

Discovering an Employer Branding: Identifying Dimensions of Employer's Attractiveness in University

This paper provides a conceptualization and operationalization of employer/organizational attractiveness and employer branding constructs. Development of the university employer brand, specifically value proposition has been approached through qualitative research identifying dimensions of the university's organizational attractiveness. Eventually, a 12-dimensional questionnaire of 74 items was prepared and psychometric tests of validity have indicated its face and content validity.

Keywords: employer's/organizational attractiveness, employer branding, value proposition, university.

Straipsnyje konceptualizuojami ir operacionalizuojami darbdavio/organizacinio patrauklumo ir darbdavio ženklodaros konstruktai. Siekiant vystyti universiteto darbdavio ženklodarą, konkrečiai vertės pasiūlymą, autoriai pateikia atliktą kokybinį universiteto organizacinio patrauklumo dimensijų identifikavimo tyrimą bei jo rezultatai – dimensijų ir 74 klausimų psichometriniais testais patvirtintą darbdavio patrauklumo vertinimo klausimyną.

Raktiniai žodžiai: darbdavio/organizacinis patrauklumas, darbdavio ženklodara, vertės pasiūlymas, universitetas.

Introduction

“When 70 % of corporate value is from intangible assets <...> and skill shortages are acute worldwide, being an attractive employer is critical to keep a sustained competitive advantage” (Universum, 2010).

The nowadays reality - increasing knowledge-based work, shortage of qualified and competent applicants, workforce diversity, difficulties attracting and retaining desired talent (Ployhart, 2006) means that the ability to attract, select and retain right employees has become a key to the

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future organizational success. Since competition for the best employees becomes almost as fierce as competition for customers (Berthon et al., 2005), organizations have to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to be seen as attractive employers for prospective applicants (Lievens, Highhouse, 2003) and current employees. Employer's attractiveness or organizational attractiveness, defined as "the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization" (Berthon et al., 2005) is becoming the most important response to the staffing challenges modern organizations in the 21st century are struggling with. Employer's attractiveness or, simply, being a "great place to work" helps an organization outperform its competitors and achieve financial success. Why? According to the large body of research done by the Great Place to Work® Institute (2011) since 1980, the value of a great workplace is undisputed. To mention just a few benefits, it creates reputation, which attracts talents, it reduces turnover, fosters creativity and innovation of employees, sets a high-quality standard on culture, increases resistance against downturns or market shocks and eventually provides higher levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The notion of 'employer attractiveness' is closely related to the concept of 'employer branding' (Berthon et al., 2005) or the company's image as an employer (Vlerick Brand Management Centre, 2008). 'Employer brand' stemming from the application of marketing principles to people management (Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004) was first coined by T. Ambler and S. Barrow (1996) and defined as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employ-

ment, and identified with the employing company". The fields of employer branding and employer/organizational attractiveness have evoked considerable research attention ever since (e.g. Turban, 2001; Lievens, Highhouse, 2003; Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007; Schreurs et al., 2009; Jiang, Iles; 2011; Kausel, Slaughter, 2011, etc.). Dimensions of employer attractiveness have been operationalized, codified and are evaluated in a number of global and national 'hot' lists and rankings (e.g. *World's Most Attractive Employers* by *Universum*, *Gallup Great Workplace Award* or *Fortune's 100 Best Companies to Work For* list produced by the *Great Place to Work Institute*).

Nevertheless to consider employer attractiveness and employer branding to be just a fad or a significant new trend in the development of human resource management it is an influential approach (Jenner, Taylor, 2007) and there have been calls for more research on organizational attraction in general (e.g. Ehrhart, Ziegert, 2005) and clarifications on how organizations should develop and implement effective employer branding in particular (Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004). The present study responded to this call by exploring employer's attractiveness and branding in case of Lithuanian university.

