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Cultural Aspects of Employer Branding

Abstract. The article presents the results of the research carried out among students coming from the UK, Ukraine, and Turkey. Surveys were conducted in 2015 amongst 105 coming students from: of Great Britain (34 persons), of Ukraine (40 persons), of Turkey (34 persons). The study aimed to show the relationship between the culture of these nations and the employer branding. The results showed the existence of relationships between cultural assumptions and factors influencing the choice of taking up employment by foreign students.

Key words: employer branding, culture, nationality

Introduction

Contemporary organizations are accompanied by constant change. In connection with the changes that occurred in the labor market at the turn of the century it has changed the attitude of both the employer and the employee. The first one is at war with the competition for the most qualified and competent personnel, while the second puts increasing demands and expectations of the employer (Wojtaszek, 2012).

The increasing globalization of the business operations forces companies to recruit highly skilled workers from many countries of the world in order to maintain competitive advantage. Hence there are challenges to implementing and developing strategies to deal with intercultural differences within the organization. International cooperation and faster developing contacts also pose a challenge in obtaining

and retaining the right employees. As marketing managers working in multinational companies must master the global differences in values, attitudes and customer behavior, so brand managers should focus on understanding what influences the choice of employer for potential employees from different markets of the world, as well as analyze differences and similarities existing among them (Christiaans, 2012).

Employer branding is translated and understood as "to build the image of the employer" or "employer brand building." These are the actions undertaken by the organization, addressed to current and potential employees, in order to build its image as an attractive employer, as well as supporting its strategic business goals (Kozłowski 2012). The term employer branding has many definitions and its translation into Polish is not a simple task, given the complexity of the problem, which stems from the interchangeability of terms such as 'brand', 'brand building' and 'image'. As a result, the authors taking this subject call this issue in different ways, often describing it really the same process. The article follows the definition of employer branding for M. Kozłowski: "These are all

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activities undertaken by the organization, addressed to current and potential employees, in order to build its image as an attractive employer, as well as supporting its strategic business objectives." At the same time specifying the definition, it should be added that not all the company actions must be officially named employer branding to be included in such . The aim of the article is to show the links between culture and employer branding.

Cultural dimensions according to G. Hofstede

Dutch social psychologist Gerard Hofstede examining the relationship between organizational culture and the nation has shown that the public have the same problems, but differ in approach of solving them.³ He said that certain patterns of thinking, feeling and behavior that distinguish members of one organization from another, are typical representatives of the people (Hofstede, Hofstede., Minkov, 2011). He created a cultural model subjected to continuous development, in which he has identified six dimensions of national cultures that characterize the nation determining its position in relation to others.

Cultural dimensions proposed by G. Hofstede are (Hofstede et al., 2011):

1. Distance to the power from small to large. The very concept of power distance is defined as "... the range of expectations and acceptance of unequal distribution of knowledge, expressed by less influential (subordinates) members of the institution or organization. The term "institutions" set the basic social structures, such as family, school or local community, "organizations" are workplaces.

In studies comparing the values of leadership in different countries it has been observed that there are differences in both the mindset of leaders and subordinates - but their opinions are more reliable because we usually more objectively evaluate the behavior of others than our own (Hofstede et al., 2011). "Power distance" dimension shows the extent to which individuals perceive and accept social inequalities, and that power is distributed unequally.

2. Individualism and collectivism

In the case of this dimension a measure is a activity of individual or a team. This means that individualistic society is such, in which the individual is seen as an essential part of a larger community, and in the collectivist a man by belonging to a larger group gains identity by membership (Ratajczak, 2006).

Extreme collectivism and extreme individualism are two opposite poles of the national cultures dimension. When creating a classification of this cultural dimension individualism and collectivism were associated with specific factors. In the case of individualism these were: time off from work, freedom in choosing the right style of work and the work as a challenge, while giving a sense of satisfaction (Hofstede et al., 2011). Collectivism was assigned to the following factors: work providing training, good conditions in the workplace, as well as full use of the skills and competencies of employees (Hofstede et al., 2011).

Students from countries belonging to the individualistic ones attributed special importance to the values of tolerance toward others, no attitude to competition, harmony in relationships with others, satisfaction of the occupied position in life, and being conservative. In contrast, students from collectivist societies considered as most

³ <http://geerthofstede.nl/index> (08.07.2016).

important: obedience to parents, respect for ancestors, financial support for parents, chastity of women and patriotism and respect for tradition (Hofstede et al., 2011).

