Faculty Perspective of Branding Higher Educational Institutions with Respect to Business Education Courses in Bangalore: A Pilot Investigation

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Abstract

Background: *Branding of service has increased its popularity in the past decade. Though, Educational Institutions come under service sector, they have begun to recognize the need to operate more like a business. A Higher Educational Institution (HEI) has 3 major stakeholders- Students, faculties and Recruiters. Higher Educational Institutions are facing few challenges with respect to various stakeholders. However, difficulty with respect to faculties like finding the right talent and qualified Faculties is seen as a major challenge. Branding is one such ways that helps them in overcoming these challenges by attracting and retaining them.*

Aim/Methodology: *This study aims at identifying the variables that faculty members perceive the business Higher Institutional institution as branded one and to tests its reliability using Cronbach's Alpha.*

Findings: *The study identified 20 variables out of which the reliability co-efficient showed 0.743 from 0.880 after eliminating one of the the variables (Support and Opportunity for Research Work).*

Conclusion: *The 19 variables can be further used for wider study and similar study can be conducted from other stakeholders' perspective.*

Keywords: *Branding, Business Education, Faculty, Higher Educational Institution.*

Introduction

Business education in India took rise as an occupational course to meet the needs of diverse lower grade designations in the field of business. Business education is a combination of 2 branches (Dey, 1999) i.e., commerce and management. Traditionally, Commerce education was initiated as formal university level course prior to the establishment of management and other professional courses. However, in addition to fulfil the budding requirements of business organizations, few management courses were imparted. Commerce courses offer students for diverse professionals as well as management focused business education (Saikia, 2011) Hence, Commerce and Management courses are part of business education.

The term 'Business Education' and 'Commerce Education' are identically used in many countries (sikandar & Das, 2006). Students are opened to the business environment throughout Business Education. Business Education helps students in developing entrepreneurial abilities and prepares them for self-employment. Business education educates them to face the market conditions and become accustomed to deal with the current situations. Moreover, it assists them to meet today's true goals of business i.e., to survive global competition and Profit earning with consumer satisfaction. Business education has put in the occupational abilities like conceptual knowledge, work quality, job involvement, ability of getting work done, and taking risks as well as helps to possess skills like managerial skills, financial, marketing & communication, and technical skills (Singh, Singh, & Rani, 2015).

History of Business Education in India

Commerce Education

The first commercial school was established by the trustees of Pachiappa's charities in Chennai in 1886 (Singh, Singh, & Rani, 2015). During 1895, School of Commerce was started by the British Government in Calicut (Kerala). In 1903, the Commerce Education was established by Presidency College in Kolkata (Mehrotra, 1987). Later in 1913, after the establishment of Sydenham College of Commerce and economics in Mumbai, Commerce education received the formal university level course status. Since then, it has experienced remarkable escalation. There is an increasing numbers in commerce students since 1950-51. The increase in enrolment is noteworthy from 0.36 lakh in 1950-51 to 14.10 lakhs and in 2010-11 to 29 lakhs now which is 17.2 percent of total enrolment in higher education. The enrolment in M.Com and B.Com courses in India has increased from previous 15 years. This has vice-versa increased in the demand for commerce faculties and hence they are established in many universities.

Management Education

Likewise, the history of management courses is not very long in India. They are of recent origin not more than four decades ago. For quite long time, the Indian organized industrial sector was slender and the requirement for business administration workforce used to be predominantly met by the recruitment of trained graduates in the field of Commerce/Accountancy and Economics (Devaraj & Srinivasagowda, 2013). India being one of the largest producers of MBAs at present, there are around 75,000 MBAs are produced every year (Saikia, 2011). In 1991, there were only around, 130 approved management education institutions in India. Since then, due to liberalization policy there are large numbers of B-schools today in India.

Branding, Brand Image and Employer Branding

Brand is defined as "views of the organization developed by its stakeholders; the outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customers, shareholders, the media, the general public, and so on" (Hatch & schultz, 2003). In other words, a Brand is defined as the feelings, impressions, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes toward an establishment. Branding is about something that dwells in the minds of the consumers about a product or service. Building a Brand Image takes marketing programs that connect strong, positive, and distinctive association to the brand in memory. (Keller, 2008)

Even though strong service brands like American express, British airways, etc have subsisted for past few years, the popularity of service branding have increased in the past decade. While talking about marketing services, the major challenge we come across is that they are less tangible unlike physical products. They are more likely to differ in quality depending on the people who provide them. Brands can help to recognize and give meaning to the various services provided by the organization.

