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**Modelling and Managing the Impact of Employer Branding:
A Social Identity Approach**

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the Degree of Master of Research in Management Research**

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Abstract

Employers throughout the developed world are facing a fierce 'war for talent' that may soon eclipse the traditional competition for customers.¹ Employer branding has been widely recognized as a valuable strategic weapon in this 'war for talent,'² but we still do not fully understand what it is or how it works.³ This review seeks to address both questions by developing a model of the 'employer branding value chain'.

The model proposed in this paper is based on a systematic review of the literature in two subject areas, employer branding and organizational identification. Employer branding is a relatively new field of study that applies the theory of consumer branding to the practice of HR management.⁴ The principles are well-established, as are the objectives, but little research has yet been conducted to establish the causal relationships between them. Organizational identification, on the other hand, is a relatively well-researched field that describes the psychological attachment of an individual to an organization. The most popular theory of organizational identification is based on Ashforth and Mael's (1989) 'social identity approach,' and this is the theory covered in the review. The proposed model also incorporates the notion of person-organization fit as described by Herriot (2002, 2004). However his 'social process' approach to recruitment is based on the same three theories as those used by Ashforth and Mael (1989), and is therefore treated as an extension of the literature on organizational identification.

By integrating insights from both areas, this review seeks to both explain and predict employee behaviour. The resulting model brings the extant theory and research to bear on a critical business issue, providing a practical guide for managers. I conclude the review with a discussion of limitations and areas for further study.

¹ Ewing et al, 2002

² Michaels et al, 2001

³ Miles and Mangold, 2004

⁴ Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004

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1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Firms throughout the developed world are facing a serious and increasing shortage of highly skilled employees that has been described as a 'demographic time bomb.' (Ewing et al, 2002; Chambers et al 1998; Frank and Taylor, 2004) The baby boom generation is nearing retirement, not enough new people are nearing working age, and fewer skilled workers are migrating to the developed world. (Mahroum, 2000; Chambers et al, 1998) Together these trends are creating a 'war for talent' that some predict will be even fiercer than the traditional competition for customers. (Ewing et al, 2002) Therefore the ability to recruit employees will become a necessary, but not sufficient criterion for success. In order to survive and prosper, firms will also need to effectively retain, inspire, and properly align their employees with the objectives of the organization. (Earle, 2003)

Employer branding has been widely hailed as the solution to these problems, even dubbed the 'new performance discourse for HR' (Martin et al, 2005). Advocates claim that a strong employer brand can help a firm to attract and retain the 'best' employees, improve employee relations, and even strengthen its consumer brands. (Uncles and Morocco, 2005; Ambler and Barrow, 1996) As a result the subject has attracted an enormous amount of attention in the business and practitioner press, and many firms have already invested considerable sums. However research by Backhaus (2004) reveals that true employer brands are still extremely rare. Miles and Mangold (2004) also observe that the term remains vague and 'under-conceptualized.' (Miles and Mangold, 2004) In short, we still do not fully understand what employer branding is or how it works.

This review seeks to address the questions raised above by developing a model of the employer branding value chain. This model is intended to serve as a useful guide for managers, bringing academic research and theory to bear on a critical business issue. It will also highlight those areas in which further research is needed and where it is likely to prove most useful.

Conceptual Framework

The model proposed in this paper is based on a systematic review of the literature in two subject areas, employer branding and organizational identification. Employer branding is a relatively new field of study that applies the theory of consumer branding to the practice of HR management. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) The principles are well-established, as are the objectives, but little research has yet been conducted to establish the causal relationships between them. Organizational identification, on the other hand, is a relatively well-researched field that describes an individual's psychological attachment to an organization. The most popular theory of organizational identification is based on Ashforth and Mael's (1989) 'social identity approach,' and this is the theory covered in the review. The proposed model also incorporates the notion of person-organization fit as described by Herriot. (2002, 2004) However his 'social process' approach to recruitment is based on the same theoretical arguments as those presented by Ashforth and Mael (1989), and is therefore treated as an extension of the literature on organizational identification.

The conceptual framework for this review is based on my scoping study and is illustrated in fig. 1. It is intended to show how the principles of employer branding can be used to achieve specific managerial objectives. In order to account for the lack of research on employer branding, the framework incorporates two intervening variables. The first is organizational identification and the second is person-organization fit, defined here as congruence between the identity of the individual and the perceived identity of the organization.

The research questions to be addressed in this review are derived from the conceptual framework described above and may be stated as follows.

How can managers use employer branding, as a conceptual tool, to create value for the firm?

- What are the strategic objectives of employer branding?
- What is required in order to achieve these objectives?

How can organizational identification, as a form of psychological attachment, create value for the firm?

- What are the antecedents of organizational identification?
- What are the consequences of organizational identification?

How can the ‘social process’ approach to recruitment create value for the firm?

- How does it promote person-organization fit?
- What are the consequences of person-organization fit?

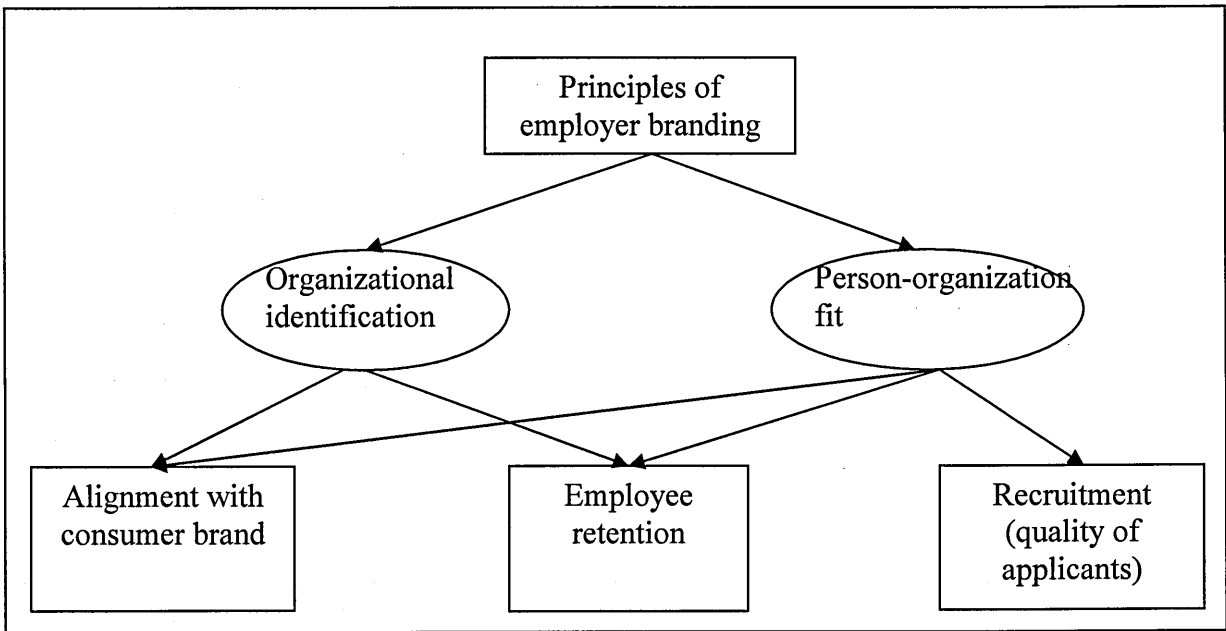


Fig. 1 Conceptual framework for the review

2. SITUATING THE FIELD

OVERVIEW

This review covers two separate and fundamentally different areas of literature. (A map of the field is shown in appendix B.)

The first topic, employer branding, is essentially a conceptual tool for managing employee relations and recruitment. Although it is a relatively new field of academic study, employer branding has been a popular strategy among practitioners for almost ten years. The academic literature on employer branding also has strong theoretical roots in the well-established area of consumer branding. The objective of most academic authors in this area is to explain how the principles of consumer branding can be applied in the context of employer branding.

The second topic, organizational identification, is treated here as a subset of the literature on social identity theory. (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) This is a psychological theory of group relations. It explains how and why group membership affects individual attitudes and behaviour, particularly in the context of inter-group competition. Social identity theory was adapted by Ashforth and Mael (1989) to the study of organizational identification, which they described as a 'specific form of social identification,' and is now the most popular theory in that field. The main distinction between organizational identification, as described by Ashforth and Mael (1989) and social identification, as described by Tajfel and Turner (1979), is the addition of 'organizational identity' as the foundation for self-categorization and identification. The social identity approach to organizational identification also incorporates principles from self-categorization theory.

The social process approach to recruitment, which is the third area covered in this review, is an extension of the literature on organizational identification. It applies similar theoretical arguments to those made by Ashforth and Mael (1989) to explain the attitudes and behaviour of job applicants during the recruitment process. The decision to continue or to exit this process is described as a function of perceived

congruence between the salient identity of the individual and the perceived identity of the organization. This idea was proposed by Herriot (2002, 2004), but has not yet been fully explored.

In this section I will provide a brief overview of each field, including its history and a summary of the key themes.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Background

In the wake of the ‘war for talent’ that accompanied the ‘dot.com’ boom of the 1990’s, recruitment was a critical issue for many organizations. (Chambers et al, 1998) It was in this context that Ambler and Barrow (1996) published their seminal work on employer branding. They argued that by applying the principles of marketing to the practice of HR management, firms could compete more effectively for the best employees, improve relations with their existing staff, and increase the value of their consumer brands. This notion captured the imagination of practitioners and employer branding soon became one of the hottest topics in the practitioner press.

Surprisingly, it was not until 2002 that employer branding appeared again in the academic press. By this point it was a well-established area of practice but the theoretical underpinnings remained underdeveloped. As Ewing et al (2002) explained with respect to the academic literature at that time,

“...the notions of employment branding, and its consequence, EBE, are novel, and as far as we are able to establish, researchers have not yet formally recognised the concepts or begun to study them seriously.”

As a result, most academic papers published in the following four years fell into one of two categories. Empirical studies focused on current practice, classifying and evaluating recruitment strategies that were already in use. (e.g. Berthon et al, 2005; Backhaus, 2004) Conceptual papers attempted to describe the theoretical underpinnings of the field (e.g. Martin et al, 2005; Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). However the number of academic works published on this topic is still extremely small.

In short, the field of employer branding is still in its infancy. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) Although thousands of articles have been published in the practitioner press (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), most of these are based on practical experience and make no reference to theory. Academics authors have attempted to address this imbalance by developing a theoretical framework for the field. However little research has yet been conducted that shows how theory relates to practice. As a result there are two parallel streams of literature on employer branding. The first stream includes works that have been published in the academic press and the second includes those that have been published in the practitioner press. In order to fully understand and contextualize the notion of employer branding, this review will cover both streams.

Theoretical Foundations

Marketing

When Ambler and Barrow (1996) first introduced the notion of employer branding, they grounded it firmly in the marketing literature. They argued that a 'marketing approach to HR' could improve recruitment outcomes and internal relationships, and that this would ultimately increase the value of a firm's external brands. More specifically they suggested that the principles of consumer branding were applicable 'mutis mutandis' to the development of an employer brand. This was defined as 'the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company.' While their definition has not been universally accepted, their theoretical arguments still represent the foundation of employer branding.

In essence Ambler and Barrow (1996) viewed employer branding as the 'reciprocal' of customer relationship marketing. This analogy mirrored a recent shift in marketing thinking, away from customer attraction and short term economics toward customer retention and long-term relationship building. Marketers had already found that it was 'easier, cheaper, and more profitable to keep existing customers than to recruit new ones' and this appeared to be equally true for employees; Ambler and Barrow

saw recruiting and training new employees as a costly enterprise that could only be profitable if those employees stayed long enough for the company to see a return on its investment. Therefore a strong employer brand had to be relevant to both current and potential employees. More specifically it had to deliver benefits that both groups considered important and could not obtain from a competing employer.

Ambler and Barrow also referred to three other areas of marketing literature. The first was corporate identity, which they described as a visual representation of the firm's culture. They considered culture to be important because it captured the organizational values that could motivate employees to support the firm's consumer brand. Second they highlighted those aspects of Dowling's (1994) work on corporate reputation that overlapped with employer branding, namely the firm's image and reputation in the minds of employees. Together, they argued, these represented the internal component of a firm's employer brand equity. Therefore Dowling's (1994) framework of influential factors (shown below) was directly relevant to the study of employer branding. However their paper did not expand on this argument.

Finally they discussed the parallels between employer branding and internal marketing. Quoting Kotler (1990) they defined internal marketing as 'the task of successfully hiring, training and motivating able employees to serve the customer well.' This definition was almost identical to the objectives associated with employer branding. In order to explain how employer branding might be carried out within the firm, Ambler and Barrow also cited Foreman and Money's (1995) 2X2 matrix of internal marketing strategies. They suggested that the process of employer branding would be closest to type IV, with the whole organization taking on both roles. Clearly they saw important similarities between these two areas of marketing theory. The main difference, they argued, was that unlike employer branding, 'internal marketing does not make the direct brand/employee management comparison.'

In short, Ambler and Barrow described employer branding as a field that brought together several different areas of marketing thought and 'synthesized' them within a single framework. This implied that a fuller understanding of the employer branding concept might be developed through a more thorough review of the literature in each of these areas. Some progress has been made in this direction (E.g. Miles and

Mangold, 2004; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004), but much remains to be done. In fact nine years after Ambler and Barrow published their original paper the same argument was made more explicitly by Uncles and Moroko (2005):

“To establish what may constitute the employer branding process, a broader review of the literature is required. A number of general marketing concepts would appear to be relevant, including relationship marketing, corporate branding, culture and identity, internal marketing, and corporate reputation.”

This statement seems to suggest that the same theories identified by Ambler and Barrow (1996) are still the most relevant, at least from a marketing perspective, but nine years on the connections and implications have yet to be fully explored.

