

An Overview of Employer Branding in Iran, Viewpoint of Potential Employees

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ABSTRACT

As the competition in all areas of business gets tighter, a new realm of success has appeared, that is the ability to attract and keep the valuable human resources. Employer branding is the differentiation strategy of human resource management by applying marketing principles. The main application of employer branding is to attract external potential work talents and to maintain the current work talents. The employer brand thought has been considered for some years, but it seems that this concept in Iran, in both academic and managerial fields is still in its infancy and is not a familiar notion. The present study utilizes exploratory approach and aims to identify the attractive dimensions of employer and attractive sets of marketing activities related to employment, from the perspective of potential employees.

To this end, sample data was gathered from 216 students of two prestigious Iranian universities. Based on the research results, five dimensions of employer attractiveness namely: innovativeness; self-achievement; giving back to society; happiness and economic achievement are postulated. Likewise, four categories of recruitment related communication categories are recognized namely: publicity; sponsorship; word of mouth and advertising. The findings also disclosed the perceptual differences in the importance degree among male and female respondents for both attractive employer dimensions and attractive communication categories. However according to our findings, field of study, was not a significant source of difference in respondents' perception of attractiveness, neither in regard the employers dimensions nor in regard the communication categories.

On the other hand, through lenses of person-organization fit theory, we expected that the prospective applicants associate with employer attractiveness dimensions based on their types of personality. The results further supported the hypothesized relationship between respondents' personality types and their preferred attributes of employer. Overall, the outcomes of this study would assist the organizations to gain a noteworthy understanding as to how tactically cultivate and communicate their employer brand message as well as strategically tailor their employer brand message to their target characters.

Keywords: Employer brand, human resource, potential employees, Iran

ÖZ

İş dünyasının tüm alanlarında rekabet artarken, değerli insan kaynaklarını kazanmak ve elde tutmak da başarının temel alanlarından biri haline gelmiştir. İşveren markalaşması insan kaynaklarında pazarlama ilkelerini kullanan bir farklılaşma stratejisidir. İşveren markalaşmasının temel amacı potansiyel çalışanları kuruma çekmek ve mevcut çalışanları kurumda tutmaktır. İşveren markalaşması bir süredir gündemde bulunmaktadır, ancak İran’da bu kavram pek de akademik ve yönetsel çevrelerde incelenmemiştir ve henüz emekleme aşamasındadır. Mevcut çalışma işverenlerin çalışanlar için cazip görünen boyutlarını ortaya çıkarmakta ve hangi pazarlama araçlarının potansiyel çalışanları etkilemekte olduğunu incelemektedir.

Bu amaçla İran’da en tanınmış üniversitelerde eğitim alan 216 öğrenciden veri toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre beş işveren çekicilik boyutu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bunlar sırası ile yenilikçilik, kişisel başarı, topluma katkı, mutluluk ve ekonomik başarı olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Bunun yanında personel temini için kullanılan iletişim yöntemleri de dört boyutta toplanmıştır. Bunlar tanıtım, sponsorluk, kişiler arası ilişkiler, ve reklam olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Araştırma bulguları kadın ve erkeklerin işveren çekiciliği ve personel temini yöntemlerinden etkilenme ölçülerinin çeşitli boyutlarda farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ancak öğrencilerin eğitim gördükleri programların işveren çekiciliği ve personel temin yöntemlerine tepkisini etkilemediğini göstermiştir.

Çalışan örgüt uyumu kuramına göre potansiyel çalışanların kişilik özellikleri ile işveren çekiciliği boyutları arasında ilişki olmasını beklemekteydik. Sonuçlarımız kişilik özellikleri ile işverende aradıkları özellikler arasında ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Genel olarak çalışma sonuçları kurumların işveren markasını stratejik olarak nasıl oluşturup tanıtması gerektiği konusunda ve özellikle de hedef kitlelerine yönelik işveren marka mesajlarını nasıl oluşturmaları gerektiği konusunda yöneticilere yol gösterici olacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İşveren markası, personel temini, İran, potansiyel çalışanlar

To my loving and supportive mother

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Chapter1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Suggested by the resource-based view, it is predictable that human resource is one of the most appreciated properties of the companies in the current world of business (Barney, 1991). Nowadays companies must think about their intellectual assets and try to attract and keep the clever or high skill workers to be actively present in this competitive age of technology and information. The two crucial and competitive factors for the companies are brand and gifted employees. In other words, generating, communicating and keeping the brand as well as the need to attract, improve and retain capable and inspired employees. These are considered as competitive strategies for companies (Backhaus, 2004).

The employer brand concept is relatively a new idea. The introduction of the employer branding ideology goes back to 1996 by Simon Borrow, around two decades. The first definition of the term employer branding is “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company” (Ambler, T and Barrow, S, 1996). In another definition, employer branding has been described as the “sum of a company’s efforts to communicate to existing and prospective staff that it is a desirable place to work” (Berthon et al. 2005).

In recent times, the concept of employer branding has become one of the significant developments. The Fortune magazine publishes the world's best employers to work yearly. In the report by Conference Board in 2001, companies spent a great deal of money and effort for employer branding promotions, directing us to the fact that employer branding practices are valuable for the firms (Conference Board, 2001). A number of reasons can clarify why there is such a great consideration to the topic of right and proper applicant attraction. Foremost, in this unpredictable economy situation, it is almost impossible to gain the required competitive advantage without possessing the right human personnel and secondly the fulfillment and efficiency of persons and organizations are the outcomes of the fitting match between the organization and the workers (Backhaus K., 2004).

Employer branding is the process of identifying and creating the organizations' brand message by using marketing principles in the aim of achieving best position as a preferred employer. According to the employer branding viewpoint, the marketing fundamentals can be applied in the firm's enrollment and retention scheme. The employer brand is all about applying the branding science in the human resource field. The employer brand has the strong influence on the business outcomes just similar to when product brand creates profit and progress for the companies (Edwards, 2010). In employer branding, the target market is the high-qualified potential workers, which their characters and values match with the employers. Correspondingly, exercising the proper kind of channel to communicate the brand message is important. The employer brand equity can be shaped by creating and communicating the distinctive employment value proposition. The attracting and keeping the best talent workers rest highly on the organization effort in application of

marketing and communication activities (Cable & Turban, 2001). On the other hand, the applicants normally would decide about their employer of choice differently, it is usually a matter of viewpoint for each person based on their values, personality, culture and the like. Therefore, the brand characteristics are playing important role in attraction of the potential candidates (Barber and Roehling, 1993). Accordingly, the viewpoint of the target potential workers is a key and need to be considered by the companies. The needs and wants of target employees should be addressed (Cable and Turban, 2001).

As stated above, the organizations need to place themselves as the superior employer to strive and stay competitive. Consequently, the first step to possess the status of the organization as the employer of choice is identifying what the potential high quality workers are considering when choosing their employer (Edwards, 2010). An employer value positioning (EVP) with structures intended to attract, maintain and stimulate its target workforce needs to be established and offered by the organization as a part of the becoming the employer of choice process. The sets of unified and manageable attributes are going to be characterized by the employer value positioning just similar to the customer value positioning (Michaels et al., 2001). As explained, employer branding is the practice of recognizing and generating a company brand message in the recruitment market. The effectiveness of this process highly depends on the awareness about the important organizational factors considered by target employees. The first stage of this study is devoted to identify these factors from the perspective of Iranian potential talent workers.

The supplementary step in employer branding process is to communicate the brand message. In addition to having, the value propositions well defined, it is similarly important to communicate it to the potential audience. In communicating, the appropriate channel should be chosen in order to catch the target employees' attention (Cable and Turban, 2001). Employers need to differentiate themselves from their competitors and with the advent of marketing tools. Achievement of this goal will be eased. The goal of recruiting has always been building connection with the prospective applicants as well as fostering relationship with the current employees. The main difference in the employer branding is that with the rise of competition, employers are more looking for the qualified workers. At this point, marketing tools can be very useful as they can build an effective way of communicating the brand to the wanted candidates. In today's world of technology and information, the potential employees are exposed to different communication channels such as the social media, the internet, websites, job blogs, the job ads on the printed media, sponsorship activities or endorsements and the like. Running the channels in a way that ensure the company's discernibility to the potential employees is an essential step in the world of employer branding (Cascio, 2014). The other purpose of the proposed research will be to identify the different categories of recruitment marketing activities in the Iranian context as well as analyzing these different activities and types of potential applicants in terms of their gender and field of study.

As well as identifying the work values , realizing how job seekers acquire the work values and how person-organization fit is used in their decision making is also necessary (Kristof ,1996) . According to branding literature, organizations need to distinguish their employment brand message in order to recruit the right applicants

who fit with the organizations' image. This concern is similar to person-organization framework. The difference is that, in employer branding, more emphasis is on the employer part. In other words, the employer needs to put effort to position itself in a way that fits its desired potential employees and attract them (Backhaus, 2004). Personality, which is the enduring and stable trait of individuals, can be one possible indicator that may influence on the job seekers' preferred work preference (Judge, T. A., & Cable, D. M., 1997). However, there is not plenty of research in examining the bond between personality characters and organizational attributes. As the person-organization fit construct suggests, job seekers infer fit perception when deciding on the employer of choice. Therefore, it is valuable for the companies to know how different applicants construe their employer's attractiveness dimensions. The further aim in this research is to analyze the relationship between employer branding attractive dimensions types of the applicants in terms of personality and demographics.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to a 2009 report by the International Monetary Fund, in the number of professionals leaving the country, Iran ranks first among 91 developing and underdeveloped countries. Many of the talented and top students migrate to Western Europe and North America. Apart from political and sociological motives, these phenomena can be addressed to the fact that Iran is unable to captivate this highly talented potential workforce. Usually they are not adequately encouraged and motivated to enter into Iran's job market after graduation, and consequently the majority of Iran's talents, high qualified potentials and experts are immigrating to other countries (Archive: Iran faced growing brain drain, 2012).

As stated by the publication of Central Intelligence Agency in 2014, around 46 percent of Iran's population is the young population (between 24 to 54 years) and the median age of the country is 28.3, which is indicating that Iran owns a demographic of opportunity. Moreover, the birth rate of Iran is declared as 18.23 births per 1,000 populations (The World Fact Book, Middle East: Iran, 2014). Given the country's declining birth rate, Iran would keep this young population at most for 30 or 35 years. It is predicted that after 1.5 generation, Iran will face the aging of the baby boomer generation of 1980-92, when the current baby boomers of Iran's post-revolutionary get retired (Chamlou, 2013). Additionally, as specified by the Central Intelligence Agency's publication, labor force of Iran suffers from shortage in high skill workers. Furthermore, the net migration rate of Iran as of 2014 is declared as -0.08 migrant(s) per 1,000 population. It shows that, in year 2014, from every 1000 people 80 people have actually left the country (The World Fact Book, Middle East: Iran, 2014). These realities will lead us to the important point that, irrespective of the potential of Iran's oil and gas resources, Iran's most valuable resource is its human capital. For making fuller use of its educated population, it would need to put in place policies and practices that make better use of this talent pool. This study contributes to the concept of employer branding within Iranian context. Since most studies were conducted in western countries and there has been little study regarding this issue in a developing country like Iran, which possesses a unique situation in both owning talented people and losing them and therefore needs to attract its potential talented workers.

