

The Effect of Employer Branding on Employees' Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

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Abstract

The present study aims to investigate how employer brand affects organizational citizenship behaviors of employees. The study sample included 281 participants. The data collection was performed using a set of questionnaires consisting of 49 questions related to employer attractiveness and organizational citizenship. The study results were analyzed using SPSS v23.0. The results demonstrate that the behavioral values of employer branding have a positive impact on employees' organizational citizenship behaviors, and there is a positive relationship between overall employer brand and organizational citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Since the transformation from the industrial era to knowledge, human resources have been one of the significant advantages in order to gain a competitive edge for major economies. Today, the role of employees is recognized as highly important in developing and achieving an organizational brand. In this sense, the term brand is "a recognizable and trustworthy badge of origin and also a promise of performance" (Feldwick, 1991).

To attract and retain the most talented individuals, organizations apply brand management principles to human resources, which has led the introduction of employer branding concept to the organizational literature. The term "employer brand" was first introduced by Ambler and Barrow (1996), who identified three basic values as psychological, functional and economic values, to define employer brand. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) described employer branding as "the differentiation of a firm's characteristics as an employer from those of its competitors. The employment brand highlights the unique aspects of the firm's employment offerings or environment". More specifically, "...the need for companies to differentiate themselves and to market is the unique employment proposition they can offer" (Ewing et. al., 2002).

An employer brand affects what new employees expect from an organization. To the degree that an employer brand is correct, the expectations of a new employee is likely to be fulfilled by the organization. This psychological fulfillment is in turn likely to result in improved employee attitudes such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Turnley et al., 2003).

Organizational citizenship behaviors reflect discretionary behaviors that are not required by the work role in contractual terms, but that are expected by an organization (Organ, 1988). Such behaviors include completing an assignment on time, helping other coworkers, introducing creative suggestions for improvement and offering to do things that are not included in one's role (Bateman & Organ, 1983).

The literature on organizational citizenship behavior typically includes a five-dimension model consisting of altruism, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue and courtesy. Altruism is a positive attitude related to concern for the others' well-being with no self-interest. In organizational context, this concept includes "... voluntary actions that help another person with a work problem" (Organ, 1990). Sportsmanship is also a positive attitude related to tolerance of inconveniences with no complaints (Organ, 1990). Conscientious employees are defined by Podsakoff et al. (2000) as "...an employee who religiously obeys all rules and regulations, even when no one is watching". Conscientiousness is considered general in nature as it

does not involve helping a specific person, but rather provide help to any other individuals within the division, organization or the system (Organ et al., 2006). Civic virtue is described as the "... behaviors reflect a person's recognition of being part of a larger whole in the same way that citizens are members of a country and accept the responsibilities which that entails" (Podsakoff et al, 2000), and employees with civic virtue are voluntarily engaged in the improvement of the organizational policies and management (Organ et al., 2006). Courtesy, which is the last dimension of organizational citizenship behavior, is the behaviors of an employee exhibited to prevent other employees from experiencing a work-related problem prior to their actions such as advance notices (Organ, 1990).

In light of this theoretical background, the present study aims to investigate the impact of employer brand on employees' organizational citizenship behaviors.

1. EMPLOYER BRANDING

There is an increasing competition among companies for talented employees as there is for customers, which drives organizations to create attractiveness for present and potential employees (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Employees act as key factors for a successful management of a brand. As well, it is believed that a significant competitive edge can be achieved through the recruitment and retention of individuals who are capable of representing the organization before customers (Chambers et al., 1998). This recognition has led Ambler and Barrow (1996) to develop the concept "employer brand". This concept combines the interactive opinions of present and prospective employees within an organization and the perception of that organization as an employer (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Ewing et al, 2002; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Ambler and Barrow (1996) defined employer brand as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". These authors described three dimensions related to employer brand, psychological, functional and economic dimensions. Later on, Berthon et al. (2005) expanded this concept to five behavioral values as development, social, interest, application and economic values. According to these authors, the development value evaluates the degree of attractiveness of an employer providing career development. The social value evaluated the degree of attractiveness of an employer providing a work environment with team spirit and good relations. The interest value evaluates the degree of attractiveness of an employer providing a work environment with novelty and creativity opportunities. The application value evaluated the degree of attractiveness of an employer providing the chance to practice and train what is learnt. The economic value evaluates the degree of attractiveness of an employer providing a good salary and benefits. The interest and social values correspond to the psychological dimension and the development and application values correspond to the functional dimension, whereas the economic dimension is similar economic value (Berthon et al., 2005).