Universities are knowledge-based organizations and their success relies merely on the expertise, competencies and excellence of their employees. It is an intangible asset that according to the Resource Based View of the firm (RBV) in order to provide a competitive advantage and "to be considered strategic <...> must be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable" (Wernerfelt, 1984). Human capital is valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable,

and non-substitutable through attracting and retaining top talent and also developing unique aggregate-level competencies (Ployhart, 2006). But talents are scarce. Desired competencies and skills are in short supply. Moreover, hyper-competition is spreading to higher education sector with far-reaching consequences (Sharkey, Beeman, 2008). Thus, university in order to successfully respond to the labour market circumstances has to be able to *attract* and *retain* their valuable and talented human resources. Therefore this paper is intended to identify and operationalize the dimensions of employer attractiveness in Lithuanian university and, accordingly, contribute to the theoretical and practical framework of effective employer branding and, specifically value proposition development.

The authors argue that employer attractiveness must be conceptualized particularly in the case of universities, in view of the fact that adopting measures available worldwide would produce unreliable results because of both national and organizational variables. The diversity and ambiguity among the measures of employer attractiveness have also encouraged not applying the "one size fits all" approach but rather to synthesize and create a measure that particularly fits universities.

Therefore, the **object** of the study presented in this article is the attractiveness of university as an employer. Consequently, the goal of this study is to develop and validate a scale for measuring employer's attractiveness in university. The following **objectives** have been set to reach this goal:

- to elaborate on theoretical framework of employer attractiveness and employer branding;
- to identify dimensions of employer attractiveness of the researched higher

education institution, Vytautas Magnus University;

- to develop and validate a reliable scale for measuring university's as attractive workplace's potential;
- to contribute to the university's employer branding and value proposition development.

Methods: scientific literature review, data analysis, pilot survey, psychometric tests of face and content validity.

Organizational/employer attractiveness

A theoretical framework of organizational attractiveness research encompasses three metatheories as suggested by K. H. Ehrhart and J. C. Ziegert (2005), i.e. *environment processing metatheory* which comprises of image theory, signaling theory, expectancy theory, etc.; *interactionist processing metatheory*, based on the idea of *fit* between individual and environmental characteristics (person-job abbreviated as P-J and person-organization abbreviated as P-O fit); *self-processing metatheory*, which involves relation between attitudes and views of the self and attraction to organization (e.g. social learning theory, consistency theory, social identity theory).

Organizational attractiveness as employer denotes "the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization" (Berthon et al., 2005), i.e. perceived economic value, interest value, social value, development value and application value (Jiang & Iles, 2011) or "the degree to which potential applicants/current employees favourably perceive organizations as places to work" (Jiang & Iles, 2011). From the interactionist

perspective applied to a recruitment context, organizational attractiveness is defined as “a function of characteristics of the applicant and characteristics of the job/organization” (Schreurs et al., 2009).

Research on organizational choice or the premises of organization’s attractiveness as an employer has been given a great attention during the past two decades. Investigations on factors of organizational attractiveness basically focus on instrumental (job/organization characteristics) and symbolic (trait-based inferences about organization) attributes (e.g. Lievens, Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007, etc.) and interactionist perspective, i.e. person-job/P-J or person-organization/P-O fit (e.g. Lievens et al., 2001; Kroustalis, Meade, 2007; Schreurs et al., 2009; Chapman et al., 2005, etc.).

F. Lievens and S. Highhouse (2003) have developed the instrumental-symbolic framework of organizational attraction and five personality trait-based inferences, i.e. *Sincerity*, *Innovativeness*, *Competence*, *Prestige* and *Robustness* have emerged as significant predictors of organizational attractiveness as an employer in their study. Further research in the field (Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007) have purified the scale of symbolic attributes to five broad factors which are *Sincerity*, *Excitement*, *Competence*, *Prestige* and *Ruggedness*. Later this scale has been applied examining the moderating influence of the Big Five personality factors (i.e. *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness*, *Neuroticism* and *Openness to Experience*) in the relationship between symbolic attributes and organizational attractiveness (Schreurs et al., 2009). Meanwhile J. E. Slaughter, M. J. Zickar, S. Highhouse and D. C. Mohr (2004)

have developed their scale of *organization personality perceptions* (OPPS) and also suggested that such personality trait inferences as *Boy Scout* (recently changed to *Trustworthiness* by E. E. Kausel and J. E. Slaughter (2011)), *Innovativeness*, *Dominance*, *Thrift* and *Style* are related to organizational attraction and explain differences among organizations.

