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A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL VALUES AND CULTURE ON EMPLOYER BRANDING IN SELECT IT COMPANIES IN CHENNAI CITY

Dr S Rukmani**ABSTRACT**

In an employment market which is highly competitive, 'war for talent' is a reality. Organisations must focus on their employer brand to attract and retain talent. Literature on employer branding suggests that interest on employer branding is increasing due to changes in economics, geographies and cultural preferences. Organisations are working on their strategies to attract and retain employees. Among the various dimensions of employer branding, organisational culture and values have emerged as a critical factor influencing employee perceptions and organisational attractiveness. This study examines IT employees' perceptions of values and culture as a construct of employer branding and analyses the relationship between employees' demographic profiles and their perceptions of culture and values. Primary data were collected from 600 employees working in the top 20 IT companies ranked by NASSCOM using a structured questionnaire. Judgement sampling was adopted, and statistical tools such as percentage analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA were employed for data analysis. The findings reveal that IT employees exhibit a moderate level of satisfaction with values and culture in their organisation. While no significant differences were found across gender, age and experience in the field, significant variations in perceptions of values and culture were observed across marital status, educational qualification, designation, job type, experience, and income levels. The study concludes that values and culture of an organisation plays a vital role in strengthening employer branding by enhancing employee engagement, fostering innovation, and positioning organisations as inclusive employers of choice.

KEYWORDS: Employer Branding, Organisational Culture, IT Employees, IT Companies

INTRODUCTION

In an employment market which is highly competitive, 'war for talent' is a reality. Organisations must focus on their employer brand to attract and retain talent. Literature on employer branding suggests that interest on employer branding is increasing due to changes in economics, geographies and cultural preferences. Organisations are working on their strategies to attract and retain employees (Mosley, 2007). Employer branding is the strategy that is critical to the growth and success of an organisation.

Manmohan Bhutani, VP, People & Operations, Fiserv India, articulates that employer branding is all about capturing the essence of the organisation in such a way that it engages current and prospective employees. It conveys an organisation's 'value proposition'- the totality of its culture, systems, attitudes and employee relationships, providing a new pivotal point for the organisation. According to Bhattacharya, CEO of Great Place to Work Institute, India, Employer brand is the totality of all the positive and negative experiences that people have about the organisation before they join, during

their stay and after they leave the organisation. The employer brand is what the organisation stands for as an employer and is therefore an extension of its core values.

According to the Conference Board Report on Employer Branding (Conference Board, 2001), employer branding brings competitive advantage to the organisation, assists employees to internalise organisational values and helps in retention of employees. "The employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the firm's value system, policies and behaviours towards the objective of attracting, motivating and retaining the firm's current and potential employees". Watson & Reissner (2010) explain employer branding as "a set of attributes and qualities-often intangible-that makes an organisation distinctive, promises a particular kind of employment experience and appeals to those who will thrive and perform best in its culture". It is not about an attractive logo, catchy tagline or a cleverly crafted advertisement. It is all about expressing the company's personality and promise of its culture to both potential and existing employees (Aravamudhan, 2009). Employer branding can be divided into internal and external employer branding. Internal employer branding targets the existing employees by offering development programmes and building a well-defined corporate culture whereas external employer branding is aimed at prospective employees. (AON HEWITT ROI). The internal employer branding process includes developing a compelling employment image or proposition, communicating it to employees, assuring them of its worth and linking the organisation's every job to the brand essence (Berthon et al, 2005; Martin et al, 2005). Similarly, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) point out that employer brand serves two different marketing contexts: external and internal. "External marketing of the employer brand is designed primarily to attract the target population, but is also designed to support and enhance the product or corporate brand. The goal of internal marketing of the employer brand is to develop a workforce that is committed to the set of values and organisational goals established by the firm".