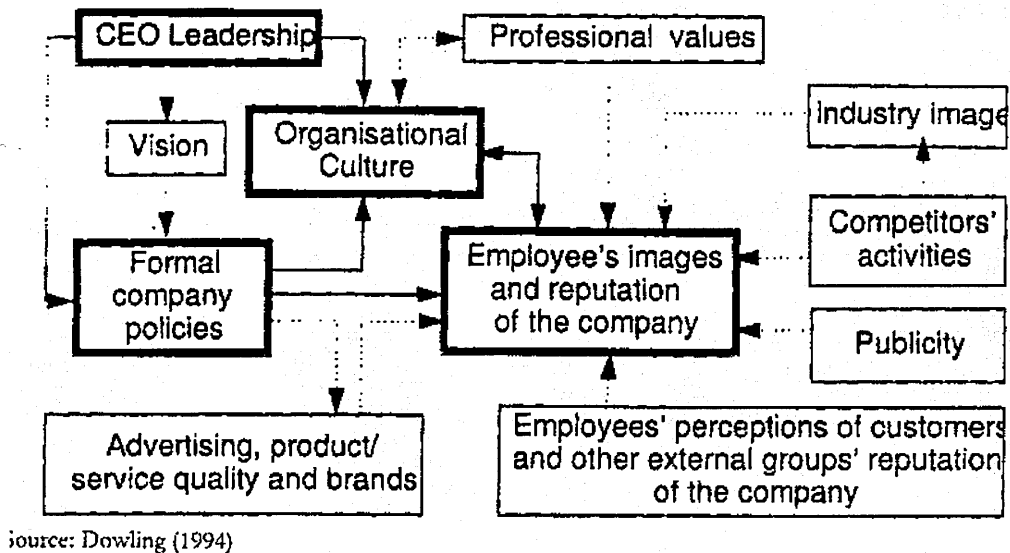


Fig. 2 Dowling's framework of factors that influence corporate reputation

Source: Dowling (1994)

HR

Subsequent authors recognized that some of the issues associated with employer branding fell outside the traditional boundaries of marketing, and they filled this gap by incorporating theories from the literature on HR management.

Miles and Mangold (2004) argued that the key to effective employer branding was an understanding of the relationship between an organization and its employees. In order to describe this relationship and to explain its importance in the context of employer branding, they turned to the theory of psychological contracts. This was defined by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) as a set of 'subjective beliefs regarding an exchange agreement between an individual... and the employing firm and its agents'. According to this theory an employee's perception of and response to the employment experience is significantly influenced by his prior expectations. The recruitment process can therefore be seen as an important first step in establishing the employment relationship.

In order to justify the study and practice of employer branding from an HR perspective, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) also incorporated the Resource-Based View of the firm. This theory states that ownership or control of resources that are scarce, valuable, non-substitutable, non-transferable, and difficult to copy can provide the firm with a source of sustained competitive advantage. (Barney, 1991) Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) argued that a firm's human resources, if well managed, could meet all five criteria. Therefore employer branding was not just a support for the consumer brand but an effective strategy for creating sustained competitive advantage through the management of a firm's human resources. In other words the Resource-Based View could be used to explain how employer branding brought together 'strategy, engaged employees, and financial performance' (Joo and McLean, 2006)

Strategic Perspectives

There is agreement within the academic and practitioner literature that the brand image communicated to potential employees should be consistent with that perceived by a firm's current employees. (Knox and Freeman, 2006; Martin et al, 2005; Van Leeuwen et al, 2005). However there are two seemingly contradictory views as to how this may be achieved.

The first view may be broadly described as 'outside-in'. (E.g. Miles and Mangold, 2005; Fabian et al, 2005) Authors who subscribe to this view tend to emphasize the benefits sought by potential employees or the behaviour required to deliver on a brand

promise made to the firm's consumers; these are seen as key strategic inputs in the employer brand development process. Once the desired image has been clearly specified, the image held by current employees may be brought into alignment through the use of internal communications, training, and employee development exercises. (Dalby, 2004; Rogers, 2003)

The second view may be broadly described as 'inside-out.' Authors who subscribe to this view place greater emphasis on the image already held by current employees. (Eg. Johnson and Roberts, 2006; Van Leeuwen et al, 2005; Lee, 2002; IOMA, 2004) More specifically they argue that employer branding is 'not about what people want to hear. It's about figuring out the realities of your organization and getting to its essence.' (IOMA, 2004) Since the image communicated to potential employees is based on the image held by current employees, no further activities are needed to bring them into alignment.

Employer branding is likely to be most effective when insights are drawn from both perspectives, thereby using the organization's existing strengths to meet the demands of the market. In theory and in practice, however, the two perspectives are not easily reconciled. The outside-in approach is consistent with traditional marketing theory, which emphasizes the needs of the customer as the basis for strategic decision making; if the needs of the customer change, the firm must respond. The inside-out approach is more consistent with the Resource Based View of the firm; organizations are assumed to have intangible characteristics that are unique and difficult to change or copy, and it is these 'enduring' characteristics that provide the basis for a sustained competitive advantage. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) Therefore a fundamental tension exists which may be stated as follows: If a firm's competitive advantage is derived from its 'enduring' characteristics, how much can or should it change those characteristics in order to meet the demands of the market?

Employer Branding versus Internal Marketing

Several employer branding authors cite internal marketing as an important theoretical influence. (E.g. Knox and Freeman, 2006; Berthon et al, 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2004; Ambler and Barrow, 1996) In each case, however, the topic is given only

cursory attention. This is surprising in light of the apparent overlap; as discussed earlier, the objectives associated with internal marketing are almost identical to those associated with employer branding. Moreover the various authors seem to disagree about what makes the two topics distinct from one another. In order to develop a clearer understanding of the employer branding concept, it may therefore be useful to summarize some key similarities and differences between employer branding and internal marketing.

Key similarities have to do with objectives and techniques. Like employer branding internal marketing is intended to enhance the value of a firm's consumer brands. It does so by applying the techniques of consumer marketing to the practice of human resource management. (Foreman and Money, 1995) These include research, market segmentation, communications, and a system for incorporating feedback. (Mitchell, 2002; Piercy and Morgan, 1991) Also like employer branding, internal marketing is based on an assumption that employees have a significant impact on consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

Key differences have to do with the product, audience, and marketing mix. While internal marketing and employer branding both treat the employee as a customer (Foreman and Money, 1995), they are intended to sell different 'products.' The product that drives an internal marketing campaign is the firm's consumer marketing plan. (Piercy and Morgan, 1991) The product at the centre of an employer brand is a job within the firm. Consequently the foundation for each strategy is also different. Internal marketing begins with the 'brand promise' made to consumers while employer branding begins with an employee value proposition. This employer value proposition represents a separate 'brand promise' which is aligned with the consumer brand but geared toward the benefits sought by employees.

The target audience and the marketing mix are also defined more broadly in the context of employer branding than they are in the context of internal marketing. The target audience for internal marketing includes only a firm's current employees. The audience for an employer brand includes both current and potential employees. Therefore the value proposition associated with an employer brand has to capture benefits which are considered important to both groups. The marketing mix for an

employer brand must also include a wider range of variables which allows the firm to communicate its employer value proposition to people both inside and outside of the firm.

In general it is useful to note that there is a significant overlap between these two areas of literature. Many of the issues raised are relevant to both topics, and in many cases the difference is only a matter of degree. For example both strategies should arguably align the behaviour of employees with the interests of the consumer. However employer branding emphasizes the first group more than the second and vice versa for internal marketing. The main difference, from a practical perspective, is that employer branding is a more comprehensive strategy with wider ranging implications. The main difference, from a theoretical perspective, is that internal marketing falls within the domain of consumer marketing while employer branding represents a separate domain within the broader topic of branding. Therefore the insights that may be gleaned from the literature on internal marketing are valuable but may need qualification when applied in this new context. They are considered relevant here only to the extent that they have already been qualified and incorporated within the employer branding literature.

SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND SOCIAL PROCESS APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

Organizational Identification

Background

Organizational Identification is generally described as ‘the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate’. (Riketta, 2005) The first model of identification as an organization-level construct was published by March and Simon in 1963. For the next 30 years, however, the field was characterized by multiple, inconsistent definitions.

Though theorists recognized that organizational identification could yield substantial benefits for the organization, disagreement persisted as to the nature and scope of the construct. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) Some described it as a cognitive concept, focusing particularly on the congruence of an individual's values with those of the organization. (E.g. Hall et al, 1970) Others emphasized the affective aspect of an individual's relationship with the organization (E.g. O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986). Still others attempted to describe the complex relationship between cognition and affect. In many cases the definitions were also relatively broad. For example Lee (1971) used the term to denote 'some degree of belongingness, loyalty, or shared characteristics.' Without a shared platform on which to base further theory and research, progress in the field was limited.

It was not until 1989 that Ashforth and Mael laid the foundation for a more coherent body of literature to be developed. Their paper, 'social identity theory and the organization', was largely based on Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory of group relations. (Foreman and Whetten, 2002) In order to explain how this theory could be applied in the organizational context, however, they drew on Tajfel's (1979) self-categorization theory and Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition of organizational identity; an individual who identified with the organization was assumed to incorporate its perceived identity within his own self-concept. This created a bridge between the literature on organizational identity and organizational identification; it suggested that together they could predict a wide range of individual and collective behaviours. (Haslam et al, 2003) As a result it sparked renewed interest in both topics and has provided the basis for almost all the recent literature in this field.

Theoretical Foundations

Social Identity Theory

The social identity approach is based primarily on Tajfel and Turner's (1979) 'social identity theory'. Published initially in 1979, this theory represented a significant change in the way that group relations were conceptualized (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002). Earlier theorists had emphasized the role of interpersonal relations within the

group. Tajfel and Turner, however, viewed the group as a distinct psychological construct. They argued that people make sense of their social environment, and their own place in that environment, by sorting people into psychological groups or categories. People in a particular category are perceived to share certain characteristics and the category itself functions as a psychological abstraction that embodies these characteristics. It is this psychological abstraction, rather than the individual members, which functions as the object of identification. In other words Tajfel and Turner shifted the focus from interpersonal relationships to the relationship between individual members and the group itself as a psychological category.

They further argued that this theory could explain how group membership influences individual behaviour. Their basic argument is based on three assumptions. The first assumption is that an individual will strive to enhance his self-esteem, which is largely dependent on his self-concept and more specifically his social identity. The second assumption is that a person's social identity is determined by his perceived membership in particular social groups and the characteristics he ascribes to those groups; by defining himself as part of the group he also ascribes those characteristics to himself, and incorporates them within his own self-concept. The third assumption is that he evaluates each group in relation to relevant out-groups. (Van Dick et al, 2005) Therefore an individual may strive to enhance his self-esteem through membership in groups which he perceives to have relatively positive characteristics. Once he defines himself as a member of the group his self-concept is tied to his evaluation of the group, so he is motivated to act in the group's collective interests.

Self-categorization Theory

Self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985) is essentially an extension of social identity theory. (Pratt, 1998) Instead of describing the consequences of group membership, however, self-categorization theory explains the process of self-categorization and provides a model for determining which identity will be salient in a particular context. In doing so it addresses an important limitation in the original theory. (Haslam, 2001)

According to self-categorization theory an individual has as many social identities as he has group memberships. These may include, for example, his gender, age cohort,

and religious affiliation. (Tajfel and Turner, 1985) Once a particular identity is 'switched on' the individual will think and act according to the norms and values of that group. Turner (1987) described this process as 'depersonalization':

'Individuals react to themselves and others not as differentiated, individual persons but as exemplars of the common characteristics of their group. It is through this process that salient or functioning social identifications help to regulate social behaviour...' (Brown and Turner, 1981)

However the values and norms associated with different identities are often inconsistent or even contradictory. (Morgan et al, 2004) In order to predict or explain an individual's behaviour it is therefore necessary to determine which identity is likely to be salient in a particular situation.

Salience of a particular identity is determined by 'fit' and 'accessibility.' Fit is both 'comparative' and 'normative', and both are dependent on context. (Haslam et al, 2000) The principle of comparative fit implies that differences between members of the in-group will be smaller, on a particular dimension, than differences between members of the in-group and members of salient out-groups. (Turner, 1985) The principle of normative fit implies that similarity and difference will be judged on a dimension that is relevant to those categories and consistent with the individual's expectations; other dimensions simply will not be invoked. (Haslam et al, 2000) Finally, 'accessibility' depends on the individual's subjective perception of the situation, (Oakes et al, 1994) which is determined by his 'prior expectations, goals, and theories.' (Haslam, 2001) These three principles are summarized in figure 3, excerpted from Haslam et al (2000).

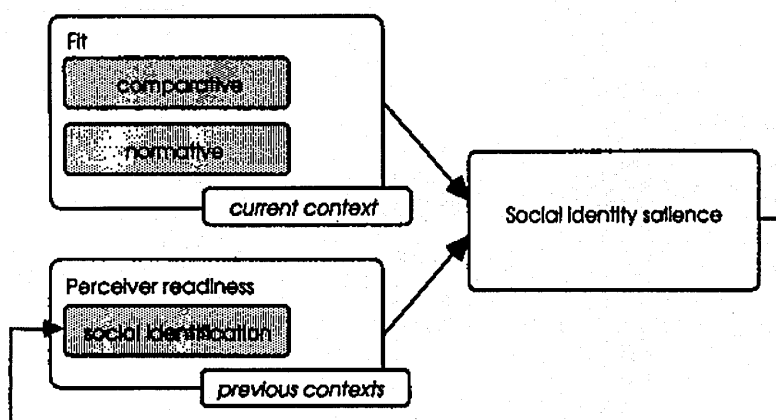


Fig. 3 Factors influencing identity salience

Source: Haslam et al, 2000

Organizational Identity

Ashforth and Mael (1989) adapted these theories to the study of organizational identification by incorporating the notion of organizational identity. Defined by Albert and Whetten (1985) as that which is ‘most central, distinctive, and enduring’ about the organization, this term captured the essential characteristics of an organization that might be incorporated within an individual’s self-concept. Therefore organizational identification was later defined by Dutton et al (1994) as ‘one form of psychological attachment that occurs when members adopt the defining characteristics of the organization as defining characteristics for themselves.’

Key Themes

Dimensions

Several authors argue that it is useful to distinguish between three separate dimensions of organizational identification. (E.g. van Dick et al, 2004; van Dick and Wagner, 2002; Bergami and Bergozzi, 2000; Ellemers et al, 1998) The first is cognitive. This dimension represents an individual’s perception that he is a member of the group, and is a necessary condition for the other two dimensions to exist; an individual cannot experience any dimension of identification if he is not aware of

membership. The second dimension, described as evaluative, represents the value that an individual ascribes to membership in the group. The third dimension, described as affective, represents the individual's emotional attachment to that group. Since emotional attachment is likely to enhance an individual's evaluation of the group, and vice versa, the second and third dimensions are closely interrelated. (van Dick et al, 2004) Some authors (e.g. Jackson, 2002) have also argued for a fourth dimension called 'behavioural identification', but this dimension has gained less widespread acceptance.

According to Ashforth and Mael (1989), organizational identification is a 'perceptual cognitive construct' that links the social identity of an individual to the perceived identity of the organization. It is not necessarily associated with any particular emotions or behaviours, but research has shown that people who identify do tend to feel and act in particular ways. Therefore they treat the other phenomena described above as antecedents or consequences, rather than dimensions, of organizational identification.