Briefly, employer branding is a managerial strategy to create a well-regarded organizational image both in the internal and external markets (Minchington, 2010). This strategy "represents organizations' efforts to communicate to internal and external audiences what makes it both desirable and different as an employer" (Jenner & Taylor, 2007).

Prior research demonstrated that talented employees are attracted by the organizations that have a favorable employer brand (Cable & Graham, 2000; Turban & Greening, 1996). Such favorable employer brand may lead to decreased employment expenses due to better recruitment process (Barrow & Mosley, 2005), improved employee retention and lower employee turnover (Barrow & Mosley, 2005), and better organizational culture (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

The term employer branding as developed by Ambler and Barrow (1996), refers to all organizational benefits provided, which, taken together, forms a distinctive employer image in the mind of candidate and present employees, motivating them to stay with that organization. According to these authors, an employer brand is associated with an image and an identity that are aimed at the job market, making the brand and its labor pool strongly connected. An employer brand provides a proposition of value, which will be gained when employees work for that particular organization (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

The literature on employer branding is relatively limited and focuses mainly on its definition (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Ewing et al., 2002), its basic principles (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), or its organizational outcomes related to recruitment (Ewing et al., 2002; Backhaus, 2004). Therefore, the present study aims to expand the available literature on employer branding and discusses the concept using the five behavioral values proposed by Berthon et al. (2005).

2. ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR

In today's world, it is not enough for organizations to have employees who just fulfill their duties specified in their employment contracts (Katz, 1964). It is now known that more positive outcomes are achieved when employees exhibit behaviors beyond their job descriptions (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; Podsakoff et al., 1997). Such behaviors are enacted to contribute to an effective organizational functioning based on willingness with no self-interest in the formal reward process (Organ, 1997). This behavior is called organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and it is related to work; however, it does not depend on the formal reward process.

Organizational citizenship behavior was first introduced by Organ (1988) as an "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization". This definition by Organ (1988) suggests three basic characteristics for organizational citizenship behavior. The first one is the voluntariness. The behavior should not be specified in the job description or included in formal responsibilities. The second one is the benefit to the organization. The behavior should provide an organizational benefit. This may be the most important component of OCB because these behaviors are not formed incidentally, but aim directly at the organization and provide benefits to the organization. The third one is the multidimensional nature of organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2014).

Organizational citizenship behavior is a voluntary behavior of an individual that supports the psychological and social structure of an organization (Borman & Motowildo, 1993). The OCB concept is associated with many outcomes both at individual level such as employee performance and at organizational level such as organizational efficiency (Podsakoff et al., 2009). Prior research has demonstrated that organizational citizenship behaviors lead to enhanced efficiency of an organization, improved organizational environment and relations (MacKenzie et al., 1999; Podsakoff et al., 2009).

According to Podsakoff et al. (1990), organizational citizenship behaviors include five dimensions, altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness and civic virtue. Altruism refers to discretionary behaviors for helping other employees with problems related to work, which are aimed at specific individuals. Examples may include helping a coworker who is not at work with his/her responsibilities or helping a colleague with his/her responsibilities requiring high demands. Courtesy also refers to supportive behaviors, but is not directed at specific individuals like altruism and these behaviors are rather for preventing the occurrence of potential issues. Examples may include transmitting proper information and giving prior reminders to respective coworkers. Sportsmanship is similar to organizational commitment and loyalty, and defined by Organ (1990) as the "willingness to tolerate the inevitable inconveniences and impositions of work without complaining". Sportsmanship behaviors result in contributions to the organizational efficacy especially under conditions that are unpredictable (Podsakoff, et. al., 2000). Management becomes difficult for organizations when employees are complaining about simple issues related to work. Conscientiousness refers to behaviors related to time management and work schedule. Conscientious employees are attentive to details and work with well-planned schedules, providing reliable service. Civic virtue is defined as "the active involvement in the corporate governance on a macro-level interest basis" (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994). Examples may include one's willingness to follow recent changes associated with the organization, attend meetings and be involved in the policy process of the organization. As clearly understood from the descriptions, these five types of behaviors have a close relationship with each other.