According to Edgar H Schein (1984), "Culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group

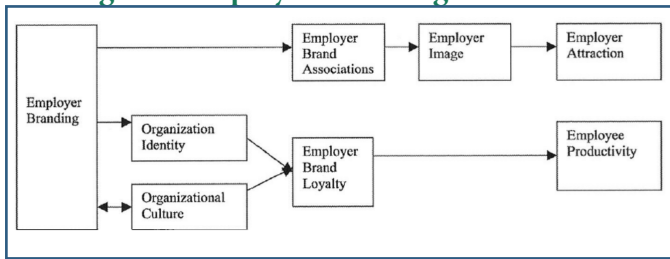
learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way you perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems". Dyer (2023) defines organisational culture as the combination of easily recognizable ideals such as statements of vision and values, and more difficult to recognize norms like language, beliefs and behaviours. He also states that assessing and promoting organisational culture is not meant to be a one-time effort, but it should be an ongoing process. Another definition of organisational culture is, that it is a set of consistent behaviours within an organisation, and such behaviours are guided by shared values (Adams & Marshall 2020). According to the structure of organisational culture by Schein and Schein, there are three different levels of structural elements in every organisation. The levels describe the degree to which the structural elements are visible, ranging from clearly visible artifacts to less visible espoused values and to invisible basic assumptions. (Schein & Schein 2017). The visible artifacts are the physical things in the organisation, like buildings, interior, attire and logo. Also, the myth and stories that are told about the organisation and the easy to observe organisational structure are visible artifacts. Despite the visibility, this level is not easy to decode, since it can be interpreted in different ways by different people. (Schein & Schein 2017). Less visible espoused values and beliefs are things like formal rules, goals, norms, ideologies and philosophies, which are usually stated by management through goals, strategy and mission statements (Schein & Schein 2017). Underlying basic assumptions are invisible and unconscious. They are unwritten laws, norms and rules, which are taken for granted. They are generally not to confront, debate or negotiate and therefore extremely difficult to change. Those assumptions are shared assumptions and that means they are mutually reinforced, which makes them truly powerful and again very difficult to change. (Schein & Schein 2019). Organizational Culture (OC) is how its life is expressed; hence one may compare OC to the character of the organization.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) present a conceptual framework of employer branding. According to them, employer branding generates brand

associations and brand loyalty. Employer brand associations forms the employer image which in turn affects the organisation's attraction to potential employees. Employer brand image is the totality of the perceptions related to the functional benefits such as salary, benefits etc. and symbolic benefits such as prestige, social approval etc. offered to the employees. It influences the attraction of potential employees to the organisation and rests on person-organisation fit and social identity theory. Employer brand, while promoting the symbolic aspects of the organisation, also presents the realistic facet of the organisation. The employer branding message which does not provide a realistic job preview and an incomplete depiction of its organisational culture will allow for employees to leave the organisation.

Fig. 2.2: Employer Branding Framework



Source: Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004.

Employer branding also influences the organisation culture and organisational identity leading to employer brand loyalty. Organisational culture also feeds back to the employer brand. Employer brand loyalty increases employee productivity. Employer brand loyalty in employer branding literature refers to the commitment of employees towards their employers. Employer brand loyalty has a behavioural dimension that relates to organisation culture and an attitudinal dimension that relates to organisational identity. Organisational commitment here refers to the attachment that employees feel towards their organisation. Employees who are loyal remain with the organisation even under uncertain circumstances. Organisational culture and commitment are related to high levels of commitment. Organisational culture conciliates the association between employer branding and employer loyalty. Employer branding affects organisational culture and organisational identity in turn affecting employer brand loyalty. Organisational identity is the cognitive image held by the employees and can be understood as the

'collective attitude' about who the organisation is as a group. When the organisational identity is positive and incremental in nature, it leads to organisational commitment. Thus, the relationship between employer branding and employer brand loyalty is negotiated by organisational identity. Employer branding also influences the association between employer brand loyalty and employee productivity as creation of employer brand improves the attitude of employees, leading to customer satisfaction and profitability.