1.3 Objectives of the study

According to the above discussion, this study aims to address various dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding within an Iranian context. Secondly, it is

attempted to identify the different communication channels in conveying the employer attractiveness dimensions. Thirdly, the differences between the perceptions of respondents concerning the attractiveness categories of employer and marketing activities are examined by respondents' demographic variables. Lastly, the relation between personality traits of respondent's and employer attractiveness dimensions are analyzed within the person organization framework.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the factors that constitute the employer attractiveness from the perspective of potential employees in the Iranian context?
2. What are the different marketing activities that contribute to recruitment in the Iranian context?
3. How the perceived level of attraction in employer characteristics and recruitment activities vary according to the potential workers' demographics?
4. How the perceived level of attraction in employer characteristics vary according to the potential workers' personality types (Conscientiousness, Extroversion, and Openness to new experience)?

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 What is Employer Branding?

According to the American Marketing Association (1960) brand is “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. What can be inferred from this description is that, in the process of branding, the organizations need to establish a name, logo, symbol and some brand characteristics that can make them notable among the competitors (Keller, 1998).

As brands are one of the company’s most valuable assets, brand management is a very critical task for organizations. The branding efforts of the firms are generally concentrated on generating product and corporate brands. Whereas in recent years, the value of using the branding concepts to human resource management is recognized and has been labelled “employer branding” The employer branding framework contribute to both potential and current employees in a way that attract the future target employees and the same time keep the current employees engaged with the firm (Edwards, 2010).

The unique firm’s characteristic as an employer among others, can be settled through employer branding. In other words, firms can point out their employment distinctions

by means of employer branding. The very first attempt to define employer branding was by Ambler and Barrow in 1996. They described the employer brand as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company.” In another effort, the employer branding has been defined as “the sum of a company's efforts to communicate to existing and prospective staff what makes it a desirable place to work” (Liyods, 2002) .Martin G and Beaumont, in 2003 described the idea of employer branding as “a company’s image as seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires.” Likewise, Minchinton (2005), defined employer brand as “the image of your organization as a great place to work”. In employer branding process, the organizations try to use strategies for attracting talent, fulfilling and maintaining the desired employees.

2.2 Competitive Advantage of Employer Branding

In the world today, organizations face boundless competition in the markets. Correspondingly, the products and services are becoming identical. Therefore, distinction is the way for grabbing the customers’ attention. The same strategy has to be addressed in case of employees (Berthon et al., 2005). It is predictable that organization need the human resources that can respond to this challenging and serious competitive market condition (Moroko and Uncles, 2009).

The origin of the employer branding comes from the assumption that human capital is a valuable source for the firms and will empower companies’ level of performance thus is a source of competitive advantage. According to resource-based view (RBV), firms’ sustainable competitive advantage can be drawn from the characteristics of its resources. The condition is that the resources should be valuable, rare and difficult

to emulate (Barney, 1991). One of the resources that are considered as hard to imitate is the human resource. The value creation for firms and shareholders can be done by the means of employees who are profitable and contribute to the firms' accomplishment. These noteworthy employees should be attracted and retained through progress of employer brand (Moroko and Uncles, 2008). Research has proved that, companies owning valuable staff can enjoy benefits such as lower cost, better service level, advanced knowledge, and greater sale growth as well as more motivated employees (Riston, 2002). Meanwhile, due to the aging labor force, low birth rate, immigration of top talent, and scarcity of proper educational programs, the desired and wanted human personnel is gradually decreasing. This fact will intensify the importance of employer brand strategy. A successful employer branding strategy would make the firm distinctive and is able to highlight positive characteristics of the employer and make the firm as the superior employer.

2.3 Employer Branding Process

Based on what is suggested by human resource experts, the employer branding is in a three-step procedure. The Three step process as follows;

1. Employer Value positioning
2. External Marketing
3. Internal Marketing

In the first step, the employer brand should express value proposition. In this approach, the organizations' values, administration style, merits of current employees, current employment image, and anticipated quality of product or service need to be settled first and then managers need to foster a conception and choose which particular value their company is able to offer to employees. The employer brand's dominant message is transported through the value proposition. In other

words, firms use value proposition to signify what they actually want to propose to the prospective employees. As stated earlier, the uniqueness and differentiation play a critical role in catching the audience attention. Therefore, organizations need to express their employment image by clarifying the distinct aspect of their employment. As stated by Knox et al. (2000), the explanation of “unique organizational value proposition”, is the key part of the employer branding package. Barrow and Mosley, (2005) called this process as “employee value proposition”. Likewise, Martin (2008) denoted it simply as “value proposition”. In the second step, the proposed value needs to be reached to future employees, recruitment organizations and the like. The goal of this part is to draw the target employees as well as to boost the corporate brand. After the value proposition, it is essential to communicate the “offering” by widespread communication activities. Both concrete and intangible employment offering is expected to be conveyed and achieved by the employer branding communication programs. The firms’ formation as the employer of choice will be achieved by external marketing activities and it can attract the expected target employees. The third step is called internal marketing. The internal marketing concept was introduced in publication of Berry’s (1981) article. It was defined that internal marketing as “viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization”. The focus is now on the current employees. The target employees are already attracted based on the set of assumptions that were expressed by the employer. In this phase, the organizations need to support these promised values and subsequently improve the current employee’s commitment and loyalty. The important point of internal marketing in employer branding discourse is that the employment “promise” should be made and

the organizations culture should be shown through this phase (Frook, 2001). By systematic approach of internal marketing, the company can generate committed workforce to the organization's beliefs and aims. This kind of human resource would be difficult for competitors to possess.

2.4 Dimensions of Employer Attractiveness

Employer brand do not seem to be a one-dimensional concept, but includes different conceptual components. Almost in all the attempts of defining employer brand concept, the term "package" is used in the offered employment advantages to employees, presenting that the organization values are differed and are not in only one aspect, rather in multiple aspects. The employer attractiveness and potential employees have been regarded as being influenced by several factors. For example, in the study by Turban (2001), job security, economic safety, managements of employees and growth opportunities were highly relevant to employer attractiveness. Likewise, the practices of motivation enhancing, training, or high wedges have been highlighted (Batts, 2002).

Characteristics and attributes applied in the employer brand value propositions also differ in their degree of tangibility and intangibility. Therefore, in the employer branding process, firms need to uniquely pinpoint the employment experience by considering all the tangible and intangible features that they can propose to the target employees. Lievens and Highhouse (2003) divided the dimensions of attractiveness in to two broad categories, namely instrumental and symbolic. They showed that job and organizational characteristics such as salary, prospects for development, location, career plans or organizational structure are very influential in the organization attractiveness perception of applicants. Here, they described these

objective and concrete organizational factors as instrumental attributes. The instrumental attributes may be inherent in the organization or job characteristics. In addition, they asserted that, in employer branding the applicants find the symbolic traits such as innovativeness, excitement or prestige of the company attractive. It has been also suggested that the symbolic attributes can be more important in case that the instrumental aspects of the organizations are identical or not much different. The instrumental factors of the organization are usually similar in the same industries. Hence, by only focusing on instrumental factors, it would be difficult for organizations to place themselves as a different and superior employer (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). In such a condition, it is recommended for the organizations to deliver their symbolic attributes in establishing a favorable employer image. In the instrumental and symbolic framework, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) found that instrumental attributes such as payment or benefits have lower and degraded value in compare to symbolic trait implications of organizations. It has been argued that the attractiveness of the symbolic attributes is rooted in self-identity and self-image of people. People link the symbolic characteristics of the firms to the desire of expressing themselves and maintaining their self-identity or to increase their self-image.

The concept of employer attractiveness has been very common topic in employer branding. As potential employees perceive a particular employer more attractive, the employer brand equity of that organization will increase as well. It is defined as the “envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization” (Berthon et al. 2005). In an effort to classify and identify the constituents of employer attractiveness from the viewpoint of potential employees,

Berthon et al. (2005) developed and validated a scale. Their starting point was constructing a list of all value factors using a series of focus groups. The participants were final year graduate and undergraduate students at a well-known university in Australia. The respondents were asked to reflect their ideal employers' characteristics. The factors that can contribute to their potential employer attractiveness, as well as the factors that may be considered as less attractive and lastly the ways and places that they may look for employment. Finally, a 32 potential item scale was generated inductively. They administered this scale on a sample of 683 university students. Thus, it can provide us a groundwork for further investigation in employer branding. As suggested by the authors this scale can be applied in most contexts and conditions. The five factors are interest value, social value, economic value, development value, and application value. Interest value measures the degree to which an employer can attract the individual by providing an arousing work environment, innovative work practices and using the creativity of employees in which high quality and innovative products and services are produced. Social value measures the degree to which an employer can attract future workers by providing a happy, fun and warm environment. There should be a good relationship between the colleagues and superiors as well. Therefore, this dimension represents the team and social spirit of the working atmosphere. Economic value assesses the extent to which an employer can attract the employees by offering high salary payments, job security, compensation packages and promotional prospects. Development value measures the extent to which an employer can attract the employees by conveying acknowledgement, respect, gratitude, self-worth, and confidence, accompanied with a profession-enhancing experience as well as a springboard to future employment. Lastly, application value measures the degree to which an individual is attracted to

an employer that provides an opportunity for the employee to apply what they have learned and to teach others. The desired atmosphere is customer orientated and at the same time humanitarian.

The following model gives an outline of the elements contributing to employer attractiveness.

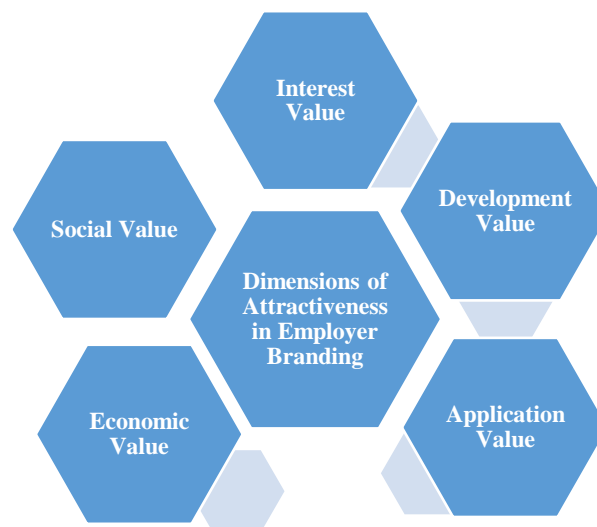


Figure 1. Dimensions of employer attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005)

2.5 Marketing Activities and Brand Equity

The brand equity notion is another relevant concept that provides a theoretical outlook for understanding employer branding. According to marketing disciplines, brand equity is “a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers”(Aaker, 1991). Customer based brand equity suggests that the brand knowledge affects the consumer response to the marketing of the product. The brand equity can be enhanced by marketing communication activities (Keller, 1993). In other words, it is suggested by customer-based brand equity literature that if firms

use a combination of marketing communication tools, they can effectively build durable brand equity.

