) and would recommend the company as an employer (Newburry, Gardberg & Belkin, 2006). Whereas employer brand is a set of attributes and qualities — often intangible — that make an organization distinctive, promise a particular kind of employment experience and appeal to those people who will thrive and perform their best in its culture (Walker, 2007).

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Lievens et al.(2005) developed a scale to measure symbolic traits of an employer on the basis of Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale but the items/ factors were specific to army/defense. Similarly, the scale used by Highhouse, Zickar, et al. (1999) to measure company employment image had items which were relevant to fast food chains. Knox & Freeman (2006) have also attempted to measure the employer brand image. The current research is an extension of earlier work by adding more attributes to the employer brand scale, and thereby developing theory and customizing it to contextual domains of emerging markets like India.

Research Design & Sample

The concerned problem was addressed with the help of a cross sectional, non- experimental, sequential mixed method research design. The methodology for scale development was adapted from Churchill (1979).To initialize the study, an extensive literature survey on employer brand and its related concepts was carried out. Data was collected in two stages where exploratory qualitative data analysis was followed by a conclusive quantitative approach thus demonstrating "between (or across) methods" type triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

The qualitative exploratory study comprised several methods, namely, open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, focus groups discussions and content analysis of the main page and career section of official websites of different organizations. Pattern coding (Ewing et al, 2002), was utilized to identify the key constituents of the employer brand construct. The samples for the exploratory study were final year postgraduate management students and working managers enrolled in executive management program (both prospective employees) and senior HR executives who were dealing with recruitment in their current organizations (prospective employers). Two non-probability sampling techniques, purposive and snowball were used to determine the respondent (Table 1)

Table 1 Sample Statistics in Exploratory Study

Methodology	Prospective Employees	Prospective Employers
Open ended questionnaire	Final year Post Graduate management students (*N*=30)	
10 Focus group Discussions in a group of 7-10 respondents	4 each on final year Post Graduate management students and working mangers in Executive management program (*N*=62)	2 on senior HR executives (*N*=16)
57 Semi structured depth interviews	• Pre placement: (*N*=15) final year Post Graduate management students + (*N*=15) working managers in executive management program • Post placement: (*N*=22) final year Post Graduate management students	(*N*=5) senior HR executives
Content analysis		(*N*=10) Main page & career sections of official websites of different or ganizations

Results of the content analyses of pre–placement interview, focus group transcripts and websites resulted in the identification of thirty-nine themes which were perceived to be associated with employer brand. These thirty nine themes were conceptually grouped into seven dimensions based on their similarity. Supported with literature, the seven dimensions were further reduced to three dimensions, namely, reputation, perceived culture and HR systems & processes, based on their frequency of occurrence and prominence (% response) in the exploratory research.

Employer brand is a latent construct as it cannot be observed directly. The three dimensions of employer brand namely reputation, perceived culture and HR systems & processes (referred to as sub-constructs) are also latent in nature.

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It is recommended that in the case of complex constructs, it may be advisable to divide the construct into sub-scales (Spector, 1992), hence the proposed dimensions are scales in their own means and are measured with the help of different variables emerging during the study. Reputation was measured with the help of the five other variables namely financial performance of the organization, product/ service brand image, image of the industry/ sector the organization is operating in, corporate citizenship behavior and the effect of word of mouth on the reputation of the organization. Similarly, 'perceived culture' was measured with variables- autonomy, people-orientedness, 'fun at work' and 'HR systems &processes' is measured with the variables- learning & development, career growth and reward strategy. All of these variables have support in extant literature.

Item Generation: Guided by the extant literature and exploratory data, 174 items were subsequently derived deductively and inductively for employer brand, which were consistent with the definitions of each of the three dimensions. Based on the variables identified in the exploratory study, items were also adapted/ modified from established scales.

Purification &Pretest of Items: After a content validity check by four subject matter experts and a verbal protocol analysis, the questionnaires were further pre-tested on postgraduate management students for content and clarity. This brought down the number of items in the employer brand scale to 72.