The shift from industrial economy to knowledge economy, demand for talent and high rates of turnover are the underlying forces behind the war for talent. A strong employer brand is one of the best tools an organisation has to contend with in the highly competitive market for talent. It establishes what is specific about an organisation and its culture. Employer branding increases the employee life time value by retaining them for a longer period of time to maximise the investments made in them by way of training, development and orienting them to the organisation's culture (Roy, 2006).

Alignment of culture, vision and image of an organisation is important for an effective corporate brand. Sree Lakshmi et al (2009) adopt Hatch & Schultz's (2001) model to be applied to Employer Branding. Culture represents the organisational values, behaviour and attitude whereas vision represents the top management's aspirations. The image reflects the outsiders' impression of the organisation. Vision –culture gap exists due to the differences in organisation's vision, attitude and behaviour of its employees. Culture – image gap arises due to differences between employees' attitudes and outsiders' perceptions. Vision – image gap is the disparity between top management vision and outsiders' perception. The gaps have to be bridged to have an effective employer brand. The employer brand establishes the identity of the firm as an employer. It encompasses the organisation's values, systems, policies and behaviour towards the objective of attracting, motivating and retaining the organisation's current and future employees. The employer brand is an organisation's Trust Mark- the USP, the image and personality.

An organisation which has a culture of contribution rather than participation has a better employer brand (Chebolu, 2006). It should be transparent to ensure that merit and performance is recognised (Mallikarjunan, 2006). Pingle & Sharma (2015) understand that the culture of an employer as well as the vision and values of the organisation plays an important role in establishing a relationship between employer and employee. It is important that employers identify the proposition that they should offer in order to retain their employees. Organisation culture is the foundation of the employer brand. Employees would prefer to be associated with the organisation having shared values and beliefs. Employer branding influences the organisational culture and the implementation of successful talent management (Unwin, 2007). Sunder & Thakar (2009) in a study on employer branding in fifteen Indian organisations found that employees' values should be aligned with the organisation's values for a better employer- employee relationship.

Khan et al. (2021) claimed that EB involves a group of characteristics, frequently intangible, that highlight an organization's uniqueness, provide job opportunities, and draw people who perform optimally in its culture. Kuchеров and Zavyalova (2012) argued that internal EB could enhance corporate culture. O'Reily and Chatman (1996) defined organizational culture as a "social control system that is based on shared norms and values that set expectations about appropriate attitudes and behaviour for a member of the group". Strong and supportive organizational culture not only increases the financial performance and provides competitive advantage, but also plays an important role in attracting and retaining the employees (Zinko et al. 2017). The authors argue that supportive organizational culture fosters the development of employer branding by building a cooperative place to work image among employees. Moroko and Uncles (2008) show that when the culture of an organization presents a supportive organizational culture and cares about employee benefits, employer brand is strengthened. Additionally, supportive organizational culture enhances employer branding by creating an atmosphere of committing to the personal and professional development of its employees.

Maharani et al (2021) build a research model showing how a well formulated organisational learning, organisational culture and employee well-being impact employer branding positively using a structural model approach. The research shows insights from the perspective of employees on employer branding and results of quantitative analysis indicate that employer branding is driven by organisational culture. A well-established employer brand can only be achieved once it ensures a favourable organisational culture (Reis et al, 2021). Al-Khoja & Girissen (2021) find that organisational culture has a more significant impact on employer branding than organisational commitment in their quantitative research on employees of Turkish organisations.

Huseynova & Matoskova (2022) study the mediating role of organisational culture in the relationship between sustainable HRM practices and employer branding from data collected from 420 Azerbaijani employees. Findings reveal that by implementing sustainable HRM practices and maintaining an engaged organisational culture in the employer brand would enable organisations to meet the employees' expectations while maintaining consistent image of the organisational brand. Kehrs (2024) observe the relationship between organisational culture, employee experience and employer brand and find that employees' expectation from employees were appreciation and trust. Goyal & Kaur (2023) highlight the role of employer branding in the retention of nurses in the organisation and investigate the mediating role of organisational culture and career development with a sample of 628 nurses from private hospitals in northern India. Results from Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model showed a positive impact of employer branding on employee retentions with the existence of organisation culture and career development as mediators and their hypothesis that employer branding has a positive impact on organisational culture is accepted. Muceldili et al (2021) investigate the impact of employer branding on current employees from data obtained from 289 white collar employees using structural equation model. Results indicate that organisational culture is positively associated with employer branding and that employer branding mediates the relationship between organisational culture and intention to stay

with the organisation.

