



An Investigation into the Impact of Employer Brand on Attracting and Recruiting Employees in a Non-Profit Organisation in Ireland

by

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Thesis Submission Form

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Abstract

This research intends to investigate the impact employer brand has on recruitment and attraction in non-profit organisations in Ireland. The topic of employer branding has become increasingly popular in the field of Human Resources in recent years. Employer brand is generally associated with corporate organisations and there is limited research on employer brand in non-profit organisations. The aim of this research is to investigate employer brand in a non-profit organisation. The researcher will take a qualitative approach in their research and will interview 9 individuals that work in a non-profit organisation in Ireland. The research design is a case study. The interviews conducted will be semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis will be used to analyse the interviews. From conducting these interviews, the researcher hopes to gain a better understanding of what attracts individuals to non-profit organisations.

The researcher found that the employer brand does have an impact on recruitment and attraction in non-profit organisations. Six themes emerged from the interviews. It was found that trust plays an important role in non-profit organisations for the brand. If there is no trust or honesty associated with the brand, then individuals will not want to work with the organisation. Many of the participants noted that they were not aware of the brand before they applied for a position. However, they carried out research on the employer brand and then continued with the recruitment process when they could not see anything negative. Some participants furthermore noted that it was the values of the organisation and the work that the organisation carried out that attracted them to working in it. This research additionally showed that individuals in non-profit organisations have an emotional attachment to the employer brand.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Rationale

Employer branding is a strategy used to attract and recruit skilled employees to the organisation. The employer brand can motivate and retain current employees however, it can equally attract potential employees (Michaela 2017). Employers are making big efforts to be perceived unique in today's labour market and the brand of the organisation can make a difference in attracting the right employees (Priyadarshi, 2011).

The researcher of this paper is currently working in a non-profit organisation in the Human Resource Department, works in recruitment, and is highly interested in the topic of employer branding and understanding what makes an organisation attractive to individuals. Therefore, that is the rationale for this research. Countless scholars discuss employer branding relating it to for-profit and corporate organisations. The literature on employer branding in non-profit organisations is small in comparison to that in for-profit. This research hopes to fill that gap in the literature in relation to non-profit organisations. This research design will be a case study of the organisation that the researcher is employed. It is a non-profit organisation that works with a marginalised group in society. This organisation employs nearly four hundred employees and the level of recruitment would be high due to organisational needs.

1.2 Research Title

“An Investigation into the Impact of Employer Brand on Attracting and Recruiting Employees in a Non-Profit Organisation in Ireland”

1.3 Research Objectives

To investigate this research, the specific objectives below will be examined in greater detail:

1. To investigate if employer brand can improve the attractiveness in non-profit organisations

1.4 Sub Objectives

1. To examine to what extent an employer's brand influences attraction in non-profit organisations.
2. To examine different approaches and methods that are used in non-profit organisations to build the employer brand.
3. To explore the use of external branding and its benefit for attracting talent to organisations
4. To explore internal branding to look at its benefits for retaining talent in organisations.
5. To find out if employees in non-profit organisations think that brand contributes or adds value to the organisation.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section of the paper will review the relevant literature on employer branding and it will draw upon the perspectives of various academics. This literature review will demonstrate that there are many different views on the topic of employer brand and the link between recruitment and attractiveness to an organisation.

Throughout the completion of the literature review, it became clear that there were several topics in the field of employer brand that were relevant to this research question. These topics that were looked at in closer detail, are as follows. (i) Understanding Employer Branding; this was examined to determine what is meant by employer branding. Employer brand can be viewed in diverse ways by scholars, but most agree that it is beneficial to an organisation. (ii) External Brand; this explores what impact brand has to those external to the organisation such as customers or potential employees. (iii) Internal Brand; this examines how the behaviours of employees internally can impact the overall organisation brand. (iv) Brand/Organisation Attraction; this explores what it takes to become an attractive brand. (v) Employer Brand within Non-Profit Organisations; as this research is conducting a case study on a non-profit organisation this section will examine the literature relating to non-profit organisations and what it means for a non-profit to have a strong employer brand.

2.2 Understanding Employer Branding

Employer branding can be used as a tool for attracting and recruiting valuable employees. According to Michaela (2017) employer brand is defined as “an effective strategy for motivating employees to live the brand and it represents what makes an organization attractive to its current and future employee”. However, Starineca (2015) describes it more specifically as an organisation working on their culture, values, mission and relationships with stakeholders. App et al (2012) mentions that employer branding does assist organisations in gaining a competitive advantage and helps in becoming an employer of choice and that it is the responsibility of Human

Resource Management to build this brand. They need to make the organisation attractive to the labour market (App, *et al.*, 2012). The term employer brand includes many factors. As mentioned by App, *et al.* (2012) it includes financial value and the psychological value, and these should show what the organisations represents and stands for. Fernandez-Lores, *et al.* (2016) similarly state that employer brand has a psychological aspect to it. According to the authors, employer branding has shifted to gaining emotional attachments to the brand through satisfying their needs and wants. Consumer branding and employer branding are closely linked however the customer is replaced as the employee or potential employee. Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) describe employer brand attachment is that the employee is attached to the organisation, even during less than ideal working conditions. These are brand loyal employees. Michaela (2017), analysis draws a different conclusion that employer brand creates two assets; brand association and brand loyalty. Brand association shapes the attractiveness of the organisation and brand loyalty is created through culture and identity. Many scholars look at employer branding in slightly different ways, but it is undoubtedly clear that they all agree that employer brand, when developed correctly, can have many benefits in terms of attracting and recruiting employees.

App *et al.* (2012) discuss how employer branding literature tends to relate to the corporate brand as they are closely linked. They furthermore discuss the difference between corporate brand and employer brand. Corporate brand is the organisational culture and values and this in turn gives the organisation a reputation, its identity and image. Employer brand is mainly associated with employees, whether they are current or potential. Corporate brand also takes into consideration all stakeholders linked to the organisation. To establish a strong employer brand, an organisation must be unique from its competitors. If the resources are available to an organisation, implementing strategies that are difficult to replicate by other organisations, can in turn lead to gaining a competitive advantage. By creating a positive and different image of the workplace, individuals are more likely to be attracted to that organisation that stands out from the others (App *et al.*, 2012).

It can be difficult to understand what a strong employer brand for non-profit organisations is. What makes a strong brand in the for-profit sector may not make a strong brand in the non-profit sector (Boenigk & Becker, 2016). Boenigk & Becker (2016) discuss employer brand in the non-profit sector as having 3 dimensions; brand awareness, brand trust and brand commitment. Similarly, Wymer *et al* (2015) parallels the idea that employer brand in the non-profit sector have 3 dimensions. However, these dimensions have different titles. Brand familiarity, brand remarkability and brand attitude. Boenigk & Becker (2016) conducted a study in Germany to investigate which non-profit organisation had the strongest brand. They measured it by asking participants to rate in accordance to the 3 dimensions. It was found splitting it up into these dimensions gave honest reports as participants rated according to the 3 dimensions listed above. These were found to be the most important factors for non-profit organisations in terms of brand. This was completed using a quantitative research approach and gathered data by surveys. Garven *et al* (2016) also pointed out that it can be difficult to measure brand in non-profit organisations as financial gain is not their objective. They are dependent on stakeholders to operate therefore you could say that brand is vitally important for non-profit organisations to function. If money donors do not trust where their donations are going or if potential employees do not agree with the attitudes of the organisations, this in turn could lead to poor donations and lack of interest from potential talented employees. It is evident that as with for-profit organisations, there are many factors that need to be considered when examining employer brand in non-profit organisations.