Instrumental attributes signal the applicants about objective, concrete and factual characteristics that a job/organization either has or does not have and, accordingly determine company’s perceived attractiveness as an employer (Lievens, Highhouse, 2003). Instrumental attributes, in order to influence initial assessments of organizational attractiveness, should be visible, salient, manifesting organizational culture and values and, finally differ across organizations (Lievens et al., 2001). Research on instrumental attributes has found empirical evidence that medium-sized and large-sized, multinational and decentralized organizations were more attractive to potential applicants (Lievens et al., 2001), it was also revealed that applicants’ attraction to the Belgian Army was mostly related to such instrumental dimensions as team/sports activities, structure and job security (Lievens et al., 2007). The study by J. T. Nadler, N. L. Cundiff, M. R. Lowery and S. Jackson (2010) has suggested that work schedule flexibility positively affects potential employees’ perceptions of organizational attractiveness.

It should be noted that personality trait-based inferences have predominantly showed out to be a more important organization’s attractiveness factor and differentiator than specific job/organization characteristics (e.g. Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Martin, 2007).

That supports an evidence from marketing literature, where emotional appeal is given preference over functional benefits in the marketplace with similar products or services.

Further research on organizational attractiveness encompasses the dimensionality of organizational/employer attractiveness (Highhouse et al., 2003; Berthon et al., 2005; Tüzüner & Yüksel, 2009), effects of country of origin (COO) of an employer (Zaveri, Mulye, 2010), familiarity with the firm (Lievens et al., 2005; Turban, 2001), recruitment activities (Kroustalis, Meade, 2007; Turban, 2001), social context and organizational attributes (Turban, 2001), employee-based brand equity (Jiang, Iles, 2011), work schedule flexibility (Nadler et al., 2010), Corporate Social Performance (Turban, Greening, 1996; Albinger, Freeman, 2000; Nurn, Tan, 2010), etc.

Organizational attractiveness as a recruitment outcome variable has been also explored by D. S. Chapman, K. L. Uggerslev, S. A. Carroll, K. A. Piasentin & D. A. Jones (2005) in their meta-analysis of 667 coefficients from 71 studies on recruitment research examining relationships between recruitment predictors and applicant attraction outcomes. The authors have reported that perceptions of person-organization fit and job/organization characteristics were the strongest predictors of various recruitment outcomes (Ployhart, 2006). Interestingly, on contrary to previous research, E. E. Kausel and J. E. Slaughter's (2011) study from the complementarity perspective revealed that organizations should not trust similarity in personality as an attraction strategy of most preferred candidates. For example, the such an organizational trait as Trustworthiness does not positively correlate

with high scores on individual's characteristic Trust as a mediator of organizational attractiveness.

As T. T. Jiang and P. Iles (2011) have pointed out, organizational attractiveness is "the power that draws applicants' attention to focus on an employer brand and encourages existing employees to stay". According to the authors it is a two-dimensional construct, where internal attractiveness expresses perceptions of existing employees and external attractiveness perceptions of external applicants. It is a pretty novel approach to organizational attractiveness, forasmuch as previous research has put an emphasis on the potential applicants perspective (e.g. Berthon et al., 2005; Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005, etc.) and very few studies have involved actual employees (e.g. Turban, 2001; Lievens et al., 2007) which could help to explore an 'experienced' opinion and make an attempt to answer why individuals who were attracted and selected consequently retain. Admitting this limitation of organizational attractiveness research scholars (Nadler et al.; 2010; Ehrhart, Ziegert, 2005; Jiang, Iles, 2011) argue for more studies examining perceptions of workforce population.

Employer branding

The concept of 'employer attractiveness' is closely related to 'employer branding' (Berthon et al., 2005). Employer branding has emerged from applying marketing principles to human resources management in the USA and the UK in the end of 20th and immediately in the beginning of 21st century as a response to "brand power, HR's search for credibility, prevailing labour market

conditions and employee engagement” (Jenner, Taylor, 2007). Growing importance of intangible assets and intellectual capital, development of services-based economies as well as overall importance of corporate branding makes employer branding a strategic must (Martin et al., 2005). Brand management as a new performance discourse for HR professionals has is used to attracts applicants and retain current employees assuring their engagement in the culture and strategy of the company they work for (Beckhaus, Tikoo, 2004).