The Questionnaire: Quantitative conclusive study consisted of two pilot surveys and a main survey. The two pilot surveys resulted into a self-administrable questionnaire consisting of 33 items that remained after purification of the initial scales. A list of 32 organizations from eight different industries was provided in the beginning of the questionnaire. Since one has to be familiar with an object in order to have certain perception about it, the respondents were asked to choose an organization which they were familiar with. Each item was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (which ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).

Participants& Sampling Procedure: The unit of analysis in the conclusive study is prospective employees in management in the age group of 20-45. Data for the two pilot surveys (n=105 & 99) and the main survey (n=425) was collected from final year postgraduate management students who were about to enter the corporate world and working managers in the executive management program who were already occupying managerial positions in reputed organizations, using self administered questionnaires. Two different samples were taken because self-concepts, emotional intensity, social interaction patterns, altruistic attitudes and behaviors, life goals, and coping strategies of people (Steverink & Lindenberg, 2006) and work values developed through education and life circumstances are likely to differ across different job seeking populations (Albinger & Freeman, 2000). This also helps in the generalizability of the results and fulfils the concern posed by Cable & Turban (2003) regarding inclusion of working executives in the employer brand research.

The sampling frame was composed of all the final year postgraduate management students enrolled in the flagship management program of the four chosen B-schools across two geographic clusters of India and all the working executives of the National Capital Region (NCR) of India enrolled in the executive management program of the two chosen B-schools. Since National Capital Region (NCR) comprising four districts of India is a hub of many multinationals and reputed Indian organizations, managers working there have a fair idea about the organizations listed in the questionnaire. Non-probability multistage quota sampling technique was used.

Data Collection

The period before the placement was chosen for data collection, as during this period students are more active in gathering knowledge about different employers and their mind is ripe with such information. Since the business environment and the organizational conditions needed to be same in both the samples, data was collected concurrently. A total of 530 questionnaires were administered out of which 488 were returned making it a high response rate of 92%. The respondents' participation was voluntary. After removing responses that were incomplete, erroneous and patterned, the tally came down to 441. A list wise deletion of cases with missing values was carried out for CFA and model testing using SEM which resulted in 425 cases with a loss of about 3% of the original data.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Thereafter, the data corresponding to different constructs was subjected to a number of evaluative procedures. According to the guidelines provided by De Vellis (1991), the data was checked for internal consistency, item-total correlation, variance, item means before proceeding for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Principal Component Method was used with orthogonal (varimax) rotation and a factor extraction according to the MINEIGEN criterion (Hair et al., 2006). During each survey (two pilots and a main survey), the EFA of each subscale of employer brand was first carried out. Then, again the EFA was carried out taking all the items together that emerged in each subscale.

It resulted in four factors that explained 53.6% variance. The four rotated components accounted respectively for 23.1%, 14.0%, 9.2% and 7.3% of total variance following deletion of cross-loaded items, items with low factor loadings (less than 0.4) or items that were theoretically inconsistent with their factor. Based on the orthogonal factor pattern, each factor clearly reflected the three a priori dimensions although the second and fourth factor together constituted the dimension of HR systems and processes suggesting its multidimensional nature. The breakdown of these items was: reputation (3 items), perceived culture (5 items) and HR systems & processes divided into two factors 'learning & development' (4 items) and 'career growth' (2 items).

Table2 Factor Loading of 'Employer Brand' in Main Survey

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	Reputation	Learning & Development	Perceived Culture	Career Growth
rep_lacking financial soundness	0.804			
rep_favorable impression	0.743			
rep_competitive work environment	0.710			
hr_foreign assignments		0.754		
hr_values individual contribution		0.656		
hr_people from different countries		0.594		
hr_leadership development training programme		0.518		
pc_half day leave to celebrate occasions			0.718	
pc_sabbatical policy			0.669	
pc_genuine interest in people's personal lives			0.650	
pc_promotes fun at work			0.522	
pc_autonomy to take decisions.			0.417	
hr_promotion from within				0.789
hr_positions are posted internally				0.786

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

The last stage of scale development involves assessing the external validity or generalizability of the scale to the population. The most direct method of validating the results is to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and assess the replicability of the results. Since the model on employer brand framework and the related a priori linkage between item measures and constructs were formulated based on the literature and qualitative research insights, confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the expected factor structure comprising a priori item grouping derived from EFA. CFA of the sub-scales was carried out first before testing them as dimensions of employer brand so that the misspecification in the former, if present, can be addressed first (Byrne, 2001).