The next section of this literature review will be focusing on external brand and what the literature discussed about it in relation to attracting and recruiting talent.

2.3 External Brand

As this research will mainly be focusing on the attraction and recruitment of talent, this is considered as the external employer brand. Employer brand is the perception that an organisation portrays in the mind of potential recruits. The external brand is

what attracts the employee to the organisation (Das & Ahmed, 2014). The external brand is considered to be the reputation that the organisation has (Mosley, 2007). Older research suggests that the organisations brand is one of the most treasured assets an organisation can have. Employer branding is about engaging people in the culture and values of the organisation (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) describe a three-step process in establishing an employer brand. First a value proposition needs to be determined. This value is then conveyed through the employer's brand. It is important to show what value is offered to prospective employee and current ones. Secondly the organisation must focus on the external marketing of this value proposition to attract talent. Finally, the internal marketing must be developed, and the brand promise must be upheld to the new recruits. The brand needs to be incorporated into the organisations culture. Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) mention that when developing the external brand, it is key that it must be consistent with all other brands throughout the organisation. Berthon et al (2005) explains that there are 5 steps that an organisation must take when creating an employer brand. First, understand your organisation. Second, create a 'compelling brand promise' for both customers and employees. Third, develop standards to fulfil this brand promise. Fourth. Align all people and practices to enforce this brand promise. Fifth, execute the measure (Berthon et al, 2005). Foster et al (2010) equally agrees that external branding is providing messages about the organisations values, culture and identity. However, they go on to say further that if this is done incorrectly it could be detrimental to the organisation. It is paramount that an organisation, when promoting the brand, that it is a true reflection of the organisation and that they must be aligned.

New employees have already made a psychological attachment to the organisation and if this is not met, it will impact on the organisations turnover (Foster et al, 2010). If the external brand or ethos of the organisation is not a true reflection of what it is when working in the organisation, employee's will feel that is fake or the need to 'put on a show' to those externally. The external values must be the same as the internal values. They must be aligned (Mosley, 2007).

Wilden et al (2010) conducted a study. Part of this study was to examine if people have concerns about the brand promise not being fulfilled during the recruitment process. Thirty interviews were carried out with individuals that were seeking jobs. The results of this research had interesting findings. Some participants noted that when an organisation has a very clear and strong brand that this saves time in having to do a lot of research prior to interview (Wilden et al, 2010). It was found that in large organisations that the culture and values are clear however, the specific job values are unclear. The finding that was most surprising to the authors was that the majority of participants did not mention or see the risk of the employer not fulfilling its promises of the brand that were made prior to employment. Foster *et al* (2010) argued that this may be detrimental to an organisation but, according to the research conducted by Wilden et al (2010) it appeared that people were more concerned with their own performance in the new organisation.

Wilden et al (2010) finally noted that not fulfilling the brand promise can come with negative implications for the new employee and the organisation. It can cause low job satisfaction for the individual and poor retention for the organisation. The next section of this literature review will research the internal brand in organisations.

2.4 Internal Brand

Burmann et al (2009) argue that internal brand management is used for developing and maintaining a strong brand. It can be used as a method for gaining a competitive advantage. The internal brand is reflected in the behaviour of the employees. The true brand of the organisation will lie in the heart of them. The employees are ultimately responsible for the internal brand. All employees will, whether senior or junior, 'live the brand' to a different extent but this will all contribute to the overall internal brand (Burmann et al 2009). Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) similarly mention that in the context of internal branding, aligning the behaviours of the employees to the organisations values is key to delivering the brand promise and gaining a competitive advantage. Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) furthermore explain that organisations are beginning to realise that they may be vulnerable as they are so dependent on their employees when it comes to branding. Employees are the most valuable asset to an organisation as they promote the brand to customers and potential employees

however, they can equally be the most challenging as they may not promote the organisation positively. Punjaisri & Wilson (2000) explain that employees that have interactions with customers or potential stakeholders have an influence on the organisations brand. Some stakeholders can deal with several employees and it is important that there is consistency in the behaviours and attitudes. Employees risk reinforcing the organisations value or undermining them through behaviours displayed (Berthon et al 2005). Bergstrom et al (2002) explains what internal branding is by breaking up it into 3 phases. Internal branding is communicating the brand to the employees efficiently, convincing employees of its worth and value and linking all roles in the organisation to deliver and embrace that brand.

It is evident from the research that internal branding is a very important element to the overall employer brand but there is little research on what is required or what approach to use to align the behaviours and values of the employees. Punjaisri & Wilson (2007) suggest that in order to create a successful internal brand, internal marketing and internal communicating are very important. However, we must not rely completely on internal communication as this can be a pitfall. The whole organisation must be integrated into the internal brand. The brand must be integrated in to departments such as corporate management and human resource management and this in turn will lead to employees accepting and brand values and being committed to the organisation. If internal communication is successful it will lead to commitment, loyalty, shared vision and job satisfaction (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007). Bergstrom et al (2002) suggested a different approach to use when implementing internal branding. This approach is known as the five C's. Clarity, commitment, communications, culture and compensation. All staff including senior and junior should be clear on what the brand represents. In order to gain commitment, there must be consensus in relation to the brand. Individuals must genuinely be aligned and not just saying so. Commitment is ongoing in organisations. Communication involves the leaders of the organisation voicing the brand. Reinforcing it through high frequency by telling people over and over. The culture of the organisation must change, and the employees must have trust in it. This can be done by responding to culture resistance effectively. The key is to continuously

communicate to employees why the brand is relevant and to communicate the consequences of not cooperating. Organisations need to be more sophisticated about compensating employees, and in particular those that are at the forefront and in frontline work as they are the ones dealing with the stakeholders.

Bergstrom et al (2002) explain that the brand is communicated through all aspects of the organisation from how the phone is answered to how something is packaged and how work is presented. All of that contributes to the subconscious impression of the brand so therefore it is important to motivate the 'internal customers' (employees) (Bergstrom, et al., 2002). The section of this literature review will research brand and organisation attraction.