Brand Image concerns immediate impressions unlike "Reputations" which are more durable over time. Brand Image in education is not just creating Brand name or a Logo. It is seen as an exercise that helps develop an identity that inspires people. An Image is the abrupt set of meanings inferred by a subject in confrontation to one or more signals. In other words, it is the net results of the communication of a subject's beliefs, ideas, feelings and impressions about an institution at a particular point of time.

There is relevance for the concept Brand in the employment context as well. The term employer branding proposes the uniqueness of a HEI (Higher educational Institution) features as an employer from those of its opponent players (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The major goal of the Employer Branding is to positively persuade present and prospective employees with the intention to catch the attention of high potential employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). It

portrays the extent of a company's attractiveness to current and potential employees (Bodderas, Cachelin, Maas, & Schlager, 2011). For the most part of service-centred circumstances, employees are capable to build brand equity. Therefore, one of the HEI's responsibilities is to deal with employee (i.e., Faculty) attitudes and behaviours properly, as they become evident in the customer-employee interface. (Pugh, 2001) .

Review of Literature

(Hunt, Eaton, & Reinstein, 2009) This paper examines accounting faculty job search and selection in the tightening academic job market. The study aimed at faculty members with new PhD and relocating faculty members. It was observed that teaching load, promotion criteria, tenure policy and compatibility were the most important ones among the various factors studies in this article. Salary and geographical location, quality of student group, etc were relatively less important factors from faculty perspective. However, it is further advised to conduct a study by gathering more information in addition to this and make a comparison with past results over time. Research can also analyze the importance of salary, cost of living in different locations, differences in recruitment practices, etc.

(Ambler & Barrow, 1996) This study aims at testing the techniques of brand management to Human Resource management. This study was exploratory in nature where respondents from 27 varieties of service organizations were considered. The paper reviewed the concepts of employer branding and pointed out that marketing can be applied to the employment situations. Further, it was recommended to study if any active equity building programmes exist; if yes, then to what extent the programmes are formal or informal and how they correlate with their subsequent performance, etc

(Grace & O'Casa, 2004) This research was an attempt to understand consumer evaluation service performance. Bank brands were used as brand stimuli for the purpose of the study. The main aim was to explore the dimensions of service-brand that influence their customers and to examine their post consumption evaluations. Data was collected from 254 respondents and a factor analysis was conducted. The findings showed that service experience had significant effects on feelings, satisfaction and brand attitudes. Further, it was suggested that the key constructs of the study can be explored and compared across service brands of different types like displaying search attributes, experience attributes, and credence attributes. It was also recommended to undertake a study on B2B and non-profit services with the same variables and test their relevance in other service purchasing situations.

(Tigga, Pathak, & Kumar, 2014) The purpose of this study was to understand the expectations of major stakeholders of B-School operating at premier, national and regional level. The study considered primary data collection from students, faculties and recruiters. The findings showed there was a positive correlation between the faculty members of national and premier B-Schools and recruiters look for the right attitude and students' ability to adapt to the organizational culture. It was concluded that setting strategies and resources to meet the stakeholders' expectations, will help in achieving strong and successful brand image.

(Shahaida, Rajashekar, & Nargundkar, 2009) This article proposed a conceptual model on the process of understanding what goes into building a Brand name for a B-school. The model considered the role of 3 major stakeholders- students, faculties, and corporate. The aim of the study is to provide an insight into various parameters to brand building of B-Schools. The study showed the findings that only few B-schools adopted certain branding activities while In India not many B-schools practiced organized holistic approach to branding activities. Study further suggested testing this conceptual model empirically keeping the relevance and importance of changing market forces in mind.

(Chen, Gupta, & Hoshower, 2004) The study's objective was to examine the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that motivate faculty members to carry on research activities. Research was conducted empirically considering 320 faculty members from 10 business schools. Out of 13

rewards studied, having tenure was the most important one and getting possible administrative position was least important. It was also found that there were significant differences in the importance of those rewards between tenured and un-tenured and between male and female faculty members.

(Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004) The study's main purpose was to conceptualize and research the concept of 'Employer Branding". The study discusses the relationship between employer branding and organizational career management. It also outlines research issues that need to be addressed to develop employer branding as a useful organizing framework for strategic human resource management. Further, this article gives a framework to initiate the scholarly study on employer branding.