Organizational citizenship behavior is known to improve with organizational identification (Dukerich et al., 2002; Tyler and Blader, 2000). The degree to which an employee feels identification with an organization, in turn, is demonstrated to enhance when the organizational identity is perceived as attractive and distinctive (Dutton et al., 1994; Mael, 1998). Accordingly, it is possible that employer attractiveness and employer brand drive employees to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors. However, the available literature on the relationship between organizational citizenship and employer branding is limited. The study by Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) about psychological contract, reported that employees who perceive their employer as failed to meet its responsibilities arising from the exchange process become less committed and willing to be involved in organizational citizenship behavior. Based on this theoretical background, the present study aims to reveal whether organizational citizenship behavior is affected by employer branding.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Goal

This study examines the impact of employer branding on employees' organizational citizenship behaviors. According to the model developed for this purpose, it is assumed that all five dimensions of employer attractiveness have a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

3.2. Participants and Procedure

The study sample included 281 participants (75 female and 206 male individuals). The participants were selected by convenience sampling method. Of the study participants, 73.3% were male and 26.7% were female, 68.7% were married and 31.3% were single, 42.3% have no children, 58% were born between 1980 and 1999, 43.4% were graduated from a high school or an equivalent school, and 32% have a work experience of 6 to 10 years.

3.3. Measures

Employer branding was measured using the employer attractiveness scale designed by Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005). This scale includes 25 items related to 5 values, the interest value (e.g. "I must work in an exciting environment"), social value (e.g. "I must have a fun working environment"), economic value (e.g. "My company should provide job security"), development value (e.g. "Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for this company is important to me") and application value (e.g. "My company should be customer-oriented"). The participants were asked to respond on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Berthon et al. (2005) reported that the Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was 0.96.

Organizational citizenship behavior was measured using the scale designed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). The scale includes 24 items and 5 dimensions, altruism (e.g. "I help others who have heavy workloads"), conscientiousness (e.g. "I do not take extra breaks"), courtesy (e.g. "I respect the rights of people who work with me"), civic virtue (e.g. "I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but important") and sportsmanship (e.g. "I do not waste time complaining about trivial matters"). The participants were asked to respond on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Podsakoff et al. (1990) reported that the Cronbach's alpha of the scale ranged from 0.80 for civic virtue to 0.85 for altruism, courtesy and sportsmanship.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Data Analysis

Study findings were achieved by analyzing the data obtained from organizations using Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS) v23.0. The survey data were analyzed based on the responses given by 281 individuals.

The data obtained were analyzed via percentage and frequency methods. The results were acquired and evaluated in tabular format. The survey questions were evaluated using factor and reliability analyses, the responses to the survey were presented in tabular format, the distribution percentage of the result was explained through numeric information, and the tables containing the study subject are presented respectively.

4.2. Study Findings

4.2.1. Descriptive Analysis Results Related to the Demographics of Study Participants

Table 1 shows the findings of 281 individuals included in the study. Of the study participants, 73.3% were male and 26.7% were female, 68.7% were married and 31.3% were single, 42.3% have no children, 58% were born between 1980 and 1999, 43.4% were graduated from a high school or an equivalent school, and 32% have a work experience of 6 to 10 years.

4.2.2. Factor Analysis

Table 2 and Table 3 show the factor analysis results with descending sort based on the factor loadings.

Factor analysis was performed in order to establish the subdimensions of the scales consisting of the research questions. In order to determine the factor structure, principal components factor analysis was applied to the scores obtained from the responses given by 281 participants. The adequacy of the data set for factor analysis was tested using Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

The data set was found adequate for factor analysis as KMO value of the employer attractiveness scale was found to be 0.92, which was above 0.70, the acceptable limit, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was above 0.50 and significant at the significance level of 0.05. The KMO coefficient that was found indicates the data adequacy for analysis. The criterion was that the variance explanatoriness rate was 0.50 and above.

Principal components factor analysis and Varimax rotation method were used to analyze the questions. The questions that had a sampling adequacy value below 0.50, remained alone under a factor, had close factor loadings and a factor loading below 0.50 were excluded from the factor analysis, and 2 factors with an eigenvalue ≥ 1 were achieved. The total variance explained was 62.6%.

