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A Study on Employer Branding in Seed Sector in Tamil Nadu

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

As an agricultural country, seed sector is one among the important segments in India. In this competitive world, hiring and retaining talent is tough. Attracting the key talent to the right position can be pretty much impossible without solid employer brand. At present, turnover intention of employees is the universal problem that haunts the organization. The present study investigated the relationship between dimensions of employer branding (social value, interest value, application value, economic value and development value) and turnover intention of employees working in Tamil Nadu seed companies.

According to the survey conducted by Indian Seed Market for the year 2019, five seed companies were selected based on the respondent's willingness to participate in the study. The participants were contacted through online. Google forms were sent to 390 respondents via mail and 150 usable responses were collected. Survey was conducted from March 2020 to June 2020. Ordinal logistic regression analysis was done to assess the relationship between employer branding and turnover intention.

The results showed that employer branding dimensions such as social value, interest value, development value was significantly negative to turnover intention, whereas application value and

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economic value showed non-significant relation. Hence, the study revealed that increase in employer branding resulted in lower turnover intention. Lower turnover rate further lead to reduction in hiring and training cost for new employees and thereby would increase organization's profitability.

Keywords: Employer branding; social value; interest value; application value; economic value; development value; turnover intention; seed sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

Each firm is working hard to provide high quality products and services to satisfy their customers. Thus satisfied customer would revisit the firm and become loyal customer in the long run. Most of the firm is concerned about their customers rather than their employees because they believe that customer's loyalty helps to increase firm's profitability. In recent years, turnover intention of employees is also emerging as a greater problem faced by the organization. Turnover intention is the voluntary terminations of members from organizations [1]. Talent is one of the most valuable weapons in any firm [2] and strategic tool for achieving organizational outcomes when strategically maintained and managed. In this competitive world, hiring and retaining talent is tough. Attracting the key talent to the right position can be pretty much impossible without solid employer brand. Employer Branding is the way the business is operated and shaped as an ideal place for job seekers, staffs and key players.

The brand image of the firm would result in the following outcomes namely, attraction and retention of talents, employer brand loyalty, employee engagement and turnover intention [3]. The measurement of employer branding will help the employers to assess the status of their organization in the market place. Further, it guides the organization to help in reducing turnover intention. Employer brand is the organization's reputation as an employer. Organization's reputation is in the minds of job seekers and existing employees.

Every organization has an employer brand, but the question is whether they actively manage it or not. Talented workforce gets attracted to an organization with positive employer branding and the employees will do their best to retain in that organization. To-date there has been no evidence of employer branding in seed sector. Companies with wide distribution setup and key talents are at better position to take on

competition. Indian seed industry is the fifth largest seed market in the world. In 2018, the Indian seed market reached a value of \$4.1 billion, registering a CAGR of 15.7% (source: IBEF report). It is further expected to grow at a CAGR of 13.6% during 2019-2024, reaching a value of \$9.1 billion (source: IBEF report). Being agriculture based country, it is advisable to have better employer branding in seed sector to perform better. Therefore, this research attempts to investigate the impact of employer branding on turnover intention in seed sector.

The main contributions of this work are to analyze employer branding in seed sector and to identify the relationship between employer branding and turnover intention (TOI).

1.1 Employer Branding

The term employer branding was coined and defined by Ambler and Barrow [4]. A brand is a name, logo, symbol or combination of them which helps to identify the products from that of competitors [5]. But building a brand does not stop there. It has been applied to distinguish firms and people. Employers differentiate themselves in the job market by highlighting the specific set of benefits provided by them in comparison to competitors and communicate it through external and internal media [6]. Employer branding is the image of the organization as a great place to work in the mind of current employees and key stakeholders in the external market [7]. Employer attractiveness scale [8] measures the five dimensions of employer brand that are applicable to employees which are interest value, social value, economic value, development value and application value.

1.1.1 Interest value

An organization uses employees' creativity, provide an enthusiastic workplace to develop products and services.