(Bodderas, Cachelin, Maas, & Schlager, 2011) The study focuses on seeking favourable employee attitude that creates service brand. The purpose of this empirical study was to develop a framework that combines the concept of perceived employer brand and employee outcomes that are relevant for service branding. The findings of the study showed 2 results; firstly, that there was a positive relationship between the perceived employer brand and service branding. Secondly, the influence of particular drivers for employee attitude was determined. Further, since the customer outcomes were not investigated in the study, investigating the creation of service brand, simultaneously exploring employees' attitudes and customers' experiences was suggested by the author.

(Berns, 1990) The author's aim was to study relationship between job satisfaction and teacher turnover. The respondents considered for the study both practicing vocational and formal vocational education teachers in northwest Ohio. 38 job satisfaction indicators were determined. Factor analysis and Discriminant analysis were used to study these indicators. The findings of factor analysis identified nine factors and differences were found between former teachers who left due to retired and former teachers who left for other reasons. Discriminant analysis classified practicing teachers according to whether or not they remain in teaching until retirement and resulted in classification probability of 12.5%.

(Taherkhani, 2015) The author's purpose was to review the relationship between creativity and job satisfaction of sports teachers. The study considered Rendesip questionary and Martin ganon questionary for creativity and job satisfaction respectively and the same was validated by 15 experts and reliability test was conducted with 30 testers and Cronbach's alpha 0/8 and 0/87 respectively. The study showed positive findings about the relationship between creativity and job satisfaction. It was also found that teachers with high degree (BA, MA) have more job satisfaction and creativity.

(M.B, 2013) This paper brings out the conceptual understanding of Employer Branding and its usefulness in attracting, recruiting and retaining the talented staff. The main purpose is to give an understanding on employer branding process and importance, steps in building employer branding. The study has also given suggestions to attract, keep and motivate employees and strategies to retain the employees. It was concluded that organizations may use many other ways to attract and retain their employees, but however keeping in mind about the organizational changes and challenges, it is time to implement organization's brand to attract the talents the organization would like.

(Malik, Danish, & Munir, 2012) This article is an effort to study the significance and association of pay and promotion on job satisfaction in higher education institutes in Pakistan. To examine the correlation between dependent variable (job satisfaction) and the independent variables (pay and promotion) multiple regression analysis has been used as a statistical tool. The findings showed that both pay and promotion has an influence on job satisfaction but however, promotion variable's beta coefficient is not significant. Therefore, it is concluded that pay has significant impact on job satisfaction, where as promotion has partial impact on job satisfaction of educationalist. Finally, was suggested that various other factors

influencing job satisfaction like job security, fringe benefits, etc can also be included for further study.

Importance of the Study

The market in higher education is seeing easy entry of new competitors due to globalization. This has forced the institutions of higher education to begin to recognize that they need to function more like a business and market their offerings utilizing sound strategies and create a brand image for themselves.

The meaning of the brand is a consequence of customers' experiences which evolve between the interactions of stakeholders such as employees and customers (Grace & O'Casa, 2004) (Brodie, Whittome, & Brush, 2009). (Bodderas, Cachelin, Maas, & Schlager, 2011)'s approach focuses on the employer branding rather than directly on customers. They believe it has two crucial advantages: first, employees constitute an important link in establishing the service brand and second, a company can manage employees more easily than customers due to the fact that they are closer to the company. Hence this study concentrates more on the faculty members' perspective as employees of a business HEIs as they benefit from knowing the factors that prospective faculty consider important in their job selection decisions (Hunt, Eaton, & Reinstein, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

According to Theus (1993), while significant research into corporate image has been established in all fields of marketing and management, relatively less image research has been conducted on service-oriented organizations, including education, hospitals or churches (Curtis, Abratt, & Minor, 2009).With respect to an HEI being a service sector can be branded by understanding the expectations of their stakeholders. (Tigga, Pathak, & Kumar, 2014).