3. Masculinity. Different mental programming of societies associated with this dimension beyond the social character is also the emotional character. Social roles can be imposed by external factors, but it is how people feel from there, they lie deep within them. Defining masculinity, it can be stated that "... it is a feature of societies in which the social roles based on gender are clearly defined, it means that the men are expected to assertiveness, hardness and being directed the on material success, while from the women's modesty, sensitivity and thoughtfulness quality of life. While femininity is characterized by a society in which social roles of both sexes penetrate each other, that is, both the men and women expected to be the same" (Hofstede et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be stated that the dimension of masculinity and femininity distinguish between countries in which dominates the focus on competition and results, and those in which good atmosphere, concern for others and quality of life are important.
4. Uncertainty avoidance a dimension that determines whether a given culture, people readily accept the change or defend against them, trying to reduce the risk, also determines how they deal with uncertainty and stress in novel situations (Hofstede et al., 2011).
5. Long - versus short - term orientation is the ratio of the time in a given society and the importance attached to the future or the present and the past, and also deals with the ability to distinguish between long - and short-term attitude to life (Ratajczak, 2006). The present dimension consists of the following values: perseverance, economy, development of human relations by status, a sense of shame, and on the other hand: reciprocating greetings, respect for tradition, stability and a balance (Hofstede et al., 2011).
6. Indulgence versus restraint is the latest dimension, where indulgence is defined as the opposite of restraint; together they make up one of the dimensions of national culture. Indulgence is characterized by a society that allows you to meet the basic natural human desires associated with pleasure and joy of life (Hofstede et al., 2011). Cultures, which have a high rate of indulgence are a big contrast to the restraint, where positive emotions are not easily exposed, happiness, freedom, and the rest is not applied the same weight.

Restrictiveness is characterized by a society that limits the satisfaction of basic and natural human needs associated with benefiting joy of life and fun and they regulate this sphere of strict social norms "(Hofstede et al., 2011).

Interesting results, obtained during the research, is the work context in an international environment where the cultures of indulge put more weight on the freedom of speech and self-control, and in the restrictive cultures there is more sense of helplessness in the face of their own destiny. In the workplace it can be a reference in the approach of having and expressing their own opinion. In the cultures of indulge the employees in the first place put personal happiness and freedom, and therefore more easily they are willing to leave their job if they feel unfortunate there (Hofstede et al., 2011).

Cultural conditions of the factors determining the choice of the employer

Surveys were conducted in 2015 among 105 students from: the UK (34 people), Ukraine (40 persons), Turkey (34 people). Respondents represented 68% of urban and 32% rural. They came from different regions of the countries represented. Classification of cultures by G. Hofstede was taken as a basis for analyzing the cultures of selected countries. It was assumed that: there are relationships between cultural dimensions and assessment of the factors determining the choice of the employer. The students surveyed were asked about the factors that guide them when choosing an employer. At each of the 12 factors listed in the questionnaire they have to determine their validity using the scale. Job, including 27 people as very important and 12 as valid. Similar were respondents' answers from Turkey, where most of them, because the 20 of surveyed considered "stable jobs" as an important factor when choosing an employer (Table. 1).

Table 1. Factor "job stability"

Country of Origin of Students	Definitely irrelevant	Irrelevant	important	Very important
The UK	5	13	10	6
Ukraine	0	1	12	27
Turkey	2	5	20	6

Source: own research.

In the case of students from the UK responses divided respondents into those who don't attach importance to "stable jobs" factor where 13 respondents identified this factor as irrelevant and 5 for strongly irrelevant. The high number of surveyed students from Ukraine and Turkey indicating the nature of "stability" factor may be due to the "Uncertainty avoidance" cultural dimension which is defined as "the degree of threat felt by members of a particular culture in the face of a situation of new, unknown or uncertain" (Hofstede and al., 2011). The research of G. Hofstede shows that Ukraine has a very high rate, as many as 95⁴ (scale 5-115) for mentioned dimension, and Turkey – has the indicator 85⁵.

Cultures of strong avoidance of uncertainty, according to the classification of cultural dimension of G. Hofstede in the context of work, organization and motivation are characterized by longer periods of employment, less frequent rate of change of employer, and generally living in the name of the idea of "time is money". In the case of this dimension the main motivators are: meeting the security needs and the recognition of belonging to a group (Hofstede et al., 2011).

Table 2. Factor „Starting salary”

Country of origin of students	Definitely irrelevant	Irrelevant	Important	Very important
The UK	0	4	13	17
Ukraine	0	14	18	9
Turkey	0	7	12	9

Source: own research.

⁴ <http://geert-hofstede.com/ukraine.html> (dostęp: 20.09.2015).

⁵ <http://geert-hofstede.com/turkey.html> (dostęp: 20.09.2015).

Members of cultures with a low uncertainty avoidance, as the United Kingdom, frequently change jobs and are employed for a shorter period of time. They treat the work as a necessity, but at the same time have a positive attitude to idle, while in the case of cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, there is a great need to be constantly busy and hard work is an inner need (Hofstede et al., 2011). It can be concluded that students from Ukraine and Turkey treat job stability higher than students from Great Britain.

Another of the factors studied was "starting salary". The students evaluated the extent to which the amount of the proposed remuneration at the time of applying for a job is a decisive factor (Table 2).

For more than half of Britons the amount of initial salary was a very important and significant factor only for 4 people it was not important.

For students from Ukraine "starting salary" also mattered, 14 respondents considered it as important, and 18 as very important. For 1/3 of Ukrainians initial salary factor was irrelevant. Turkish students gave similar responses.

For most respondents, regardless of their country of origin "starting salary" is important. Moreover, none of the respondents declared that the tested factor is "definitely irrelevant."