Table 2. Factor Analysis of Employer Attractiveness Scale and the Factor Loadings

Factor Name	Question Statement	Factor Loading	Factor Explanatoriness (%)
Organizational Opportunities	My company should produce and offer high-quality products/services.	0.827	45.826
	My company should both value and make use of my creativity.	0.810	
	My company should offer an attractive overall compensation package.	0.804	
	My company should offer opportunity to apply what was learned at tertiary institution.	0.791	
	My company should produce and offer innovative products/services.	0.787	
	My company should offer opportunity to teach others what I have learned.	0.768	
	Acceptance and belonging is important to me.	0.697	
	My company should pay an above average basic salary.	0.655	
	Feeling more self-confident as a result of working for this company is important to me.	0.649	
	My company should offer hands-on inter-departmental experience.	0.599	
	A humanitarian company, which gives back to society is important.	0.570	
Work Environment	I must have a fun working environment.	0.872	16.806
	I must work in an exciting environment.	0.772	
Total			62.632
Kaiser - Meyer – Olkin Sampling Adequacy			0.928
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Chi-square	2216.389
		p value	0.000

Table 3. Factor Analysis of Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale and the Factor Loadings

Factor Name	Question Statement	Factor Loading	Factor Explanatoriness (%)
Organizational Loyalty	I respect company rules and policies even when no one is watching me.	0.853	40.011
	I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but important.	0.786	
	I consider the impact of my actions on co-workers.	0.769	
	I do not take extra breaks.	0.767	
	I do my job without constant requests from my boss.	0.763	
	I take steps to try to avoid problems with other workers.	0.750	
	I am always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me.	0.721	
	I help orient new people even though it is not required.	0.717	
	I attend functions that are not required, but help the company image.	0.712	
	I believe in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.	0.667	
	I am one of the most conscientious employees.	0.657	
	I am mindful of how my behavior affects other people's job.	0.649	
	I keep abreast of changes in the organization.	0.644	
	I willingly help others who have work-related problems	0.637	
	My attendance at work is above the norm.	0.619	
	I always focus on the positive side, rather than what is wrong.	0.590	
	I read and keep up with organization announcements, memos, and so on.	0.574	
	I respect the rights of people that work with me.	0.554	
Disharmony	I waste time complaining about trivial matters.	-0.867	9.623
	I tend to make mountains of molehills.	-0.798	
Goodwill	I help others who have been absent.	0.838	8.972
	I help others who have heavy workloads.	0.738	
Total			58.606
Kaiser - Meyer – Olkin Sampling Adequacy			0.951
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Chi-square	3.471214
		p value	0.000

The data set was found adequate for factor analysis as KMO value of the organizational citizenship scale was found to be 0.95, which was above 0.70, the acceptable limit, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was above 0.50 and significant at the significance level of 0.05. The KMO coefficient found indicates the data adequacy for analysis. The criterion was that the variance explanatoriness rate was 0.50 and above.

Principal components factor analysis and varimax rotation method were used to analyze the questions. The questions that had a sampling adequacy value below 0.50, remained alone under a factor, and those had close factor loadings and a factor loading below 0.50 were excluded from the factor analysis, and 3 factors with an eigenvalue ≥ 1 were achieved. The total variance explained was 58.6%.

4.2.3. Reliability Analysis

Prior to the descriptive values of research variables, analyses for the interrelations of the variables and hypothesis tests, the questions with finalized grouping forms after factor analysis were combined based on the obtained results and subjected to reliability analysis. Table 4 demonstrates the results of the reliability analysis.

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients of Variables

Variable Name	Number of Questions	Reliability Coefficient
Organizational Opportunities	11	0.929
Work Environment	2	0.679
Employer Brand (overall)	13	0.924
Organizational Citizenship (overall)	22	0.904

Internal consistencies of the factors were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha values. It was found that the reliability coefficients ranged from 0.67 to 0.92. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.92 for the employer attractiveness scale and 0.90 for the organizational citizenship scale. These values meet the lower limit criterion of 0.60 that is prescribed in the literature (Cronbach, 1990). Table 4 demonstrates that the scales used in the study have internal reliability.

4.2.4. Normal Distribution Analysis

The distribution of the responses to the scales and their dimensions was analyzed using Kolmogorov – Smirnov test. The test results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Normal Distribution Test (n=281)

Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test	Kolmogorov - Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Organizational Opportunities	3.028	0.000
Work Environment	3.121	0.000
Employer Brand (overall)	2.734	0.000
Organizational Citizenship (overall)	1.886	0.002

The test result showed that Factor 1, Factor 2, employer brand (overall) and organizational citizenship (overall) variables were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$). Analyses were made using non-parametric techniques.

4.2.5. Study Hypotheses

H_1 : The "Organizational Opportunities" dimension of employer brand has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

H_2 : The "Work Environment" dimension of employer brand has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

H_3 : The employer brand (overall) has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior.