1.1.2 Social value

Friendly, enjoyable and pleasant working environment provided by the organization to promote co-operation and teamwork culture.

1.1.3 Economic value

It is based on the perception that the organization provides its employees above-average remuneration, job security.

1.1.4 Development value

The degree to which employers acknowledges the accomplishments of the employees and give career-enhancing experiences.

1.1.5 Application value

The firm offer employees the chances to apply their knowledge and skills at work.

An active employer brand is the key for organization's profitability. The decision of engaging employer branding to attract and retain talents among the employees' of Indian companies has been increasing [9]. Companies with positive brands get twice as many applications as companies with negative brands, and they spend less money on employees (Randstad report, 2019). Branding provides good relationship between firm and employees and a unique work experience for its current employees, thereby increasing the organization's brand image [10]. The employees of the organization are the first market that organization should focus [11]. According to Berthon et al. [8] "employees are internal customers and jobs are internal products". Employer branding enhances the urge in people to work for the organization, therefore employees' word of mouth matters, whether it is positive or negative [12]. Employees can effectively portray the brand as brand ambassadors because they fully comprehend the aspects of business ethics, goals and values [13].

1.2 Turnover Intention

Turnover is referred as an individual's estimated probability that they will stay or not stay in an employing organization [14]. Turnover intention occurs for many reasons. It is a desire to escape which is induced within employees and stimulated by outside factors [15]. The process in

which employees leave the organization in search of better opportunities become voluntary turnover intention. The employees are sent out of organization because of employee's inefficiency, to eliminate economic pressures or downturns in business are referred to involuntary turnover intention. In general, voluntary turnover creates monetary and structural stress on the organization. At least with involuntary turnover, the organization can make preparations to reduce losses. However, turnover intention disrupts business activities, creates work moral problems and handles various costs [16]. According to Abbasi et al. [17], employee turnover is the rotation of workers around the labor market, between firms, jobs and occupations. The existing generations of employees will retire and the younger generation of employees will take over soon. A major challenge faced by firms will be reducing turnover intention (retaining employees) of new generation employees because the younger generation has the tendency to switch their jobs [18]. Employees switch their jobs due to the wide range of employment options available to them, which is a challenge for the employers to retain the current workforce [5].

1.3 Employer Branding and Turnover Intention

An effective brand reduces employee turnover rate and enhances employee's loyalty [19]. Positive employer brand minimizes turnover intention of employees. Low turnover rates further lead to reduction in hiring and training cost for new employees and thereby increases organization's profitability [20]. Employer branding is continuously expanding by attracting and retaining employees [21]. According to Martin et al. [13], employer branding is highly influential for the whole employment experience as it encourages good work environment while reducing voluntary turnover. Employer branding is in close relation with organization's recruitment strategy [22]. Hence, branding brings high level of satisfaction and turns the organization into a great place to work by reducing turnover intention of employees' [23]. According to Karnadi et al. [24], if the business offers an improvement in productivity, economic, and psychological benefits, it can generate a strong incentive to continue and contribute to the organization and even decrease the turnover intention level. The hypothesized relationships are summarized in Fig. 1.

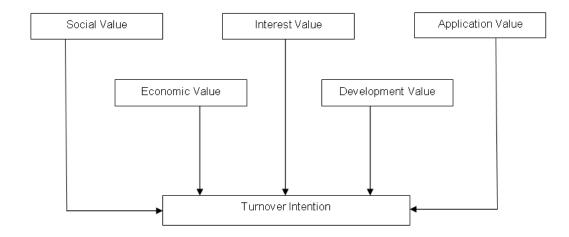


Fig. 1. Dimensions of employer branding and turnover intention

H₁. Social value is negatively associated with turnover intention of employees

H₂. Interest value is negatively associated with turnover intention of employees

H₃. Application value is negatively associated with turnover intention of employees

H₄. Economic value is negatively associated with turnover intention of employees

 H_{5} . Development value is negatively associated with turnover intention of employees

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sample and Data Collection

Five seed companies in Tamil Nadu were selected based on the willingness of the respondents to participate in the study. The HR heads of the company were contacted to get email ID of the respondents. The participants were contacted through online. Google forms were sent to 390 respondents via mail and 150 usable responses were considered. The

sampling technique selected for the study is snowball sampling.

