
PERCEPTIONS ON EMPLOYER BRANDING : AN INSIGHT INTO GENERATION 'Y'

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1. Conceptual Framework of Employer Branding

The essence of employer branding is to attract talented individuals and ensure both they and existing employees identify with the organization and its brand and mission to produce desired outcomes for organizations. Employer branding begins with the creation of an *employer brand image*, what an organization's senior managers want to communicate about its package of functional, economic and psychological benefits; in effect, this is its autobiographical account of the employee value proposition (or brand promise). It also aims to influence wider public perceptions of an organization's reputation since both potential and existing employees also see their organizations in the light of what they believe significant others feel about it. The autobiographical account of the employer brand image is driven by an *organization's identity*, a collective answer by employees and managers to the 'who are we' question, revealed in its shared knowledge, beliefs, language and behaviours. This organizational self-concept is not just a collection of individual identities but has a metaphorical a life of its own, often independent of those who are currently employed in it. The second driver is the *corporate identity*, which is an organization's projected image expressed not only in the form of tangible logos, architecture and public pronouncements, but also in its communication of 'what it is' – its mission, strategies and culture. Both of these drivers are products of the more deep-seated notion of *organizational culture* the hidden, values, assumptions and beliefs that define 'the way things are done. Another important feature of employer brand reputations is that people work (and are intended to work) at two levels - satisfying the *instrumental* needs of people for objective, physical and tangible benefits, and satisfying the *symbolic* needs of people for meaning,

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2. Growth of the Concept

There are two roots to the family tree of the employer brand. The first lies in recruitment communications linked to the growth of the power of the corporate brand and the second in occupational psychology and, in particular, in the idea of the psychological contract. But in the last decade the concept of the employer brand was propelled into the limelight by combined effect of *brand management*, which was becoming recognized as a legitimate discipline and the 'people dimensions' of an organization's brand were being acknowledged and debated as people were the biggest costs on the profit and loss account for many organizations and therefore people-focused forces were powerful organizational drivers. Presently, this sense of affiliation to a corporate purpose is central to the people power of a brand and is at the heart of a strategic definition for employer branding.

3. Characteristics of Generation Y

Out of a population of 102 billion in 2009 about 426 million people were from of generation Y. This Generation Y is being raised in the age of the "active parent." Their parents helped them plan their achievements, took part in their activities, and showed strong beliefs in their child's worth. This generation has a strong sense of entitlement. Striving for a quality of life only known by the rich and famous, wanting the best and thinking they deserve it, makes Generation Y result oriented and ambitious, with high expectations. Going to college is no longer reserved for the elite, as there are many alternatives for school and college education and even part-time and distance learning forms of education. Generation Y grew up with technology and rely on it to perform their jobs better. Armed with Black Berrys, laptops, cellphones and other gadgets, Generation Y is plugged-in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This generation prefers to communicate through e-mail and text messaging rather than face-to-face contact and prefers webinars and online technology to traditional lecture-based presentations. Generation Y professionals have a different vision of workplace, expectations and prioritize family over work. They value teamwork and seek the input and affirmation of others. Part of a no-person-left-behind generation, Generation Y is loyal, committed and wants to be included and involved. Generation Y craves attention in the forms of feedback and guidance but lacks patience. Members of Generation Y are very tolerant of the diversity around them. Working and interacting with people outside of their own ethnic group is the norm, and acceptable and also they are fast losing the values and traditional lifestyle. They appreciate

being kept in the loop and seek frequent praise and reassurance. Generation Y benefit greatly from mentors who can help guide and develop their young careers. Position selection is behavior-driven. Generation Y'ers wants to take a job because they want to work there, not because they have to. Adding a personal touch is very important, in order to take away the dehumanizing feeling of the online recruitment process. Generation Y expects to interact with recruiters who are knowledgeable and skillful. They want specifics about the company, the possibilities and the opportunities. Personal contact is very highly regarded and usually taken over hi-tech proficiency in the recruitment arena. Generation Y is heavily influenced by the input of their parents. It is not uncommon for a member of Generation Y to hold off making a decision, even related to employment, without first discussing it with their family. Most families of Generation Y are dual-earner households. The concept of self, me, my family my job takes a precedence over the greater societal demands.