Types of Organizational Identification

In addition to identification three other types of organizational identification are described in the literature (Pratt, 2000; Elstak and Van Riel, 2005) Disidentification exists when a member of the organization defines himself as not having the attributes of the organization. This may cause him to lie about his membership, to voice his opinion about aspects of the organization which he does not like, or to emphasize those characteristics which make him different from other members. (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004) Ambivalent or schizo-identification exists when a member simultaneously identifies and disidentifies with the organization. In most cases this occurs because the person identifies with certain aspects of the organization's identity and disidentifies with others. However there may also be instances when he simultaneously identifies and disidentifies with the same aspects. (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004) This may result in a seemingly schizophrenic alternation between very strong and very weak job performance (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004) or his 'mixed feelings' may create a sense of lethargy. (Elstak and van Riel, 2005) Neutral identification exists when a member neither identifies nor disidentifies with the

organization. This may be considered a 'suboptimal' situation because the individual is likely to be driven primarily by self interest, rather than the interests of the organization. (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004) To date little research has been conducted on these constructs, but several authors argue that they deserve greater attention.

Organizational Identification versus Organizational Commitment

Organizational identification and organizational commitment both represent particular forms of psychological attachment to the organization, but each has been subject to multiples definitions and measures. As a result theorists have tended to disagree about how they are, or are not, different from one another. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Mael and Ashforth, 1995) Some see the two terms as interchangeable while others describe organizational identification as just one aspect of organizational commitment. (Riketta, 2005) For example Allen and Meyer (1990) define affective organizational commitment as an 'employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in, the organization.' Moreover organizational commitment theorists often use definitions that are inconsistent with that proposed by Ashforth and Mael (1989). For example O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) define organizational identification as 'involvement based on a desire for affiliation.' According to Mael and Ashforth (1995) this definition is based on the psychodynamic view of identification; it implies that the individual attempts to subsume himself in the organization. However their view is exactly the opposite; for an individual who identifies, the organization becomes a part of his extended self.

Several authors have attempted to resolves this confusion by studying the empirical relation between these two constructs. Although the evidence is not conclusive (Riketta, 2005), most studies have shown that organizational identification and organizational commitment to be strongly correlated but empirically distinct. (Cole and Bruch, 2006; van Knippenberg and Sleebos, 2006; Gautam et al, 2004; Mael and Tetrick, 1992)

Others have emphasized the conceptual distinction. Organizational commitment is based primarily on exchange, and therefore requires that the individual and the organization be treated as separate entities. (Cole and Bruch, 2006) According to van

Knippenberg and Sleafos (2006), however, identification 'implies psychological oneness' with the organization. This precludes an attachment based on exchange.

Organizational identification is based instead on a sense of shared fate and perceived similarity to the organization. (Mael and Ashforth, 1992; Ashforth and Mael, 1989) It is also specific to a particular organization while commitment may be readily transferred to another organization. (Mael and Ashforth, 1995)

Social Process Approach to Recruitment

Herriot (2002, 2004) extended Ashforth and Mael's (1989) theoretical argument to the field of employee recruitment. He argued that this 'social process' approach represented a paradigm shift in the field of recruitment, and he identified three key ways in which it differed from the traditional psychometric approach. First, while other theorists had focused on a firm's objective assessment of the applicant's skills and abilities, Herriot described selection as an interactive process shaped by the subjective perceptions of both parties. Second, rather than viewing the selection process as a 'hurdle' that precedes the employment relationship, he described the selection process as the first step in that relationship. Finally, he described the selection process as a series of social encounters and argued that either party might choose to exit the process after any encounter if the identity of the applicant and that of the organization were seen to be incongruent. This approach was supported by theory and research in several areas, including organizational justice, selector behaviour, and applicants' preference. However no research had yet been conducted to test the application of social identity theory in the context of employee recruitment, so the model was purely conceptual. This research gap still has not been addressed.

3. METHODOLOGY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this systematic review was to develop a model which showed how employer branding could be used to create financial value for the firm. This was achieved through a targeted review of the literature in two areas – employer branding and the social identity approach to organizational identification and recruitment. The methods used to identify and select appropriate studies were determined by the research questions and by the nature of the literature in each subject area.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The topic of this systematic review is loosely based on the proposal which I submitted to Cranfield with my application for the PhD program. At that time I was looking at employer branding and how it might relate to organizational culture. However my reading of the literature on employer branding, as well as several related areas, has provided a much broader understanding of the subject.

In my student project seminar I suggested that an employer brand has two components, tangible and intangible. More specifically I suggested that a strong employer brand needs to reflect the brand's intangible benefits, which are based on the actual work experience. Culture, organizational identity and organizational identification all relate to this intangible component. However I have chosen to focus on organizational identification because research has uncovered specific links to individual behaviour and because it has roots in organizational identity, which appears to tie directly into the employer branding literature; the notion of 'perceived organizational identity' (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) is conceptually identical to the internal component of employer brand image.

A potential source of personal bias comes from having worked mostly in creative and non-profit environments. In both cases people seem to be driven more by intrinsic factors than by material rewards. I may therefore be more attuned to arguments that

extol the benefits of intrinsic motivation or imply that it may be easily instilled. In conducting the systematic review I was careful to give equal attention to all points of view and to judge empirical studies solely on the weight of the evidence presented.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

In order to ensure that the review was comprehensive, I consulted faculty members in each of the three relevant subject areas and practitioners who were experts in the field.

The literature on employer branding encompasses marketing and human resource management and the literature on organizational identification falls within the domain of organization studies. As well as consulting my supervisor, Professor Simon Knox, I therefore consulted Dr. Hugh Wilson, Senior Research Fellow in the area of Marketing, Dr. Emma Parry, Research Fellow in Cranfield’s Human Resource Research Centre, and Dr. Silviya Svejenova. Although Dr. Parry and Dr. Svejenova were not official members of the panel they both made very helpful suggestions with regard to the literature.

I also discussed the topic informally with recruitment consultants at the Bernard Hodes group (a recruitment consulting company). While they, like Dr. Parry were not members of the panel, they brought attention to some of the practical difficulties associated with employer branding and to the objectives most commonly specified by client companies. This input was particularly valuable in assessing the practical value of the model.

To summarize, during the review process I consulted the following people:

Official Panel Members

Supervisor	Dr. Simon Knox
Academics in the field	Dr. Hugh Wilson (Marketing)
Bibliographic search and review process	Dr. David Denyer Heather Woodfield

Informal Advisors

Academics in the field	Dr. Emma Parry (HR Management) Dr. Silviya Svejnova (Organization Studies)
Practitioners in the field	Tom Crawford (Director of Solutions Consulting at Bernard Hodes) Charlotte Housden (Consultant at Bernard Hodes)

STAGES IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

1. Search Strategy

The first stage in the systematic review process was a search for relevant studies. These came from a variety of sources.

Articles

Articles were identified through searches of the following electronic databases:

Proquest ABI

EBSCO (Business Source Premiere)

psycINFO

The first two databases were selected because they provide links to the well established English language management journals. PsycInfo was chosen because social identity theory is partly rooted in psychology, and prior searches had suggested that it might be a rich source of information on this topic.

Books

Books were identified through cross-referencing (starting with the articles identified through database searches), through consultation with the panel members, and through searches of the Cranfield library catalogue.

Conference papers

Conference papers were identified through database searches, cross-referencing, and recommendations from Professor Knox.

2. Search Strings

When searching the electronic databases listed above, I used the following search strings.

KEYWORDS	SEARCH STRINGS	RATIONALE
Employer branding	Employ* brand*	The number of articles published on this subject is so small that it made sense to review them all, just to make sure that nothing was missed. The terms employ* and recruit* were included (rather than just ‘employer’) so that articles using synonyms such as employee or recruitment branding would not be missed.
Social identity theory Organizational identification	(organizational identification) AND (social identity)	This review was concerned specifically with the social identity approach to organizational identification. To exclude works that were based on other theories, I searched only for those that included both terms. However the social identity approach is now so popular that many authors use this approach without specifically mentioning it in the abstract. When conducting searches I therefore applied the term ‘organizational identification’ to the abstract and the term ‘social

		identity’ to the whole text. The term ‘social identity’ was used without the word ‘theory’ because the theoretical approach described in this paper is often described as the social identity approach and its implications are often discussed simply in terms of members’ social identity. Although I was concerned specifically with antecedents, consequences, and recruitment, adding these search terms (even with several synonyms) eliminated several relevant articles. I therefore chose to use this relatively broad search term and filter the results according to the criteria listed below.
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3. Selection

Works identified through the search process outlined above were then screened for relevance. The inclusion criteria used during this stage of the selection process were applied consistently, but the exclusion criteria were different for each subject area. The criteria used and the rationale for those choices are described below.

ALL SUBJECT AREAS

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION	RATIONALE
Both theoretical and empirical works were included, with no restriction on methodologies.	All three subject areas have strong theoretical roots and these were central to the review. A review of the existing research was also important in order to position the research for my PhD.
Words relating to any industry, sector, or geographic location	The topic of the review was not restricted by any of these factors.
Only works that were written or translated	I cannot not read any language besides

into English	English.
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EMPLOYER BRANDING

CRITERIA FOR EXCLUSION	RATIONALE
Works that use employer branding as a synonym for internal branding.	Internal branding is an established area of literature that is related to but distinct from employer branding. This study was concerned with employer branding.

SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

CRITERIA FOR EXCLUSION	RATIONALE
Works that are not grounded in the social identity approach to organizational identification	This review was specifically concerned with the social identity approach to organizational identification. Since some of the key works in this area implicitly or explicitly incorporate other theories, particular in their treatment of organizational identity, it was not required that works be based solely on the social identity approach. However works that were essentially grounded in other theories of organizational identification were considered to be outside the scope of this review.
Works published before 1989 (Except key works cited by Ashforth and Mael, 1989)	Works published before 1989 pre-date the social identity approach to organizational identification, and were therefore assumed to be outside the scope of this review. Exception: key works cited by Ashforth and Mael (1989) represent the theoretical foundations of the social identity approach, and were therefore considered relevant.

Works primarily concerned with demography	Demography concerns identification with an individual's demographic peer group, which is based on the perceived characteristics of that group. This review was concerned with organizational identification, which is based on the perceived characteristics of the organization. Therefore studies of demography were outside the scope of the review.
Works that emphasized identification with a unit other than the organization, for example a person's work team or profession	The antecedents and consequences of social identification are specific to the type of group on which it is focused. (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002) Since an employer brand is applicable specifically to the organization, this was the only type of group relevant to the review.
Works concerned primarily with managing change	This review was not concerned with managing change, so these works were considered outside the scope of the review.

4. Quality Appraisal

Articles

Articles that met the relevance criteria were then screened on the basis of quality. The quality criteria were as follows:

1. *Theory*: Is the paper consistent with the established theories and definitions within the field? Are the theoretical assumptions or frameworks clearly stated?
2. *Literature*: Does the paper site appropriate sources? Are there obvious gaps in the literature review?
3. *Method*: Are the methods appropriate and valid? Are the findings generalizable?

4. *Integration*: Does the research provide a good test of the theory and hypotheses?
5. *Contribution*: Does the paper make a new and meaningful theoretical contribution to management literature?

These categories were directly copied from the guidelines for Academy of Management Journal reviewers and were chosen for two reasons. First the use of this list by AMJ suggests that the categories are widely accepted within the academic community as valid quality assessment criteria. Second this list is flexible enough to be used for a broad range of articles, both qualitative and quantitative, empirical and theoretical (with the exception of method and integration). Some of the questions attached to each category are slightly adapted from the AMJ guidelines, based on my previous reading of the academic fields to be addressed in the review.

Articles were given a tick for each criterion that was met and a cross for each criterion that was not met. If a particular criterion did not apply, no mark was made. Articles that received less than 3 crosses were included in the study. Treatment of all other articles depended on the subject area.

Social Identity approach to Organizational Identification and Recruitment

Articles in this area that received 3 or more crosses were not considered to be of an adequate standard and were excluded from the review.

Employer Branding

The remaining articles on employer branding were divided into two categories. Those that were written by practitioners, or academics in a consulting role, were included in the review under the heading 'practitioner press.' (All of the works that received less than three crosses were written by academics, so there was no overlap between the practitioner press and the academic press.) The rationale, as suggested in section 2 of this review, was that practitioner articles might provide important insights on the practical issues surrounding employer branding. This supposition is supported by Uncles and Moroko (2005):

'To establish what may constitute the employer branding process a broader review of the literature is required ... concepts from human

resources and organizational behaviour, *as well as industry journals*, are also relevant, illuminating the relationship between prospective employees, employees, and employers.’ (emphasis added)

Works that received 3 or more crosses and were not written by practitioners were excluded from the review.

All other Works

All other works were judged purely on the basis of where I found the reference. If a book or conference paper was cited in an article that met the quality criteria above, if it was written by one of the same authors, or if it was recommended by a member of the panel, then it was included the review.

5. Data Extraction

Basic information was extracted from each study that met both the selection and quality criteria. This information was then recorded in an Excel worksheet.

6. Synthesis and Reporting

Consistent with the objectives stated in section 1, the final step in the review process was to bring together the findings of these various studies in a model that showed how employer branding can be used to create value for the firm. This model is shown in Appendix A and discussed in section 7.

4. DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

Overview

By considering the attributes of the studies selected in each area, it was possible to identify several interesting trends. These findings are discussed below according to subject area.

Employer Branding

The employer branding literature was slightly weighted toward practitioner publications. This finding was surprising given the number of articles actually published in the practitioner press. For example Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) note that searches on a Yahoo and Google each yielded over 3000 results.

The time frame was also fairly similar for publication of academic and practitioner articles; both appeared to become popular after 2002. This was also surprising because employer branding gained huge popularity among practicing managers during the late 1990s.

In both cases these findings may have been influenced by the search strategy. As discussed later in the paper, the methodology applied in this systematic review was heavily biased toward academic works.

	1996-2001	2002-2006	TOTAL
Academic	1	12	13
Practitioner	1	15	16

Fig. 4 Attributes of studies selected in the area of Employer Branding

Social Identity Approach to Organizational Identification

The literature in this area was heavily weighted toward empirical studies. Since the popularity of this subject is based on Ashforth and Mael’s adaptation of social identity theory, it makes sense that debating the underlying theory has been of less concern than testing it and exploring its implications in different contexts.

In the last five years there has also been a significant increase in the number of works published. The reason for this increase is not clear, but it is apparent that the subject has recently become very popular.