2.2 Measuring Instrument

For this research, the questionnaire comprised of three sections which included demographics, employer branding and turnover intention.

2.3 Employer Branding

Employer Attractiveness scale [8] was adapted to measure the dimensions of employer brand (EmpAt scale). The scale consisted of five dimensions. Each dimension has five statements with a total of 25 statements in employer branding and measured on a seven-point scale using the likert type technique (from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

2.4 Turnover Intention Scale

Turnover Intention scale (Roodt-2004) was used to assess turnover intention of employees. The scale consisted of 6 statements and measured on a five-point scale using the likerttype technique (from 1 = never to 5 = always).

Table 1. Employer branding dimensions

S.No	Employer branding dimensions	Statements
1	Social value	5
2	Interest value	5
3	Application value	5
4	Economic value	5
5	Development value	5

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using SPSS version 16. ANOVA and ordinal logistic regression tools were used.

In this study, one way ANOVA tool was used to analyze whether there was significant difference in employer branding in seed companies.

Ordinal logistic regression was used to predict an ordinal dependent variable given one or more independent variables.

In this study, employer branding and demographic variables (age, education and experience) were taken as independent variable and turnover intention as dependent variable.

The regression model for ordinal logistic regression is as follows:

Y =
$$\beta_0 + \beta_1(AGE) + \beta_2(EDU) + \beta_3(EXP) + \beta_4(SV) + \beta_5(IV) + \beta_6(AV) + \beta_7(EV) + \beta_8(DV)$$

Where,

Bn =Intercept

Y = Dependent variable (turnover intention)

AGE = Age of the employees

EDU = Educational status of the employees

EXP = Experience of the employees

SV = Social value IV = Interest value

AV = Application value EV = Economic value

EV - Economic value

DV = Development value

 β_1 to β_7 = Coefficients of independent variables

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic Study of the Respondents

The descriptive statistics is given in Table 2. Among the respondents 80.67 per cent were male and 19.33 per cent were female. Majority of respondents belonged to 20-29 age group (71.33 per cent). Among the respondents 17.33 per cent had diploma, 70.67 per cent of them were graduates and 12 percent of masters background of education. About 51 per cent of the respondents had 1-3 years experience, while 35.33 per cent of them had 4-5 years experience. Only 13.34 per cent of the respondents had more than 5 years experience. Majority of the respondents were market development officers (64 percent) and 61.33 per cent of respondents

belonged to middle level of management. As per monthly salary, 55.33 per cent of respondents earned less than Rs.30000 and 32.67 per cent earned Rs.30001-40000 per month. Only two per cent earned more than Rs.50000 per month.

3.2 Measuring the Employer Brand (EmpAt scale)

Employer Branding for the five seed companies was estimated using EmpAt scale and the results are presented in Table 3.

Employer branding has five dimensions with five statements in each dimension. Each statement was measured on seven point likert scale with minimum score of 1 and maximum score of 7. Hence, the minimum scores of employer branding for each company was found to be 35 with the maximum score of 175. Employer branding of company A was found to be the highest with score of 104.46 out of 175, followed by company B (92.26), company C (86.67), company D (79.43) and company E (60.93) respectively. This implied that among five seed companies, employees consider company A as the best organization to work.

To understand the employer branding (EmpAt scale) across five seed companies, ANOVA test was employed. It could be inferred from the results ANOVA 476.48, *P*<0.05, indicated significant difference in employer branding scores among the five seed companies. This means that brand is one of the important factor that employee would look into while joining any firm. The reason for difference in EmpAt scale scores can be understood by studying the dimensions of employer branding.