4. Research Methodology

The present research is a pilot study conducted to get an idea about the feelings of the present and pass out students of Delhi University colleges who comprise a segment of the corporate work force. The snowball sampling method is applied to select the respondents through questionnaire survey based on Likert scale across different colleges. The responses were solicited through the cooperation of the alumni associations and placement committee of 20 colleges spread across Delhi. It was targeted to have at least 10 responses i.e., 5 from the current batch of students and 5 from the previous batches who could be easily contacted. Therefore, the target sample was of 200 respondents. It is further assumed that there is no difference between different industries or organizations and across different courses also.

But in the limited period for the study there were fewer responses than the targeted. A total of 172 responses could be available, of which 117 and 55 were of male and female respectively. They were analyzed on three dimensions related to job and each dimension laid out four different aspects of related expectation and behavior responses.

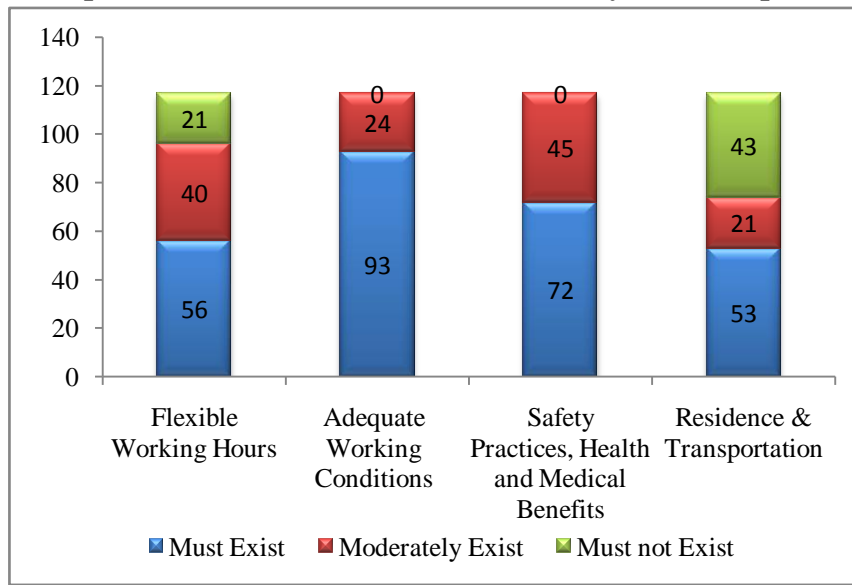
These dimensions were :

- **Work place and Facilities** : It included factors like flexible working hours, shift timings, lighting, ventilation, seating, medical benefits health and safety practices.
- **Career Growth Facilities** : Training and development, refresher, orientation, training attitudes and values and training evaluation comprised this segment

➤ **Work Culture and Responsibility:** Internal work motivation, promotional opportunity, employment security, and close supervision were assessed in this section