Employer branding is defined as “a targeted, long term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm” (Sullivan, 2004). Employer branding “represents organizations’ efforts to communicate to internal and external audiences what makes it both desirable and different as an employer.” (Jenner, Taylor, 2007). H. Rosethorn and J. Mensink (2007) argue that “employer branding is not a project or a programme. Nor is it a rush to freshen up your recruitment advertising. It’s a way of business life. Understanding what engages people and being clear about what an organization offers and does not, means that you are more likely to recruit and therefore retain the right people.” According to the latest research (EB Insights, 2011), employer branding also helps organizations to define the kind of desired applicants, with right cultural fit, build a more consistent employment experience and communication.

J. Sullivan (2004) claims that in order to be successful, employer branding must contain each of eight essential elements: (i) a culture of sharing and continuous improvement, (ii) a balance between good

management and high productivity, (iii) obtaining public recognition (great-place-to-work lists), (iv) employees “proactively” telling stories, (v) getting talked about, (vi) becoming a benchmark firm, (vii) increasing candidate awareness of your best practices, (viii) branding assessment metrics.

The conceptual framework of employment branding (see Fig. 1) suggests that employer branding begins with the creation of an *employer brand image* or *value proposition*. Value proposition is a central message to be conveyed by the brand what particular value is offered by a company to employees. This process encompasses self-audit of organization’s culture, mission, strategies (*corporate identity*) and the shared knowledge, beliefs, language and behaviours (*organizational identity*). According to B. Minchington and R. Estis (2009) “operating from this position of intelligence supports the construct of a message platform that is authentic, compelling, differentiated, and that will be internally embraced, appropriately received in the external market and consistently delivered upon by the organization”. Employer brand image, as an autobiographical account of who it wants to be forms *employer brand reputation* that is the biographical account of who it is perceived through instrumental and symbolic attributes (Martin, 2007). These brand associations affect *employer attractiveness* to potential employees and strengthen *organizational identification* among employees and, in turn, affect employer brand loyalty that is positively related to organizational performance.

This model could be complemented by T. T. Jiang & P. Iles (2011) further exploration on *employer brand equity* that is referred as the desired outcome

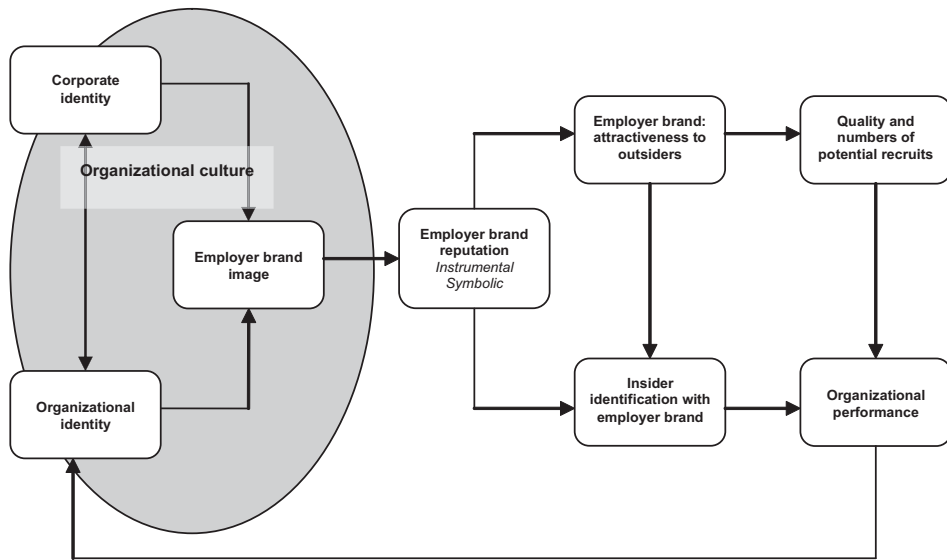


Fig. 1. Employer branding framework

Source: G. Martin (2007).

of employer brand activities in terms of brand knowledge on potential and current employees attracting the previous to apply and the latter to stay with the company (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). T. T. Jiang and P. Iles (2011) have suggested that employer brand equity is an antecedent of organizational attractiveness and, accordingly an antecedent of intentions to accept the job and stay in organization.