2.5 Brand/ Organisation Attraction

To attract employees and remain competitive in today's labour market, being a first-choice brand is a great advantage (Rampl, 2014). Khalid & Tariq (2015) explain that from a resource-based view approach, that if your organisation has exclusive resources it will then gain competitive advantage. The presence of exclusive resources will make an organisation stand out. The race for employers to be seen differently has increased in recent years due to the talent on the markets and the need to attract this talent (Priyadarshi, 2011). Mosley (2007) similarly outlines that offering a unique service or resource is a crucial factor for gaining competitive advantage however, there is little time before a competitor will replicate what you are offering. Even if an organisation creates something new, there is not much time before another organisation does the same. In some cases, other organisations can do it better than you had originally and beat you at your own game (Mosley 2007). Organisations are now benchmarking their practices off other organisations that are considered to be the best (Maxwell, 2009). There are many other elements that contribute to an organisations attractiveness. These include, salary, location, opportunity for development, job security, the actual job itself and structural attributes (Rampl, 2014) (Priyadarshi, 2011). Nolan & Harold (2010) argue that it is more than these elements that contribute to brand attractiveness. It is the similarity

in the image that the organisation represents, and the image that the individual holds of themselves or the image that they desire to be someday. Furthermore, they go on to explain that image congruity theory suggests that individuals are more attracted to brands that portray images that are like theirs or to images that they aspire to. Nolan & Harold (2010) explain that organisations image has two components; instrumental attributes and symbolic meanings. Symbolic meaning refers to the organisations traits. Sokro (2012) explains that organisations have an employer brand whether they set out to have one or not. This brand is built by current employees, customers and past employees. It is important to have good people management while employees are working in the organisation to ensure that this does not impact the organisations brand when they leave through negative interactions with potential recruits. Mosley (2007) parallels this as he also believes that there is a strong link between satisfied employees and positive business results. Satisfied employees are more likely to deliver a good service to customers and this in turn will contribute to the organisations brand. Sokro (2012) conducted a study to determine how employer branding impacted on retention and attraction in organisations. He distributed questionnaires to those working in the banking sector. One of the questions in the study asked why they decided to work in their organisation. 78% of the participants of the study said the reason they picked their organisation was the good conditions of service. Career advancement and development was ranked second at 71% (Sokro, 2012). From the results of this study, it is clear that good working conditions are very attractive to individuals that are looking for employment.

Priyadarshi (2011) discussed how an individual's perception of the image of the brand has an impact on the attraction to organisations and their wishes to gain employment in that organisation. Applying the concept of consumer brand loyalty to employment. Brand loyalty is the attachment that consumers would feel towards a certain brand. Employer brand loyalty would be the perception of a brand through the organisations culture and attitudes. Employer brand loyalty is more difficult to gain as an employer than it would be from the consumer perspective as more commitment is needed from the individual to change brand. There is more risk involved and it is at a higher

cost (Priyadarshi, 2011). Davies (2008), similarly to Priyadarshi (2011) agrees that customers have a loyalty to certain brands and that an emotional attachment is formed by the customer. However, Davies (2008) furthermore goes on to note that there are four characteristics to a brand that are also very relevant to the employer brand. These four characteristics are the organisations ability to differentiate, create loyalty, satisfy and create an emotional attachment (Davies, 2008). Other characteristics that contributes to an employer's attractiveness is their image and personality. Brand image is concerned with the associations held of a brand. Brand personality is the human associations we make with a brand. For example, we may call a company honest or daring (Davies, 2008). In a more recent article, Jain (2017) describes brand personality as the way a brand behaves and speaks, and this helps to achieve differentiation. Brand personality also includes characteristics like age, gender and class (Jain, 2017). In comparison, Rampl (2014) argues that the brand personality is developed through the personality of the employees and the clients. It is their personality traits that develops the organisations personality and their image (Rampl, 2014).

Employer branding is not only about attracting potential employee's, it is used to engage and retain present employees (Priyadarshi, 2011).

2.6 Employer Brand within Non-Profit Organisations

Non-profit brands have been previously known to be one of the strongest brands in the world (Stride & Lee, 2007). In the non-profit sector having a strong employer brand can contribute to the success of the organisation. An employer's brand can assist to gain trust and loyalty from stakeholders. The brand demonstrates the values and core principles to external stakeholders such as potential employees, volunteers and donors (Boenigk & Becker, 2016). Donors need to know that their money will be used appropriately and that is why trust is so important in the non-profit sector (Stride, 2006). Similarly Stride & Lee (2007) also argue that having a strong brand helps gain trust in voluntary organisations but furthermore adds that it helps strengthen awareness of the organisations with donors, academics and practitioners.

Stride (2006) notes that while brand does help with building awareness and has many positives, charity organisations are becoming over commercialised. This is due to the adaptation of more corporate techniques when it comes to branding and this could contribute to non-profit organisations losing their unique nature (Stride, 2006).

Wymer et al (2016) discuss the impact that a strong and weak brand can have on a non-profit organisation. They describe non-profit brand strength as how well known and how well perceived the organisations brand is to the target group. In non-profit organisations, brand strength is compared to its peers and classed as either strong or weak. To say that an organisation has a strong brand, it must be perceived as exceptional (Wymer et al 2016). In charities, you are more likely to get donations if there is a strong brand related to the organisation. The more choice that the donors have the more important that brand strength becomes as you have competitors (Wymer et al 2016).

Stride & Lee (2007) conducted qualitative research to gain a better understanding of the thoughts and values of employer brand in non-profit organisations. Senior consultants and directors of several major charity non-profit organisations were interviewed. All participants had extensive experience in the field of employer brand in the non-profit sector. The study found, from the individuals that were interviewed that some non-profit organisations were resistant to the word 'brand'. Some felt that it is more appropriate for corporate organisations and undermines the mission of a non-profit organisation. Many of the consultants interviewed agreed that brand is important in non-profit sector but did not see it as strategic tool. However, Boenigk & Becker (2016) maintain that brand is seen in non-profit organisations as a strategic asset. One participant mentioned that brand can be difficult to develop consistently as there are many departments in charity organisations such as the campaigning, fundraising and frontline and all of these may have different takes on what the brand is. Several participants mentioned that the brand is communicated differently to different stakeholders in non-profit organisations. This shows inconsistency. It was clear from all those that were interviewed that values are at the core of non-profit organisations (Stride & Lee, 2007). Without values, charities would not exist (Stride, 2006).

Wymer et al (2016) argue that managers of non-profit organisations should know where they stand in terms of their brand strength. This is important for comparing with peer organisations and to understand if you are reaching your target audience. Older research suggests that managers may be unwilling to get involved in actively assisting in building a brand (Laidler-Kylander & Simonin, 2009) however, Wymer et al (2016) maintains that managers need to be thinking of innovative ways for communicating their brand and making it remarkable.

Although Laidler & Simonin (2009) mentioned that managers are not very eager to work on improving brand they have offered suggestions to support non-profit brand managers with management of the brand. They developed a theory through research in the field, case studies from international charity organisations and comparison analysis. They developed 11 specific recommendations however, this paper will discuss this theory by summarising it. This theory aims to enhance consistency, focus, trust, partnership and internal branding. To improve consistency, internal communication must be improved. Increasing the number of internal coordination meetings and activities and employing someone to focus on this will contribute to consistency. It is equally important to focus on the external messaging. Every non-profit organisation should strive for operational focus and not lose sight of the mission. It is important to establish boundaries. As non-profit organisations grow and grow this can become more difficult. To promote trust, keep a strong brand positioning and raise visibility through having a presence in the sector and promote organisational integrity. Share best practices and implement peer review programmes. Seek partners that fit well with the organisation and managing this partnership effectively and maintain a positive relationship. Finally, promote the brand internally to the internal audience. Communicate the importance of it. Ensure that the internal brand is aligned with the external brand (Laidler-Kylander & Simonin, 2009).