As indicated by research, when the marketing activities are used to sell a given product or service, the brand equity will increase since the marketing mix have raised the awareness and generated favorable attitude toward the brand. Consequently strengthen the brand and its distinctiveness in a way that customers link brand attributes with the brand (Aaker & Biel, 1993). The brand equity concept can be applied in the recruitment protocol in such a way that will influence the brand knowledge of both potential and current employees (Cable and Turban 2001). If the employer brand exist, the potential applicants will be propelled to apply, further the existing employees will be patronized, stay with and support the organization. The anticipated result of the employer brand activities is employer brand equity. In the recruitment context, the dimensions of brand equity are critical factors that drive job seekers application intention. Therefore, it is important to know how the perceptions of those attributes in the minds of job seekers are influenced. In addition, the reaction of potential or existing employees to similar staffing selection and retention efforts of the firms are different because the organizations do not have similar employer brand equity. For instance, Turban and Cable (2003) stated that reputation of the firms is playing as supplementary information for job seekers. They pinpointed that as job pursuits are only left with the available information to make decision, the reputation of the firms plays as another key in the process of recognizing the employer of choice. The target employees may associate different brand attributes to each firm according to their brand equity. As suggested by signaling theory, the applicants' perception about a particular employer, is based on the information they receive

while searching for job. This information can be conveyed via the advertisements or other recruitment activities (Rynes & Miller, 1983).

2.6 Signaling Theory

As revealed by the previous research, mere human resource practices of firm are not able to empower the employer attractiveness. In addition, the effects of these practices depend on whether the potential applicants have recognized them or not. Thus in order to increase the employer attractiveness, the firms should enforce the suitable human resource operations as well as communicating their proposal in the job market (Wilden et al., 2010). This facet is often investigated from the viewpoint of signaling theory. Spence (1974) conceptualized the signaling theory in his article for the first time. In view of Spence (1974), signaling theory was described as the number of times that something has been present in the market. For instance if something has been present in the market in a repeated manner, it would have more chance to be read or to be invested, likewise when something has been present in the market rarely or occasionally, it would have less chance to be invested or to be attended by the target audience. Signaling theory is mainly centered on the fact that two parties have uneven information about each other. Generally, one side (receiver) does not have enough information about the other side (sender), thus the sender will try to send information or signals to the receiver (Spence, 1974, 2002). Then the receiver may infer and perceive the signal. It is said that, by this way, the asymmetry of information is lessened. Applying Spence's signaling theory to the job market, it is said that the implication from the delivered information will be the foundation for job decision. Originally, in the Spence's job market signaling theory, the potential employees were seen as the senders and the companies as receivers, where the potential employees would make signals by their qualifications and

education for the potential employer. However, in employer attractiveness context, some studies have made this view the opposite way, and considered the company as the sender and the potential employees as the receivers. In this stream of research, the employers would apply recruitment instruments as signals such as career fairs, campus sponsorship activities and advertisement or recruitment advertising (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Allen et al., 2007). In the recruitment area, this theory explains how certain forms of information influence applicants' awareness of an organization. Signaling theory is able to explore the early phase of the application process. Job seekers are initially exposed to some information in their job search process, what judgments are shaped in applicant's opinions through experiencing the amount of information that the applicants are exposed to, can be inspected by signaling theory. Organizational characteristics are considered as signals about the company employment conditions. When these characteristics are positive, the potential target employees will be attracted. The more the company can attract the target employees by brand signals, the more it can attract high quality employees.

2.7 Recruitment Activities in Employer Branding

Inexperienced customers, who are not certain about their preferred attributes for their desired product or service, can be easily influenced by the marketing activities of the firms. As suggested by the study of Heilman et al. (2000), the inexperienced customers, consider the marketing activities as a strong and reliable signal about product or service characteristics. Therefore, their perceived important brand attributes are based on those marketing related activities. This statement can be matched with what Barber (1998), suggested in the area of recruitment that recruitment related activities influence the decision making of potential and actual

job applicants. Thus, it can be concluded that the new and inexperienced labor market are similar as the new and inexperienced customers.

In targeting and sending the message to prospective workers, several sources (e.g. advertising, word of mouth referrals), are used by companies at the first phase of recruitment (Barber, 1998). As mentioned earlier, the theoretical foundation of such practices is the same as product communication marketing activities. Therefore, the customer-base marketing communication framework and signaling theory is used in this research to explain that using recruitment related activities associates with strong brand equity attributes. As asserted by Aaker (1996), signals of advertising create awareness about the quality of a brand. The more consumers are exposed to advertising, the more positive characteristics are ascribed (Aaker, 1996).

Recruitment advertising denotes any kind of advertisement, which is paid by the organization and is intended to promote the organization as an employer (Kotler, 2000). Cable and Turban (2001) claimed that this process of exposure and signaling can be applied for job seekers as well. Greater awareness can be generated by corporate recruitment advertising, since positive attributes and attractiveness will be made in the minds of job seekers.

Another form of marketing activity which is highly effective for increasing the brand image is publicity (Aaker, 1991). Publicity is defined as information about a product or service transferred over media and not paid by the organization (Cameron, 1994). It is declared that the brand image is more influenced by publicity since it is not paid by the organization and the audiences rely more and put more credit on publicity

than paid advertisements. While this kind of information is not directly in the control of firms, it is feasible for firms to enhance their publicity by the means of public relations or press releases and other public campaigns (Cameron1, 1994). Positive word of mouth endorsement can also boost the brand images. As indicated by researches, the consumers try to seek information about a particular service or product from friends or other reliable sources in order to decrease the risk associated with buying (Cobb-Walgren et. al., 1995). Typically, consumers' judgments are greatly affected by word of mouth when it is positive. Word of mouth can play a critical role in consumers' differentiation among brands (Keller, 1993). Correspondingly, several companies try to make positive word of mouth through building relationship with the key faculty members of universities. The underlying aim is that these university references would convey the organization positive attributes to the target students who are the potential future workers (Poe, 2000).

In increasing the brand awareness of customers, sponsorship activities have been used in parallel with advertisements (Aaker, 1996). Both product brand and corporate brand can be improved by sponsorship. The attractive aspects of organization can be nurtured among the people who attended the sponsored events (Johar & Pham, 1999). Followed by product marketing activities, firms can include sponsorship and campus activities, in their recruitment efforts and as a result, increase awareness about their employment openings (Poe, 2000).

The following display will give a better understanding of different marketing activities that can contribute to recruitment context according to Collins and Steven (2002).

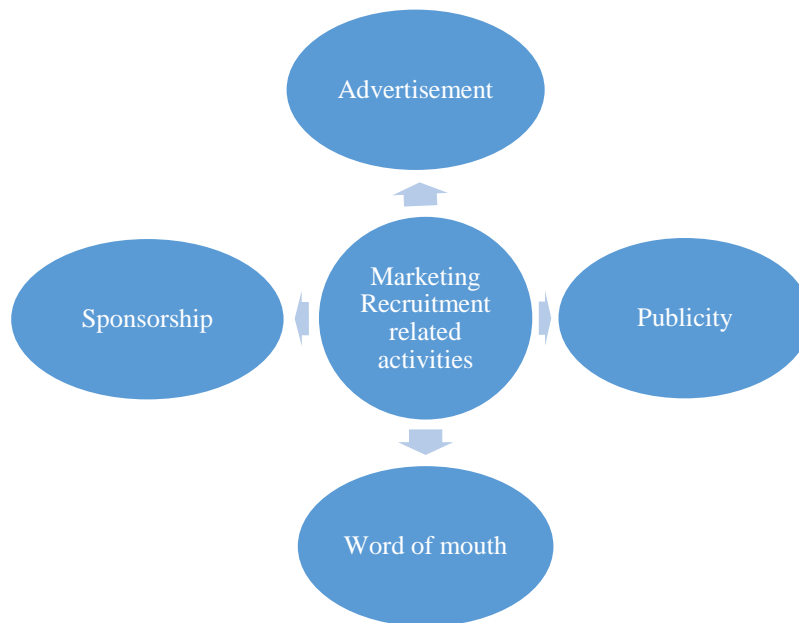


Figure 2. Early recruitment-related activities (Collins and Stevens 2002)

2.8 Person-Organization Fit Theory

A very close related theory to the signaling theory is person-organization fit theory. It is suggested that applicants in their search of suitable organization would look for those that can fit their needs in the best possible way. Cable and Judge (1994) have defined it as the ability of applicants to select and stay in an organization that its work setting best fit with their own characters. As shown by researches in this construct, job seekers usually compare the potential employer with their needs, values and personalities. As a result the job seeker will be most probably attracted to the organization which its values and characters best match with their own values and personalities (Schneider, 1987; Judge and Cable, 1997). It can be stated that the underlying framework for person-organization fit theory is Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model. The ground statement of ASA model is that “people in any organization are unique in that they are the ones attracted to, chosen by, and who choose to remain with an organization” (Schneider, 1987). In the attraction phase, it is postulated that potential workers get involved with

organizations on the basis of their varied interests, desires, partialities and personalities. In fact in the attraction phase, decision is made by both parties. On one hand the organizations are able to make decision and attract their preferred and expected personnel through the staff selection and recruitment process. On the other hand, the applicants after considering their own expectations, desires, values and characteristics are able to select their desired employer among numerous organizations.

Person-organization (P-O) fit has attempted to justify the way that people evaluate fit between themselves and the organization. Chatman (1989) defined P-O fit as “the congruence between organizational values and individual values” has defined P-O fit. Therefore, in the process of choosing the organization, the internal needs of applicants are being compared with the attributes of organizations.

The occurrence of P-O fit is when the individuals’ needs are fulfilled by the organization attributes (Kristoff, 1996). Thus once the job seekers are attracted to an organization or are decisive about working there, it is representing the perceived fit between an individual’s values, beliefs and personal characteristics and those of the organization. In the recruitment, high level of person-organization fit is preferential, since it is associated with achieving worthy work-related results such as organization commitment, enthusiasm, identification and retention (Kristoff, 1996). As found by Cable and Judge (1996), the perceived values of applicants was consistent to their chosen organization values and it was related to their P-O fit insights. In fact, the P-O fit view had affected their actual job choice. In another example, it was found that those who are highly achievement oriented, were more interested in organizations

that are centered on the performance reward. Chapman et al. (2005) has enforced the importance of P-O fit in his meta-analysis study in which it was shown that as much as 31 percent of the organization attraction process is explained by P-O fits. In another study by Devendorf and Highhouse (2008) it was found that the college students were considering the fit between themselves and the current employees of the firm. For instance, a potential employee who perceives himself as a sophisticated person may be attracted when he recognizes other employees of the organization are sophisticated as well. Likewise, in more recent studies, a very strong predictor of the applicants' attraction to job and organizational recruitment was the perceived fit that the applicants find with relative organization (Uggerslev et al. 2012).