	1989-1994	1995-2000	2001-2006	TOTAL
Conceptual	5	5	6	16
Empirical	2	6	20	28

Fig. 4 Attributes of studies selected in the area of Organizational Identification

Social Process approach Recruitment

The social process approach to recruitment is a relatively new idea that has not yet been fully explored. This review uncovered only two papers on this subject, both written by the same author and both conceptual.

5. THEMATIC FINDINGS: Employer Branding

INTRODUCTION

An initial review of the employer branding literature suggested that the original two research questions could be usefully broken down into six more specific questions. In order to describe how employer branding creates value for the firm, this section of the review is therefore structured as follows.

Academic press:

- Purpose: What is the strategic rationale behind employer branding?
- Objectives: What are the specific objectives that are typically associated with employer branding?
- Principles: What tactics can a firm employ in order to achieve these objectives?
- Relevance: Under what circumstances does employer branding create most value for the firm?
- Current knowledge: What is already known, based on academic research, about the practice of employer branding?

Practitioner Press:

- What are the principles and ideas most frequently discussed by practitioners?

ACADEMIC PRESS

PURPOSE

In most cases the ultimate purpose of employer branding is to create value for the company's shareholders. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) It does this, broadly speaking, by helping the firm to develop and manage its human resources in accordance with its wider business objectives (Sullivan, 1999) This can have a direct impact on the firm's short term objectives as well as its performance over the longer term. Therefore the employer brand has financial value that can be measured and (in the

case of an acquisition) bought or sold. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) This value is frequently described as ‘employer branding equity.’ (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Collins and Stevens, 2002)

Paraphrasing Aaker’s (1991) definition of customer brand equity, Ewing et al (2002) define employer brand equity as ‘a set of employment brand assets and liabilities linked to an employment brand, its name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) the value provided by an organization or to that organization’s employees.’ In accordance with the three views of value creation outlined below, they further argue that employer brand equity may be viewed as an independent construct or as a ‘synergistic addition to overall brand equity’

OBJECTIVES

Consistent with its theoretical underpinnings in marketing and HR management, two views persist as to how employer branding creates value for the firm. Most academic authors recognize both views, either implicitly or explicitly, and adopt the combined approach described below. This distinction is still important, however, because the appropriate balance between these two sets of objectives is likely to vary by context. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) In order to determine how employer branding should be used by a particular firm it is therefore necessary to understand the roots and implications of each perspective.

Marketing Perspective

From a marketing perspective the objective of employer branding is to enhance the value of a firm’s consumer brands. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2004; Ambler and Barrow, 1996) It can do this in two ways. First a strong employer brand can help the firm to attract and recruit potential employees who have the necessary characteristics to effectively deliver on the brand promise made to consumers and who can represent the company in a consistent manner. For example their personal values and beliefs may reflect those associated with the consumer brand. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005) Second an employer brand can motivate current employees to behave in specific ways. For example they may project the desired

brand image 'through their demeanour, appearance, and manner of interaction with customers.' (Miles and Mangold, 2004) or they may generally deliver a higher level of customer service. These behaviours contribute to increased consumer satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately higher profits. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2005)

HR Perspective

From an HR perspective employer branding creates value by enhancing the value of a firm's human capital. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Backhaus, 2004) This is viewed as a scarce and valuable resource that can improve a firm's productivity and financial performance, increase its stock price, and provide a source of sustained competitive advantage, independently of the firm's consumer brands. (Miles and Mangold, 2004; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Ewing et al, 2002; Priem and Butler, 2001) However it can only do so if the behaviour of individual employees is aligned with the firm's wider interests and for as long as they remain with the firm. (Coff, 1997) Therefore the objectives of employer branding are threefold. First an employer brand should help the firm to attract and recruit the best employees, where 'best' may be defined in terms of skills or fit. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005) Second it should improve employee retention rates. Third it should motivate employees to support the firm and its wider interests. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) In short, employer branding should increase the value of a firm's human capital by helping to attract, retain and motivate the best employees. (Conference board, 2001)

Integrated Perspective

Some authors subscribe to both views and argue that the two sets of objectives are 'mutually reinforcing.' (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), for example, a strong employer brand engenders positive attitudes, loyalty, and trust among the firm's employees. This translates to higher levels of customer service, which enhances the firm's relationships with its customers and increases the value of its consumer brand. At the same time customers who have received good service are more likely to offer positive feedback, and this feedback reinforces employees' positive attitudes toward the firm. (Miles and Mangold, 2004)

Uncles and Moroko (2005) expand this argument to the recruitment of new employees. If a firm recruits the best employees, meaning those who can support the brand promise made to consumers, this will ultimately strengthen the consumer brand, make the firm more profitable, and enhance its external reputation. This reputation then helps the firm to attract and retain the best employees because these individuals 'want to share in and be associated with the company's success.' Therefore the two sets of objectives are not only complimentary, but when considered together they appear to create a virtuous circle. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005)

RELEVANCE

The relevance of employer branding is likely to vary by industry and by company. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) More specifically, several authors argue that employer branding is likely to be most valuable in service industries and for firms that require highly skilled employees. (Knox and Freeman, 2006; de Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003). In service industries the service encounter is often a customer's only basis for forming an impression of the firm (Bitner, 1990), and the only person who can determine the quality of this encounter is the employee. Employer branding is important in this context because it can motivate each employee to manage the encounter in a way that is consistent with the firm's consumer brand image (Miles and Mangold, 2004) and meets or exceeds the customers' expectations. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005)

For a firm that relies on highly skilled employees, employer branding is also useful as a strategy for strengthening that firm's relationship with its employees. The underlying principle in this case is borrowed directly from the theory of Customer Relationship Management. Citing the work of Kotler and Armstrong (1996), Ambler and Barrow (1996) explain that the importance of a firm's relationships with its customers is inversely related to the number of customers and directly related to profit margins. Applying this logic in the context of employer branding, employee relationships are most important for firms that employ a small number of high value-adding employees. This scenario is most likely to occur in knowledge-focused organizations.

PRINCIPLES

Employer branding applies the principles of consumer branding to the practice of human resource management. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Ambler and Barrow, 1996) Because branding of any kind is essentially a conceptual tool, these principles take the form of prescriptive statements; they indicate what is required for a brand to help the firm achieve specific objectives. The most fundamental principles of employer branding are outlined below.

Employer Value Proposition (EVP)

Execution of an employer branding strategy begins with the development of an employer value proposition. This EVP specifies the key benefits of employment with a particular organization and captures, in one succinct statement, 'the holistic sum of everything people experience and receive while they are part of the company'. (Michaels et al, 2001) If the employer brand is to be effective in attracting and retaining top talent, these benefits should be attractive to members of the target audience, different from those offered by competing employers, and consistent with the realities of the organization. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) In other words the EVP should explain why 'a smart energetic ambitious individual would want to come and work with you rather than with the team next door.' (Chambers et al, 1998)

The benefits offered in the EVP are analogous to those associated with a consumer brand and may be broadly divided into two categories. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) Instrumental benefits are based on tangible job and organizational attributes that can be objectively verified. Their appeal is essentially utilitarian. (Katz, 1960) Examples include wealth (through the receipt of a salary), leisure time (through shorter working hours), and improved job skills (through training). In the consumer branding literature these benefits are also described as functional. (Keller, 1993) In the employer branding context Ambler and Barrow (1996) use the terms functional and economic.

Symbolic benefits, on the other hand, are based on each employee's subjective perception of the job or organization's intangible attributes. (Lievens and Highhouse,

2003) Their appeal is expressive or emotional. (Aaker, 1997; Katz, 1960) Examples might include a sense of belonging, direction, and purpose (Ambler and Barrow, 1996), all of which are derived through a subjective sense of fit with the organization's values and identity. In the consumer branding literature these benefits are also described as and emotional and experiential (Keller, 1993). In the context of employer branding Ambler and Barrow use the term psychological benefits.

The distinction between instrumental and symbolic benefits is well-established in the literature on consumer branding (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) and appears to be particularly relevant in the context of employer branding. First, organizations within the same industry tend to be instrumentally similar while exhibiting significant symbolic differences. (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) This means that symbolic attributes may provide the more effective source of differentiation for the employer brand. This is important because differentiation has been recognized as a key component of successful brands (De Chernatony, 2001) and as a particular challenge within the employment market. (Knox and Freeman, 2006) Symbolic benefits have also been found to have a unique influence on particular aspects of employee behavior. For example employee identification and empowerment have both been associated with organizational citizenship behavior. (Dutton et al, 1994) This is defined by Morrison as 'behavior that is beneficial for an organization but falls outside of formal role requirements such that it is difficult to formally specify or reward' and generates no immediate benefit for the employee. (Morrison, 1996). Finally there is some evidence that symbolic benefits also influence employees' experience of instrumental benefits. (Aaker, 1997)

Marketing Mix

The marketing mix includes all the variables that a manager can use to carry out a particular marketing strategy. (Borden, 1964) More specifically it can be used to communicate a firm's EVP to members of the target audience. The marketing mix for a consumer brand is typically described in terms of the four P's – product, price, place, promotion – but the marketing mix for an employer brand is far more complex. This is mainly because the target audience includes both current and potential employees, and each group learns about the brand through different media.

Potential Employees

Potential employees learn about the employer brand from a wide range of formal and informal communications media. Formal media include recruitment advertisements, sponsorships, campus presentations, job interviews, and job previews. (Miles and Mangold, 2004) These are useful because they are directly controlled by managers. As a result they can be manipulated to reach and attract particular segments of the population. Informal media, on the other hand, can be very difficult to control. These include word-of-mouth from an applicant's friends and family, as well as interactions with current employees 'who are not acting in their official capacity at the time of communication'. (Knox and Freeman, 2006; Backhaus, 2004; Miles and Mangold, 2004; Collins and Stevens, 2002)⁵ The information conveyed through such interactions is generally more accurate and perceived to be more credible than information captured in company sponsored communications. (Miles and Mangold, 2004)

Current Employees

Current employees also learn about the employer brand through various communications media. These may include company newsletters, training guides, internet sites, and other materials that have been developed specifically for the firm's existing staff, as well as those that are intended for other stakeholder groups. (Miles and Mangold, 2004) For example Berthon et al (2005) describe employees as a 'secondary audience' for consumer advertising. In general, however, a firm's current employees are likely to be most strongly influenced by the actual employment experience. This employment experience is determined partly by the firm's policies. (Mitchell, 2002) For example training and development, performance management systems, and the criteria for pay increases can all convey information about organizational goals and objectives. (Miles and Mangold, 2004) The employment experience is also shaped by factors which are very difficult for managers to control,

⁵ Quote taken from Miles and Mangold (2004)

including informal interactions with other employees, the behaviour of individual managers, and the firm's culture. (Miles and Mangold, 2004)

Employer Brand Image

Employer brand communications are intended to create a 'unique and attractive' image of the brand (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) and to position the firm in the minds of current and potential employees as 'a great place to work, over and above competing employers.' (Ewing et al, 2002) It is this mental image which influences individual decisions and behaviour. (Collins and Stevens, 2002) However brand image is 'largely a perceptual phenomenon that is formed through interpretation whether reasoned or emotional' (Knox and Freeman, 2006) and influenced by a range of factors that are essentially outside the firm's control. For example the reports of current employees are likely to have a greater impact than any company sponsored communications on the images held by potential recruits. (Dowling, 2001) At the same time current employees are likely to be most strongly influenced by their own employment experience. Therefore the brand image held by members of the target market may or may not be consistent with the image intended by managers.

Alignment

Internal-External

In order to achieve all of the objectives outlined above, external brand communications should be consistent with the actual employment experience and with the views of current employees. (Martin et al, 2005; Miles and Mangold, 2004) It is a fundamental principle of consumer branding that 'you have to deliver what you promise', (Burmahn and Zeplin, 2004) and this is equally true for employer branding. If the image projected externally is consistent with the actual employment experience, potential employees are able to more effectively self-select during the recruitment process. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004) This leads to lower costs of administration, lower turnover, and a range of other benefits associated with 'person-organization fit'. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004)

Information provided during the recruitment process can also provide the foundation for each new employee's psychological contract with the firm. (Rousseau, 2001) Therefore he enters the firm with specific expectations about what will be demanded of him and what he will receive in return. If the organization fulfils its part of this perceived exchange agreement, the employee is encouraged to trust the organization and internalize its norms and values. (Miles and Mangold, 2004) If the employee's expectations are not met, he may perceive a breach or violation of his 'psychological contract' with the firm. As a result he is likely to be less satisfied in his job, less productive, less trusting of the organization, and more likely to quit. (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994) It is therefore important to project an accurate image to potential employees, so that they enter the firm with realistic expectations.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Employer Brand Image

Most research on employer brand image has focused on the external market. For example Lievens and Highhouse (2003) adapted Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale to study the impact of instrumental versus symbolic attributes on employer attractiveness. They found that many instrumental attributes were strongly correlated with attractiveness, but did not vary significantly among firms in the same industry. Perceived symbolic traits provided a more useful basis for discriminating between brands and significantly improved prediction of attractiveness. More recently Berthon et al (2005) developed a scale to measure the attractiveness of an employer brand. They defined employer attractiveness as 'the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization' and described it as an antecedent of employer brand equity. Although the scale may not be widely generalizable, except to final year business students, it provides useful starting point for studying other audiences.

The notable exception to this trend is Knox and Freeman (2006). Their study focused on the internal, external, and construed external images associated with an employer

brand during the recruitment process. While external brand image was found to be positively correlated with application intentions, there was a significant difference between the three images. This finding highlights the difficulty and importance of aligning the perceptions of current and potential employees.

Employer Brand Communications

Most of the research on employer brand communications has also focused on the external market. Ewing et al (2002) studied recruitment ads that appeared in magazines and identified three categories of employment advertising strategy. These were status and mobility (global network – big and successful), excitement (new experiences), and identification (source similarity). Collins and Stevens (2002) studied the effect of several marketing mix variables, used early in the recruitment process, on the application decisions of graduating engineering students. They found that publicity, advertising, and word-of-mouth were all effective in creating a positive brand image, but sponsorship was not. Brand image was also found to be a significant predictor of application decisions. Backhaus (2004) studied the recruitment ads on monster.com to in order to better understand how companies were promoting themselves as employers. She found that firms tended to cluster together, conforming to ‘brand types’ rather than offering distinct benefits. However she also observed that in order to maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly tight employment market firms would need to find ways to make themselves appear unique.

PRACTITIONER PRESS

Articles in the practitioner press have defined and conceptualized employer branding in several different ways. (Miles and Mangold, 2005) While this has arguably created a lack of focus, there are several themes which have received consistent attention.