The employer branding in a service-oriented organizations especially in HEIs are relevant in today's business setting due to the fact that high-potential and at the same time loyal employees are difficult to find (Brodie, Whittome, & Brush, 2009) (Collins & Stevens, 2002). At the same time, it has become a major challenge for institutions to find the right talent and qualified faculty members in their institutions. Hence, the management has started implementing employer branding strategies to attract and retain such potential faculty members. Institutions that embrace such employer branding tactics are well placed to gain a strong position in the competitive market.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the various factors influencing Brand Image from faculty perspective

2. To test the reliability of the questionnaire using the variables identified for further study.

Methodology

The primary aim of the study was to identify the factors that are perceived to be significant from the faculties' perspective to term a Business Higher Educational Institution to be termed as "branded". For this purpose, secondary sources of data collection like Journal articles, newsletters, internet sites, etc as well as interviews with top university administrations and faculty members have been implemented to identify the variables. Further, the questionnaire was developed using five point Likert-type scale in which the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree).

Sample Design

The data collection administered through questionnaire was distributed to the faculty members of both full time and part time from there different statuses of Higher educational institutions (Government Institutions, Private management Institutions affiliated to Bangalore University and Deemed University/Autonomous institutions) in Bangalore having Business

Education Courses (i.e., B.Com, BBA, M.Com and MBA courses). Random sampling of size 37 was selected for testing the reliability of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

There are 20 items identified as factors influencing Brand Image of a HEI from faculties' perspective. The reliability of the items in the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and the results of which are as seen in Table 1.2 (b):

Table 1.1: Showing the Frequency and Percentage of the Respondents from Three Different Statuses of Higher Educational Institutions

Type of Institution	Frequency	Percent
Deemed University/Autonomous	15	40.5
Private	13	35.1
Government	9	24.3
Total	**37**	**100.0**

Table 1.2 (a): Showing the Reliability Statistics of 20 Items

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.743	20

Table 1.2(b): Showing the Reliability Co-efficient Values for Each Item

Item	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I perceive an institute to be branded depending on the degree of freedom in operation	.736
Branded institutes provide financial support for academic works like conferences and seminars	.718
Branded institutes provide fair amount of compensation and benefit	.721
We find good quality of students in a branded institute	.714
Branded institutes provide support and opportunity for research work	**.880**
Branded institutes give clarity on the faculty promotional process (i.e., next level designation)	.715

Branded institutes provide salary and other benefits as per the UGC guidelines	.726
Transparency and clarity is maintained in internal communications in branded institutes	.727
I perceive an institute to be branded based on the quality of relations among faculty and other administration staff.	.733
Branded institute maintains fairness regarding performance management and accountability issues.	.731
Branded educational institutes have good amount of teaching resource	.725
Branded institutes ensure recognition for faculty's outstanding work	.738
Rankings and reputation define an institute to be branded	.740
Branded institutes give scope for career development and growth opportunities	.730
Branded institutes give way for collaboration and co-operation among workgroups	.723
Campus appearance and its premises define an institute to be branded	.722
Branded institutes have good Infrastructure facilities.	.718
Quality of placements decides whether an institute is branded or not	.726
Branded institutes value participation of faculty members in institutional governance and decision making.	.734
A branded institute acknowledges and appreciates the innovative pedagogy tools used by faculty members	.724

From the above table, we could see that if the fifth item is deleted the reliability coefficient increases considerably (from 0.743 to 0.880). Therefore, it is advisable to delete the fifth item,

'Branded institutes provide support and opportunity for research work', from the list of 21 items to ensure its reliability.

Findings and Conclusion

There are three major stakeholders of an Educational Institute- Students, Faculties, and Recruiters. Satisfying these three stakeholders is perceived to be creating a brand name for any Educational Institutions. The employer branding in a service-oriented organizations like Educational Institutions are relevant in today's business setting due to the major challenges they face like finding right, loyal employees and qualified faculty members. The study identified 21 attributes that create Brand Image of an Educational institution from Faculty perspective. To mention a few- Degree of Freedom in Operation, Financial Support for Conferences and Seminars, Fair Compensation and Benefit, Salary, Promotion, Teaching Resource, Recognition, Campus, Infrastructure, Quality of Placements, etc. The reliability co-efficient of these variables that was tested using Cronbach's Alpha showed 0.743 from 0.880 after eliminating one of the variable (Support and Opportunity for Research Work). Further, the reliable questionnaire can be used for wider research and comparison can be made among the different statuses of Higher Educational Institutions for various other educational streams like the Science, Arts, Medical, Engineering, Law, etc. Similarly, Branding variables from the perspective of other stakeholders of an Educational Institution can also be another interesting aspect in research work.

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