Chapter 3

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Attractive Employer Dimensions

For improving the organization attractiveness as an employer, the employers need to recognize, which factors are truly components of an impressive organization, thus building their employer branding message accordingly. An assortment of influencing factors constitutes the employer brand's range of dimensions. A very close concept to brand equity is the "employer attractiveness. In order to make best use of the recruiting practice, the organizations need to get a clear understanding of the dimensions of attractiveness among the potential employees. In fact, several researches have directly attempted to recognize the employer attractiveness dimensions. It has been viewed by the recent studies that the employer attractiveness is a multi-dimensional concept.

Ambler & Barrow in 1996 carried out a pilot qualitative study among the managers of companies in the UK in regards to the effectiveness of applying marketing techniques in the field of human resource management. Three main factors were identified, namely as; functional, economic and psychological benefits.

In a study done by Herman & Gioia (2001), eight indicators that knowledge workers take in to consideration when choosing their preferred employer, were identified. These factors were labeled as: company reputation, company culture, and enlightened leadership, treatment of people, opportunity for career growth,

meaningful work, compensation and benefits (Herman, R. E., & Gioia, J. L., 2001). Branham, (2001) suggested additional aspects considered as attractive by qualified employees such as the offer of opportunities for rapid advancement, a high risk-reward profile, an exciting challenge and improved lifestyle benefits (Branham, 2001) . In 2003, Lievens and Highhouse integrated the instrumental-symbolic framework with the Employer image construct. According to this framework, images consist of both instrumental and symbolic dimensions in which the instrumental dimensions stand for the objective and concrete attributes such as pay and benefit and the symbolic dimension count for subjective, intangible and emotional factors that potential employees may associate with them such as prestige and robustness (Lievens, F., & Highhouse, S., 2003).

Berthon et al (2005) provided a valid scale of measurement of employer attractiveness named as EMPAT (Employer Attractiveness), in the Australian context and showed the significance of multidimensionality in employer attractiveness. The five dimensions of the brand attributes comprise the interest value, the social value, the economic value, the development value and the application value. (Berthon, 2005). Roy (2008) applied the EMPAT scale in the Indian context and added three more values to the original scale, the added dimensions were ethical value, psychological value and career opportunities (Roy, 2008).

In 2011 the study done by Archchige and Roberstone, using the EMPAT scale, resulted in seven more criteria that are most appreciated by potential employees in Sri Lanka. The labels were corporate environment, job structure, social commitment,

social environment, relationships, personal growth, organizational dynamism and enjoyment (Arachchige, B. J., & Robertson, A., 2011). Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2010), developed eight factors for employer attractiveness based on the exploratory factor analysis from the perspective of Indian students and managers. They labeled the dimensions as follows; caring organization, enabling organization, career growth, credible and fair, flexible and ethical, brand image, positive employer image, and global exposure (Srivastava, P., Bhatnagar, J., 2010). Hillebrandt & Ivens (2013), by focusing on employee samples, constructed the 12-dimensional employer brand the factors were: culture and communication, team spirit, tasks, international career and environment, benefits, reputation, work-life balance, training and development, diversity, customers, autonomy, corporate social responsibility (Hillebrandt, I., Ivens, B. S., 2013). As discussed, various dimensions were discovered based on diverse target groups, this reality will demand the scale analysis in regards to different segments of employees, leading to the following hypothesizes;

H1: potential employees' expectations of employer attractiveness is multidimensional

3.2 Attractive Recruitment-Related Marketing Activities

At the very first phase of the employment search, the employment position and how the working conditions are going to be in the future, is usually not clear for the applicant. Therefore, the applicant is just exposed to the signals that are provided about the firm and can interpret these signals as the only source and convert them to information. According to signaling concept, many organizations can put emphasis on their positive attributes in the minds of applicants through the recruitment activities (Barber, 1998). For instance, many positive aspects of the company such as payment, improvement opportunity or company values can be addressed in the

organization's detailed recruitment advertisements whether in the online job postings or the university brochures. According to Barber (1998), a blend of marketing recruitment activities can be used to strengthen the employer brand. Potential job applicants are exposed to different recruitment information sources such as advertising and hearsay. The foundation theory in the early-recruitment phase is borrowed from the customer-based marketing communication framework.

Marketing communication tools are combination of media advertisement such as radio, TV, newspapers or magazines as well as promotions, sponsorship, event marketing and public affairs. Each of these components may be different in regards to their effectiveness but the main goal of all is the same that is building the brand equity (Aaker, D. A., Biel, A. L, 1993). In a study by Barber, & Roehling (1993) it was found that the potential applicants will be more attracted to apply as they receive more information by the typical marketing communication practices (Barber, A.E., & Roehling, M. V., 1993). In Gatewood et al.'s research in 1993 it was revealed that student's early impression of organization and their desire for application is positively related to the exposure to the recruitment practices of organizations (Gatewood, R. D., et al., 1993). Barber (1998) states that the availability of recruitment materials such as advertising for the potential applicant has a great influence on the perceived organizational attraction in early employment phase (Barber, 1998). The amount, outline and type of information conveyed to job hunters, will be very effective in this respect. Barber (1998) noted Advertising was significantly related to students' perceptions about the attributes of the company and the job opportunity. Likewise, it has been shown that when the organization engage in sponsorship activities, it will influence positively among the people who joined

the sponsored events or became aware of the sponsorship programs, and therefore contribute to improving both the brand images and corporate brand (Johar & Pham, 1999).

Collins and Stevens (2002) found that the job seekers' attitudes and perceived attributes are positively allied with the experiencing early recruitment actions specially word of mouth and advertisement. Cober et al. (2003) conducted a qualitative study of organizational web sites and concluded that the organization web sites have critical role in delivering the message of employers in regards to compensation, culture or development aspects. It was suggested that websites of organizations should be designed in a well-organized manner which would ease the navigation and provide necessary information for job seekers (Cober, R. T., et al., 2003). In a recent study on exploring the recruitment activities in the Indian construct, the authors have used the recruitment combination tool suggested by Collins and Steven (2002). It was found that media presence or publicity was the influential recruitment activities in the Indian context (Agrawal, R. K., & Swaroop, P., 2011). Van Hoyer (2014) stated that the exposure to positive word of mouth will have the effect of enhancing organizational attractiveness, organizational image and application decision (Van Hoyer, 2014).

As mentioned above, the recruitment marketing tools vary in different ways, and are under various groups. There are communication tools which are directly in control of the organizations such as advertisement in a recruitment section in the newspaper, on the internet, information available in firm's website as well as campus related activities or sponsored events. Additionally, there are some powerful information

sources which are not in the direct control of the employer such as the publicity and word of mouth (Cable, D. M., Turban, D. B., 2001); (Collins, C. J., Stevens, C. K., 2002). Therefore we can hypothesize that the marketing activities that contribute to conveying the brand message of employers can categorize under different activities. In this research, using Collins and Stevens (2002) scale, four recruitment marketing communication tools are investigated. First, advertising which refers to any professionally projected messages for the goal of altering insight of the target audience, and is communicated by numerous media channels, that are paid and conducted by the organization (Aaker, 1996). Secondly, word of mouth, applied to the recruitment context, can be defined as any kind of independent communication between people, about an employer or about particular occupations (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). Thirdly, sponsorship which is defined by the American Marketing Association as “advertising that seeks to establish a deeper association and integration between an advertiser and a publisher, often involving coordinated beyond-the-banner placements”. And lastly, publicity, defined as the available information which the broadcasting media communicate it to people about a product or service and is not paid for by the company. (Cameron, 1994). It is of our interest to investigate how the combination of communication marketing activities are categorized in the Iranian context.

H2) the recruitment related activities that contribute to the attractiveness of employer brand are considered as multi-categorized.

3.3 Demographic Variables and Perceptions of Attractiveness

According to Smith, market segment is an identifiable group based on specific criteria and characteristics. In modern Marketing, the purpose of segmentation is to communicate the message to the desired group or target. The customers in the

segment are alike in their wishes, manners and characteristics (Kotler, 1997). Kotler (1997) provides the list of segmentation bases, that is: geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral.

Typically, this concept is applied in terms of customer. In attracting the target consumers, firms attempt to categorize their different clients or customers based on behavior, decision-making processes, demographics, lifestyle, personality and incentives. Whereas it is suggested that in the context of employer branding, the firms should also use the market segmentation strategies in order to treat certain group of respondents differently. In other words the notion of “attractiveness” is not an absolute concept, therefore it differs from segment to segments in the employment market as well (Moroko, L., Uncles, M. D., 2008). The target sample of this research are fresh graduates therefore there is not a wide range of age variances or marital status. Rather we are interested to investigate if there is any difference in applicants’ preferred attributes of employer attractiveness and suitable communication channel based on their gender, field of study and personality traits.

H3a): Perceived importance of the employer attractiveness components vary by respondents’ gender.

H3b) Perceived importance of employer attractiveness components vary by respondents’ field of study.

H4a) Perceived attraction level of recruitment activities vary by respondents’ gender.

H4b) Perceived attraction level of recruitment activities vary by respondents’ field of study.

3.4 Personality and Perceptions of Employer Attractiveness

People would decide on the employer choice based on the relation between their personality and the organization's corporate image. As Tom(1971) have demonstrated that employer selection by the job seekers is highly dependent on the degree to which the individuals see their own image and self-concept match to the image and concept of the organization (Tom, 1971). In pursuing the job, the applicants would decide based on their perceived similarity between their own personality and values and the employers'. Therefor job search is said to be a matching game (schneider, 1987) as stated by schnieder (1987) the people are functions of an attraction-selection-attrition cycle. In the attraction phase, people are attracted to careers according to variances in their own interests and personality. Followed by, attraction-selection-attrition cycle, the person-organization fit approach has also put more emphasis on the existing match between the applicants characteristics and the organization's attributes (Kristof, 1996). This theory is implying that there is a compatibility between the applicant and the organizational characteristics.

Cable and Judge (1994) found that the individuals' choice for organizations with high pay system is significantly related to their personality as materialism and self-efficiency. Turban& Keon (1993) realized that the organizational attractiveness is moderated by certain personality features of respondents such as the need for achievement or self-esteem. For instance, respondents high on self- esteems turned out to be more attracted to large and international organizations, and those high on achievement desire, were more interested in merit-based pay system.

Lievens et al. (2001) demonstrated that many personality traits could have moderating effect on the organizational attractiveness. His study revealed that the conscientiousness aspect of personality would lead to attraction to large-size companies. Alternatively, the openness characteristics of individuals will result in more attraction to multinational organizations. Schreurs et al. (2009) found that individuals high on conscientiousness were more positively attracted to the sincerity value of the

Organization, likewise he proposed that the relationship between excitement and organizational attractiveness is stronger for personalities high on openness to experience.