Key Themes

Recruitment

Recognizing the increasing 'war for talent', many articles proclaim the benefits of employer branding as a tool for attracting attention in the employment marketplace. For example Clegg (2004) describes employer branding as 'a consumer-style approach to recruitment' and an article in Harvard Management Update (2000) recommends the use of employer branding when recruiting on campus 'to make sure your company "registers on students' radars"'.

'Employer of Choice'

Most of the articles that are primarily concerned with recruitment also discuss the benefits of becoming an 'employer of choice.' (E.g. Kaliprasad, 2006) This term refers to a company that is included in one or more of the many 'best employer lists' that are published in the popular press. Examples include Fortune Magazine's '100 Best Companies to Work for in America,' Hewitt Associate's 'Best Employers in Asia,' and Computer World's '100 Best Places for IT Professionals to work.' (Joo and Mclean, 2006)

Authenticity

The term authenticity is used here to describe the balance between the firm's internal reality and its external brand communications; many authors argue that effective employer branding has to start from within. (E.g. Miles and Mangold, 2005) For example IOMA's (2004) human resource department's management report states that employer branding is 'not about what people want to hear. It's about figuring out the realities of your organization and getting to its essence.' This theme is particularly significant because it relates to the strategic debate discussed in section 1. Although there are strengths and weakness associated with this inside-out approach to employer branding, it appears to be the strategy of choice within the practitioner press.

6. THEMATIC FINDINGS: Social Identity Approach to Organizational Identification and Social Process Approach to Recruitment

SOCIAL IDENTITY APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Introduction

Organizational identification creates a strong psychological attachment which shapes an individual's motivations and behaviour, even when there are no changes in his job or material benefits. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) This can offer substantial benefits for the organization. (Olkkonen and Lipponen, 2006; Ashforth and Mael, 1989) As a result, organization theorists have attempted to describe these benefits and to discover the factors which might strengthen the underlying attachment. However the distinction between cause and effect is not fully understood. From a theoretical perspective, organizational identification appears to be self-reinforcing; it strengthens some, but not all, of the variables which have typically been considered antecedents. Moreover some variables are classified differently by different authors. Researchers have acknowledged this problem but have generally used cross-sectional data and correlation based analysis, leaving them unable to address the question of causality. (van Knippenberg and van Schie, 2000)

Although the role of individual correlates and the relationships among them remain unclear, most authors adhere to the theory based classifications established by Ashforth and Mael (1989). Variables that are not explicitly included in their paper are either linked to one that is or classified on other theoretical grounds. In order to accurately represent the literature, this review will follow the same conventions and classify each variable as either an antecedent or a consequence of organizational identification.

Antecedents

Based on Social Identity Theory

The three most frequently cited antecedents of organization identification are based on social identity theory. These are described by Ashforth and Mael (1989) as 'distinctiveness,' 'prestige', and 'salience of out-groups.' Because identification is a matter of degree, these three antecedents may affect not only the occurrence but also the strength of an individual's identification. This has been defined by van Dick and Wagner (2002) as 'the extent to which the group membership is incorporated in the self-concept.' It is also important to note that according to social identity theory identification is based on individual perceptions. Therefore the terms 'distinctiveness' and 'prestige' are used here to describe subjective impressions that may bear little resemblance to objective reality or to the impressions of other members.

Distinctiveness

Distinctiveness refers to those characteristics which set the organization apart from other comparable groups (Oakes and Turner, 1986) and give it a unique identity. This enhances identification because it separates 'figure from ground' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989), so that categorization is more likely to occur. (Pratt, 1998) People are also naturally driven to enhance their distinctiveness in social contexts, (Tajfel and Turner, 1985) and membership in a distinctive organization helps them to achieve this. (Dutton et al, 1994) The relationship between distinctiveness and organizational identification has been supported by research (Mael, 1988) and appears to hold true even when the distinction is perceived by outsiders to hold a negative connotation; group members may emphasize this distinction, particularly in response to a perceived threat, but re-construe it in a more positive light. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989)

Prestige

Prestige refers to those characteristics which may enhance the self-esteem of individual members. The meaning of this term as used in the literature is significantly broader than that implied by common usage and is generally interpreted in one of two ways.

Some authors describe prestige as dependent on the perceived opinions of other people. For example Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) describe organizational prestige as 'the perception that a member of the organization has that other people, whose opinions are valued, believe that the organization is well regarded (e.g. respected, admired, prestigious, well-known).' Smidts et al (2001) adopt a similar approach but use the term 'perceived external image.' They argue that membership in an organization that is well-regarded allows a person to 'bask in the reflected glory' (Cialdini et al, 1976) and therefore enhances his self-esteem. Several studies have supported this perspective, showing that perceived external prestige is significantly correlated with organizational identification. (E.g. Smidts et al, 2001; Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya et al, 1995; Mael and Ashforth, 1992)

Others interpret the term more broadly to include those factors which enhance a personal sense of self-worth, regardless of other people's opinions. For example a study by Olkkonen and Lipponen (2006) showed that two types of organizational justice, distributive justice and procedural justice, were significantly correlated with organizational identification. The first was defined as 'the perceived fairness of the outcomes and the allocation of resources in the workplace' and the second as 'the perceived fairness of the formal decision-making procedures used in the organization.' They argued that perceived organizational justice signals to organizational members that they are valued and respected, thus enhancing their self-esteem. A study by Bamber and Iyer (2002) also showed that for auditors in the 'Big 5' accounting firms, perceived effectiveness of a firm's audit process was directly related to organizational identification. They argued that the ability to perform high quality work contributed directly to each member's self-esteem. In both of these studies it was members' perceptions of the organization's characteristics, not their perceptions of other people's opinions, that strengthened their identification with the organization.

Salience of out-groups

According to Ashforth and Mael (1989) salience of out-groups causes members to enhance their estimations of the organization's distinctiveness and prestige. The most commonly cited cause of out-group salience is inter-group competition. Therefore out-group salience and, by extension, inter-group competition should both increase the strength of members' identification with the organization. The first supposition has generally been supported by research. (E.g. Allen et al, 1983; Turner, 1981) However the impact of inter-group competition is less clear. For example Brown and Ross (1982) and van Knippenberg (1984) both found that group boundaries are strengthened and group differences emphasized in the context of inter-group competition, but Mael and Ashforth (1992) found that organizational identification was not significantly correlated with intra-organizational competition.

Based on Self-Categorization Theory

As discussed earlier, identity salience is a necessary prerequisite for self-categorization and identification. Self-categorization theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) suggests that an organization's identity is most likely to be salient when out-groups are salient, when members of the organization are perceived to share similar characteristics, and when those characteristics are perceived to be very different from those possessed by members of other organizations. However these three antecedents have received little attention in the organizational identification literature.

Individual level Variables

Ashforth (1998) argued that strong organizational identities can 'serve as salient beacons or reference points, attracting some people and repulsing others.' This suggests that the identification with a particular organization is likely to vary significantly from person to person. Neither social identity theory nor self-categorization theory can fully explain these individual differences, but subsequent theorists and researchers have attempted to fill the gap.

March and Simon (1963) suggested that frequency of interpersonal interaction should increase organizational identification. Although their model is no longer a frequent

point of reference in the literature, this suggestion has received indirect empirical support. (Dutton et al, 1994) It is also consistent with the finding of Wiesenfeld et al (2001) that individuals who have a greater need for affiliation are more likely to identify with an organization; if organizational identification is essentially an interpersonal phenomenon, individuals who receive greater satisfaction 'from harmonious relationships and from a sense communion with others' (Murray, 1938) should be more inclined to identify. However this argument appears to be inconsistent with the principles of social identity theory.

Brewer and Gardner (1996) distinguish between interpersonal identities which are based on 'personalized bonds of attachment' and collective identities which are based on 'impersonal bonds derived from common identification with some symbolic group or social category'. Social identity theory relates to the latter. (Glynn, 1998) In fact Ashforth and Mael (1989) state explicitly that interpersonal interaction is not required for an individual to identify with the group. In order to provide an explanation that is consistent with social identity theory, Glynn (1998) proposes the hypothetical construct 'need for organizational identification' (nOID). This describes an individual's propensity to identify with the 'more impersonal, general social category of a particular collective'. A study by Kreiner and Ashforth (2004) found that nOID is a significant predictor of organizational identification.

Mael and Ashforth (1995) also argued that an individuals' propensity to identify may be influenced by his life experience. They argued that 'every experience that conceivably categorizes a person has the potential to shape the person.' (Mael and Ashforth, 1995) A person's memberships in particular groups at one point in his life can therefore influence his choice of group memberships later in life. Their study of U.S. Army recruits found that four biodata factors were significant predictors of identification. These were (1) perceived congruence of personal interests and organizational activities (2) internalization of or conformity to institutional expectations (3) a preference for group attachments and (4) cognitively ambitious, achievement-oriented pursuits. Although these four factors may not be generalizable outside of a military context, their findings provide support for the use of biodata in predicting organizational identification.

Dutton et al (1994) provided further theoretical support for the role of individual difference in determining a person's propensity to identify with a particular organization. They argued that people are driven to maintain the continuity of their self-concepts and to express those values and beliefs which they consider important. Both can be achieved through organizational identification, but only if the identity of the organization is consistent with the person's pre-existing self-concept. This self-concept is likely to be a product of the individual's unique history, experience, personality.

Other Contextual Considerations

There is disagreement in the literature as to the kind of relationship, between the organization and its employees, that is most conducive to organizational identification. Morgan et al (2004) suggest that organizational identification is likely to be strongest when the organization is viewed as a provider or 'father figure.' Likewise Rousseau (1998) argues that identification is likely to be strongest when the locus of control is with the organization, not the employee. She cites extreme examples such as religious cults and the military in which the will of the individual is subjugated to that of the group. Bamber and Iyer (2002), on the other hand, found that among certified accountants in the 'Big 5' accounting firms organizational identification was positively correlated with perceived autonomy. This inconsistency may be due to the different contexts in which the study was conducted, but there is no evidence to indicate which are the relevant variables.

Consequences

Cognitive

According to social identity theory the mere perception of membership in a group can have a significant impact on the way that a person thinks and acts. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) It creates a cognitive bias toward the in-group and its members (Tajfel and Turner, 1986) which causes the individual to find the group more attractive and to emphasize those characteristics that make its identity different from those of salient out-groups. Therefore identification becomes self-reinforcing. The

individual is also likely to prioritize the interests of the group over his own and to be more trusting of in-group members. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Weisenfeld et al, 1998) These effects can happen in any group setting, even if the group members have nothing in common, do not like each other, and never interact; the relationships of interest are not between individuals but between each individual and the group. However organizational identification is a particular type of social identification and can also influence cognition in more specific ways. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989)

A person who identifies with the organization incorporates its perceived identity within his own self-concept. (Dutton et al, 1994; Ashforth and Mael, 1989) This self-concept is 'an interpretive structure that mediates how people behave and feel in a social context.' (Dutton et al, 1994) By shaping this interpretive structure organizational identification can determine which aspects of the environment he considers important, how he interprets them, and what he considers to be an appropriate response. (Haslam et al, 2003; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) To the extent that other organizational members collectively identify with the group and form similar impressions of its identity, this allows them to coordinate their behaviour 'in ways that lead to concerted social action and collective products', and provides the basis for collective mind. (Haslam et al, 2003) Under certain circumstances, however, the same processes may contribute to negative organizational outcomes.

Organizational identification has also been associated with group think and resistance to change. (Haslam et al, 2006; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) According to Janis' (1971) influential model of groupthink, highly cohesive groups tend to make 'defective and irrational decisions' in crisis situations. (Haslam et al, 2006) Organizational identification exacerbates this tendency because it causes members to subordinate their individual identities to that of the group, thereby reducing the likelihood of dissent. It also creates an irrational commitment to the group's identity and goals. Because this commitment is 'synonymous with self-definition, self-expression, and self-preservation' it prevents group members from changing their line of thought or action, even when failure is inevitable. (Haslam et al, 2006)

In short, an individual who identifies strongly become dependent on his identity as a member of the organization. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) This dependency can

enhance his psychological well-being, 'providing a source of belongingness, empowerment and meaningfulness' (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and allows him to function more effectively as a member of the group. However it can also limit his creative thinking, increase his susceptibility to work-related stress, and eventually lead to burn-out. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) These negative outcomes are not insignificant and are inextricably linked to the potential benefits of organizational identification.

Affective

Organizational identification has been shown to influence employees' affective response to their jobs, to the organization, and to the actions of organizational leaders. (Van Dick and Wagner, 2002; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) The attitude that has received most attention in the organizational identification literature is job satisfaction. For example van Dick et al (2004) found that the two variables were significantly correlated. Their study confirmed the findings of van Knippenburg and van Schie (2000) and Mael and Ashforth (1992). In the last case, however, job satisfaction was classified as an antecedent rather than a consequence of organizational identification. Dutton and Dukerich (1991) also found that individuals who identified with the organization expressed emotions that were shaped by the organization's perceived identity; when the organization's leaders took actions that were consistent with this identity, employees expressed positive emotions, but when leaders' actions were inconsistent with the organization's perceived identity they triggered negative emotions.

Affect has also been shown to influence the relationship between identification and behaviour. Those who treat affect as a dimension of organizational identification have generally found that it is a better predictor of behaviour than either of the other two dimensions. (Ouwerkerk et al, 1999) For example van Dick et al (2004) found that the affective dimension was the most strongly correlated with withdrawal intention, job satisfaction, and team climate. Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) also found that the affective dimension was the best predictor of three forms of organizational citizenship behaviour, altruism, sportsmanship, and civic virtue. The cognitive dimension had only an indirect impact on the five forms of OCB considered.

Although Ashforth and Mael (1989) treat affect as a consequence rather than a dimension of organizational identification, this does not diminish its importance. It simply implies that affect may be an important intervening variable in the relationship between identification and behaviour.

Behavioural

Social identification can influence an individual's attitudes and behaviour, even when there are no changes in his job or material benefits. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) For example the minimal group studies showed that the mere knowledge of shared membership in a group can increase cooperation and cohesion within the group. (Tajfel and Turner, 1985) Such effects are likely to be particularly strong in an employment context because a person spends more time at work than with other groups and is personally invested in the organization's success. (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000) Organizational identification, as a particular kind of social identification, can also affect behaviour in more specific ways.