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this section of the research has reviewed the relevant literature associated with the research question. The consensus from the previous literature states that the employer brand does help attract individuals to the organisation and that it helps in gaining a competitive advantage for an organisation (App et al, 2012 & Starineca, 2015). Some scholars mentioned how employer brand can have a psychological aspect to it (Fernandez- Lores et al, 2016 & Michaela 2017). The external brand is considered to be the reputation that the organisation holds. The external brand is how the organisation is perceived from all stakeholders and this can have an impact on attracting potential employees to the organisation. It must be perceived well (Wilden et al, 2010). The internal brand is how the brand is perceived internally. Many scholars agree that internal branding lies with the current employees and that they are responsible for promoting the brand internally (Burmam et al, 2009 & Punjaisri & Wilson 2007).

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Methodology

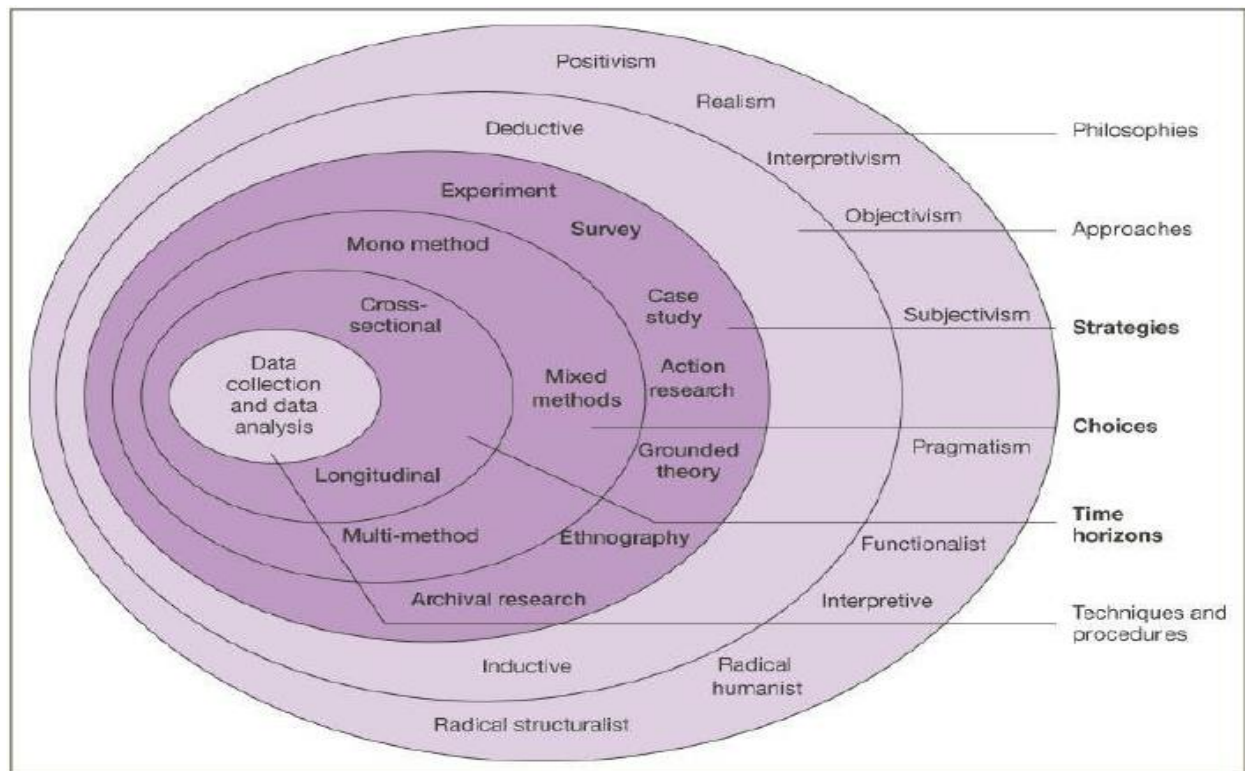
3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the research will outline the methodology selected to answer the research question. The chapter will begin with discussing the research philosophy including the research onion and paradigms. It will then discuss research approaches such as inductive and deductive approaches and thematic analysis. This chapter will then examine the methodological choices and discuss why the researcher felt qualitative research was better suited to this research question. It will then discuss semi-structured interviews and the research design of the case study. This chapter will then look at the primary and secondary research conducted and the time considerations. This chapter will then conclude by examining the pilot study, the sampling technique selected, the limitations and the ethical considerations for this research.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy that you select can be an indicator of the way in which you view the world. This will reinforce the research strategy and methods that one picks. The research philosophy that we adopt will have a significant bearing on the research outcome (Saunders et al 2012). There is no research philosophy better than the other. However, it is important to pick the one that is most suited to your research question. Every researcher will need to be able to reflect and defend their philosophical choices (Saunders et al, 2012).

The Research Onion



(The Research Onion, Saunders et al, 2012)

The research onion seen above, is a tool used in research to provide guidance throughout the research process. Each layer of the onion is concerned with a section of the research. The researcher is continuously peeling away these layers as the research philosophies and approaches are chosen. Research philosophy and research approaches are concerned with the outer layers of the onion. The inner layers of the onion are concerned with the methodological choice, the research strategy and the time horizon of the research (Saunders et al 2012).

Paradigms

“A research paradigm is a philosophical framework that guides how research should be conducted” (Collis & Hussey 2014, p. 43). There are two main paradigms, positivism and interpretivism. Positivism and interpretivism are epistemological considerations (Bryman & Bell 2015). Positivism is collecting data from a notable reality. Existing theory is used to develop a hypothesis. This will lead to the creation

of credible data and possible further development of theory (Saunders et al, 2012). Positivism focuses on theory to explain social wonders and is supported that reality is independent of us and is associated with quantitative data (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Knowledge in positivism is arrived at through gathering facts that provide the foundation for law and can be scientifically verified and proved through logical and mathematical justification (Bryman & Bell 2015, Collis & Hussey 2014). Some of the limitations associated with positivism are that it does not take into consideration people's social context and that it can, at times, ignore other relevant findings due to the research design that is undertaken. Is it an objective philosophy (Collis & Hussey, 2014).

Interpretivism is contrasting to positivism and is based on the belief that social reality is subjective and is shaped by perceptions. Interpretivism focuses on the exploring the social wonders and gaining an interpretive understanding (Collis & Hussey 2014). Interpretivism supports that researchers must adopt an empathic stance and to understand the world from the subject's point of view (Saunders et al 2012). Qualitative research methods are associated with interpretivism as researchers seek to interpret what is being described to them and come to terms with the meaning of what is being said (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Saunders et al (2012) argues that an interpretivism perspective is very appropriate in the area of business and particularly in the field of organisational behaviour and human resource management as they are complex and unique.