In this research, the respondents are segmented according to demographics and personality grouping. The personality grouping in the proposed research is based on the big-five factor model; the big five personality factor model was designed by Goldberg in (1982) who later confirmed the model in 1990. The theory, which became the basis of the big five factor, proposes that individual characteristics, patterns of thinking, feeling, behaving, and responding to environmental demands is a function of five broad domain of their personality. The big five personality factors are widely applied and it is recognized that this model encompasses most personality variables. Accordingly, there are five extensive dimensions of personality that would describe the human personality. The big five factors are openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R., 1992; Goldberg, 1990).

As indicated in Forbes website, in the world of employer branding and competing to get the most desired employee, employers asserted that, Professionalism (86%), high-energy (78%) and confidence (61%) are the top three personalities they are looking for in new hires. (Casserly, 2012). Three of the big five dimensions; extraversion, openness to new experience and conscientiousness appear to be most relevant to these desired qualities. Thus, we discuss these constructs in somewhat more detail. As to our knowledge, employers are more looking for the applicants possessing these personalities.

(a)Extroversion characterizes the tendency to be sociable, confident, energetic and active (Barrick, M.R. and Mount, M.K., 1991). The most obvious aspect of extraversion is energetic aspect, Therefore the following hypothesis is stated;

H5: Applicant high on extroversion will be positively related to happiness aspect of the organizations.

(b)Openness to Experience, the second factor that we are interested in investigating also is describing the high enthusiasm and the search for exciting and unusual activities and experiences (Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R., 1992). People high on openness are described as courageous, adventurous, bored by familiarity, and not satisfied by routine. Characteristics such as creativity, broad-mindedness, and willingness to experiment or to try new things have been used to describe individuals who are high in openness. Likewise as open to new experience characters are usually looking for new things and new ideas, they are marked as creative, innovative, original, and self-governing .It is constantly proved that openness to experience is positively related to creativity and innovative thinking. (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

H6) Applicants high on openness to experience will be positively related to innovativeness aspects of organization

(c) Conscientiousness, is manifested in three related facets-achievement orientation (hardworking and persistent), dependability (responsible and careful), and orderliness (structured and organized). Conscientiousness indicates an individual's degree of organization, persistence, hard work, and motivation in the pursuit of goal. Thus, conscientiousness is related to an individual's degree of self-control, as well as need for achievement, order and persistence (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991). This domain covers traits such as being cautious, systematic, responsible, well thought-out, good-natured, hardworking, achievement-oriented and persistent. The very obvious facet of conscientiousness is achievement (Barrick, M.R. and Mount, M.K., 1991). Therefore we can state the following:

H7) Applicants high on conscientiousness will be positively related with achievement aspects of the organization.

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample and Procedure

Our sample consisted of conveniently 216 students from two best universities in the capital city of Iran. Because of high young population of Iran, getting the chance to study in the public universities in the city of Tehran is very challenging and competitive. To gain admission into Iranian universities, Iranian applicants must take a national entrance exam given once a year. Roughly 1.5 million applicants take part each year, but only the top 100,000 (or the top 10%) are given free entrance to universities (World Education news and reviews; Education in Iran, 2013). In order to achieve our sample that is high talented potentials, we concentrated on top governmental university in the capital city, which the competition for getting acceptance is extremely intensive. Paper and pencil questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was self-administrated. We reached the students by getting allowance from the library staff of faculties and distributed the questionnaires to students. The students were kindly asked to take some time and fill out the questioners while there were readily seated by their desk. In order to be coherent and avoid any kind of misunderstanding by the students, the questioners were back translated accurately in to the Persian language, so those respondents were able to read and understand the concept of question easily and smoothly.

4.2 Measures

The emphasis of this study is on the attraction phase of employer branding. The variables of this descriptive study are the demographic characteristics, attractiveness components of firms in employer branding concept, the attractive marketing activities in the early phase of recruiter's branding and the applicants' personality traits. The questionnaire embraces four thematic areas: The first part stands for socio-demographic information in order to segment our findings accordingly. Second for identifying the employer brand components, shaped in the mind of potential employees. The third part is for identifying the marketing channels, which will constitute the employer brand equity. The last part is served for assessing respondents' personality based on big five-factor model.

4.2.1 Demographic Section

In this part, the respondents were asked to provide some demographic information, such as gender, field of study, marital status, and age (Part A of the survey).

4.2.2 Scale of Employer Dimensions

With the purpose of identifying the principal dimension describing the ideal employer, we asked respondents to use a 5-point Likert scale (one=not at all important; five=important) to rate organizational aspects. The given instruction to complete this section was "for choosing your ideal and preferred employer, please rate each of these organizational aspects according to their importance to you".

The EMPAT (Employer Attractiveness) scale is used as the primary scale. It is a 25-item scale. Berthon et al. developed this scale by conducting focus groups of final year student at a large Australian university. In his study, 32 items were identified, with seven items removed from the scale after the two-stage purification. A positive relationship was found between the five dimensions and overall attractiveness. (Part

B of the survey). It is of our interest to investigate this scale on the Iranian perspective, and if necessary, identify altered factors by conducting exploratory Factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis on the scale.

4.2.3 Scale of Recruitment-Related Marketing Activities

Different types of marketing channels are used in the initial recruitment process, such as company's website, newspapers, recruitment websites, campus events, word of mouth and endorsement. We used the scale, developed by Collins and Stevens (2002), which originally was intended for predicting the influence of these marketing activities to influence employer brand among prospective applicants as well as finding how each of these early recruitment activities , interact with each other in making the strong employer brand image. The scale contains 13 items after consistency and validity test. What was partially derived from their study was that, in organizations in which the knowledge and technologically know-how human resources are very vital, it would be advantageous to finance in marketing recruitment related activities, such publicity, word-of-mouth endorsements, and advertising (Collins, 2002).this scale was adopted to the practice of four early recruitment activities in developing employer branding. Four major elements related to early recruitment activities, (word of mouth, sponsorship, publicity and advertising) were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from one (not at all attractive) to five (very attractive). It is of our interest to investigate this scale on the Iranian perspective, and if necessary, identify altered factors by conducting exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis on the scale. The instruction given to the students was that: "How much, each of these items will be attractive for you when choosing your ideal employer" (Part C of the Survey).

4.2.4 Big Five-Personality Domain

Some studies were conducted on the relationship between the personality traits of potential applicants and the organizational attractiveness attributes although they are not very abundant. For instance, one study, done by Lievens et al., determined that subjects high on conscientiousness being more attracted to large-sized organizations. Subjects high on openness, being more attracted to diversely located organizations. (Lievens F. D., 2001). In another paper, using the big five factors , two significant two-way interactions, were revealed, showing that individuals high on conscientiousness were positively related to honesty aspect of organizational attractiveness and individuals high on openness to experience are positively related to the excitement aspect of organizational attractiveness (Schreurs et al., 2009). The questions that we used in this part were drawn from the scale developed by Gosling (2003), named as TIPI (Ten Item Personality Inventory). The measures in this research are brief and validated version of the Big Five. It is offered to use this kind of brief measure in the situations that there is a need for very short measures and the primary topic is something other than the personality ,or slightly moderated psychometric characteristics of short measures can be endured (Gosling S. D., 2011). Numerous researchers have employed this scale since its publication. For instance a study of 112 student and non- student sample , Chamorro-Premuzicin et al. , used the TIPI measure and showed that the relation of the four factors in the Big Five model with the happiness and emotional intelligence traits , was positively significant and the association between these four factors with happiness is moderated by the emotional intelligence characteristics (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2007). In another study administrated by Besser and Shackelford (2007) on 100 employees, the TIPI scale was used , which leded in to finding that the negative mood during

vacation , and the vacation-related stress are all related to personality aspects of employees (Besser et al., 2007).

In another paper, the TIPI model was used for the big five personality dimensions. This study was done on 338 medical students and 73 humanities student, aimed at evaluating the relationship between symptoms of anxiety, symptoms of depression and big-five personality dimensions and vulnerability to stress on the medical students. It was concluded that the severity of symptoms of anxiety and symptoms of depression in medical students is negatively related to emotional stability and positively related to stress vulnerability (Bunevicius et al., 2008).

In our study, we asked the students to rate the extent of each five domain of personality according to their own personality perception. Farsi version of the TIPI was employed. It was developed by Madjid Mirzavaziri, Hamid Vazire, and Simine Vazire in collaboration with Mohsen Joshanloo (Gosling S. D., 2011). In our research, extroversion, conscientiousness and openness to new experience are taking in to consideration. These personality characteristics are associated with high energy, confidence and professionalism.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Participants' Profile

The sample contained 216 students from two best universities in Tehran. 119 females (55.1%) and 97 males (44.9%) participated in the survey. Most of the participants were single (88%). The student's level of education characterized as 133 students in Bachelors (61.6%). The number of students in Master programs was (30.1%) and there were 18 PhD students (8.3%). The students' field of study was categorized into 4 major clusters, the number of students in Fundamental Sciences was 67 (31%), students in business studies were 56 (25.9%), 47 students were in humanities and behavioral science (21.8%) and 46 in technical and engineering Science (21.3%). According to the mean score and standard deviation of the age ($M = 23.29$, $SD=3.88$), it can be said that most students were typically young adults and the ages did not have a wide variation. The ages of the sample ranged from 19 to 35.

Table 1. Demographic variables frequencies

	Variables	Participants	Percentage
Gender	Female	119	55.1
	Male	97	44.9
Age	Below 20	30	13.9
	20-30	178	82.4
	Above 30	8	3.7
Majors	Fundamental Science	67	31
	Business Studies	56	25.9
	Humanities and Behavioral Science	47	21.8
	Technical and Engineering Science	46	21.3
Educational Level	Bachelors	133	61.6
	Masters	65	30.1
	PHD	18	8.3
Marital Status	Single	190	88
	Married	26	12

5.2 Exploratory Analysis for the Dimensions of Employer

Attractiveness

The statistical processing of the survey data was conducted by using SPSS software package. To answer what factors the students consider important when in view of potential employer, we used an exploratory approach with taking in to consideration that there is no study which assess the factorial structure of EMPAT scale in Iran. As we assume that distinct factors can be identified, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on sample. Principal Component analysis with Varimax rotation and extraction according to the MINEIGEN criterion (all factors with eigenvalues of greater than 1) was employed. The five factors explained a cumulative 54% of the disparity in the data. Table 2 shows the items sorted by loading from the rotated factor matrix. It can be seen that out of 25 items, 15 items loaded in five factors .Items 11-14 load on factor 1, items 16, 18, 20 and 22 load on factor 2, items 4 and 5 load on factor 3, items 2, 10 and 23 load on factor 4, and finally items 24 and 25 load on factor 5.

Factor 1, labelled “innovativeness”, evaluates the extent to which an employer can attract an individual by providing him/her a working environment, which is innovative and creative. In a way that the individual’s creativity is used and appreciated by applying novel work practices, and finally high- quality and innovative production. Factor 2, labelled “giving back to society”, assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that is beneficial to the society, which is devoted to fulfill society needs, that is both customer orientated and humanitarian. Factor 3, labelled “self-achievement”, assesses the extent of self-worth and confidence that is provided by the employer. Factor 4 which is labelled

“happiness” that assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides a working environment that is fun, happy and exciting. The fifth factor labelled “economic achievement” assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides an above average salary and attractive compensation package.