Organizational identification motivates individuals to act, and be seen to act, in accordance with the organization's perceived identity. (Haslam et al, 2000; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) Employees who identify with the organization will therefore 'feel most authentic when they are conforming to role expectations, including display roles'. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993) For such people their work provides an opportunity to express a valued identity, and this creates a sense of psychological well-being. However employees who must conform to the same display rules and do not identify may experience emotive dissonance. This creates a need to resolve the dissonance, which can be done by realigning their identity. Emotional labour, particularly deep acting, can therefore enhance organizational identification. (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993)

Individuals who identify with the organization are also motivated to pursue its goals, even at great personal cost. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) Organizational identification has therefore been shown to have a significant impact on organizational citizenship behaviour. (van Dick et al, 2005; Dukerich et al, 2002; Tyler and Blader, 2000) This is defined by Morrison as 'behavior that is beneficial for an organization but falls

outside of formal role requirements such that it is difficult to formally specify or reward'. (Morrison, 1996) A study by Lee (2004) showed that organizational identification motivated employees to engage in continuous improvement, defined as 'the propensity to pursue incremental and innovative improvements of its process, products, and services,' and he argued that this was another form of extra-role behaviour. According to Dutton et al (1994) employees who identify with the organization are also more likely to engage in impression management; because the organization's construed external image affects each member's self-concept, employees are motivated individually and collectively to promote a positive image of the organization's identity.

Finally organizational identification motivates an individual to remain with the firm, even when it may seem rational to leave, because leaving 'means losing a part of himself' (Haslam 2001) and is psychologically painful. (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) Several studies have therefore shown that organizational identification is negatively correlated with both turnover intentions and actual turnover. (Cole and Bruch, 2006; Tyler and Blader, 2000) Van Dick et al (2005) also found that it was positively correlated with employee satisfaction, which further reduced turnover intentions.

Although identification is associated with a wide range of behaviours that can benefit the organization, van Knippenberg (2002) points out that this connection needs to be qualified. Even employees who identify with the firm will only engage in these behaviours if the following three criteria are met. First the organization's identity must be salient; as explained above, the effect of identification is contingent on cueing of the relevant category. Second the behaviour must be perceived by the employee as beneficial to the organization; it is his perception of the organization's best interests, not objective reality that shapes behaviour. Finally the behaviour must be within the employee's conscious control; motivation is useless if he is unable to act on it.

SOCIAL PROCESS APPROACH TO RECRUITMENT

Herriot's (2002, 2004) 'social process' model of employee recruitment is based on the following general proposition:

'Applicants' intentions and actions regarding recruiting organizations are predicted by the extent to which applicants' salient social identities are congruent with their perceptions of the organizational identity.' (Herriot, 2004)

More specifically he describes the selection process as a series of social encounters between an applicant and the organization or its representatives. During each encounter particular identities become salient. If either party perceives the applicant's salient identity to be incongruent with that of the organization, he will choose to exit the process. In order to predict whether a job applicant will exit the process or continue in the employment relationship, it is therefore necessary to answer three questions: Which of the applicants identities is likely to be salient during a particular encounter? How does the applicant learn about the organization's identity? How does he assess the fit between his own identity and that of the organization?

Herriot (2002) identifies four factors that are likely to influence which of the applicant's identities are salient. First he argues that identity salience is influenced by the design of the recruitment process. For example if the firm takes sole responsibility for defining the criteria on which potential employees are judged and believes that it has the right to obtain whatever information is deemed relevant, the organization takes on the role of 'selector' and the potential employee categorizes himself as the 'applicant.' In fact he argues that this is the most common recruitment scenario. If the power relationship is more balanced, however, the employee's identity as a highly qualified professional might become more salient.

The second factor he identifies is the salient identity of the selector; this will shape his or her behaviour, and this behaviour is an important contextual cue. For example if the selector demonstrates values which are perceived to be strongly masculine then the applicant's gender-based identity is more likely to become salient. Third he argues that the applicant's salient identity is determined by the range of identities that he or she has to choose from, in other words 'the identities which the applicant brings

with him or her.’ Finally he argues that identity salience is influenced by other elements of the applicant’s self. For example someone who sees himself as an actor may assume whatever identity he thinks the selector wants to see.

An applicant learns about the organization’s identity from a range of sources both before and during the recruitment process. Early sources of information might include the organization’s publicity materials, the firm’s reputation, or word-of-mouth from family and friends. The applicant forms an impression of the organization’s identity, based on these sources, before the recruitment process begins. During each stage of the recruitment process he then discovers further ‘clues.’ As a result perceptions of the organization’s identity are likely to change during the recruitment process, so he may choose to exit at any time. The most important source of clues is the individual chosen to represent the firm. By choosing representatives that embody the organization’s defining characteristics, the firm can therefore help applicants to correctly assess their fit with the organization.

Herriot describes the matching process in terms of BVNs or ‘Beliefs, Values and Norms.’ If a particular identity is salient, so are the BVN’s associated with that identity. Following Schneider’s (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model he argues that if the selector has an identity that is prototypical of the organization his behaviour will reflect the BVN’s of the organization. This will lead him to attract, and be attracted to, individuals who share those BVN’s. Therefore the selection process will naturally lead to the recruitment of individuals who match the organization’s identity. Any applicants who are hired despite an identity mismatch will be ‘rejected as outsiders’ and will soon leave. As a result the individuals who join and remain with the firm will be very similar to one another and their personal characteristics will be consistent with the organization’s prototypical identity.

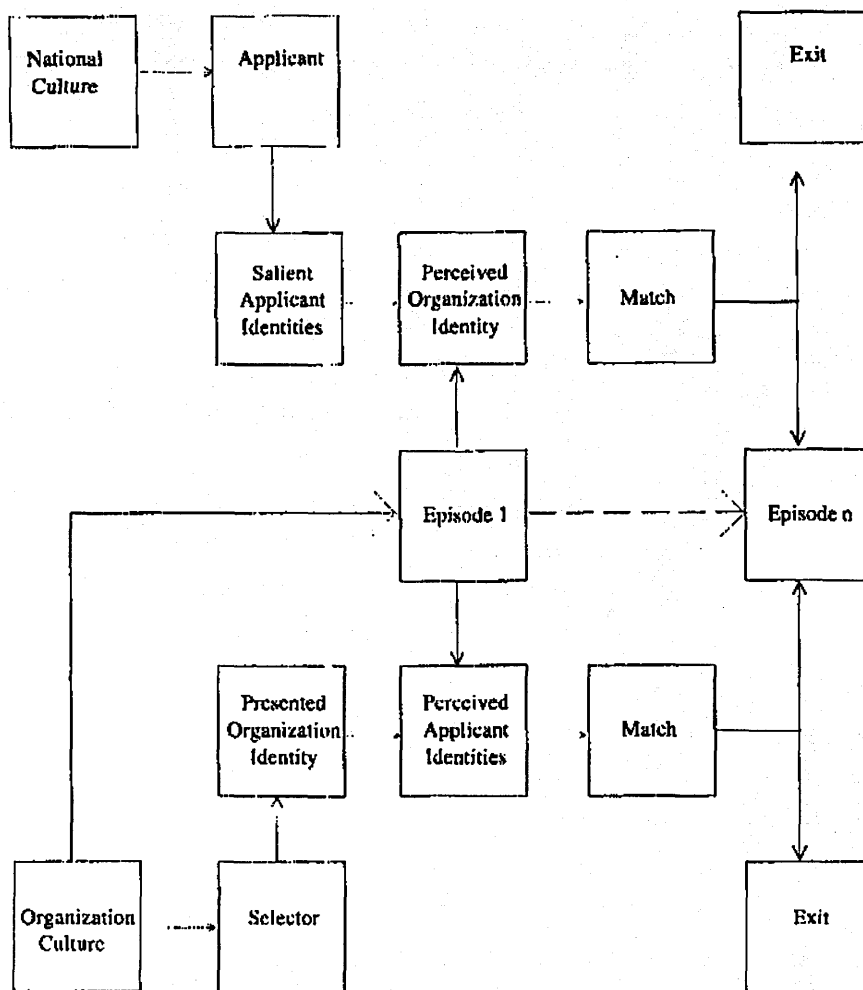


Fig. 6 Model of selection as a social process

Source: Herriot (2002)

7. DISCUSSION

Model of the Employer Branding Value Chain

Based on this systematic literature review I developed a model of the employer branding value chain. The basic components of this model are shown in appendix A. However a more detailed discussion of the model is also needed. In this section I will therefore re-examine the principles of employer branding in light of the insights gained from the organizational identification literature, describing the steps that might be taken in order to implement this particular approach to employer branding. I will then summarize the main benefits associated with this approach, as well as the potential problems. Finally I will discuss the strengths and weakness of the proposed model and identify areas in which further research would be most valuable.

Principles

The model proposed in this review represents an inside-out approach to employer branding. It is the organization's perceived identity, rather than the benefits sought by current or potential employees, that determines how the employer brand should be positioned. More specifically the organization's perceived identity is defined here as the aggregate perception of current employees regarding its 'most central, distinctive, and enduring' characteristics. (Albert and Whetten, 1985) This approach is consistent with the Resource Based View of the firm, as discussed in section 2. The organization's identity is assumed to provide a potential source of sustained competitive advantage and employer branding allows the firm to realize that advantage.

According to this logic the employer value proposition is simply an explicit statement of the organization's perceived identity. This perceived identity is conceptually identical to the employer brand image held by current employees. Therefore the image communicated to potential employees is automatically aligned with the actual employment experience. This ensures that new employees enter the firm with realistic expectations, thereby avoiding a breach or violation of the psychological

contract formed between the firm and its new employees. It also allows potential employees to effectively self-select during the recruitment process. (Herriot, 2002, 2004) Applicants who perceive their own self-concepts to be congruent with the organization's perceived identity will be more likely to join the firm and others will exit the process of their own volition. As a result those who do join the firm are likely to stay longer, be more satisfied in their jobs, and be more likely to identify with the firm. (Schneider, 1987)

For these people the employer value proposition carries an implicit promise of enhanced self-esteem. Membership in an organization that is seen to embody their own beliefs and values allows them to maintain a sense of self-continuity and express those values which they consider important. (Dutton and Dukerich, 1991) The perceived distinctiveness of the organization may also contribute to a sense of individual distinctiveness. (Dutton et al, 1994) These are symbolic benefits that are likely to be valued by both current and potential employees, therefore enhancing both organizational identification and attraction. Of course these potential benefits will be greater if the firm is perceived to be prestigious and distinctive, (Ashforth and Mael, 1989) and these characteristics can be enhanced in a number of ways. For example the firm may revise its procedures and policies to ensure they appear fair or use internal and external communications media to enhance the firm's perceived prestige. Managers may also use take steps to create a sense of competition with other organizations. This should cause current employees to perceive the organization as more attractive and more distinctive, even in the absence of substantive changes, and their perceptions may be passed on to potential employees through word-of-mouth.

The marketing mix should be designed not only to convey this value proposition, but also to make the firm's identity salient in the minds of both current and potential employees. Particular attention might be paid to those situations that have a direct impact on the firm's objectives. For example by making the organization's value proposition salient when potential employees are deciding where to apply, a firm can ensure that it is included in the decision set. Likewise if the organization's identity is salient during a service encounter the employee is more likely to think and act in accordance with the firm's beliefs, values and norms. As long as these are aligned with the firm's consumer brand, this will help to ensure that the customer's

experience meets or exceeds to his expectations. Making the organization’s identity salient for employees throughout the workday may also help the firm to function more efficiently; because the firm’s identity functions as a shared cognitive framework, employees who perceive this identity to be salient will interpret and respond to events in similar ways. These connections are summarized in figure 7.

	Salience	Prestige, distinctiveness
Current employees	Behaviour shaped by organizational identity	Increased organizational identification
Potential employees	Firm becomes part of consideration set	Increased organizational attraction

Fig. 7 Benefits associated with salience and content of employer value proposition

In order to meet these objectives the firm can use a wide range of media. These may include communications, company policies, training and development activities, and so on. According to Herriot (2002, 2004) it is also important that the individuals selected to represent the firm are those who embody the firm’s defining characteristics; this ensures that the applicant receives accurate ‘clues’ regarding the organization’s identity. Moreover the literature on organizational identification suggests that it may be effective to reach beyond the primary audience, defined here as current employees and those who have been identified as potential recruits. For example prestige depends on the perceived opinion of outsiders. By using external communications to enhance the firm’s wider reputation, the firm may therefore increase identification among a firm’s current employees. Since potential employees

respond to the recruitment process in accordance with their prior images of the firm (Herriot, 2004), this may also enhance the firm's recruitment outcomes.

Consequences

This review suggests that a broad range of benefits may be realized through the use of employer branding. By increasing the strength of organizational identification among current employees and recruiting new employees who 'fit' well with the organization's perceived identity, the firm can attract and retain the best employees, motivate them to pursue the organizations goals, and align their behaviour with the firm's consumer brand. The model therefore shows how employer branding can contribute to both marketing and HR related objectives. Moreover the strategy implied in this model appears to offer benefits which have yet to be recognized in the employer branding literature. These include extra-role behaviours, continuous improvement, and impression management by the firm's employees. On the other hand it suggests that the development of a strong employer brand may sometimes have negative consequences, such as group think and resistance to change.

Discussion of the Model and Areas for Further Research

This model is not intended to be the only potential model of the employer branding value chain. Nor is it expected to be the most appropriate model in every circumstance; the model has specific strengths and weaknesses, and the balance between them may depend on contextual factors that have not been fully explored in this review. There are also certain parts of the model which are not yet fully specified. Some of these gaps are due to the limited scope of the present study and may be addressed through a review of the literature in other related areas, but others are more likely to require original research. It would be particularly useful, therefore, to test the validity and relative impact of this model in different contexts, and to explore how these gaps may be addressed. Key strengths and weaknesses of the model are described below, along with suggestions for further research.

As mentioned above, this model implies an inside-out approach to employer branding. It therefore allows the firm to build on its existing strengths, ensures that its

psychological contract with new employees is not broken, and captures those characteristics that are most 'distinctive' about the organization. However it does not fully explain how an employer brand can be repositioned in response to changing marketing conditions. In fact this approach to employer branding is likely to create immense resistance to management lead change, promoting group think and an irrational commitment to the status quo. This is a weakness that may be particularly apparent in dynamic industries such as IT.

The model is also reliant on symbolic rather than instrumental benefits to attract and motivate employees. It may therefore induce behaviours that are uniquely associated with symbolic benefits, such as OCB and impression management. It also provides a strong basis for differentiation in the employment market (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003) and will be difficult for competitors to copy. However the model does not address the role of instrumental benefits. In an employment context these can hardly be ignored. Further research is therefore needed to investigate the relative influence of instrumental versus symbolic benefits, particularly in different industries or at different levels of the organizational hierarchy.