As suggested by Byrne, the measurement model was tested using the maximum likelihood estimation method to ensure that parameter estimates exhibit the correct sign and size, and are consistent with underlying theory. Goodness of fit related to individual parameters of the model focuses on both the appropriateness (i.e., no negative variances, no correlations >1.00) and statistical significance (i.e., estimate divided by standard error >±1.96) of their estimates. All parameter estimates for these first-order models of the proposed dimensions were found to be statistically significant.

Initially going strictly by the confirmatory approach, the latent first-order factors (reputation, perceived culture & HR systems & processes) and their reflective indicators were placed as the dimensions of the second-order factor measurement model of employer brand. Hence the multidimensional model was tested with the 14 items derived from EFA. We wish to report that the measurement models of employer brand based on EFA did not give an acceptable goodness of fit values. Hence, adopting the generating model strategy, model re–specification was done. This logic has justification in literature (Jöreskog, 1993) that re–specification may be either theory or data driven as the ultimate objective is to find a model that is both substantively meaningful and statistically well fitting. Finally, the second order factor of employer brand attained acceptable goodness of fit. The three factors were found to be distinct, albeit, inter–related constructs with correlation ranging from 0.54 to 0.85. This model (Fig. 1) represents employer brand as a three dimensional construct characterized by a second order structure comprising the subconstructs of 'reputation', 'perceived culture' and 'HR systems and processes' (for coding detail of each item see Table 3).

Fig. 1 Second Order Measurement Model of Employer Brand (For coding of the items see Table 4)

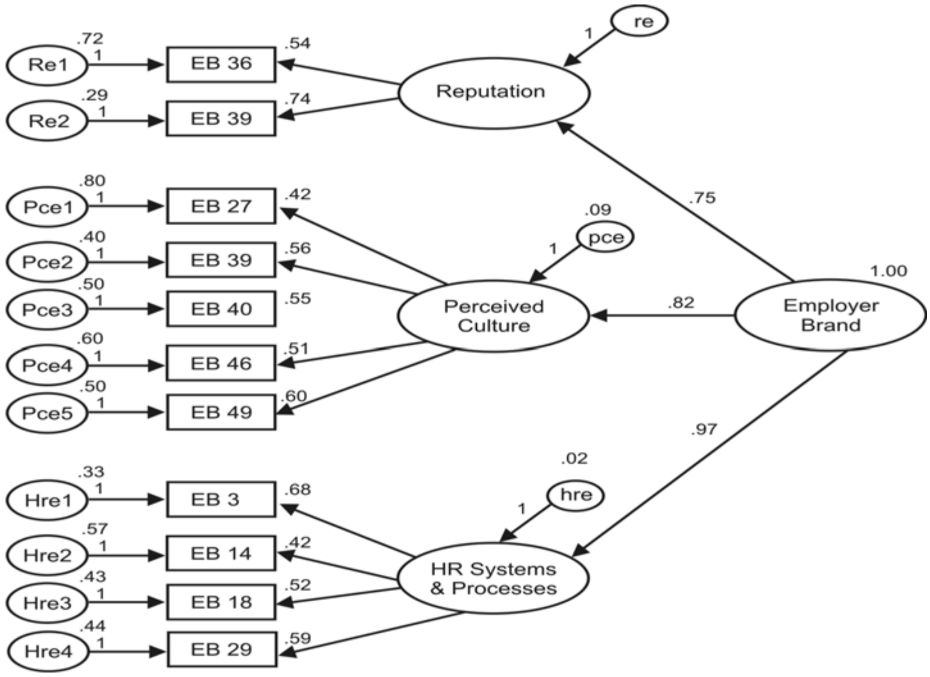

Table 3 Indicators for the Employer Brand Scale

(Items marked with * were dropped during CFA while those marked with ** were dropped during EFA but taken back during CFA)