Reliability analyses were also conducted. For the reliability test, the Cronbach alpha score of more than 0.7 is recommended (Cronbach, 1970). Composites were calculated by averaging the ratings for items associated with each practice. The sample results indicated reasonable Cronbach alpha for each composites; innovativeness $\alpha = 0.81$; giving back to society $\alpha = 0.70$; self-achievement $\alpha = 0.80$; happiness $\alpha = 0.70$ and for economic achievement $\alpha = 0.84$.

5.3 Confirmatory Analysis for Dimensions of Employer

Attractiveness

After identifying five distinct factors, by application of principal components analysis, the next phase is to confirm the factor structure on sample. We conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis, using Amos software. The proposed model with the standardized regression weights (factor loadings) for the common factor and each of the indicator are represented in Figure 3. As can be seen, the model entails a five-factor structure. (Innovativeness, giving back to society, self-achievement, happiness and economic achievement) with the detected items loading in accordance with the discovered factor loadings in the exploratory analysis of sample.

In order to see whether this five-factor model produced the best fit to the data or not, a number of tests were observed. The chi-square test provides a statistical test

that the model fits the data, and generally χ^2 divided by the degree of freedom (df) is believed to be fitting when is less than five. In this research, the χ^2 related to the five-factor model was 164.72 and $df = 80$ Thus, the χ^2/df is 2.059 which is less than 5 indicating that the model fits the data.

In addition, other absolute fit indices are also usually used for overall goodness of fit. Root mean square residual (RMR) which is the square root of the discrepancy between the sample covariance matrix and the model covariance matrix. Typically a figure of less than 0.1 is advised; the other indices is adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI). A measure of fit between the hypothesized model and the observed covariance matrix is explained by the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI). It ranges between 0 and 1, where a score of more than 0.8 is suggested. The last index is comparative fit index (CFI). Examining the difference between the data and the hypothesized model can be done by the comparative fit index (CFI). The range of CFI values is from 0 to 1, where larger values signifying better fit where a figure of more than 0.90 is agreed . (Bentler, 1990). In this five factor model, the RMR = 0.056, AGFI = 0.86 and CFI = 0.912. These figures suggest that the model fits the data soundly.

Table 2. Factor analysis of employer attractiveness dimensions

Rotated Component Matrix											
components	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings				
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %		
1	6.86	27.47	27.47	6.86	27.47	27.47	2.98	11.95	11.95		
2	1.94	7.78	35.26	1.94	7.78	35.26	2.88	11.52	23.47		
3	1.63	6.54	41.80	1.63	6.54	41.80	2.80	11.22	34.70		
4	1.48	5.92	47.73	1.48	5.92	47.73	2.59	10.36	45.07		
5	1.37	5.48	53.21	1.37	5.48	53.21	2.03	8.149	53.21		
							Factor Loading				
							1	2	3	4	5
	Q11.	Innovative employer-novel work practices					0.68				
	Q12.	The organization values and makes use of your creativity					0.77				
	Q13.	The organization produces high quality					0.72				
	Q14.	The organization produces innovative					0.78				
	Q16.	Humanitarian Organization						0.52			
	Q18.	Opportunity to teach others what you learned						0.65			
	Q20.	The organization which is customer oriented						0.72			
	Q22.	Hands on interdepartmental experience						0.65			
	Q4.	Feeling good about yourself							0.81		
	Q5.	Feeling more self-confidence about yourself							0.70		
	Q2.	A fun working environment								0.75	
	Q10.	Working in an exciting environment								0.63	
	Q23.	Happy working environment								0.75	
	Q24.	An above average basic salary									0.78
	Q25.	An attractive overall compensation package									0.83

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis, rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, factor loadings less than 0.5 are repressed, rotation converged in 5 iterations.

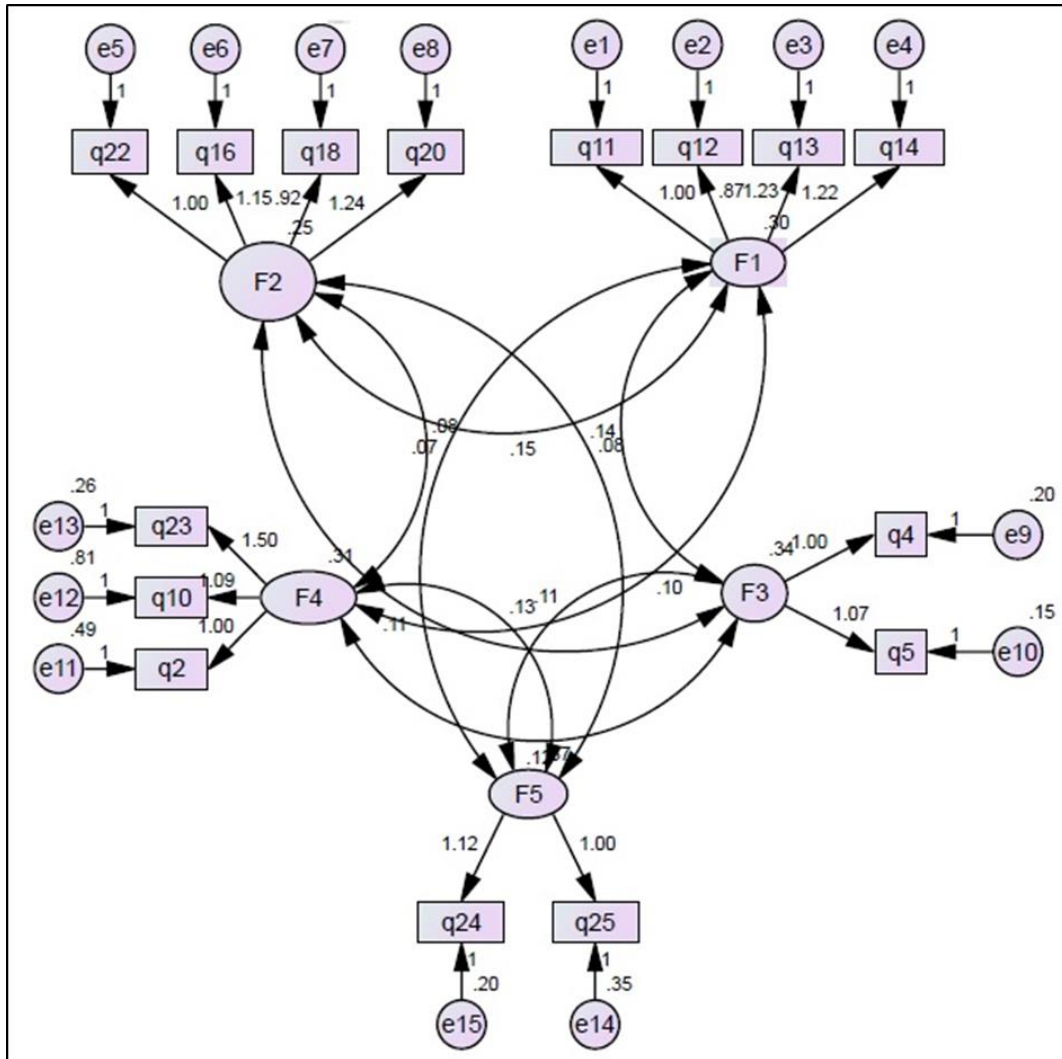


Figure 3. Confirmatory factor analysis for employer attractiveness dimensions

As expected, our first hypothesis was supported. The employer attractiveness dimensions was a multi-dimensional concept, in our sample data, we found five distinct factors. Labelled as innovativeness, giving back to society, self-achievement, happiness and economic achievement. For further enquiry, the ranking order of the attractiveness dimensions were displayed in accordance to the mean of each dimension. As can be seen in the table, self-achievement (M=4.44) and innovativeness (M=4.25) were ranked as the most important two factors, followed by economic achievement (M=4.17).

Table 3. Attractive employer factors ranked in order of their means

Ranking	Factor	Means	SD
1	Self- Achievement	4.44	0.66
2	Innovativeness	4.25	0.64
3	Economic Achievement	4.17	0.74
4	Giving Back to Society	3.77	0.64
5	Happiness	3.73	0.77

5.4 Exploratory Analysis for Recruitment-Related Marketing

Activities

In order to answer the question what categories of marketing activities can be attractive in the recruitment market, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the Collins and Steven's (2002) scale of the recruitment activities on the Iranian sample. With the assumption that, distinct activities can be identified. A similar factor analysis to the above was conducted on the data obtained from the Iranian students using part C of the survey. A principal component analysis with Rotated Varimax was carried out to group the items of recruitment activities into factors. Values with marked loadings above 0.5 were selected as important variables under each factor. Results of factor analysis are indicated in Table 4. As a result of factor analysis to examine marketing activities regarding employer attractiveness, it was found that recruitment marketing activities were grouped under four groups. In the proposed four factor grouping around 68 % of the cumulative variance was explained. Not surprisingly, the results of our factor analysis were very similar to the original work of Collins and Stevens (2002).

Out of 13 items of the scale, the only item that did not load on any factor was question 34 which was indicating the organization's relationship with career offices. All the other items loaded on the same factors in Collins and Steven's study. From

the rotated factor matrix in table 4 it can be seen that items 26 and 27 load on factor 1 which is labelled “publicity”. Publicity as represented by Collins and Steven (2002), is in fact the popularity of the organization, the extent which the organization has been present in the public media such as TV or newspapers, specifically in a way that the organization gains public awareness and visibility with low cost, since it is not directly paid by the organization .Items 28, 29 and 30 load on factor 2 labelled as “sponsorship”. Sponsorship in this survey measures the extent in which the organization take part in the donation activities such as donating implements to universities or sponsoring the university scholarship for qualified students, sponsoring the events and social activities in the universities. Similar to the publicity, sponsorship activities are struggling to gain awareness and visibility of the organization between the target audiences. Items 35, 36, 37 and 38 loaded on factor 3 named as “advertisement”. Advertisement in this context is the extent which the organization propose detailed information about its job opening and recruitment procedures through advertisements in university or on its websites and brochures .The obvious feature of the advertisement is that, it is having high information load and it is directly in control of the organization. Finally, items 31, 32 and 33 load on factor 4 which is labelled “word of mouth”. Word of mouth in the recruitment refers to the extent which the potential employee is exposed to the information about the proposed organization by surroundings, in this survey the specifically the word of mouth of faculty members, university alumni and students’ peers.

Each factor was computed by averaging the rate for each item of the related factor. It is noteworthy to mention that the coefficient of internal consistency was conducted in order to estimate the reliability of the observed factors. For publicity, $\alpha = 0.87$, for sponsorship $\alpha = 0.78$, for advertisement $\alpha = 0.73$ and for word of mouth $\alpha = 0.71$. The

corresponding alpha for all the four factors resulted as acceptable which is more than 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951).