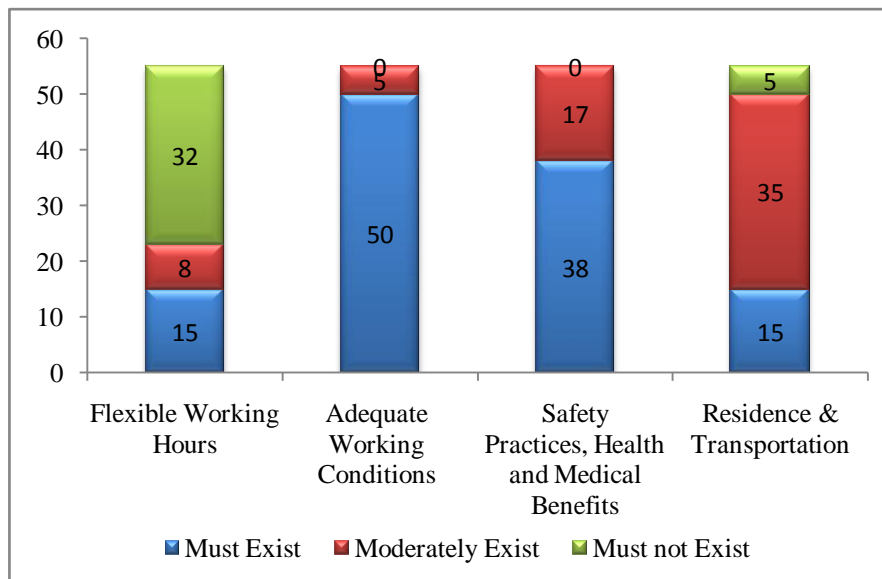
4.1 In this section an attempt was made to analysis perceptions related to job conditions of the present and prospective job holders in different jobs. The results of the survey are as follows.

Figure 1
Responses for Work Place and Facilities by Male Respondents



Source : Survey

Figure 2
Responses for Work Place and Facilities by Female Respondents



Source : Survey

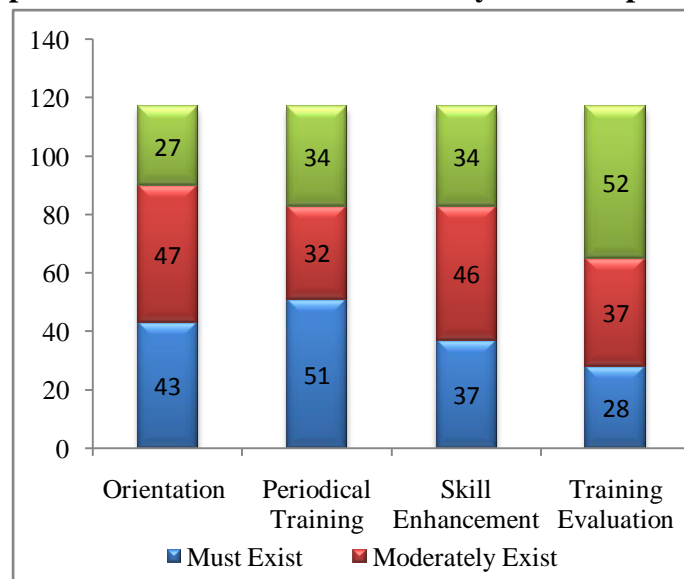
With regard to flexibility for working hours and shift schedule for the job about 47% of the male respondents agreed for it in comparison to 27% of female respondents. However 34% of male respondents and 14.5% of the female respondents were moderately inclined for the concept. But around 18% and 58% of male and female respondents were against the concept of shift schedule for the work.

Adequate working conditions is no more a motivational factor, rather an mandatory requirement for making the workforce to work. 83% of the total respondents said that they work only under necessary conditions for work being provided by their employer, whereas only 17% of the respondents were in favour of working even when working conditions are moderately satisfied by their employer.

Unlike yester years the practices for not only safety but also related to good health and medical benefits are increasingly becoming a part of the employment practise. As high as 63% of the respondents voted these being a necessary object while 38% and 30% of male and female respondents were not so rigid for these as a part of service conditions.