Dimension With Indicators(Items 1-4 of reputation; Items 5-11 of perceived culture;Items 12-20 of HR systems & processes)	Mean (Standard Deviation)	Principal Component Factor Loading	Measurement Model	
			Standard Coefficient	R^2
1. This organization is known for healthy competitive work environment. (EB36)	4.04 (1.01)	0.76	0.54	0.29
2. This organization possesses a favorable reputation for its community and environmental responsibility. (EB39)	3.96 (0.81)	0.67	0.74	0.55
3. People in the society hold a favourable impression of this organization as an employer. (EB10)*	4.20 (1.01)	0.74		
4. This organization has a poor reputation for lacking financial soundness.(EB12)*	4.41 (0.87)	0.76		
5. This organization provides a sabbatical policy where people are given paid leave for a few months to pursue an activity of their choice.(EB27)	2.96 (0.99)	0.71	0.42	0.17
6. This organization commits time and resources in managing employee relations. (EB33)	3.73 (0.77)	0.64	0.56	0.32
7. This organization is known for providing autonomy to its employees to take decisions. (EB40)	3.55 (0.84)	0.67	0.55	0.30
8. This organization seriously promotes fun at work. (EB46)	3.19 (0.90)	0.55	0.51	0.26
9. This organization is known to demonstrate caring by showing a genuine interest in people's personal lives. (EB49)	3.50 (0.89)	0.65	0.60	0.35
10. Its management genuinely seeks and responds to employees' suggestions and ideas. (EB22)*	3.59 (0.84)	0.73		
11. The organization has a policy to provide a half day leave to celebrate occasions like birthdays and anniversaries. (EB19)*	2.83 (0.99)	0.83		
12. Joining this organization would be a beneficial move for an individual's career. (EB3)**	4.09 (0.78)		0.68	0.46
13. This organization provides a learning opportunity to work on different projects. (EB14)**	3.78 (0.84)		0.42	0.17
14. This organization communicates a clear advancement path for its employees. (EB18)**	3.61 (0.77)		0.52	0.27
15. This organization values individual contribution of its employees and rewards accordingly. (EB29)**	3.83 (0.82)		0.59	0.35
16. This organization has a structured leadership development training programme for its employees. (EB38)*	3.78 (0.83)	0.52		
17. This organization offers positions in foreign (*Adapted from Lievens et al, 2005*) assignments.(EB13)*	3.47 (1.15)	0.86		
18. This organization does not provides the opportunity to work with people from different countries. (EB37)*	3.67 (1.11)	0.73		
19. In this organization, all permanent positions are posted internally to existing employees before external hiring begins.(EB26)*	3.33 (0.89)	0.82		
20. This organization follows the policy of 'promotion from within'.(EB47)*	3.56 (0.72)	0.81		

Results

The test of this measurement model demonstrated good fit between the data and the proposed measurement model resulting into CMIN/DF=1.902, RMR= 0.031, GFI=0.968, CFI=0.953, RMSEA= 0.046 with CI_{90}: (0.030, 0.062). The t-values in the model ranged from 6.712 to 11.647. The final measurement models with reasonably good indices for goodness of fit and the final items with their estimates are given in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 4 Goodness of Fit Indicators of Measurement Models of Reputation (Rep), Perceived Culture (PC), HR Systems & Processes (HRSP), Employer Brand (EB)

