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Employer Brand and Talented Employee Interaction

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

Brands are deemed as one of the most important intangible assets of enterprises. As a product of an enterprise, a brand is its most valuable feature which functions to distinguish the enterprise from its competitors. One of the most important values, an enterprise may get through branding is to improve enterprise's reputation by creating a positive image in the minds of target groups. One of the key target groups of enterprises is their existing and potential employees. Brands study on escalating value of brands in order to increase current employees' performances and to become an attraction center for talented employees as employer. Hypothetically these studies are referred as employer brand as a whole. Employer brand and talent management have become more important in terms of strategic human resources management. Objective is to ensure competition by people's hands. Enterprises' duties and liabilities at this point are to attract talented people to enterprise and to create strategies and policies forming required vision in keeping those talented people (Pogorzelski et. al., 201:23). Employer brand concept has been mentioned in 1990s during talent wars (Clarke, 2009:33). Talent wars appeared due to socio-political, demographical, technological and economical changes happened in the country. With these wars, number and efficiency of labor being qualified decreased and therefore many burdens are experienced (Doğru & Çakir, 2015:675). Employer brand is a fact ensuring differentiation of an enterprise as an employer. According to Balmer and Gray (2003:975), there is a rising awareness that brands serve as a strong and leading instrument to various partners for some several purposes including employment and consumers' buying behavior. Lloyd on the other hand defined employer brand as 'a place where existing and potential employees wish to work' (Berthon et. al., 2005:156). Employer brand is a key structure of human resources function, supporting the optimum strategy in accordance with enterprise's culture, value and vision (Vardarlier & Taşçi, 2017: 874). Human resources management effectiveness and efficiency are about administering functions in harmony with each other. To this end, functions are to select and employ most convenient

personnel in accordance with qualifications of the job, to measure, evaluate and reward within the scope of performance management, to target maximum yield from human resources due to its role in fields such as employer brand in keeping talented people as well as training and developing them. Employer brand is a matter so highly important that cannot be neglected and will be taken in agendas by enterprises since it is a process to create a brand for currently working and potential employees. The purpose of this study is to uncover the interaction of employers' brands with talented employees. The interaction of these concepts with each other was evaluated and interaction between the employer brand and talented employees was tried to be explained.

Methodology

With this study, it was tried to be explored how an enterprise's HR talents give its shape to employer brand. It was taken as a case study from employer brand and talent performance process perspective and qualitative analysis technique was used. This exploratory and descriptive research has been done by making 21 in-depth interviews with HR managers of enterprises from various sectors having 150 to 300 employees as size. Many different studies were used to evaluate employer brands and talent managements of enterprises and evaluations in these studies were considered. After evaluation, statements from "Employer Attractiveness Scale (EmpAt Scale)" developed by Berthon et. al. (2005) and studies of Amber and Barrow (1996), Knox and Freeman (2006) and Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) about employer brand were also used during these interviews in order not to deviate from fundamental question of this research. Interview questionnaire forms were created by using "Talent Management Scale" by Tutar, Altonöz and Çöp (2011) selected among other talent management scales, studies by Balyejjusa (2014), Akar (2012) and Davies & Davies (2010) upon literature search. By this way, answers to following questions were sought in this research;

- Importance for enterprises to focus on operational effectiveness, success and efficiency factors in order to achieve their strategic goals,
- How is the relationship between talented employees' roles in critical success factors and firm's targets,
- How does effective and efficient use of HR influence employer brand and profitability,
- Importance of talent management in enterprises,
- How should performance assessment be for talented personnel and how does it apply,
- What is the relationship between brand and personnel,
- On what scale do firm's relationship with its employees as well as employee's view about firm have influence on the brand.

Sticking to the flow of interview prepared earlier, semi-structured in-depth interview technique was used. The reason why semi-structured interview technique was used in collecting research data was because when HR managers are declaring their comments on employer brand and talent performance process, maintaining the process by sticking to interview forms prepared earlier allows a more systematic progress. This technique was also useful to the person who was running the interview for providing standardization and flexibility at a certain level (Yildirim & Şimşek, 2011: 152; Ekiz, 2003:25). Interviews were done from January to May 2017. In line with the arrangements with managers selected by purpose-based sampling method, 45 – 60

minute in-depth interviews were made. Sound recordings nearly 1200 minutes were taken in total during these interviews. HR Managers' opinions were noted on interview forms during these interviews and sound records were turned into word-to-word written transcriptions and collected data were analyzed by Maxqda 11, one of the computer aided qualitative data analysis software programs. Thanks to this software, interview texts were put into a certain systematic. Analysis tables and diagrams were obtained by doing coding on straight texts of interviews made with HR managers.

Findings

Interviews with HR managers were uploaded to Maxqda 11 software in order to encode data obtained from sound recordings collected as a result of these interviews, to find and arrange themes and to identify and interpret findings. In line with expert views, a code key was used for encoding and it was identified to software. Interview results were read one by one for ability to encode upon organizing in the form of written texts and text of each interview has been encoded upon analysis of its meanings such as text, word, sentence or paragraph. Afterwards, how the same code would differ from person to person and/or sector to sector, considering relationships between codes. Using common grounds identified, firstly code categories and then diagrams were reached. As a result of readings, "profitability", "success", "target", "brand – employee relationship", "talent", "efficiency", "effectiveness", "employer brand" and "performance" codes were created. Interviews done with HR managers were uploaded to Maxqda 11 package software. Codes including factors of each interview were analyzed at the level of words, sentences and paragraphs mentioned in the interviews. Firstly the interrelationship between codes was analyzed. In such analysis, number of interaction between various codes was quantitatively evaluated and it showed strong and weak relationship ties. These ties revealed the facts used by participant managers in their evaluations. According to this matrix, codes of brand-employee relationship and success, employer brand and brand-employee relationship, efficiency and effectiveness were in a significantly high correlation. From this point, it is possible for us to say that highly interacted codes create common patterns for HR managers. Accordingly a manager mentioning about brand-employee relationship intersects this hypothesis certainly with employer brand and success codes. Likewise, a manager mentioning about efficiency also uses effectiveness in the same phrase for sure. In the light of these conclusions, it seems a correct determination to say that these codes are common patterns for HR managers.

Conclusion

In this study, results of interviews done with human resources managers from Turkey's leading and common sectors (production, health, retail, logistics, construction, services, food and informatics) were analyzed. As a result of this analysis, it is seen that talent and brand employee relationship concepts were used together frequently. It is found that HR managers repeated the words; employee, brand, performance and talent so frequently during their interviews and in managing employer brand and talent performance processes, brand- employee relationship was correlated with talent and performance concept. As the indicator of this correlation, employer brand should be emphasized within the scope of talent and brand employee relationship. According to findings of this research, it may be suggested that there is a significant correlation between enterprises' studies on employer brand and talent's performance. There were

some limitations in this research. It includes a 5-month period. Interviews were done with only HR managers from predetermined sectors. In further studies, employers' opinions may be analyzed and sector limitation may be applied. A quantitative study may be done over the same subject and conclusions may be compared. Limitations of this research also have the quality of recommendation for further studies in this field.