Taking all approaches and assumptions mentioned above into consideration this study is adopting an interpretivist epistemological philosophical approach. Through reviewing the previous literature related to this topic, the majority of studies conducted are through this philosophy. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact and look at the reasons why people are or are not influenced by an employer's brand. If a positivist approach was to be adopted this would not be achievable as the researcher would only be concerned with the facts that they are presented with. The researcher will explore the findings and understand the reality and meaning behind the details given (Saunders et al 2012).

3.3 Research Approaches

Research design is often portrayed as two approaches; deductive or inductive. It is based on the reasoning you adopt (Saunders et al 2012), and the relationship between the theory and research (Bryman & Bell 2015). Deductive research is “a study in which a conceptual and theoretical structure is developed and then tested by empirical observation; thus, particular instances are deduced from general inferences” (Collis & Hussey 2014 p.7). With the deductive approach, when the premises are true, the outcome will also be true. A number of hypothesis are developed, and then this is generally tested using quantitative data. In a deductive approach it is important to be specific with the conditions that the hypothesis is likely to hold or the hypothesis will be false (Saunders et al 2012). As there is no consideration given to other explanations of what might be going on, this could be considered a limitation to this approach.

“Inductive research is a study in which theory is developed from the observation of empirical reality; thus, general inferences are induced from particular instances” (Collis & Hussey 2014 p.7). An inductive approach is when data is collected, and a theory is developed as a result of that data being analysed. This data is used then to identify themes and patterns. Inductive research is concerned with developing the understanding, the context of the situation and the reasons behind behaviours, according to Saunders et al (2012) is a strength of the inductive approach.

This research will be adopting an inductive approach to the research question. The rational for this is that there is room to explore and understand behaviours of what might be going on in the organisation. It is a less structured and rigid approach. To analyse the collected data thematic analysis will be conducted. Thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within the data. Themes are defined as the reoccurring patterns that emerge within it (Braun & Clarke 2006).

One of the benefits of thematic analysis is that it is a flexible tool that can provide a detailed and complex account of data. Thematic analysis allows for participants to report their experiences and realities as opposed to other forms of qualitative

research. Other forms of analysis that are commonly used in qualitative research are thematic discourse analysis and grounded theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These both seek to identify themes that occur in the data, but they are more restricted thematic analysis. Grounded theory is theoretically bound and directed towards the development of new theory. Thematic discourse analysis also identifies themes in the data however, it examines the language and vocabulary used by participants and theories this (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As this research is seeking to understand the impact that employer brand has on attraction and recruitment of individuals, having considered other options the researcher felt that thematic analysis would be the most suitable approach to achieve this.

3.4 Methodological Choice

Research can consist of a quantitative, qualitative or mixed method approach. Quantitative research methods focus on data that can be measured and analysed (Goertzen, 2017). Quantitative data can be represented numerically. Questions in quantitative research are direct and effective at gaining solid information. Findings from quantitative research can be statistically analysed and the results can be compared and summarised. Survey's and questionnaires are quantitative research methods that are commonly used (Goertzen, 2017). Quantitative research is more focused on testing the theories and is generally a deductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015). According to Barnham (2015) and Goertzen (2017) it is very useful for finding out the 'what' questions rather than the 'why' in research and it is factual. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research is an inductive approach and has more of an emphasises on the words rather than the numbers. Qualitative research takes the views of social reality into consideration (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The qualitative research method studies participants. This means that there is a relationship between the researcher and the participant. The research process in qualitative methods tends to be interactive and naturalistic for e.g. interviews and focus groups (Saunders et al, 2012).

A mixed method approach, also known as multi-strategy research, is research that combines qualitative and quantitative research. This method integrates them both into a single project (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It is both an inductive and deductive approach (Saunders, et al., 2012). There has been some debate over mixed method research approach in recent years. As it is a mix of two paradigms, epistemological and ontological, some scholar's questions if they are compatible when combined. Some argue that it is not a feasible method and is the least desirable (Bryman & Bell, 2015). However, Collis & Hussey (2014) argue that a mixed method approach is becoming more accepted in business research. As a mixed method approach can be more time consuming and more expensive, Collis & Hussey (2014) advise completing it as part of a team if possible. One of the reasons that a mixed method approach was not chosen for this research was due to the time restrictions as this approach can quiet elongated (Collis & Hussey, 2014). The researcher furthermore felt that a qualitative research approach such as interviews would be more appropriate as you gain more of an understanding of participants thoughts and feelings from the data collected in comparison to numerical data collected from questionnaires or surveys. This research will be conducted using a mono-method qualitative research design. This research is seeking to discover the impact that employer brand has on employees and potential employees and data represented in numbers and statistics may not reflect that as well as describing the words and realities of the participants. As mentioned by Barnham (2015), qualitative research is useful at finding out the 'why' factor in research. The aim of this research is to find out why people are more attracted to a non-profit organisation if they do or do not have a strong brand and that is the reason that qualitative research was chosen for this research.

3.5 Semi Structured Interview

Interviews are concerned with exploring feelings, opinions and attitudes and can be unstructured and semi-structured. There are several types of interviews. In unstructured interviews, the questions are not prepared and develop throughout the interview. Open ended questions are used (Collis & Hussey, 2014). In semi structured

interviews, questions are prepared to prompt the participant and the researcher. The researcher will not have to ask all the listed questions if the participant has answered them through other questions and there is no specific order in which questions need to be asked (Collis & Hussey, 2014). It is important in interviews that open questions are asked as there will be need for more than yes or no answers. It is essential that the interviewer actively listens to the participant and recognises when there is a need to explore further (Saunders et al, 2012).

This research will be carrying out a semi-structured interview strategy. The rationale of choosing semi-structured interviews rather than unstructured interviews is that there are certain questions that the researcher wishes to ask and certain points in the interview that they would like to touch on and this opportunity may not arise if there is not some structure to the interview.

3.6 Research Design-Case Study

Research design refers to the decisions that are made in relation to the methodology. Research design is concerned with the methods used to address the research question (Collis & Hussey, 2014) A case study is a method used to explore a single phenomenon within its context or natural setting (Saunders et al, 2012) The case selected may be a group of workers, a business, event or even an individual person (Collis & Hussey, 2014). A case study strategy is applicable if the researcher is seeking to gain a rich understanding of the research. Case study gives answers to the 'why', 'what' and 'how' questions and is often used in exploratory research. Case studies can be used in qualitative or quantitative research (Saunders et al, 2012).

Triangulation is the use of different or multiple sources of data collection techniques. Triangulation can also have more than one researcher (Saunders et al, 2012). For example, the use of semi structured interviews would be a method of triangulation. The researcher could interview one person but asking more people will result in a much broader and richer understanding of individuals experience (Collis & Hussey 2014).