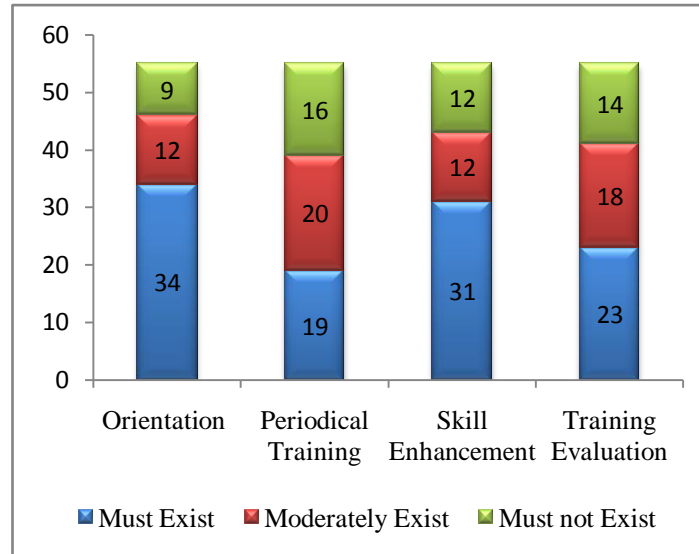
4.2 Career advancement where every employee dreams to embark upon even before joining occupies a pivotal position in the employer branding. The perceptions of the respondents related to this field are as follows.

Figure 3
Responses for Career Advancement by Male Respondents



Source : Survey

Figure 4
Responses for Career Advancement by Female Respondents

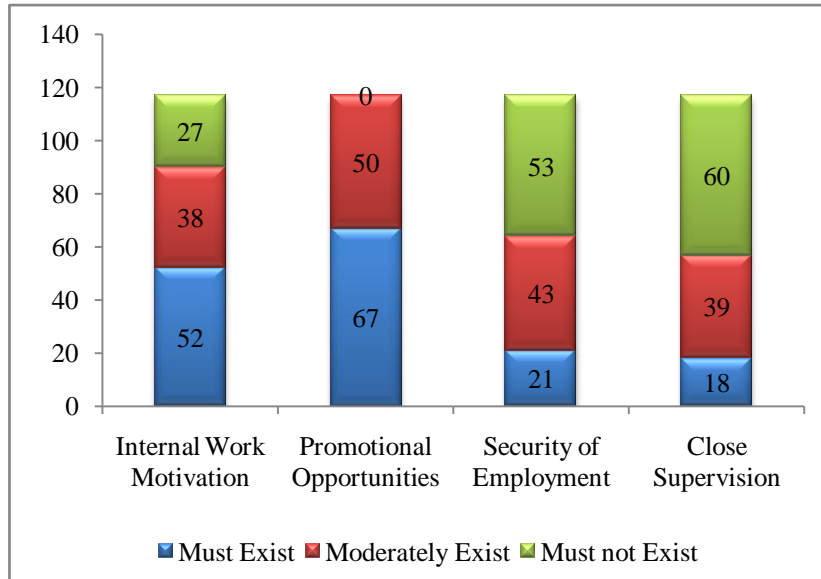


Source : Survey

The perceptions were evaluated on four respects like Orientation, Periodical Training, Skill Enhancement and Training Evaluation for male and female respondents. It was found that about 45% of the respondents were in favour of that orientation must exist, whereas 34% moderately agreed to the concept. For Periodical training 43% and 34% of male and female respondents wanted periodical training and 30% were against the idea of periodical training. It was found that male employees were more reluctant for skill enhancement as only 30% were willing that it exist as a mandatory requirement in contrast with around 56% of female respondents. The fourth one remained the grey area as 38% of the respondents were totally against the concept of training evaluation and only 29% were in favour for training evaluation with 41% and 24% of female and male respondents in favour of the concept.