5.5 Confirmatory Analysis for Recruitment-Related Marketing

Activities

In order to be consistent in our research and to verify our sets of observed factors in the marketing recruitment context, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted similar to the employer attractiveness dimension that was done earlier in this research. Figure 4. indicates the four factor structure for sets of marketing activities in recruitment. As can be seen, the observed factor in our confirmatory analysis were in line with the factors revealed in the exploratory analyses. Similar to the previous confirmatory analysis, in order to test the fit between the four structure model and the data, we examined the absolute fit indices as follows, Chi-Squared test, CFI, AGFI and RMR following suggestions offered by Bentler(1990). The difference between observed and expected covariance matrices is indicated by the chi-squared test, if the Value of χ^2/df is less than five, it is showing a good fit. In our case, the Chi-square = 104.763 and degrees of freedom = 48, therefore $\chi^2/df=2.18$.

In this model, the figure of CFI was 0.941. The AGFI was 0.879 and RMR was 0.052. As stated earlier CFI is suggested to be more than 0.9, AGFI is preferred to be more than 0.8 and RMR is deemed to be close to zero. All the absolute fit indices that we examined met the appropriate criteria and we can state that our 4 factor model for the recruitment related marketing activities has a good fit with our data.

Table 4. Factor analysis of recruitment-related marketing activities

Rotated Component Matrix										
Components	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings			
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	
1	5.16	39.75	39.75	5.16	39.75	39.75	2.31	17.78	17.78	
2	1.36	10.52	50.28	1.36	10.52	50.28	2.27	17.52	35.30	
3	1.25	9.63	59.91	1.25	9.63	59.91	2.25	17.36	52.66	
4	0.99	7.64	67.56	.99	7.64	67.56	1.93	14.89	67.56	
							Factor Loadings			
							1	2	3	4
Q26. Top officials of the organization , are often quoted in newspapers or journals							0.87			
Q27. To see news stories about this organization (e.g., on TV or newspapers)							0.86			
Q28. An organization which you saw or worked on its donated equipment's or products								0.80		
Q29. An organization which sponsors scholarship in your university								0.82		
Q30. An organization which sponsors events (e.g., speakers, sport events) in university								0.86		
Q35. To see advertisement of the organization on the school newspapers or on the flyers									0.54	
Q36. An organization which its recruitment brochures or website give detailed information									0.65	
Q37. An organization which its recruitment advertisement catch your attention									0.72	
Q38. Job postings gave me detailed information about openings of the organization									0.76	
Q31. An organization which a lot of alumni of your university or similar go to work for										0.55
Q32. Heard that students who have worked in this organization and had good experience										0.79
Q33. Your faculty think this organization is a good place to go to work										0.73

Note: Extraction Method: Principal component analysis, Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, Factor loadings less than 0.5 are repressed, Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

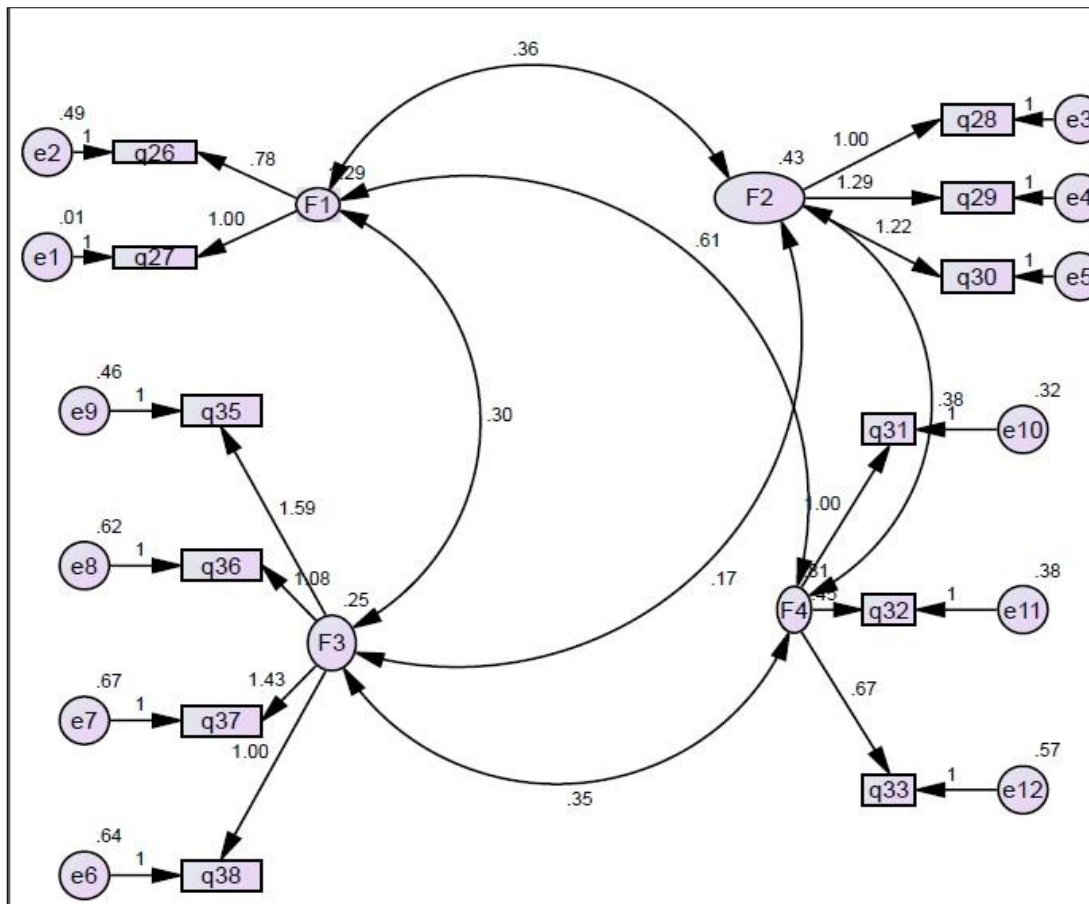


Figure 4. Confirmatory factor analysis for recruitment-related marketing activities

As expected, the second hypothesis was supported. The recruitment related activities categorized in to distinct different groups (Publicity, Sponsorship, Word of Mouth and Advertising). For future investigation, we ranked the attractiveness level of each activity according to its parallel mean. As indicated by table 5, word of mouth (M=4.02) and advertising (M=3.77) were ranked highly as attractive marketing activities in the recruitment.

Table 5. Attractive recruitment-related marketing activities ranked in order of means

Ranking	Factor	Means	SD
1	Word of Mouth	4.02	0.74
2	Advertising	3.77	0.75
3	Sponsorship	3.47	0.86
4	Publicity	2.99	1.07

5.6 Demographic Variables and Scale Variables

As specified in the hypothesis development section, the two demographic variables that we are interested to investigate are the major and gender of the respondents. As indicated in the data frequency table, there is not high age variation in our sample. In addition, 88% of our sample are single. Therefore, we cannot have a meaningful comparison between married and single respondent. In relation to level of education, more than 60% are at the undergraduate level. Accordingly, the comparison between the levels of education, marital status and age would not be representative.

5.6.1 Attractive Employer Dimensions and Gender

After identifying the five distinct dimensions for employer attractiveness scale, composite variable were computed. In order to test whether our scale variables of employer attractiveness dimensions change by gender, independent-samples t-test was conducted. Results are shown in table 6.

Table 6. Independent sample t test, average importance level of employer attractiveness factors between females and males

Employer Attractiveness Dimensions	Gender		t	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Innovativeness	4.30 (0.61)	4.19 (0.68)	1.25	0.210
Giving Back to Society	3.79 (0.63)	3.75 (0.66)	0.48	0.626
Self-Achievement	4.60 (0.49)	4.25 (0.79)	4.02	0.000***
Happiness	3.78 (0.73)	3.67 (0.82)	1.02	0.308
Economic Achievement	4.27 (0.68)	4.05 (0.79)	2.18	0.030*

Note: * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means.

As can be interpreted from the given table, concerning the “Self -Achievement” aspect of the employer, there was a significant effect for gender, $t = 4.02$, $p < .001$, with female receiving higher scores than male potential employees. Likewise, it can be seen that, female applicants with mean score of ($M=4.27$) were significantly more

concerned about economic achievement than men ($M=4.05$) with $t = 2.18$, at $p < 0.05$. Therefore, our hypothesis 3a is partly supported. For the other aspects of employer attractiveness, t test failed to reveal any reliable significant difference between female and male potential employees.

5.6.2 Attractive Employer Dimensions and Field of Study

In order to test whether the importance of dimensions of employer attractiveness vary according to respondents' field of study, one-way ANOVA test was conducted.

Table 6 depicted the results.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA test, average importance level of employer attractiveness factors between four different major

Employer attractiveness dimensions	Field of Study				F	Sig.
	Fundamental Science	Business Studies	Humanities Science	Technical Science		
Innovativeness	4.27 (0.66)	4.17 (0.64)	4.29 (0.69)	4.28 (0.56)	0.37	0.773
Giving Back to Society	3.79 (0.60)	3.71 (0.66)	3.89 (0.75)	3.71 (0.55)	0.86	0.459
Self- Achievement	4.34 (0.74)	4.36 (0.70)	4.55 (0.61)	4.47 (0.55)	0.97	0.406
Happiness	3.52 (0.70)	3.83 (0.82)	3.82 (0.75)	3.81 (0.77)	2.45	0.064
Economic Achievement	4.00 (0.73)	4.30 (0.67)	4.19 (0.83)	4.27 (0.69)	2.09	0.102

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means

Based on the above table, it can be said that the average importance level of employer attractiveness dimensions did not differ significantly between the students from different major of studies. Leading to rejection of hypothesis 3b.

5.6.3 Recruitment-Related Marketing Activities and Gender

To examine whether there is significant differences between genders in the attitudes toward attractiveness of each recruitment marketing activities, independent sample t test was conducted. Table 8 shows the outcomes.

Table 8. Independent sample t test, average attractiveness level of recruitment marketing factors between females and males

Recruitment-related Marketing Activities	Gender		t	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Publicity	3.07 (1.01)	2.88 (1.13)	1.32	0.188
Sponsorship	3.53 (0.80)	3.39 (0.94)	1.14	0.252
Word of Mouth	4.15 (0.69)	3.85 (0.77)	3.00	0.003**
Advertisement	3.51 (0.73)	3.27 (0.75)	2.37	0.018*

Note: * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .01$. Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means

The independent sample t-test, indicates the level that females are attracted to word of mouth is significantly higher than men, with the mean score of (M=4.15) for women in compare to men (M=3.85), (t=3, $p < 0.001$). Likewise female perceived the attractiveness of advertisement higher than men did with the mean score of (M=3.51) in compare to men (M=3.27), (t=2.37, $p < 0.05$). Other recruitment related marketing activities, did not differ statistically significant by gender. Hypothesis 4a is partly supported.

5.6.4 Recruitment-Related Marketing Activities and Field of Study

To examine whether students from different field of study have different attitude toward the attractiveness of recruitment related marketing activities, one-way ANOVA test was conducted, and table 9 summarized the results.