It is worthy to note that research on organizational attractiveness and employer branding has benefited greatly from the organizational ecology theory and research, namely the study on employment-based organizational identities conducted by J. N. Baron (2004). The author has called attention to three features of an organization's identity as of considerable relevance to labor market identities, i.e. *sharpness/resonance*, *focus* and *authenticity*. For example, Hastings

College of the Law in San Francisco for some years has been predominantly hiring retired attorneys and judges wishing to stay engaged with the law demonstrating the greater *focus* in terms of selection criterion than a typical law school. *Sharpness* is denoted in sense that identity is differentiating the orientations of key stakeholder powerfully from one to another organization (e.g. individualist vs. collectivist culture or formal vs. informal structure). In addition, *resonance* activates these distinctions along social, ethnic, religious, economic, political and cultural lines. Sharp and resonant identity is highly resistant to change, as J. N. Baron (2004) suggests "imagine how profound and immediate the effects would be within higher education if Harvard University were to announce suddenly that it is no longer offering tenure to its faculty members". Finally, *authenticity* is

referred as a credible commitment to the clients based on a non-economic logic for action and above narrow self-interest. As author argues, organizational identities, possessing all three features are reckoned as strong though authenticity is of prime importance for labor market identities. This study contributes to the theoretical framework of organizational attractiveness and provides with valuable implications for future research. Specifically, it could be surveyed how potential applicants perceive organizations considering aforementioned features of labor market identities and how their perceptions are related to the organizational attractiveness as an employer.

The latest research reveals that “employer image and attractiveness is the most important element of finding the right talent for organization” (EB Insights, 2011) forasmuch it helps to attract higher quality employees and enlarges the pool of applicants (Shahzad et al. 2011; Mahon, 2002; Turban, Cable, 2003). Therefore developing an attractive positive image and reputation as an employer is critical. Talents are scarce and their attraction becomes increasingly complex. If previously companies could spend 1 or 2 years developing and implementing talent acquisition and retention strategies, the competitiveness for talent is demanding to react quicker. “Even top employer-branding companies like Google, Adidas, and Deloitte are constantly seeking innovative ways to source, develop, and retain talent. If that’s what is happening with the market leaders, consider the millions of other companies around the world who have similar challenges”, claims Chairman/CEO of *Employer Brand International (EBI)* B. Minchington (2011).

Therefore striving for a competitive advantage it is imperative for the university to become an employer of choice and to be regarded as a great place to work both for existing and potentials employees. Addressing this ambition an efforts to identify and operationalize the dimensions of university attractiveness as an employer providing a means (i.e. questionnaire to assess employer’s attractiveness) for employer brand development have been undertaken and reported in this study.

Methodology

Based on S. J. Newell and R. E. Goldsmith (2001), C. J. Fombrun et al. (1999), H. A. DeVon et al. (2007), N. Parsian and T. Dunning (2009), D. Pennington (2003), the following steps were taken as part of the development of a questionnaire to measure university’s attractiveness as an employer: 1) the research area was defined; 2) a pool of scale items was composed; 3) two pilot surveys were conducted; 4) content and face validity of instrument was performed.

Developing a pool of scale items

During the development of a tool to assess university as an attractive employer, literature analysis and a survey of best workplace assessment methodologies used around the world (Fombrun et al, 1999, DeVon et al., 2007) were performed. For the purposes of the research, 7 international methodologies were chosen: *Great Place to Work*®; *The Chronicle of Higher Education. Great Colleges to Work For*; *ModernThink Modern Education Insight*

Survey ©; *The Scientist, Best Places to Work Academia; Gallup Great Workplace Award, Q12* ©; *Canada's Top 100 Employers; Britain's Top Employers; Aon Hewitt Best Employers, Australia and New Zealand*. The TNS Gallup's *Index of the Most Attractive Employer 2006* was also analyzed. All dimensions used in these methodologies are the result of long, thorough and purposeful scientific research, thus they are reliable in the measurement of an attractive employer. This allowed building the theoretical construct of employer's attractiveness and identifying its possible dimensions. General list of 71 dimensions of an employer's attractiveness was composed and narrowed down to 26 dimensions based on separate features. The maximum possible number of potential dimensions as recommended by H. A. DeVon et al. (2007) was retained. Additionally, dimensions were detailed to ensure that their perception is equal to a maximal degree.