A more general weakness in the proposed model is its vague use of the term 'organizational identity'. According to the model proposed here, organizational identity represents the very foundation of employer branding. However the definition cited by Ashforth and Mael (1989) is so flexible that organizational identity has since been described as merely 'a useful contrivance' (Czarniawska, 1997) that means different things to different people at different times. It would therefore be useful to consider how the term might be operationalized in the context of employer branding. Studies by Knox and Freeman (2006) and Berthon et al (2005) go some ways toward addressing this question; they explain what characteristics make an organization attractive to potential employees. Future research might also explore what makes an organization attractive to current employees or it might use a grounded approach to better understand how employees perceive or make sense of the organization's identity.

Limitations of the review and areas for further research

This paper provided a systematic review of the academic literature on employer branding. As mentioned earlier in the review, however, employer branding is a field that synthesizes several related areas of marketing thought. (Ambler and Barrow, 1996) Therefore a full understanding of the subject would require a review of the literature in all of these areas of marketing. (Uncles and Moroko, 2005) Such a review is beyond the scope of this paper, but represents a promising avenue for future consideration.

The practitioner literature was briefly reviewed, but the methods applied were ill-suited to the task. For example the database searches were set to include only those articles which were published in academic journals. The number of articles included in the study was also a mere fraction of those that have been published in the practitioner press; a search on Google resulted in more than 200,000 hits.⁶ It might therefore be useful to conduct a broader review of the practitioner literature in this area. The purpose of such a review would not be to find out what is 'known' about employer branding, but to find out what might be learned from the experience of practicing managers.

By adopting a social identity approach to both the intervening variables (organizational identification and person-organization fit) this review excluded potentially valuable ideas associated with other perspectives. This was a particularly significant limitation with respect to organizational attraction and person-organization fit; in both cases there is a vast body of relevant literature, but most works were outside the scope of this review. A broader review of the literature in these fields might also be valuable and could be used to elaborate on the model proposed here.

⁶ A Google search for 'employer branding' resulted in 229,000 hits. The idea of using Google as an indicator of practitioner interest was borrowed from Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), who stated that searches on Google and Yahoo each generated over 3,000 hits. The huge increase over 2 years appears to demonstrate a surge in practitioner interest.

8. CONCLUSION

This paper provided a systematic review of the literature in two areas, employer branding and the social identity approach to organizational identity. The social process approach to employee selection (Herriot, 2002, 2004) was also explored as an extension of the literature on organizational identification. Based on the insights gained from this review I developed a model of the employer branding value chain. This model showed how employer branding could be used to achieve specific managerial objectives. The limitations of this review were then acknowledged and areas for further research were suggested.

This review has contributed to the literature on employer branding in three ways. First it has provided a detailed and empirically valid model of the employer branding value chain. In doing so it has begun to address both of the questions raised at the beginning of the paper: (1) What is employer branding? (2) How does it work? Second the review has shown that employer branding can have negative consequences and explained when they are most likely to occur. Third the review has demonstrated that organizational identification, and more specifically the social identity approach, may be just as relevant to employer branding as theories from HR and marketing.

Although the model has significant limitations, as discussed in section 7 of this review, it appears to meet the objectives specified at the beginning of this paper. It provides a framework that is directly relevant to practice and it highlights areas in which further research is needed. These were also discussed in section 7. Therefore the objectives of the review have been met, but the model has also raised further questions. These questions may be used to position further research into the process of employer branding and how it creates value for the firm.

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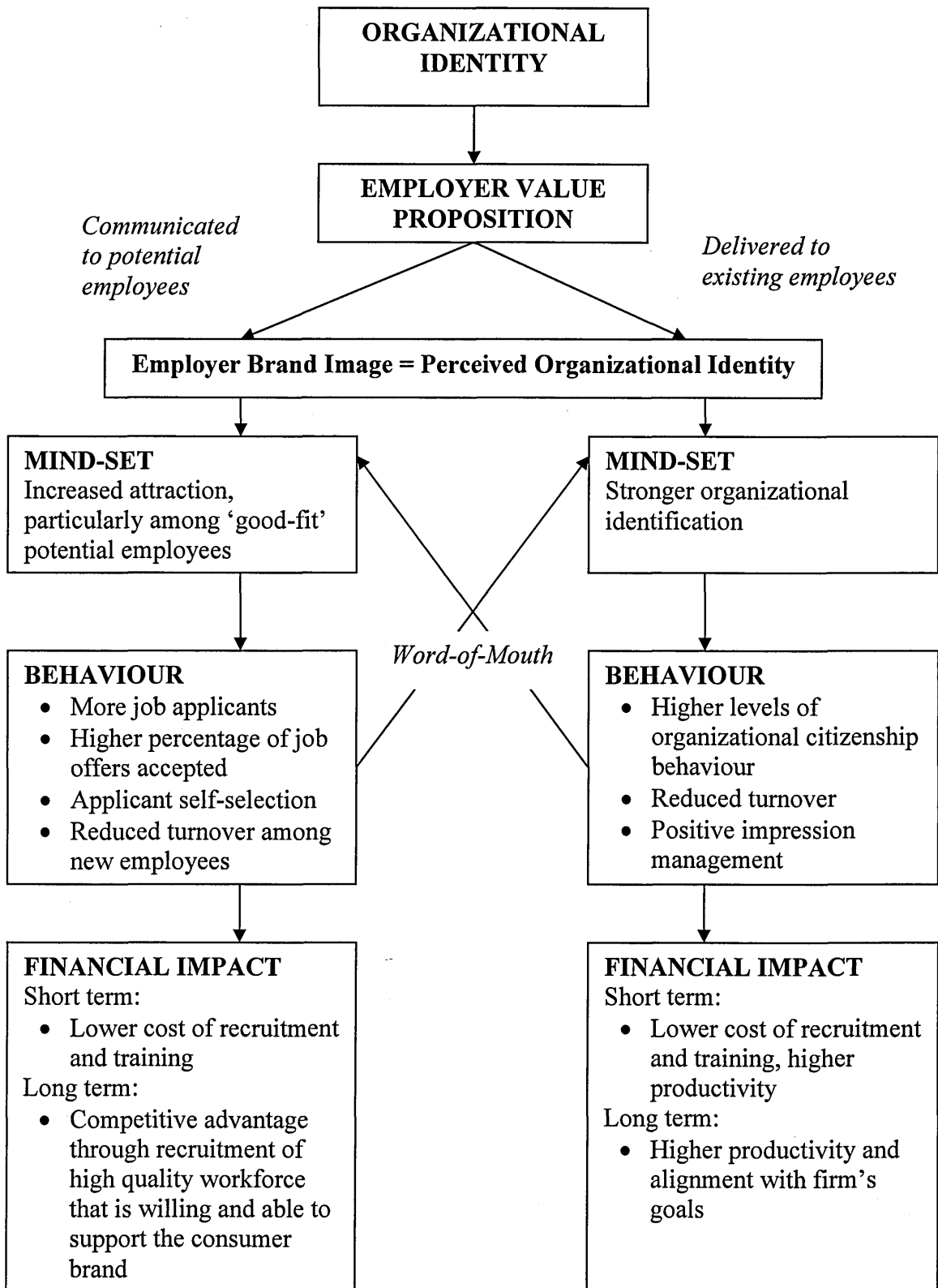
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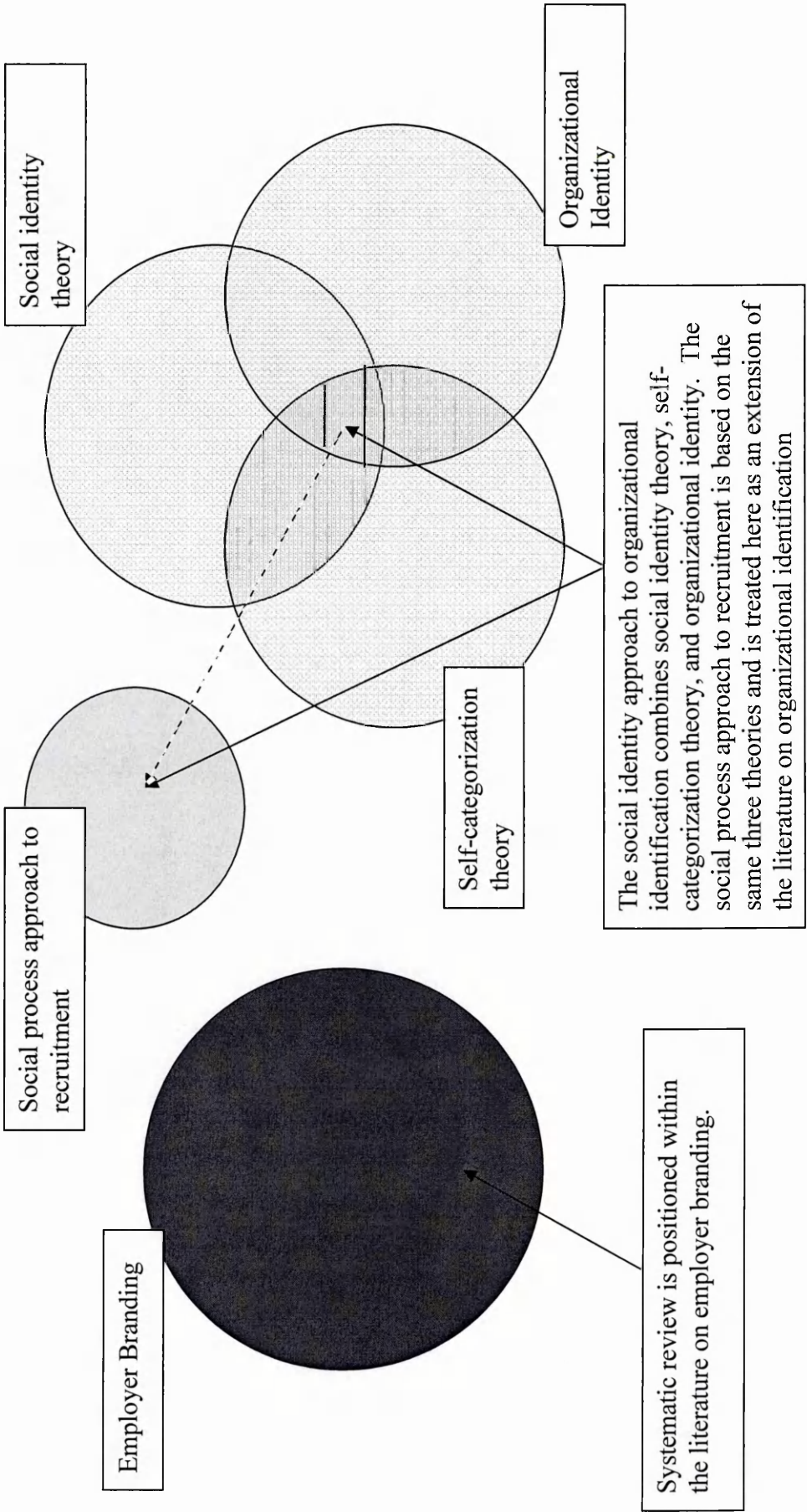
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APPENDIX A: MODEL OF THE EMPLOYER BRANDING VALUE CHAIN



APPENDIX B: MAP OF THE FIELD



APPENDIX C: WORKS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Articles

Authors	Title of work	Year	Publication	Issue	Vol.	Pages	Type	Findings or Key Points
Ambler, T and Barrow, S.	The employer brand	1996	Journal of brand management	4	3	185-206	Academic, empirical	Conceptual overview of employer branding as an idea that synthesizes several areas of marketing thought. Idea found resonance with managers although they had not previously heard the term 'employer brand'
Anonymous	Viewpoint: can you be an employer of choice	2005	Employee benefits	7-Dec		18	Practitioner	Describes popularity and benefits of 'employer of choice' strategy
Backhaus, B and Tikoo, S.	Conceptualizing and researching employer branding	2004	Career Development International	9	4/5	501-517	Academic, conceptual	Conceptual overview of employer branding
Backhaus, K	An exploration of corporate recruitment descriptions on monster.com' 41(2): 115-136	2004	Journal of Business Communications	41	2	115-136	Academic, empirical	True employer brands found to be extremely rare; firms tended to conform to industry norms, creating clusters rather than offering unique value propositions
Berthon, P, Ewing, M. and Hah, L.	Captivating company: dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding	2005	International Journal of Advertising	24	2	151-172	Academic, empirical	Develops a scale for measuring organizational attractiveness
Brown, A.	Strategic talent retention	2003	Strategic HR Review	2	4	22-27	Practitioner	Argues for the use of metrics in management of staff retention,

										particularly for understanding why staff leave and whether the firm is living up to its promise as an employer.
Chambers, E, Foulton, M, Handfield- Jones, H, Hankin, S. and Michaels III, E.	The war for talent	1998	McKinsey Quarterly		4			44-58	Practitioner	Explains why employer branding is important and argues that firms need to develop compelling value propositions. Concerned primarily with recruitment of senior managers.
Clegg, A.	Companies pull on grab-a-graduate night	2004	Financial Times	25th Nov.					Practitioner	Describes the tactics that various companies are using to attract and recruit graduates.
Collins, C. and Stevens, C.	The relationship between early recruitment-related activities and the application decisions of new labor-market entrants: a brand equity approach to recruitment	2002	Journal of applied psychology	87	6			1121- 1133		General attitudes toward the company and perceived job attributes were both found to be significant predictors of applications intention. Word of mouth had a particular impact on brand image.
Dalby, C.	Developing an employer brand at Thomas Cook' 3(5): 16-19	2004	Strategic HR Review	3	5			16-19	Practitioner	Describes development of employer brand at Thomas Cook. Emphasis on recruitment and changing perceptions of current employees.
Ewing, M, Pitt, L, de Bussy, N. and Berthon, P.	Employer branding in the knowledge economy	2002	International Journal of Advertising	21				3-22	Academic, empirical	Identified three types of recruitment advertising already in use. Described them as Transnational, Inc, Mission to Mars and Local.

IOMA	Why HR branding is a 'must do' for recruiting	2004	IOMA's Human Resource Department Management Report	May			7-8	Practitioner	Describes employer branding in very broad terms. Argues for inside-out approach.
Joo, B. and Mclean, G.	Best employer studies: conceptual model from a literature review and a case study	2006	Human Resource Development Review	5	2		228-257	Academic, conceptual	Conceptual overview of the 'best employer' concept
Johnson, M. and Roberts, P.	Rules of attraction	2006	MHS					Practitioner	Outlines step-by-step approach to employer branding. Describes most important elements as positioning, personality, and promise.
Kaliprasad, M.	The human factor I: Attracting, retaining motivating capable people	2006	Cost Engineering	48	6		20-26	Practitioner	Discusses importance of staff recruitment, retention, and motivation. Describes employer branding as 'a critical tool in the recruitment industry.'
Knox, S. and Freeman, C.	Measuring and managing employer brand image in the service industry'	2006	accepted for publication, Journal of Marketing Management					Academic, empirical	Attractiveness of employer brand image was found to be moderately correlated with application intention. Internal, external, and construed external images of the firm were partially aligned.
Lee, T.	Leading the way with company brand	2002	SCM	6	4		9	Practitioner	Argues for an inside-out approach to employer branding.
Lievens, F. and Highhouse, S.	The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to a company's attractiveness as an employer	2003	Personnel Psychology	56	1		75-102	Academic, empirical	Trait inferences found to be a better predictor of employer attractiveness than other job and organizational attributes.