Yin (2009) mentions that choosing a single case strategy gives an opportunity to explore and observe a phenomenon that not have been considered previously. According to Yin (2009), many part time students will pick this method as it is their place of work. It is important to ensure that this approach is relevant and appropriate for your research question and not just convenient (Yin, 2009).

In this research, it is a single case that has been selected. It is the organisation that the researcher is working in. The organisation is a non-profit organisation that works with individuals on the margins of society. As the level of recruitment in that sector is high, the researcher thought it would be interesting to explore if employer brand attracts individuals to this organisation or are there other motivations such as rewards, career development or the work itself driving people to work in this organisation

3.7 Primary and Secondary Research

Primary research is research that is conducted by oneself such as interviews, surveys and focus groups. Secondary research is data collected from existing sources such as journal articles, publications and books (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This research has both primary and secondary data. The secondary research conducted was data gathered from journal articles, books and ebooks related to the topic employer brand and this can be found in the literature review section. Through this secondary research, it was clear that there has not been many studies conducted on non-profit organisations and a gap in the literature was recognised. There is a small number of studies conducted in the area however, most of the studies were conducted in corporate organisations. According to Bryman & Bell (2015) there is both advantages and limitations to secondary data analysis. One of the advantages noted was the cost and time associated with secondary data. Secondary data can generally be accessed at a low price and in a timely manner with the resources we have today. Another advantage noted was that secondary data is a high quality data that has been generated by highly experienced scholars. A limitation noted by Bryman & Bell (2015) is that there can be an absence of a key variable when you are analysing someone's

research, and this can be frustrating at times. Another limitation noted was that the researcher may lack familiarity with data and there is a period of familiarization of datasets that the researcher will go through and these can be quite complex (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

3.8 Time Consideration

A researcher must ask themselves are they looking for a snapshot of a particular time in their research or are they looking for a series of snapshots over a period of time. This in other words, is the difference between a cross-sectional study and a longitudinal study (Saunders et al, 2012). Cross sectional studies are designed to allow the researcher to examine a phenomenon from different contexts over a particular time. Cross sectional studies are mostly associated with the use of surveys within organisations that represent a range of industries however, qualitative interviews can also be used (Collis & Hussey, 2014). Longitudinal studies are studies that are over an extended period of time. It is the study of groups or subjects that can run for several years and this gives the researcher an opportunity to monitor changes over the period of time. Longitudinal studies are used within social, economic and the political settings (Collis & Hussey, 2014). This research will be a cross sectional study. The reason for not choosing a longitudinal study is due to time restrictions and the researcher felt that this would be the most appropriate research design to answer the research question.

3.9 Pilot Study

Before one begins their research, it should be pilot tested. A pilot test will show if there are any problems within the questions and if amendments need to be made. A pilot test allows the researcher to examine if the questions are reliable, valid and if they will answer the overall research question (Saunders et al, 2012). The researcher should allow for suggestions to be made by others in relation to the questions asked. According to Saunders et al (2012) there can be a temptation among students to skip

the pilot test but Saunders et al (2012) stresses the importance of completing one for the research to succeed.

In this research the first two interviews were used as the pilot study. Following these first two interviews some slight changes were made to the order in which the questions were being asked. The researcher had some questions near the beginning of the interview however, they were moved to the end as they seemed to better fit there.

3.10 Sample

According to Saunders et al (2012), in any research that is carried out, the need for sampling will need to be considered. They describe two types of sampling techniques that are used in research; probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is commonly associated with research that involves surveys and experiments. With this technique of sampling, the possibility of all cases from the population being selected is usually equal. Non-probability sampling can be described as non-random sampling. This sampling technique is commonly associated with case studies and market surveys (Saunders et al, 2012). The non-probability sampling technique used was purposive sampling. This technique involved the researcher selecting the sample that they feel will be in the best position to answer the research question (Saunders et al, 2012). The researcher of this case study selected 10 participants who they felt would be most suitable.

3.11 Limitations

According to Collis & Hussey (2014) when a researcher picks a case study as their research design, the outcome of that research is attempted to be generalized from the sample that the researcher used to the general population of similar circumstances. By choosing a second similar case this will show how the researcher's theory can be generalized as there will be samples that are similar (Collis & Hussey, 2014). As this research was a single case, this could be considered a limitation as it

represents a small number of the population with similar circumstances. Saunders et al (2012) described non-random sampling as having an element of subjective judgement. As the sample for this research was not selected at random, this could be considered a limitation. The final limitation noted by the researcher was post selection of the participants by the researcher. The selected participants had to be signed off by a senior director of the organisation. As this took approximately two weeks, it delayed the process of the interviews starting. All participants selected were permitted.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

“The term ethics refers to the moral values and principles that form the basis of a code of conduct” (Collis & Hussey, 2014 p. 30). Saunders et al (2012) explains that the concern of ethics in research has grown over the years. Whether one is using secondary data or conducting their own primary research, research ethics must come into consideration. Bryman & Bell (2015) explained that research ethics is concerned with many areas. Some of these areas will now be outlined in further detail. The research must not cause harm to any of the participants. This harm may be physical or psychological. It must not cause stress or interfere with their employment. All participants must be given as much detail as possible before taking part in the research so that they are fully informed and can make an informed decision. It must be outlined what taking part in the research will entail. Everyone has the right to privacy throughout the research process and this must be upheld. The researcher must not misrepresent their research for something that it is not as this will lead to deception. During the data collection stage of the research it is important to manage the data safely and correctly. The researcher must be open and honest with the participants in all their communication about the research.

There were several steps taken in this research to consider the ethical issues. All participants were given all information in relation to the research and its purpose. Participants were given the choice to participate and they were informed that they could withdraw from the process at any stage, even during interview stage. They

were informed that they did not have to answer any questions if they did not feel comfortable doing so. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity.

Chapter 4

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Demographics of Participants

This research consisted of 9 participants, 8 of which were female and 1 male participant. These participants were all employees of the organisation ranging from senior management to entry level staff with the age range of early twenties to late forties. To get variety of experience and length of service, staff were picked by the researcher from all different departments within the organisation such as the human resource department, communications department, fundraising department and staff that work in the frontline services.

It is recognised by the researcher that the ratio of female participants in this research is a lot greater than the male participants however, the sector that this research was conducted in is a highly female dominated workforce. In fact, in 2016 81.7% of employees in the sector of Human Health and Social Work are female leaving just 18.3% male (CSO, 2017). There were 10 interviews planned to take place with the tenth participant being male however, this was not possible due to availability of the participant and time restrictions.

4.2 Trust

It was noted by Garven et al (2016) that when it comes to non-profit organisations trust is very important. It is important from a fundraising perspective as people that donate need to understand where their money is going and what it is being used for. According to Boenigk & Becker (2016) it is the employer's brand that helps to gain this trust, and furthermore loyalty from all stakeholders such as customers, potential employees and donors. Six participants in of this study equally recognised that trust is one of the most important elements that can make a non-profit organisations brand strong.

"In non-profit, the more media you get in a positive light the more open people are to donate. It is important that we do what we say we are doing and people trust us. Being honest, open and communicative is important."