Content validity #1

Content validity was used to verify whether the items in the sample are relevant to the purposes of the study. Following N. Parsian and T. Dunning (2009), target group of 15 content experts was set up, consisting of experts in various fields (human resource management, marketing, organizational management, organizational psychology, etc.) and representing both academic and non-academic staff of the university.

Even though 4-point scale is recommended for use in content validity, it is assumed that this scale is not sensitive enough in light of the fact that content experts are often prone to evaluate con-

tent items with high marks (DeVon et al., 2007). Because of this, content reviewers were asked to assess every dimension's importance to the attractiveness of the university as an employer, evaluating on the scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is "absolutely irrelevant" and 10 is "extremely important". In order to achieve high level of objectivity and distance themselves as far as possible from the evaluation of the *present situation* in the university, the experts were asked to refrain from analyzing current situation in the university in separate dimensions, but instead base their answers on their own expectations, i.e. points of view, opinions, attitudes and beliefs about the university as an attractive employer.

For the selection of dimensions, The *Content Validity Index (CVI)* was used, a tool which is employed to calculate the ratio of highest evaluations every dimension receives vs. the total number of dimensions (DeVon et al., 2007). Since 15 experts took part in the assessment, it was counted how many experts evaluated every dimension with a 9 or 10, that is, the dimension was seen as very important. That way all dimensions were ranked according to the number of collected marks (9 and 10) and, for further analysis, dimensions awarded high marks by 10 or more experts (i.e., two thirds of all experts were in consensus regarding this question) were selected. Using the CVI (no less than 0.667 accordingly), a list of 12 dimensions was made.

Table 1 demonstrates how many experts marked every dimension as an important one (second column) and how many of the 8 attractive employer assessment methodologies that were analyzed make reference to the corresponding dimension.

Table 1

Content Validity Index by Dimensions

Dimension	CVI	Frequency of reference to dimension in 8 methodologies
Fairness	0.933	2
Organizational Culture	0.933	2
Supervisor Relationship	0.867	3
Job Satisfaction	0.867	4
Training and Development	0.800	5
Working Conditions	0.800	4
Trustworthiness	0.733	2
Strategic Management	0.733	4
Compensation & Benefits	0.667	6
Teamwork	0.667	3
Work/Life Balance	0.667	3
Teaching Environment	0.667	1
Commitment to Quality	0.600	3
Effective Leadership	0.600	2
Career Development	0.600	5
Performance Management	0.600	2
Reputation	0.600	2
Employee engagement	0.533	3
Respect and Recognition	0.533	4
Work Atmosphere & Social	0.533	4
Social Security	0.467	2
Diversity	0.467	1
Research Resources	0.467	1
Organizational Integrity	0.400	1
Financial Success	0.400	1
Social Activity & Responsibility	0.400	1

Face validity

Seeking to ensure the *face validity* of the tool, experts were also asked to write comments related to the formulation of the dimension and clarity, precision of its elaboration, as well as suitability of the wording and its probable comprehensibility to the respondents.

Pilot surveys

In parallel, pilot surveys of the university's staff (n=70) and students (n=160) were conducted with the aim of determining their views and perceptions about the researched university. The staff were asked *why they are working in the university* and

for what reasons they would leave it. Individual answers were summarized according to the frequency of repetitions, revealing the value attitudes that help form the university's identity in this way. Student groups tried to explain *why I am in this university*. Like in the case of the staff, answers during the collective talk sessions were pooled into value groups. As a summation of the data from the pilot survey, a list of 149 statements made by the respondents was created, which demonstrated how they expressed their motivation in view of refined values. It is noteworthy that this process helped to identify viewpoints of both external and internal stakeholders and to ensure the synergy and integrity effect of the image (for the students) and the identity (for the employees).

Content validity #2

The next stage in the development of the questionnaire began with the expansion of the 12 expert-refined dimensions that

make up the attractiveness of a university as an employer with the statements made during the pilot surveys. Validity assessment of the statements in all of the dimensions was also conducted.