4.2.6. Correlation Analysis

Table 6 presents the main descriptive statistics related to the variables and the correlation coefficients expressing the relationships among the variables. Regarding descriptive statistics, the table contains mean and standard deviation values of the variables. Spearman's correlation coefficients in the table indicate the relationships among the study variables. According to the table, the mean of the variables ranges between 3.66 and 4.16, and the standard deviation ranges between 0.56 and 1.00.

Table 6. Correlation Analysis Results

Dimensions	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Organizational Opportunities	4.16	0.73	1			
2. Work Environment	3.66	1.00	0.518**	1		
3. Employer Brand	4.09	0.71	0.963**	0.711**	1	
4. Organizational Citizenship	3.92	0.56	0.581**	0.196**	0.519**	1

** Spearman's Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$.

The significant relationships between the variables, which were found using correlation analysis, are as follows.

There is a positive relationship between organizational opportunities and organizational citizenship ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.581$). Namely, the “organizational opportunities” dimension of employer brand has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis H_1 is affirmed.

There is a positive relationship between work environment and organizational citizenship ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.196$). In other words, the “work environment” dimension of employer brand has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis H_2 is affirmed.

There is a positive relationship between employer brand (overall) and organizational citizenship ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.519$), that is, the employer brand has a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis H_3 is affirmed.

There is a positive relationship between organizational opportunities and work environment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.518$).

There is a positive relationship between organizational opportunities and employer brand ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.963$).

There is a positive relationship between employer brand (overall) and work environment ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.711$).

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The present paper explored the extent to which an employer brand has an impact on the organizational citizenship behaviors of employees. For this purpose, the employer brand concept was discussed under five subdimensions, development, social, interest, application and economic values, as suggested by Berthon et al. (2005), and the organizational citizenship was discussed under five subdimensions, altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy and civic virtue, as introduced by Podsakoff et al. (1990).

The factor analysis of employer branding produced two factors in the present research, which were organizational opportunities and working environment. The first factor corresponds to the social and interest values, whereas the latter corresponds to the development, application and economic values proposed by Berthon et al. (2005). The study findings about employer brand demonstrated that both organizational opportunities and work environment are positively related with organizational citizenship behaviors, indicating that overall employer brand has a positive effect on OCB. This suggests that the more employees are attracted to an employer brand, the more citizenship behaviors they are engaged in within an organization. In this regard, the present study offers a significant contribution to the employer branding literature by revealing its relationship with organizational citizenship.

This study was conducted using convenience-sampling method, which can be considered as a study limitation in this context. Employer branding is a relatively new concept that has not become very common among organizations. Therefore, future studies may concentrate specifically on organizations implementing employer branding as a corporate strategy, and reveal the influence of such strategy on citizenship behaviors. Future research may also focus on the association between specific dimensions of employer branding and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Another limitation may be the cultural context. This research was conducted in Turkey, a collectivistic culture, and it is likely to have different effects on organizational behaviors of employees, such as commitment to and identification with an organization. Since employer branding is likely to be an outcome of identifying one's self with the brand of his/her employer, future studies may involve a multicultural design to reveal the cultural differences and establish which types of citizenship behaviors are common and what drives individuals to display such behaviors in individualistic and collectivistic societies.

Furthermore, future focus may be on the consequences of employer branding specifically at individual and organizational levels. The influence of this concept on individuals may differ from that on the organization. The available literature has generally focused on the organizational outcomes, and therefore, it would make a significant contribution to reveal the mechanisms underlying one's attractiveness to a brand.

Concerning the organizational citizenship behaviors, the literature reports that such behaviors affect the decision process of supervisors about promotions and reward system (Park & Sims, 1989; Allen & Rush, 1998). Accordingly, future studies may investigate the supervisor perspective in this regard and determine supervisor- or management-related mechanisms resulting in such behaviors.

Based on the findings of the present study, organizations may invest in developing and fostering the sense of being a citizen among their employees in order to improve their organizational performance and effectiveness. Apparently, employer branding may be a useful tool to achieve this goal. However, different social and organizational dynamics have different effects on employee attributes, leading to different employee behaviors. Accordingly, the aspects of an employer brand are likely to be perceived and valued differently in different organizations. Human resources or executive management of an organization may first determine the aspects that are considered attractive and non-attractive by its employees, and then formulate a brand strategy based on these aspects. In this regard, the present study provides a valuable insight into some basic elements related to employer attractiveness. Based on the findings, organizations can offer career opportunities and promotions, support a creative and innovative environment, conduct social responsibility projects, and provide above-average financial packages to their employees to build a strong employer brand, which in turn would enhance citizenship behaviors.

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