Table 9. One-way ANOVA test, average attractiveness level of recruitment marketing factors between different fields of study

Recruitment-related Marketing Activities	Field of Study				F	Sig.
	Fundamental Science	Business Studies	Humanities Science	Technical Science		
Publicity	2.89 (1.08)	3.08 (1.09)	3.21 (1.04)	2.80 (1.03)	1.00	0.392
Sponsorship	3.51 (0.83)	3.41 (0.84)	3.65 (0.81)	3.28 (0.98)	1.55	0.202
Word of mouth	4.00 (0.77)	4.02 (0.69)	4.17 (0.68)	3.99 (0.81)	0.55	0.645
Advertising	3.38 (0.71)	3.49 (0.73)	3.41 (0.81)	3.30 (0.78)	1.45	0.229

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means

As can be inferred from table 9, students from different fields of study, do not have significantly different attitude toward attractiveness of recruitment marketing sets.

(P-value for all variables >0.05 and >0.01). As a result, hypothesis 4 b is rejected.

5.7 Correlations of Personality Traits and Employer Attractiveness

Dimensions

In this section, the relationship between the employer attractiveness factors and personality traits of the potential employee is investigated. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the potential applicants' perceived attractive dimensions (innovativeness, happiness and achievement aspect) and applicants' personality traits (extroversion, openness to new experience and conscientiousness). The results are shown in table 10.

Table 10. Correlations; attractive employer dimensions and applicants personality

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Innovativeness	-						
2. Happiness	0.298**	-					
3. Self –Achievement	0.394**	0.339**	-				
4. Economic Achievement	0.189**	0.299**	0.221**	-			
5. Extroversion	0.091	0.242**	0.091	0.115	-		
6. Openness	0.326**	0.262**	0.201**	0.117	0.097	-	
7. Conscientiousness	0.143*	0.055	0.208**	0.173*	0.167*	0.382**	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

For the extroversion aspect of personality, results showed that extroverts are positively related with happiness aspect of the organization, with $r=0.242$ at $p= 0.01$. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is supported. The results demonstrate that applicants who are open to new experience are positively related to the innovative aspect of employer as expected. With $r=0.326$ at $p = 0.01$. Therefore, the hypothesis 6 is also supported. For the conscientiousness feature and self- achievement, positive and statistically meaningful relationship was found with $r=0.208$ at $p=0.01$, Likewise, it can be stated that people high on conscientiousness are closely related with economic achievement aspect of organization as well, with $r=0.173$ at $p =0.05$ level of significance. Leading to confirm the hypothesis 7.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Results and Implications

The employer branding's importance has grown as firms engage in attraction and retention of employees. The effective employer branding practices is when the factors contributing towards "employer attractiveness" are recognized by the organizations. This study deals with the question of what organizational attributes are lined to employer attractiveness and with which marketing activities can be done.

In this study, the different dimensions of employer attractiveness were examined among Iranian students. In this aim, EMPAT scale by Berthon (2005) was used. Factor structure of the employer attractiveness scale was analyzed by principal component analysis. Further by confirmatory factor analysis. Factor analysis revealed five factors representing the dimensions of employer attractiveness (innovativeness, giving back to society, self-achievement, happiness and economic achievement) which were somehow different from the original five factors structure. This difference can be probably rooted in the cultural differences. However, the modified factor structure of the employer attractiveness represented reasonable reliability and fit with the data. By looking at our acknowledged factors, it can be inferred that apart from the economic achievement, all the other factors were among intangible values namely; self-confidence, happiness, giving back to society and innovativeness. It is implicating that the potential work talents are not just looking

for compensation but also they are seeking concrete values. Drawn from our research, it can be suggested to the employers to concentrate on these factors when developing the employee value proposition. When organizations work towards integrating these factors into the employment brand, they can hope to successfully compete globally in attracting new employees. Further, we made comparisons regarding the gender of the respondents for employer dimensions. Statistical analysis revealed that there is significant differences between genders. Female respondents attributed higher importance to self-achievement and economic achievement dimensions in compared to males.

In regarding to identifying the different sets of recruitment-related, marketing activities, Collins and Steven (2002) scale was used. Factor structure of this scale was initially examined by principal factor analysis, the results formed a four factor structure which was quite similar to the original four factor activities by Collins and Steven (2002), labeled as publicity, sponsorship, advertising and word of mouth. For complementary inquiry, confirmatory factor analysis was also conducted and revealed the acceptable fit with our data. Word of mouth had the most popularity among our sample ($M= 4.02$) and publicity had the least attractiveness. ($M=2.99$). It may be probably because of the point that the Iranian society makes more positive judgments based on word of mouth rather than what they see in the public media. It should be mentioned that by word of mouth, we mean credible word of mouth as the word of mouth factor consisted the questions, which were about the word of mouth of faculty members, current employees and the university alumni. Overall, it can be stated that managers should try to integrate these marketing activities such as detailed advertisement posting online or printed, campus sponsorship activities, as

well as engaging in building relationship with alumni or faculty members or take active participation in the media, to gain popularity between the students as the superior employer.

Likewise, it was found that there is significant difference between men and women in their level of attraction to the recruitment related marketing practices. Women were more attracted to word of mouth and advertisement than men were. In addition, comparison among students with different majors of study were examined and the analysis showed that there is no significant difference between students of different majors neither regarding any dimension of employer attractiveness nor in case of the recruitment marketing activities.

Furthermore, this research contribute to our understanding of the potential job seekers employer characteristics' preferences in relation to their personalities. The results indicated clear support for the compatible relationships between personality of respondents and organizational aspects preferences.

Useful inferences regarding human resources management and marketing recruitment practices are provided by the results. Organizations have to differentiate themselves from their competitors to attract skilled employees. Understanding which factors are valued in the view of the job seekers and which marketing activities are attractive in this case, may help recruitment managers to develop more effective job announcements. Additionally, when the perceived attractiveness of each attributes of employer, between jobseekers of different characteristics is recognized, the development of employment message will be facilitated.

6.2 Limitations and Recommendations

Inevitably, there are some limitations in this study. First of all, convenience sample was used in this research. Thus, for making more general implications, it is recommended that further researches be conducted with the use of more representative random samples. Moreover, since the age, educational level and marital status of the sample were almost alike, the current study was unable to make any reliable comparison in case of these variables. In addition, in order to avoid lengthy questionnaire, the short measurement scales have been used, which were not adequately thorough and detailed and may be a source of weakness in our study.

Furthermore, this study applied a general procedure in identifying the factors, whereas it is foreseeable that the elements of attractiveness and communication channels differs industry by industry. Advance research is needed to determine these factors in more specified level. Likewise, this study only concerned about the potential workers, however it is noteworthy to inspect the individuals who are already employed and have experienced the employment conditions of Iran. It would be also interesting to make comparison based on current and potential employees in more detailed manner.

On the other hand, it is useful to extend the study to include a dependent variable named as the level of attraction to a well-known company, explore the regression analysis, and investigate the relationships of the variables in more depth. It is also recommended to explore the validity of the survey by applying it on number of present recognized Iranian companies as well as gaining a reasonable gauge of the current position of employers in Iran in terms of their attractiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Part A

Please provide the following demographic information

- Indicate you gender Female Male
- Specify your age
- Your Marital Status Single Married
- Your field of study
- Your education level : Bachelors Masters PHD

Part B

For choosing your ideal and preferred employer, please rate each of these organizational aspects according to their importance to you.

1. Not at all important 2. Somewhat unimportant 3. Neither important nor unimportant 4. Somewhat important 5. Absolutely important

1	Appreciation and recognition from manger	1	2	3	4	5
2	A fun working environment	1	2	3	4	5
3	A springboard for future employment	1	2	3	4	5
4	Feeling good about yourself as a result of working for a particular organization	1	2	3	4	5
5	Feeling more self-confidence	1	2	3	4	5
6	Gaining career enhancing experience	1	2	3	4	5
7	Having a good relationship with your superiors	1	2	3	4	5

8	Having a good relationship with your colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
9	Supportive and encouraging colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
10	Working in an exciting environment	1	2	3	4	5
11	Innovative employer – novel work practices/forward-thinking	1	2	3	4	5
12	The organization both values and makes use of your creativity	1	2	3	4	5
13	The organization produces high-quality products and services	1	2	3	4	5
14	The organization produces innovative products and services	1	2	3	4	5
15	Good promotion opportunities within the organization	1	2	3	4	5
16	Humanitarian organization – gives back to society	1	2	3	4	5
17	Opportunity to apply what was learned at a tertiary institution	1	2	3	4	5
18	Opportunity to teach others what you have learned	1	2	3	4	5
19	Acceptance and belonging	1	2	3	4	5
20	The organization is customer-orientated	1	2	3	4	5
21	Job security within the organization	1	2	3	4	5
22	Hands-on inter-departmental experience	1	2	3	4	5
23	Happy work environment	1	2	3	4	5
24	An above average basic salary	1	2	3	4	5
25	An attractive overall compensation package	1	2	3	4	5

Part C

How much, each of these items will be attractive for you when choosing your ideal employer?

1. Not at all attractive 2. Somewhat attractive 3. Neither attractive nor
unattractive 4. Somewhat attractive 5. Absolutely attractive

26	Top officials of the organization , (e.g., its CEO) are often quoted in newspapers, or trade journals	1	2	3	4	5
27	To see news stories about this organization (e.g., on TV or newspapers)	1	2	3	4	5
28	An organization which you saw or worked on its donated equipments	1	2	3	4	5
29	An organization which sponsors scholarship in your university	1	2	3	4	5
30	An organization which sponsors events (e.g., speakers, concerts, sport events)	1	2	3	4	5
31	An organization which a lot of alumni of your university or similar universities to yours, go to work for	1	2	3	4	5
32	Heard that students who have worked in this organization are satisfied	1	2	3	4	5
33	Your faculty think this organization is a good place to go to work	1	2	3	4	5
34	An organization which have good relationship with the career services office	1	2	3	4	5
35	To see ads of the organization on the school newspapers or on the flyers	1	2	3	4	5
36	An organization which its recruitment brochures or website give detailed information about their job opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
37	An organization which its recruitment advertisement catch your attention	1	2	3	4	5
38	Job postings gave me detailed information about openings for which this organization is recruiting	1	2	3	4	5

Part D

Here are a number of personality traits that may apply to yourself. Please rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, Rate from 1 to 7 .

1= Strongly Disagree 2= Moderately Disagree 3=Disagree a little
 4=Neither agree nor disagree 5=Agree a little 6= Moderately Agree
 7= Strongly Agree

	I see myself as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39	Extraverted, enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40	Critical, quarrelsome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41	Dependable, self-disciplined	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42	Anxious, easily upset	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43	Open to new experiences, complex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44	Reserved, quiet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45	Sympathetic, warm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46	Disorganized, careless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47	Calm, emotionally stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48	Conventional, uncreative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix B : Turnitin Originality Report

6/22/2014

Turnitin Originality Report



Turnitin Originality Report

by Bahar Bahar

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