Another target group of 13 experts was also formed and requested to evaluate the validity of every statement in regard to the dimension to which it has been attributed as follows: *If your answer to the question "Does the statement measure the dimension to which it has been assigned?" is "No", please assign the statement to another dimension by marking the field "Move to the dimension No." or choose the option to "Remove" the statement. If in your opinion the list of statements does not include one needed to measure a dimension, please fill in the field "Other" by writing your opinion or offering a suitable statement.* Refining the list of statements the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was used. Its basic goal is to evaluate how essential a particular item is for the measurement of a dimension. D. Pennington (2003) argues that the proportion must be greater than

Table 2

Labelling Dimensions the Categories of Workplace Satisfaction

Achievement	Strategic Management
	Teaching Environment
	Work/Life Balance
Connection	Organizational Culture
	Job Satisfaction
	Working Conditions
Relations	Trustworthiness
	Teamwork
	Supervisor Relationship
Systems	Training and Development
	Fairness
	Compensation & Benefits

0.54, which corresponds to 10 out of 13 experts assessing a respective element as suitable to the given dimension. 75 out of 149 statements were eliminated using this method.

After a psychometric test of face and content validity, a questionnaire for the measurement of university as an attractive employer was formulated, consisting of 12 dimensions and 74 statements connected to them. Following the *Best Places to Work* methodology (2011), an approach was employed to transform the survey dimensions into specific categories of 'great workplace' (Ellemann, 2010). These are, as shown in Table 2: 1) achievement; 2) connection; 3) relations and 4) systems.

Conclusion

This study elaborates on the conceptual and practical framework of employer attractiveness and employer branding, specifically contributing to deeper understanding of employer brand image (value proposition) development.

It is argued that being the best place to work provides an organization a clear competitive advantage in the market allowing to attract and retain the most talented employees, satisfy customers' expectations, stay efficient and financially successful. Pursuing attractiveness of university as an employer it is advocated as a must both in the light of hyper-competition it faces and particularity of

knowledge organization it embodies. Consequently, after a review and synthesis of 8 research-based employer's attractiveness measures available worldwide, pilot surveys of a sample of 70 university employees and a sample of 160 university undergraduate students conducted as well as two-stage content expert review, the questionnaire for the measurement of university as an attractive employer was formulated and validated. The instrument comprises 12 dimensions of employer attractiveness and 74 statements connected to them. 4 indexes of employer's attractiveness, namely Achievement, Connection, Relations and Systems are also constructed.

Identified dimensions of university's attractiveness as an employer enhance organizational intelligence and support the construct of sound, authentic, compelling, credible and differentiating value proposition to be marketed to potential applicants and promised to existing employees.

In the next stage, a primary survey of respondents is intended to be carried out, after which the reliability of the questionnaire will be verified using the method of factor analysis. This will enable further elaboration on the employer branding in university as well as serve as an audit of university's potential as an attractive employer. Accordingly, gaps to bridge and areas for improvement will be targeted incorporating priority directions and goals into the university's strategy.

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UNIVERSITETO KAIP DARBDAVIO PATRAUKLUMO DIMENSIJŲ IDENTIFIKAVIMAS DARBDAVIO ŽENKLODAROS VYSTYMO KONTEKSTE

S a n t r a u k a

Šių dienų darbo rinkos realybė – žinių ekonomikos plėtra, kvalifikuotų ir kompetentingų darbuotojų trūkumas, darbo jėgos įvairovė bei organizacijoms išskylanti talentų pritraukimo ir išlaikymo problema lemia vis didėjančią organizacijos, kaip darbdavio patrauklumo ir išskirtinumo, reikšmę. Kadangi konkurencija dėl geriausių darbuotojų tampa kone tolygi konkurencijai dėl klientų, organizacijos turi diferencijuoti savo įvaizdį ir pozicionuoti save kaip pageidautiną darbo vietą tiek esamiems, tiek potencialiems darbuotojams. Organizacijos kaip darbdavio patrauklumas, apibrėžiamas kaip kandidatų ir darbuotojų įžvelgiamas darbo konkrečioje organizacijoje naudas, tampa svarbiausiu atsaku į personalo vadybos iššūkius, su kuriais XXI amžiuje susiduria modernios organizacijos. Kaip rodo tyrimai, be to, kad darbdavio patrauklumas yra puiki investicija į talentus, tai teikia ir kitą pridėtinę vertę, t.y. mažina darbuotojų kaitą, įtakoja finansinę sėkmę, didina atsparumą rinkos nuosmukiams, skatina klientų pasitenkinimą ir lojalumą.