Another factor that has been subjected to analysis was "partnership relations" in the workplace (Table 3).

Table 3. Factor „Partnership relations in the workplace”

Country of origin of students	Definitely irrelevant	Irrelevant	Important	Very important
The UK	1	2	10	21
Ukraine	8	17	11	4
Turkey	3	9	13	8

Source: own research.

They are more frequently indicated in the studies as one of the employer selection factor. Defined as partnerships, which should be based on the principle of equality of roles and rights (Korah, 2009).

Definition, perception and understanding of the partnerships varies among different cultures. For the vast majority of British students factor "partnerships" was important, ie. 21 respondents recognized partnerships as an essential element of choice of employer, 10 marked it as "important" and for only 1 person it was not relevant factor.

The result obtained in the case of British students may be due to the low power distance, which refers to the societies in which partnerships are rooted in the beliefs of most at the stage of childhood, where parents and children treat each other as partners and children treat teachers and vice versa (cf. Hofstede et al., 2011). The experiences and role models from childhood often are transferred later on relationships in the workplace, which in the case of culture of low gap might result in a partnership between superiors and employees, and goes even further in the context of organizational culture on small differences in wages between high and low positions. Additionally, these relationships also allow for situations in which supervisors use their own experience and experience of subordinates (Hofstede et al., 2011).

Replies of Ukrainian students strongly differed from the responses of British students. More than half of Ukrainians do not attach much importance to "partnerships". 17

respondents do not constitute it as a significant factor when choosing a job, and for the 8 partnerships were clearly irrelevant. High power distance, from the perspective of the workplace is characterized by a society whose members maintain formal relations and strongly feel dependency on people managing their heads (cf. Hofstede et al., 2011).

Large variations occurred among the responses of Turkish students, however, it is clear that for most of them partnership will be important when choosing an employer, 13 of them said it is important, and 8 - it is very important. According to the 9 respondents partnerships are irrelevant, and for 3 definitely irrelevant.

Turkey in the context of "distance power" dimension, against the UK and Ukraine, ranks in the middle⁶, which means that it neither belongs to countries with high power nor with low, which certainly has different effects on different aspects of life.

In summary, it can be said that students from the UK and Turkey appreciate partnerships factor in the workplace much more than students from Ukraine, but it should be emphasized that among the British it is much more visible. In the case of the Turks another studies should be conducted in order to verify whether a greater impact on the "partnerships" factor has "power distance" cultural dimension or perhaps age, sex, size, or "acquiescence - restrictiveness."

Table 4. Frequently indicated communication tools

Communication tools	Students from the UK	Students from Ukraine
Social networking	30	26
Job advertisements on websites	9	23
Corporate site / bookmark CAREER	25	16
Mobile applications	8	9
Conversation with an employee of the company	0	3
Company Blogs	5	3
events at universities	1	3
videos	3	3
Mailings / newsletters	6	2
College Career Fair	1	2
company brochures	2	1
Open days	2	1
Programs reference for employees	2	0
TV	0	0
Radio	0	0

Source: own research.

Analysis of the results showed that all students, regardless of their country of origin, most frequently used communication channel such as the Internet. Out of 15 most popular and used by employers tools of communication with employees aimed at gaining workers, students pointed to social networking sites. They were pointed by 30 from 34 respondents from the UK, 32 from 40 respondents from Turkey and 26 out of the 40 respondents from Ukraine. Besides social networking British students also pointed to the company's corporate websites (Table 4).

⁶ <http://geert-hofstede.com/turkey.html> [Access: September 2015].

For 23 out of 40 Ukrainian students as well as for the Britons, job advertisements in web portals and employer websites, belong to the most visited sites on the Internet (Table 1). Similarly, among Turkish students the most popular were social networking sites, the employer websites and job portals.

In summary, regardless of nationality, surveyed students, as the most popular tools to communicate with a potential employer pointed out: job advertisements on websites and professional sites. Besides given tools there were also mobile applications and corporate blogs. The least popular are the traditional forms of communication, i.e.: radio, television, brochures, leaflets, posters. Low popular were also events at universities, university Career Fair, Open Days at the companies.

Summary

Analysis of the results showed the existence of the relationship between cultural assumptions and factors determining the choice of taking up employment by foreign students. Students from Ukraine and Turkey treat job stability higher than students from Great Britain. Members of the cultures with low uncertainty avoidance like the United Kingdom frequently change jobs and are employed for a shorter period of time. They treat the work as a necessity, while having a positive attitude to idle, as opposed to cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, where there is a strong need to be constantly busy, and hard work is an inner need.

For the majority of the surveyed students, no matter what country came from, "starting salary" was important. Material factor, regardless of the culture was important for young people from the point of view of the employer's choice.

Students from the UK - a country with a low power distance and Turkey - a country with a medium range power factor, valued partner relationships in the workplace much more than students from Ukraine - a country belonging to the cultures with high power distance.

Respondents from all three countries studied - The United Kingdom, Ukraine and Turkey chose the Internet as the most frequently used channel of communication during the job search.

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