Martin, G, Beaumont, P, Doig, R. and Pate, J.	Branding: a new performance discourse for HR?	2005	European Management Journal	23	1	76-88	Academic, conceptual	Conceptual overview of employer branding, emphasizes the need to align the firm's external image with its internal identity.
McKenzie, A. and Glynn, S.	Effective employment branding	2001	Strategic communication management	5	4	22-25	Practitioner	Prescriptions for successful employer branding. Advocates inside-out approach, development of the firm's story.
Miles, S. and Mangold, W.	Conceptualization of the employee branding process	2004	Journal of relationship marketing	3	2/3	65-87	Academic, conceptual	Conceptual overview of employer branding, based primarily on theory of psychological contract
Miles, S. and Mangold, W.	Positioning Southwest Airlines through employee branding	2005	Business Horizons	48	6	535-545	Practitioner	Describes how employer branding can be used as a 'positioning tool'. Uses the case of Southwest Airlines to illustrate.
Mitchell, C.	Using branding to attract talent	2002	Harvard Business Review	80	1	99-105	Practitioner	Advocates the treatment of potential recruits as customers, use of sophisticated market analysis techniques, importance of intangible benefits.
Rogers, F.	Engaging employees to live the brand	2003	Strategic HR Review	2	6	34-37	Practitioner	Prescriptions for successful branding. Advocates outside-in approach to align employment experience with external brand.
Sullivan, J.	Measuring brand employment	2003	Strategic HR Review	2	6	7	Practitioner	Argues that success of employer branding should be measured at four levels: media exposure, name recognition, detailed knowledge, brand results in action.

Van Leeuwen, B, Pieters, J. and Crawford, T.	Building Philips' employer brand from the inside out	2005	Strategic HR Review	4	4	16-19	Practitioner	Describes how consulting firm helped Philips to develop employer brand. Advocates an inside-out approach to employer branding
Young, A.	Aligning employer and consumer brand messages at the FT	2003	SCM	7	3	16-29	Practitioner	Describes how the Financial Times keeps its employer brand aligned with its consumer brand.

Books

Author	Year	Title	Publisher
Barrow, S. and Mosley, R.	2005	The Employer Brand	John Wiley and Sons Ltd, Chichester

Conference Papers

Title	Year	Conference details	Key Findings/Ideas
Employer Branding – the case for a multidisciplinary process related empirical investigation'	2005	Sutar, G. and Sweeney, J. (eds.) Broadening the Boundaries, ANZMAC conference proceedings, Perth, Australia	Review of the literature relevant to employer branding. Argues for further investigation into the employer branding process.

APPENDIX D: WORKS INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Articles

Authors	Title of work	Year	Journal	Issue	Vol	Pages	Type	Key Findings/Theoretical Conclusions
Albert, S. and Whetten, D.	Organizational identity	1985	Research in organizational behavior	7		263-295	T	Introduces notion of organizational identity as that which is 'most central, enduring, and distinctive' about the organization
Albert, S., Ashforth, B. and Dutton, J.	Organizational identity and identification: charting new waters and building new bridges		Academy of Management Review	25	1	13-17	T	Introduction to special issue on identity and identification, discusses relevance of these issues and current state of the field
Ashforth, B. and Humphrey, R.	Emotional labor in service roles: the influence of identity	1993	Academy of management review	18	1	88-115	T	Emotional labour, particularly deep acting, is expected to increase identification; it creates psychological pressure to identify as a means of dissonance reduction.
Ashforth, B. and Mael, F.	Social identity theory and the organization	1989	Academy of Management Review	14	1	20-39	T	Theory of organizational identification as a cognitive construct based on social identity theory, self-categorization theory, and organizational identity. Proposes key antecedents and consequences.
Bamber, E. Venkataraman, M.	Big 5 auditors' professional and organizational identification: consistency or conflict?	2002	Auditing: a journal of practice and theory	21	2	21-38	E	Job autonomy and perceived effectiveness of firms' audit process predicted organizational identification, which was negatively correlated with turnover intentions and organizational-professional conflict.

Bartel, C.	Social comparisons in boundary-spanning work: effects of community outreach on members' organizational identity and identification	2001	Administrative Science Quarterly	46	3	379-413	E	When there was no perceived threat to the organization, boundary spanning increased OI. Feedback from outsiders caused employees to adjust their perceptions of the organization's identity.
Bergami, M. and Bagozzi, R.	Self-categorization, affective commitment and group self-esteem as distinct aspects of social identity in the organization	2000	British Journal of Social Psychology	39		555-577	E	Prestige, stereotypes enhanced self-categorization. Affective component of OI predicted 3 types of OCB. Evaluative component predicted 2 (conscientious and courteous behaviours). Cognitive component had only indirect impact.
Cole, M. and Bruch, H.	Organizational identity strength, identification, and commitment and their relationships to turnover intention: does organizational hierarchy matter	2006	Journal of organizational behavior	27		585-605	E	OI found to be empirically distinct from OC. OI was better predictor of turnover among lower level employees, OC was a better predictor among senior managers. Organizational identity strength also negatively correlated with turnover intentions.
Dutton, J., Dukerich, J. and Harquail, C.	Organizational images and member identification	1994	Administrative Science Quarterly	39		239-263	T	Model of relationship between an organization's perceived identity, its construed external identity, and the organizational identification of its members.
Dutton, J. and Dukerich, J.	Keeping an eye on the mirror: image and identity in organizational adaptation	1991	Academy of Management Journal	34	3	517-554	E	Changes in the organization's construed external identity created an identity threat, motivating employees to collectively change their own perceptions of the organization. Showed that organizational identification can facilitate adaptation to changing environment.

Feather, N. and Rauter, K.	Organizational citizenship behaviours in relation to job status, job insecurity, organizational commitment and identification, job satisfaction and work values	2004	Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology	77		81-94	E	Employment status (permanent vs. temporary contract) did not influence the strength of teachers' identification with the school
Gioia, D. and Thomas, J.	Identity, image, and issue interpretation: sensemaking during strategic change in academia	1996	Administrative Science Quarterly	41	3	370-403	E	Context was construed in strategic/political rather than opportunity/threat terms. Strategy was treated as an input to sensemaking process, not output. Image of desired future identity was used to promote identity change.
Haslam, S., Postmes, T. and Ellemers, N.	More than a metaphor: organizational identity makes organizational life possible	2003	British Journal of Management	14		357-369	T	Overview of the ways in which organizational identity and identification influence the individual and collective behaviour of employees. Defends the study of organizational identity not as a metaphor but as a psychological reality.
Haslam, S., Powell, C. and Turner, J.	Social identity, self-categorization, and work motivation: rethinking the contribution of the group to positive and sustainable organisational outcomes	2000	Applied Psychology: an International Review	49	3	319-339	T	Looks at needs hierarchies as basis for employee motivation. Argues, based on SIT and SCT, that it is ultimately more productive for the organization to meet employees' needs for social rather than individual actualization.

Haslam, S, Ryan, M, Postmes, T, Spears, R, Jetten, J. and Webley, P.	Sticking to our guns: social identity as a basis for the maintenance of commitment to faltering organizational projects	2006	Journal of Organizational Behavior	27			607-628	E	Organizational identification did not affect decision to commit to a project, but did increase willingness to maintain commitment in the face of trouble. Also contributed to 'groupthink'. Interpersonal interaction increased OI.
Herriot, P.	Selection and self: selection as a social process	2002	European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology	11	4		385-402	T	Model of selection as an episodic, interactive process. Social identity approach used to explain matching process and why either party might choose to exit process after a particular episode.
Herriot, P.	Social identities and applicant reactions	2004	International Journal of Selection and Assessment	12	1/2		75-83	T	Uses social process approach to explain how applicants assess person-organization fit during the selection process and more specifically during a job interview.
Knippenberg, D. and Van Schie, E.	Foci and correlates of organizational identification	2000	Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology	73			137-147	E	Work group identification was stronger than organizational identification. It was also more strongly correlated with job satisfaction, turnover intentions, job involvement, and job motivation.
Kreiner, G. and Ashforth, B.	Evidence toward an expanded model of organizational identification	2004	Journal of organizational behavior	25	1		1-17	E	Identification, disidentification, ambivalent identification, and neutral identification were all found to be related but empirically distinct constructs with different antecedents and consequences.
Lee, H.	The role of competence-based trust and organizational identification in continuous	2004	Journal of Managerial Psychology	19	6		623-639	E	Strength of organizational identification was correlated with the extent of individuals' continuous improvement efforts.

	improvement								
Mael, F. and Ashforth, B.	Loyal from day one: biodata, organizational identification, and turnover among newcomers	1995	Personnel Psychology	48	2	309- 333			Biodata was a significant predictor of organizational identification.
Mael, F. and Ashforth, B.	Alumni and their alma mater: a partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification	1992	Journal of Organizational Behavior	13		103- 123		E	Organizational identification was correlated with organizational prestige and distinctiveness, intraorganizational competition (neg.), tenure, satisfaction, and sentimentality. Also with organizational support. Not with interorganizational competition.
Marks, A. and Lockyer, C.	Debugging the system: the impact of dispersion on the identity of software team members	2005	International Journal of Human Resource Management	16	2	219- 237		E	Team identity was more salient than organizational identity for all employees, but particularly those that were dispersed.
Morgan, J, Reynolds, C, Nelson, T, Johanning meier, A, Griffin, M. and Andrade, P.	Tales from the fields: sources of identification in agribusiness	2004	Management Communications Quarterly	17	3	360- 395		E	Integrative model of organizational identification that describes 'source' as both target and resource, and illustrates the interplay between individual, organizational, and contextual factors in shaping identification.

Olkkonen, M. and Lipponen, J.	Relationships between organizational justice, identification with organization and work unit, group-related outcomes	2006	Organizational behavior and human decision processes	100		202-215	E	Perceptions of procedural and distributive justice were related to organizational identification, perceptions of interactional justice to work-unit identification. Outcomes were relevant to focus of identification.
Polzer, J.	How subgroup interests and reputations moderate the effect of organizational identification on cooperation	2004	Journal of Management	31	1	71-96	E	Stronger sub-group identification reduced cooperation with the collective, but only when the outgroup had an individualistic culture and reputation.
Pratt, M.	The good, the bad, and the ambivalent: managing identification among Amway distributors	2000	Administrative Science Quarterly	45	3	456-493	E	Model of identification management based on management of sensemaking and 'seekership'. Incorporates Elsbach's (1999) expanded model.
Ravasi, D. and van Rekom, J.	Key issues in organizational identity and identification theory	2003	Corporate Reputation Review	6	2	118-132	T	Summarizes a discussion among academics in the field, covering theoretical roots, levels of analysis, conceptualization, measurement, and relevance.
Riketta, M.	Organizational identification: a meta-analysis	2005	Journal of Vocational Behavior	66	35-38		E	OI was found to be a distinct construct but overlapped with affective organizational commitment. Variation in results may be explained by operationalization of OI. Mael scale appeared to be most useful scale, minimizing overlap with AOC.

Rousseau, D.	Why workers still identify	1998	Journal of Organizational Behavior	19	3	217-233	T	Discussion of situated (superficial) versus deep structure (more permanent) identification and the relevant antecedents.
Scott, R.	Perceptions of organizational ethicality: do inflated perceptions of self lead to inflated perceptions of the organization?	2003	Journal of Business Ethics	42	3	253-266	E	Organizational identification moderated tendency of individuals to perceive organizational ethicality as negatively correlated with their perceived individual ethicality.
Smidts, A, Pruijn, A. and Van Riel, C.	The impact of employee communication and perceived external prestige on organizational identification	2001	Academy of Management Journal	49	5	1051-1062	E	(1) Perceived external prestige was positively correlated with organizational identification. (2) Employee communications were positively correlated with external prestige. (3) Communications climate was more important than content.
Van Dick, R, Christ, O, Stellmacher, J, Wagner, U, Ahlswede, O, Grubba, C, Hauptmeier, M, Hohfeld, C, Moltzen, K. and	Should I stay or should I go? Explaining turnover intentions with organizational identification and job satisfaction	2004	British Academy of Management	15		351-360	E	Organizational identification was negatively correlated with turnover and turnover intentions. It was also positively correlated with job satisfaction, which further increased identification.

Van Knippenberg, D.	Work motivation and performance: a social identity perspective	2000	Applied Psychology: an International Review	49	3	357-371	T	Organizational identification can enhance work motivation and performance, but only if (1) the relevant identity is salient (2) performance is perceived to be in organization's best interest (3) performance is within the individual's control
Van Knippenberg, D. and Sleebos, E.	Organizational identification versus organizational commitment: self-definition, social exchange, and job attitudes	2006	Journal of Organizational Behavior	27		571-584	E	Organizational commitment was found to be (1) more exchange based than OI (2) better predictor of job related attitudes
Wiesenfeld, B, Raghuram, S. and Garud, R.	Communications patterns as determinants of organizational identification in a virtual organization	1998	Organization Science	10	6	777-790	E	Electronic communications were a significant predictor of organizational identification among virtual employees, but face-to-face interactions were not.
Wiesenfeld, B, Sumita, R. and Garud, R.	Organizational identification among virtual workers: the role of need for affiliation and perceived work-based social support	2001	Journal of Management	27		213-229	E	Need for affiliation and perceived work-based social support were both significant predictors of organizational identification among virtual workers.

Books

Author/Editors	Year	Title	Publisher
Haslam, S.	2001	Psychology in Organizations: The social Identity approach	London: Sage Publications
Whetten, D. and Godfrey, P. (eds.)	1998	Identity in Organizations: Building Theory through Conversations	London: Sage Publications
Haslam, S, van Knippenberg, D, Platow, M. and Ellemers, N.	2003	Social identity at work: developing theory for organizational practice	New York: Psychology Press

Conference Papers

Authors	Year	Title	Conference
Elstack and Van Riel, C.	2005	Organizational identity change: an alliance between organizational identity and identification	Academy of Management Best Conference Paper