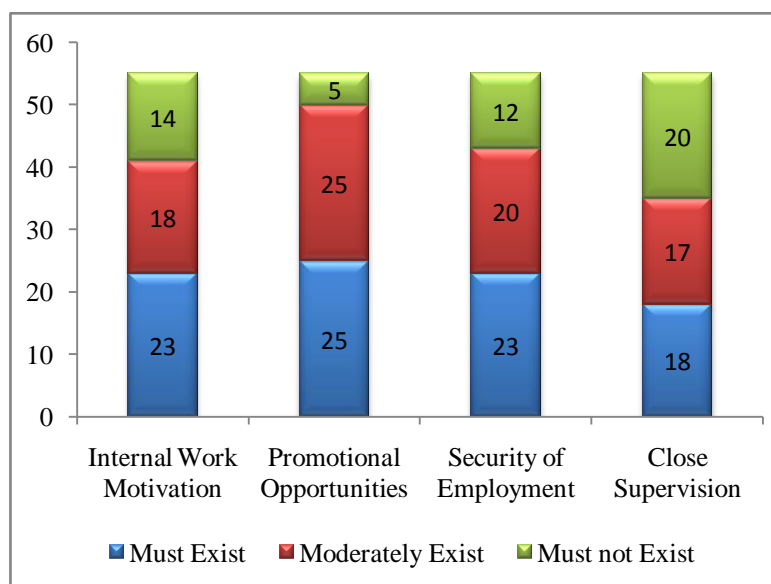
4.3 Working Culture and responsibility constitute a vital element for the efficient functioning of an organization, and also the tenure of the employees serving and organization grossly depends on it. In the present study it was analyzed with respect to internal work motivation, promotional opportunities, security of employment and close supervision.

Figure 5
Responses for Work Culture and Responsibility by Male Respondents



Source : Survey

Figure 6
Responses for Work Culture and Responsibility by Female Respondents



Source : Survey

In the above sections the responses for work culture and responsibility were analyzed. It was found that internal work motivation was necessary for 44% of the respondents in contrast to 23% of respondents for whom it was not necessary. Promotional opportunities were opined by 57% and 45% of male and female respondents respectively as essential for the job whereas for 43% of the total respondents it was not of serious consideration. 41% of the

female respondents were in favor of employment security as compared to only 21% of male counterparts. 55% of male respondents were ready for risk taking in comparison to only 21% of female. Close supervision was favored by only 15% of male respondents in comparison to 32% of female respondents. 51% of male liked the idea of independence in working whereas only 36% of female would like to be self directed.

5. Conclusions

As the attraction and retention of talent has turned into make-or-break factor for organizational success, HR professionals have had to develop a more detailed appreciation of the global talent landscape. Talent has always deserved to be a strategic issue, but now it is certainly hitting many more top table agendas. Organizations are being forced to consider their options like never before – from where the right talent pools exist and moving business operations to take advantage of them, to looking at what it takes to move the talent to meet the business need. When they feel loyalty at work, it is a result of a connection with their colleagues and their immediate boss; they want a sense that their immediate circle of influence values their contribution, shares their values and protects them from the work pressures that their parents experienced.

To catch their attention, a high technology campaign that is colorful, upbeat and modern is desired. The decision to take a position or not involves many factors for Generation Y. A good job is no longer defined by monetary gains alone. Therefore, the reflections of the pilot survey shows that it is not only essential for the employers to provide good working conditions but also due recognition to career advancement and equally matching working culture with ample of liberty. Thus, the following can be suggested :

- Encourage Employees Values: Any way to show appreciation for their individuality and let them be expressive will keep them around. Allow them to have input into the decision-making process. They want to be heard.
- Train the Employees : This is the most education-oriented generation in history. If employers want a job well done, tell them how to do it. Complete training and availability of answers is the key.
- Mentor Employees : They want to add to your company, not own it. Do not be afraid to give feedback, positive or negative. Make their work valid: Don't just give orders, give the reasoning

behind them. If you want them to do something, tell them why, in a way that lets them know the importance of the task to the company. They need to know they are making an impact.

- Provide full disclosure: They value fairness and ethical behavior, while also being skeptical. If they feel you are not truthful, they will not be satisfied.
- Create Customized Career Paths: This will create a sense of control that Gen Y desires and will provide them with a realistic account of their progress and their future with the employer.
- Provide Access to Technology: Having the newest and the best technology at their fingertips will attract and retain Generation Y employees.

The study can be extended on the basis of different disciplines, or a comparison can be drawn between present and prospective employees or across different sectors of the economy.

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