The scores of different dimensions of employer branding across seed companies are presented in Table 4.

Each dimension had a minimum score of 7 and maximum score of 35. It could be inferred from the results of the one-way ANOVA that the scores of the dimensions of social value (ANOVA=118.49, P<0.05), interest (ANOVA=96.73, P<0.05) and development value (ANOVA=107.93, P<0.05) were significantly different across each company. The scores of application value (ANOVA=72.88, P>0.05) and (ANOVA=78.03, economic P>0.05) value were not significantly different across each company.

Table 2. Demographic study of the respondents

S.No	Variable	Indices of profile	Frequency	Percentage of the respondents
1	Age	20-29	107	71.33
		30-37	23	15.33
		38-45	14	9.34
		Above 45	6	4.00
		Total	150	100.00
2	Gender	Male	121	80.67
		Female	29	19.33
		Total	150	100.00
3	Educational	Diploma	26	17.33
	qualification	UĠ	106	70.67
		PG	18	12.00
		Total	150	100.00
4	Work experience	1-3years	77	51.33
	•	4-5years	53	35.33
		>5years	20	13.34
		Total	150	100.00
5	Level of	Junior level	54	36.00
	management	Middle level	92	61.33
		Senior level	4	2.67
		Total	150	100.00
6	Monthly Income	Below 30000	83	55.33
	•	30001-40000	49	32.67
		40001-50000	15	10.00
		Above 50000	3	2.00
		Total	150	100.00
7	Designation	Market development officer	96	64.00
	-	Finance	17	11.33
		Human Resource	9	6.00
		Supervisor	9	6.00
		Research and Development	7	4.67
		Quality control officer	4	2.67
		Agronomist	3	2.00
		Lab technician	3	2.00
		Software developer	2	1.33
		Total .	150	100.00

Table 3. Employer branding (EmpAt scale) across different seed companies

S.No	Seed companies	Employer branding (EmpAt scale)	Percentage to maximum score
1	Company A	104.46	59.69
2	Company B	92.26	52.72
3	Company C	86.67	49.52
4	Company D	79.43	45.38
5	Company E	60.93	34.81
One way ANOVA		476.48	
Df		24	
Significance		0.016**	

(** 5% level of significance)

Employer Seed company (Mean score) Company branding Company Company Company Company E One-way dimensions Α В С D **ANOVA** 28.48 19.53 Social value 22.57 23.86 14.49 118.49** 96.73** Interest value 21.11 22.51 17.22 20.38 11.93 Application value 15.89 15.57 14.17 14.39 12.52 72.88 11.04 Economic value 18.85 15.68 15.98 12.25 78.03 Development value 20.09 15.97 15.42 12.86 10.93 107.93**

Table 4. Mean score of the employer branding dimensions of seed companies

(** 5% level of significance)

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

Ordinal logistic regression was used to analyze the impact of demographic variables and employer branding on employees' turnover intention.

The result indicated that age, experience, social value, economic value and development value significantly predicted turnover intention of employees.

The R² value was found to be 0.642. It shows that independent variables included in the model contributed about 64.2 per cent of the variation in their overall turnover intention and this was statistically significant.

With increase in employees age, the odds of moving up one category in turnover intention decreased by 0.558. In this study, majority of respondents were from the age group of less than 30 years, who have recently embarked on their careers and they have high turnover intention.

For one unit increase in experience, the odds of moving up one category in turnover intention would decrease by 0.662. Seed companies require more number of employees at field level. Most of the employees with low experience fail to withstand the jobrelated stress and move to other firms. By implementing appropriate stress management programmes and attaching the same to be a part of daily work culture reduce stress and result in sustainable benefits to firms.