(Participant 8)

“I think it is important for the likes of fundraising and for the funds to come in that people are fully aware of what we do. And that daily exposure of what we are about and to provide information about our services and what we do on a day to day basis. I suppose what we do on social media helps with that” (Participant 6)

“It is hugely important for a non-profits brand to be strong. From a governments perspective it is hugely important as well. People that donate must trust that their money is used properly and know exactly what it is going to be used for and used appropriately” (Participant 3)

“People have to be aware of the work we do from a fundraising perspective and they have to be aware of the outcomes happening as well because we have to show them. People need to know what is actually coming out of the money and the things that are been done with it” (Participant 9)

The importance of trust, honesty and transparency in non-profit was also noted as being important from a recruitment perspective as employees or potential employees would not like to be associated with an organisation if it was dishonest as it may impact on their career progression.

“Integrity and trust are very important. If your brand is damaged in any way it is really going to affect your fundraising. It could also affect your career, if for example you worked with a company that had issues with money or like misappropriation of funds and then if you have that company on your CV or LinkedIn, people may ask questions why did you stay there when all that was happening? I think the reputation is very important in this sector.”

(Participant 2)

“I think that in non-profit, employer brand is especially relevant as the sector is small and people talk. It is important for retaining the people that we have and for attracting new staff” (Participant 1)

The answers from the participants truly demonstrate the key role that trust plays in non-profit organisations for the employer brand. Trust assists in gaining very

important funding for the organisations to function and contributes to the attraction of the organisation for potential employees. Laidler-Kylander & Simonin (2009) recognise that to keep a strong brand positioning, an organisation must promote organisational integrity.

4.3 The Brand When Applying

Stride & Lee (2007) mentioned that non-profit organisation brands have previously been known to be the strongest brands in the world. When examining how employer brand contributes to the attractiveness of an organisation, App et al (2012) discussed that it helps become an employer of choice. It was discussed with the participants throughout the interview if the employer brand attracted them to applying for a position in this organisation and the findings were interesting. Out of the nine participants, only three were aware of the brand before coming on board. Even though these three participants were aware of the brand, they all conducted further research on the brand.

“Yeah hugely. The brand itself was the reason I wanted to work here. I put a lot of research into the brand and the brand was a huge part of my decision. Once you do further research you realise how strong it is. It is such a great organisation to have on your CV”. (Participant 3)

“Yes, I absolutely did. I heard about it through my college university. It came up in one of our studies and from that I was always kind of interested. I also kind of did my own research of I and I also knew someone that used to work here years ago”. (Participant 7)

“I did hear about it before I started, I heard it on the TV and in the media a lot. Maybe I didn’t know to what extent, but I definitely did know of it”
(Participant 9)

Four didn’t know about the organisation prior to seeing the job advert but after doing research on the organisation and the brand they realised that the brand was strong and continued to interview. For these four participants, this organisation

was not the employer of first choice, but the brand had an impact on whether they continued with the recruitment process after completing their research.

“No but I looked into it and I suppose then I looked into it as an employment opportunity and after research I thought that this is something that I want to do. It was quite clear from the mission, media and the internet what the brand was”. (Participant 4)

“No, I didn’t. I wouldn’t have known much about the organisation when I was applying. What I was made aware of however, I couldn’t trust that source so it might not have been the most positive feedback, but my goal was to work with people on the margins and that is what drew me to apply for the job at the time. I wouldn’t have been consciously aware of the brand at that time” (Participant 8)

“I didn’t know the brand at all before I started. I think you notice it more when you are actually working in the non-profit sector”. (Participant 1)

“No, I wasn’t aware of the brand but when I did more research into the role that I was applying for and into the organisation through the media, I found that it was well regarded and that was important to me” (Participant 2)

The remaining two participants were part of a transfer of undertakings into the organisation.

Rampl (2014) explains that the actual job and work itself can attract employees to an organisation. This would appear to be true for many of the participants as it was the job and work itself that attracted them to the organisation rather than just the brand. These findings may question if in non-profit organisations the brand does assist with attracting employees.

4.4 Attractiveness

To be attractive to potential employees, the organisations brand must be unique and stand out from the others (App et al, 2012). Participants were asked in the

interviews, in their opinion if they felt that an employer's brand added value to the organisation and if they thought it contributed to the attractiveness of the organisation.

"From an employee perspective the brand does make it attractive. I know when I was interviewing, even the kind of the level and the intensity of the interviews and the process, you kind of knew that this was a really really good company to work for because they put so much into me before I even got the job compared to other organisations that would never even call or email you back" (Participant 3)

From the response of participant 3, it is evident that interactions throughout the recruitment process can have a lasting impression on individuals and their understanding of the brand.

"Yes, it does, especially from a recruitment perspective, I think it is very important for our organisation to be in a strong position and to be knowledgeable of what we do and to be knowledgeable about the challenge that we face for recruitment and make changes quickly. It is really important to be clear on your branding and clear on your message for recruitment" (Participant 8)

"The war for talent is greater. If we have a good reputation and a good brand we will attract people. If you are known as an organisation that don't look after their people nobody will come work for you" (Participant 1)

"Yes absolutely. If you have a strong brand more people will want to work for you and this will increase your capabilities, and this will be more positive for everyone" (Participant 4)

"When there is competition out there, if you don't have a strong brand then you lose good employees. You can't just start a journey without knowing where you are going because brand is the kind of direction that you are going in. For people that are intelligent and people that are aspirational were to come into that organisation and see that you are visionless, they will

go. Your branding is your selling point for the organisation and it is important that you don't have to spend 10 minutes looking for information on the website. It is also important to have access to annual reports and strategic plans etc if you are a non-profit, Access to information is key" (Participant 5)

"Yes, I think it definitely adds value for recruitment purposes. If people see that you are a big brand then people will want to come and work for you. I also think that it is important for the people using the service" (Participant 9)

"Yes, it can help attract employees" (Participant 2)

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) explain that an organisations brand is one of the most treasured assets that an organisation can have and that it plays an important role in attracting talent to the organisation. Several participants mentioned that they believed that the brand has a role in attracting employees to the organisation. Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) furthermore mention that the employer brand should engage people and help them understand the brands cultures and values through the external marketing that is being done. This point was touched on by Participant 5. They mentioned that potential employees need to have access to information about the organisation and the brand. People from the outside looking in should be able to see what the mission of the organisation is and where the organisation is going.

4.5 Internal Brand in Non-profit

The participants were asked what they felt was being done to communicate the brand internally in this organisation. This was to examine if the internal branding in the organisation mirrored the external brand. The internal brand can have an impact on the external brand as employees have interactions with all stakeholders. Behaviours of the employees will contribute to the internal brand of the organisation (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007), and the management of these behaviours can lead to gaining a competitive advantage (Burmah et al, 2009).