Kaur et al (2024) study the relationship between employer branding and organisational culture from a sample of 454 private bank employees in India using structural equation modelling. Results obtained indicate that formal culture exhibit a significant relationship with employer branding and there exists a positive relationship between employer branding and employee brand equity with employee trust in organisation playing a mediating role in the relationship between employer branding and employer brand equity. Paul & Raj (2014) examine theoretically the influence of employer branding on organisational culture and its role in employee retention. Akuratiya (2017) explores the influence of employer branding on organisational culture in licenced financial companies. Results indicate that perceived employer branding had significant influence on perceived organisational culture. Chabra & Sharma (2014) investigate the organisational attributes that are attractive to final year management students of private business schools and found that the most attractive organisational attributes were organisational culture, brand name and compensation. A strong employer brand attracts and retains talented employees. Alignment of employer branding with organisational culture results in better retention (Shafiee & Goodarzi, 2026). Keino et al (2017) establish the effect of organisational culture on employer branding in the mobile communication sector in Kenya using a sample of 390 managers. Results using correlation and regression analysis indicate that most companies in Kenya have consistent core values and recommend that companies should enhance strategy fit culture. Batool et al (2026) find that organisational culture and employer branding are closely linked with culture serving as a foundation of a genuine and appealing employer brand. Strong alignment between the two reflects the employee experience which builds trust, boosts engagement and retention.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The following research objectives will be addressed in this paper:

1. To analyse the perceptions of IT employees towards values and culture as a construct of employer branding.

2. To find out the relationship between demographic profile of IT employees and their perceptions towards values and culture.

Sampling design

The present study has been conducted using a structured questionnaire to capture the views of the respondents with regard to the values and culture dimension of employer branding. Employees of top 20 IT companies ranked by NASSCOM were selected as sampling population. Judgement sampling was adopted. T test, ANOVA and percentage analysis was employed to obtain the desired results. Data was collected from 600 respondents. Reliability score was measured using Cronbach's Alpha which showed a score of 0.82 for the construct values and culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to understand the perceptions of IT employees towards values and culture, mean and standard deviation were calculated.

Table 1: Mean and SD of Values and Culture of IT organisations

Values and Culture	Mean	SD
Understanding organisation's vision and mission	4.45	0.63
Value system in place.	4.39	0.69
'Quality driven' culture.	4.49	0.70
Friendly and informal culture	4.16	1.18
Culture of innovation.	4.34	1.02
Nurturing culture that identifies, recognises and rewards contributions.	4.29	0.95
High degree of organisational flexibility.	3.59	1.43
Merit rather than seniority for advancement.	3.88	1.33
Treatment of employees equally and with respect.	4.40	0.86
Promotion of inclusion and a sense of community.	4.38	0.91
Employees set their own goals and solve problems within their ambit of authority and responsibility.	3.89	1.26
Team is more important than individuals.	4.43	0.78
Strong professionalism in behaviour of employees.	4.40	0.76
Organisation values commitment.	4.30	0.70
Employees are able to express themselves freely.	3.28	1.43

Source: Primary data

Mean scores and Standard Deviation of Values and Culture in IT organisations are presented in the above table. The mean scores range from 4.49 to 3.28 with the variable “Quality driven culture” having the highest mean score of 4.49 and SD 0.70 followed by “Understanding organisation’s vision and mission” with mean score of 4.45 and “Strong professionalism in behaviour of employees” and “Treatment of employees equally and with respect” with mean scores of 4.40. Feeling treated with respect and recognition and appreciation encouraged employees to stay with their organisations, according to a study conducted by Harvard Business Review (2014). The variable having the least mean score of 3.28 is “Employees are able to express themselves freely”. This implies that the IT employees are highly satisfied with their organisation’s culture, vision and mission. They are also highly satisfied with the professional behaviour of their fellow employees and being treated equally and with respect. However, the IT employees are only moderately satisfied with their organisation’s flexibility and policies for advancement. They are also moderately satisfied with their ability to express themselves freely.