Construct/ Sub-construct	Rep	PC	HRSP	EB (three-Dimensional)	EB (Uni-Dimensional)	EB (Null Model)
CMIN/DF	3.190	1.946	2.668	1.902	5.344	15.442
GFI	0.995	0.991	0.987	0.968	0.914	0.595
AGFI	0.969	0.973	0.962	0.949	0.874	0.514
RMR	0.029	0.022	0.023	0.031	0.200	0.000
NFI	0.984	0.962	0.948	0.908	0.717	0.000
CFI	0.989	0.981	0.966	0.953	0.754	0.000
RMSEA	0.072	0.047	0.063	0.046	0.101	0.185
Hoelter .05	511	483	352	310	109	37

Table 4 shows that multiple indices had been used to establish the model fit. The overall CMIN/DF ratios in the measurement models of perceived culture, HR systems & processes, employer brand are less than 3 suggesting an excellent fit. Among the absolute fit measures, GFI, and AGFI are above 0.95 in all the cases implying a good fit (Hoelter, 1983) with the RMSEA values less than 0.08 indicating a reasonable fit (MacCallum et al., 1996). Among the incremental fit indices (Hair et al., 2006), NFI and CFI were above the cut off value of 0.95 as suggested by Hu & Bentler (1999). The last goodness-of-fit statistic, Hoelter's (1983) critical N was greater than 200 concluding that the size of the sample in this study (N=421) was satisfactory (Byrne, 2001). Thus, the results indicate that the final measurement models have acceptable fit. CFA resulted in an 11-item scale. (Appendix A for the final scale that comprises items that remained after the main survey)

Psychometric Evaluation

After the scale development process, the newly constructed scales after EFA and CFA were tested for different kinds of validities as suggested by American Psychological Association (1985). The results indicate that the theoretical constructs exhibit good psychometric properties. Content validity of the construct was established through expert opinion, pretests and content analysis of the qualitative data and the extant literature. Each item loaded on the predicted factor thus exhibiting nomonological validity. One item supposed to load in perceived culture loaded in reputation which after expert opinion was taken as an item of repu-

Table 5 Means, Standard Deviations, Inter-correlations among Study Construct, Dimensions & Their Reliability (*N*=425)

Construct	Mean	Std Deviation	1	2	3	Reliability
Reputation	4.21	0.76	1.000			0.71
Perceived Culture	3.31	0.56	0.199	0.446		0.70
HR Systems & Processes	3.57	0.46	0.446	0.472	1.000	0.87

tation. During CFA, all goodness of fit values were in the acceptable range and each individual item's coefficient was found to be greater than twice its standard error. Thus convergent validity was established. It was found that Chi-square of individual scale (Employer Brand =78.0) was significantly smaller than all constructs in one model (240.471) hence divergent validity was ascertained. After CFA, the reliability of main constructs, employer brand was 0.78 and the reliability of its three dimensions was in the range of 0.70-0.87. The acceptable goodness of fit values established employer brand as a multi-dimensional construct with reputation, perceived culture and HR systems & processes as its dimensions.

Discussion

It was found that 'HR systems & processes' is the most dominant dimension for an employer brand followed by perceived culture and reputation. This confirms the findings of Sutherland et al.(2002) that prospective employees are most attracted towards career growth opportunities, challenging work environment, training & development and performance based pay. Among the HR systems and processes, the strongest support was for items on career growth followed by performance based pay and learning opportunities. This relates strongly with the findings of Sutherland et al (2002) on the determinants of employer of choice brands and of Kinnear and Sutherland (2000) on the determinants of organizational commitment among knowledge workers suggesting the importance of HR systems and processes. Pay level and promotional opportunities are among the most significant predictors of offer acceptance (Bretz & Judge, 1994). The career opportunities provided at the organization helps in building the employer brand which attracts prospective employees to it. The learning & development opportunities provided by the HR systems and processes of the organization also help to contribute towards employer brand.

It was found that 'HR systems & processes' is the most dominant dimension for an employer brand followed by perceived culture and reputation.

Perceived culture was dominated by the items on people-orientedness. This indicated that people form a perception about an employer based on how it treats its employees and whether it is concerned about their well being. The other items that formed a part of the perceived culture were related to autonomy and fun at work. Organizations which have a culture of autonomy in decision making and a fun-filled working environment help in the development of employer brand.