Hypothesis 1: Social value is negatively associated with turnover intention

Results showed that for each additional unit increase in social value, the odds of moving up one category in turnover intention would decrease by 0.578. It was found that social value was significantly related to turnover intention (β = -0.547, P<0.001) supporting H₁.

Social value, in this study, explains that positive superior-subordinate relationships have a prominent impact on work-related outcomes such as organizational commitment, which further leads to lower absenteeism and turnover. This indicates that employees leave their negating superiors and uncooperative colleagues. This result is consistent with previous studies, such as those of Kashyap et al., [25] and Golden and Veiga [26].

Hypothesis 2: Interest value is negatively associated with turnover intention

For each unit increase in interest value, the odds of moving up one category in turnover intention would decrease by 0.644. Results show that interest value significantly predicted turnover intention ($_{1}$ = -0.439, P<0.001) supporting H₂.

In manufacturing firm, employees give importance to creative experimentation, high quality products and services [27]. Hence, interest value is one of the key determinants for the employee to continue or discontinue.

Hypothesis 3: Application value is negatively associated with turnover intention

As shown in Table 5 the application value was found to be non significant with turnover intention (β =0.482, P>0.05). Thus, H₃ was not supported. Application value has no significant role in retaining the employees [25].

Hypothesis 4: Economic value is negatively associated with turnover intention

Results show that economic value was found to have no significant relation with turnover intention ($_{\beta}$ =0.513, P>0.05) and hence the hypothesis (H₄) is rejected. This is perhaps most of the respondents were below 30 years of age and they prefer learning and advancement opportunities over salary. The result is in line with [25].

Table 5. Parameter estimates for employer branding dimensions

Particulars	Coefficient	Odds ratio	
Age	-0.583*	0.558	
Experience	-0.412**	0.662	
Education	0.482	1.521	
Social value	-0.547*	0.578	
Interest value	-0.439*	0.644	
Application value	0.482	1.619	
Economic value	0.513	1.670	
Development value	-0.361**	0.696	
R^2 value = 0.642			
N=150			

(* 1% level of significance); (** 5% level of significance)

Hypothesis 5: Development value is negatively associated with turnover intention

In development value, for increase in one unit the odds of moving up one category decrease by 0.696. It was found that development value was significantly related to turnover intention ($_{\beta}$ = -0.361, P<0.001) and hence the hypothesis (H_{5}) is accepted.

The results indicated that presence of meaningful work adds to employees' decision to stay further. Employer should give career-enhancing experiences that act as commencement for future employees. This finding fetches adequate support from [28].

4. CONCLUSION

Employer branding plays a vital role in organization's recruitment strategy. The main motives of employer branding is to attract the talents and transform the organization into a great place to work. This can be achieved with the help of improved job satisfaction, better employer image and reduced turnover intention.

Employees are the assets of an organization who have the capacity to bring out desirable changes in the firm. Employers quit the organizations if their expectations are not met. Voluntary turnover of employees is desirable and accepted to some extent. However, turnover of too many employees disrupts the business activities. If the organization needs to be profitable, they must identify and control the factors that trigger the employees to move out.

In this study, various factors contributing to employees' turnover intention have been analyzed. With regard to the results of ordinal logistic regression analysis, it can be concluded that the factors namely age, experience, social value, interest value and development value have a significant negative relationship with turnover intention of employees in seed sector, Tamil Nadu. Hence, the seed companies should take more attention over negatively influenced factors to control turnover intention of employees. From this study, the employers must reinforce team spirit with supporting superiors and colleagues, creative experiments, reflective learning, enhancing career experiences, involving employees with offering ideas and suggestions, responsibility delegation and equip the employees with necessary knowledge and skills for the job performance. Doing so will increase the success of agri-business sector in the long run.

To improve the reliability of the study, the study can be expanded to other states of India. If the factors measuring employees' turnover intention is increased, the outcome of the study may be improved accurately. In addition, qualitative research design can be added into the future research. The study can be improved when both the qualitative and quantitative research design has been involved.

DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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