IT services of India are of the best quality and highly competitive. This is evident in the high volume of exports of IT services to other countries. IT organisations are also characterized by precise documentation of work procedure, aiming at standardization as the mistakes tend to be costly. Hence, it is of no surprise that IT organisations have a quality driven culture. In order to work in such a quality driven culture, employees should understand and identify themselves with their organisation’s vision and mission. Induction programmes, town hall meetings communicate the organisation’s vision and mission to the employees. Once there is a fit between individual’s goals and organisation’s vision and mission, the organisation can thrive and succeed in any of its endeavours. Herein again, teams play an important role in achieving organisational objectives as IT industry supports team-based working. Employees are treated equally and with respect due to the value based informal culture of IT companies. Opportunities to work in a global environment and exposure to ethical work practices across the globe have resulted in strong professionalism in the behaviour of employees. However, employees of

IT companies feel that they are not able to express themselves freely which indicates that the culture of IT companies curtails two-way communications. Such communication may be channelized and restrictive in nature. There might also be a natural and general fear of repercussions in the minds of the employees. IT companies must concentrate on improving its communication with its employees.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of Level of Values and Culture

Level of Values and Culture	Frequency	Percent
Low	164	27.3
Moderate	278	46.3
High	158	26.3
Total	600	100.0

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals the levels of satisfaction of IT employees on Values and Culture. 46.3% of the sample respondents are moderately satisfied with the level of values and culture whereas 26.3% of the sample respondents are highly satisfied with the level of Values and Culture.

To find out the relation between demographic profile of IT employees and their perception towards Values and Culture, t test and ANOVA were calculated.

H_0 : There is no significant difference between demographic variables and Values and Culture

Table 3: t test for significant differences between demographic variables and Values and Culture

Demographic variable	t value	p value
Gender	1.820	0.069
Marital status	3.886	<0.001

Source: Primary data

There is no significant difference between male and female respondents with regard to the dimensions of Values and Culture since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. The results indicate that with regard to the above dimension of employer branding, both male and female employees feel the same way. Since P value is less than 0.01, null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance with regard to the dimension of Values and Culture. Hence, there is a significant difference between married and

single individuals with regard to the said dimension of Employer Branding.

Table 4: ANOVA for significant differences between demographic variables and Values and Culture

Demographic variable	F value	P value
Age in years	1.518	0.220
Educational qualification	21.732	<0.001
Designation	6.121	0.002
Job type	3.733	0.024
Years of experience in the industry	2.664	0.071
Years of experience in the organisation	12.823	<0.001
Monthly income	12.267	<0.001

Source: Primary data

There is no significant difference between age groups, between employees having different years of experience in the field with regard to dimension of Values and Culture since P value is greater than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. Employees of different age groups feel the same way with regard to the above dimension of employer branding. Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level with regard to values and culture. Hence, there is significant difference between educational qualifications of IT employees, designation, between employees having different years of experience in the organisation and Monthly Income of employees with regard to the above-mentioned dimension. Employees having different educational qualification differ significantly with each other at 5% level of significance in values and culture. Since P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regard to the dimensions of Values and Culture. Hence, there is a significant difference between job types for the above-mentioned dimension of employer branding.

CONCLUSION

This study analyses the influence of organisational values and culture on employer branding. It adds to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between organisational values and culture and employer branding. Organisations can draw practical implications from this study to enhance

their employer brand through strengthening their organisational culture and values. The survey results indicate that various demographic factors have significant effect on organisational culture and values. The results can be generalised across industries to understand the influence of organisational culture and values on employer branding.

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