The two items that assessed reputation were both of corporate citizenship behavior. This emphasizes the fact that the organizations which exhibit corporate citizenship behavior are able to develop a positive image (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990) and an employer brand.

Contributions

This research is an attempt to wards the development of a reliable and valid scale on employer brand. In the primary stage, this scale may result in theory building within the staffing domain. Earlier studies have mostly been conducted on final year students who are the new labor market entrants. By including people who are already working, it tries to bridge this gap and the scale can be generalized to include a larger population of prospective employees in different stages of their careers. As noted by Barber (1998), it is important to complement the hypothetical nature of past research with similar studies of actual organizations. This study uses multiple real organizations to choose from which is much closer to reality.

Implications

The current research has theoretical implications as developing a scale on employer brand is an attempt to assess an organization's brand strength as an employer in the external labor market especially in the Indian context. The scale should be considered a first iteration as further empirical testing is required to improve its efficacy in organizational studies. By building a strong employer brand an organization can easily come into the consideration set of prospective employees especially the first time job seekers. Resourcing the best candidates from a bigger talent pool rather than the available applicants would result in a more efficient talent acquisition process. These data provide valuable insights that can be used to tailor recruitment strategies to attract prospective employees. This study suggests which specific organizational attributes recruiters should emphasize when building the employer brand (Hieronimus et al., 2005). Practical implications are present for HR and brand managers, as organizations may also live up to the brand by meeting the expectations of their employees as promised in their employment value propositions in order to keep their employees engaged (Bhatnagar & Srivastava, 2008).

Resourcing the best candidates from a bigger talent pool rather than the available applicants would result in a more efficient talent acquisition process.

Limitations

This study restricts employer branding for the purpose of recruitment at the pre-organizational entry stage and studies only prospective employees and excludes current employees of organizations. The study is limited to only one section of talent pool i.e. managers, and omits technical employees, scientists, academicians etc. The present study has tried to widely capture the constituents; yet the dimensions and measures used in the study are not exhaustive. Inclusion of variables for employer brand construct in the study is restricted to those that emerged in our exploratory study, and focuses on the Indian labor market domain. This leads to the probability of overall employer brand image to be more than the sum of the separate attributes (Knox & Freeman, 2006), particularly when it was only possible to use three out of the seven dimensions found in the exploratory research for reasons of parsimony.

Future Research

There is further scope to explore more dimensions of employer brand. This study has used subjective measures to examine the perception about different organizations. In future studies, it would be useful to have more contingency variables e.g. organizational size in terms of financial turnover, geographical spread and number of employees, survey rankings etc. about the participating organizations.

Another area of research is to explore the role of employees as 'brand ambassadors' for the employer. Research also needs to explore whether the employer image in reality is in congruence to the rankings in the best employer surveys. The different consequences of developing an employer brand can be empirically examined. Employer brand benefits the organizations by bringing down the recruitment cost. This could be tested empirically. Another interesting work would be to understand the reasons why an employer's image matters to the prospective employees, current employees and the organization itself? Future empirical work should take into account the engagement and retention of employees as a result of employer brand.

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Appendix A Final Items in the Employer Brand Scale

REPU-TATION	1.	This organization is known for healthy competitive work environment.
	2.	This organization possesses a favorable reputation for its community and environmental responsibility.
PERCEIVED	3.	This organization provides a sabbatical policy where people are given paid leave for a few months to pursue an activity of their choice.
	4.	This organization commits time and resources in managing employee relations.
	5.	This organization is known for providing autonomy to its employees to take decisions.
	6.	This organization seriously promotes fun at work.
	7.	This organization is known to demonstrate caring by showing a genuine interest in people’s personal lives.
HR SYSTEMS & PROCESSES	8.	Joining this organization would be a beneficial move for an individual’s career.
	9.	This organization provides a learning opportunity to work on different projects.
	10.	This organization communicates a clear advancement path for its employees.
	11.	This organization values individual contribution of its employees and rewards accordingly.