Darbdavio patrauklumo sąvoka glaudžiai susijusi su darbdavio ženklodaros (angl. employer branding) konceptu, kuris pirmą kartą pavartotas T. Ambler ir S. Barrow 1996 m. publikuotame straipsnyje ir apibrėžtas kaip „darbo teikiamų funkcinių,

ekonominių ir psichologinių naudų identifikavimas su samdančiąja įmone“. Darbdavio ženklodara, kaip nauja ir įtakinga srovė, susiformavo personalo vadyboje taikant marketingo principus ir pastaruosius du dešimtmečius sulaukia didelio mokslininkų ir praktikų dėmesio. Daugiausia mokslinių tyrimų darbdavio ženklodaros srityje atlikta analizuojant instrumentinių ir simbolinių veiksnių bei asmens ir organizacijos vertybių atitikties įtaką organizacijos kaip darbdavio patrauklumui. Darbdavio patrauklumo dimensijos operacionalizuojamos, koduojamos ir vertinamos pasauliniuose ir nacionaliniuose „geriausio darbdavio“ sąrašuose ir reitinguose.

Visgi darbdavio patrauklumo ir darbdavio ženklodaros konstruktai stokoja nuodugnaus ir vieningo teorinio apibrėžtumo, todėl reikalingi tolesni darbdavio patrauklumo moksliniai tyrimai, ypač nagrinėjant darbdavio ženklodaros vystymo ir efektyvaus įgyvendinimo procesus (Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004). Analizuojant temos aktualumą šiame straipsnyje pateikiamas atliktas kokybinis universiteto organizacinio patrauklumo dimensijų identifikavimo tyrimas bei jo rezultatai. Atlikus aštuonių pasaulyje naudojamų mokslškai pagrįstų darbdavio patrauklumo vertinimo metodikų apžvalgą ir sintezę, pilotinį tyrimą, kuriame dalyvavo

70 universiteto darbuotojų ir 160 studentų, bei dviejų etapų ekspertų apklausą, buvo suformuluotas ir psichometriniais testais patvirtintas universiteto, kaip patrauklaus darbdavio vertinimo klausimynas, kurį sudaro 12 dimensijų (santykis su tiesioginiu vadovu, teisingumas, pasitikėjimas, pasitenkinimas darbu, darbo ir asmeninio gyvenimo balansas, mokymas ir ugdymas, mokymo aplinka, atlygis ir naudos, organizacijos kultūra, strateginis valdymas, darbo sąlygos, komandinis darbas) ir 74 jas matuojantys teiginiai. Taip pat statistiškai sukonstruoti 4 darbdavio patrauklumo indeksai.

Šiuo tyrimu įgyvendinamas pirmasis darbdavio ženklo daros vystymo etapas, kuriame kuriamas vertės pasiūlymas esamiems ir potencialiems darbuotojams. Identifikuotos dimensijos, darančios

didžiausią įtaką universiteto, kaip darbdavio patrauklumui, sudaro prielaidas visapusiškam organizacijos kultūros, vertybių, darbuotojų nuostatų, požiūrio, suvokimo ir jų lojalumo veiksmų pažinimui. Šios žinios taps autentiško, įtikinančio, patraukiančio dėmesio ir išskiriančio vertės pasiūlymo, kurį priims tiek universiteto vidinės, tiek išorinės auditorijos, pagrindu.

Kitame etape planuojama atlikti pirminę respondentų apklausą, po kurios panaudojus faktorinės analizės metodus, bus pagrįstas klausimyno efektyvumas. Šis įrankis bus naudojamas toliau tiriant universiteto, kaip patrauklaus darbdavio arba, kitaip, „vietos, kur gera dirbti“ potencialą ir formuojant prioritetines kryptis, nuostatas ir tikslus strateginiame universiteto plane.