“I think that the brand here is organic and I think that it is communicated internally It might not be in an email I suppose but it communicated from my line manager to me. I think that it is communicated in small ways too like in the way that you speak if you are attending something and use certain terms. Yeah I think it is communicated and I think that everyone is aware of the brand and is really proud of it” (Participant 3)

“Yeah I do, I really do. We have our badges now and I think that has really allowed for cohesive development of the staff team including the relief workers. Also staff events brings everyone together for the organisation” (Participant 8)

“Yes I do because we do so much work with inductions. We have guidelines and we go through everything quite clearly and if someone has an issue with that we discuss it with them and what it is you don’t understand about it or what it is you are finding difficult about it and we try and give them an understanding of it.” (Participant 7)

“Absolutely, I think the brand is constantly communicated internally. When you have a new starter, they are inducted and informed about the brand. People will soon realise if this is the type of environment that they want to be in or work in. They may have the experience, but they must understand the ethos of the organisation and the brand.” (Participant 6)

“I think that it is. In my induction it was made very clear to me what the of the organisation was. I think that staff help to communicate it internally. If people come in and are not 100 % about the brand it is my job to educate them around that.” (Participant 9)

The five participants above mentioned that they felt that the brand was communicated internally in this organisation through different methods such as staff inductions and through the managers and staff themselves in their daily interactions. However, some staff felt that more could be done to communicate the brand internally.

“Maybe an intranet would help us a lot to communicate things internally. Sometimes I feel like staff hear things that are happening in the organisation for the first time on the news or in the media. I think that this would help with staff morale. Maybe more communication in the organisation through email so to let people know what is going on.” (Participant 2)

“Not enough. I don’t think that it is enough. We need the HR team to not just go into colleges but to go into teams, attend some team meets and speak about the brand. We need to embrace current and dynamic changes”.
(Participant 5)

The internal brand lies at the heart of the employees and they are responsible for the internal communication of the brand. All employees live the brand to a different extent in organisations whether they are senior or junior (Burmam et al, 2009). In this organisation, it was clear that senior staff members ‘lived the brand’ and made effort to instil the brand in new or current employees. Two staff members felt that more could be done to communicate the brand internally through the HR Department talking to teams and an intranet being developed to improve the internal communication.

Previous literature states that there are many strategies that can be implemented to communicate the brand internally and this in turn will lead to higher levels of commitment from employees. Bergstrom et al (2002) explains to get commitment from the employees that they must genuinely believe in the brand and if they don’t, they will not be committed, and it will become an issue. One participant of this research, whom is a senior member of the management noted same in their interview.

“In employees overtime you can see when someone doesn’t associate or relate with the brand and this associates less engagement and less commitment, picking fault in everything, you know. It can become a culture of entitlement. The impact is very very negative, and people will not be motivated to do their best. Everything is a problem for them but the majority

of people that I have come in contact with are very good and they buy into the ethos and they buy into the brand". (Participant 5)

Through the review of previous literature and from the findings of this research, internal branding is important for retaining employees. It needs to be communicated effectively and clearly in the organisation. The employees must understand the brand and it will become part of the culture in the organisation (Bergstrom et al 2002).

4.6 Personal Beliefs/Values

Fernandez-Lores, et al (2016) explains that employer branding has a psychological aspect to it. People can be attracted to an organisation if the brand will satisfy their needs or wants. Nolan & Harold (2010) furthermore explore that individuals are attracted to organisations through their symbolic meaning and traits of the organisation. Throughout the interviews, it was discussed with the participants what attracted them to working in this organisation. Many of the participants mentioned their own personal values and beliefs matched the organisations and that is main reason they were attracted.

"I looked at the ethos and it described how I felt personally so it immediately clicked. I wouldn't actually be in a place if I think their brand was not what suited to my personal beliefs as well so it is very important to me personally."
(Participant 5)

"Am it was probably my own values considering the two subjects I studied in university. Both of them interlinked to what I think this organisation stand for. The values of this organisation are the values that I would have grown up with so I think that makes my job a bit easier" (Participant 7)

"It was the attitude that the organisation had. I truly believed in the branding"
(Participant 8)

"It was the values. I worked for mostly large corporations before and it just didn't make sense to me anymore. I wanted to contribute to something that brings a little goodness. The end produce wasn't anything of a real value to me"

but when you are here, even though I am not frontline but still feel you're contributing" (Participant 1)

"Initially it would have been ye visiting the college that attracted me but then I realised that the values here matched mine". (Participant 9)

Three of the participants noted that they joined the organisation for career development. It may be important to note that two of these participants are not working in the frontline services of the organisation, their motivations could differ from those that work on the ground with the service users of the organisation.

"Career development. It was a step up for me. The role itself was hugely challenging so I wanted to challenge myself." (Participant 3)

"I suppose it was career development and also the values. For a while I was thinking of moving to the non-profit sector. I thought the move would be good from a career point of view and I suppose this organisation did reflect my core views in terms of helping people" (Participant 2)

"I suppose at the time it was a good fit for me (the organisation)" (Participant 6)

It was then explored with the participants if the brand was contributing to them staying in this organisation and many mentioned that it was the brand and what the organisation stands for that is in fact keeping them here.

"Yes, it was definitely held on to me. You need to strongly believe in what it stands for. Its about recognising that everything we do day to day is about the brand" (Participant 6)

"Yes, I definitely think it is. I think this organisation is becoming more well known and that would definitely influence me staying maybe from a selfish point of view (laughs) but for me it is a career thing too to work in a well-known organisation" (Participant 2)

“Definitely yes. Well I love coming to work and I am confident in the job that I do. The job that I do goes back to the ethos and the values of the organisation”
(Participant 7)

Yes, it is. I love working here and the brand is a big part of that. I work with a lot of people on events and I am representing that brand and I am proud to represent it. It makes you want to stay.” (Participant 3)

“Absolutely! (laughs) I have been tempted to move many times but when I see the impact of the work we do more and more I can’t.” (Participant 5)

“Yeah I think so. It is at the core of everything we do. Even if you are having a bad day, if you think back to why we are doing this and what we are doing, it will bring you back to why you started and what we are about”. (Participant 4)

“To a certain extent. Surely because I really really respect the work that this organisation does and their response to crisis. I wouldn’t be able to stay in an organisation that doesn’t have our beliefs and ethos and I once left a job very soon after starting and came here for that reason as I didn’t believe their principles” (Participant 8)

“I think that’s a tricky one as the brand is keeping me here, but it is also the work that I do and the people that I work with are keeping me here. It is a bit of both, I do value working for this organisation, but I also do it for the service users”. (Participant 9)

In non-profit organisations, it would appear that there is a close link to personal beliefs and values as a main attraction to the organisation. It is also evident from the responses of the participants that the brand and work that is being done by the organisation is contributing to them staying in the organisation with 8 participants saying so. Michaela (2017) concluded that individuals are attracted to organisations through association and this would be true for many of the participants. It is equally

true that individuals were attracted to this organisation due to the traits that it has. Individuals may have been attracted to its symbolic meaning (Nolan & Harold 2010).

4.7 Emotional Attachment

Throughout the interviews participants were asked if they felt that they had an emotional attachment to the brand of the organisation. Many of the participants mentioned that they felt that they do have an attachment to the organisation. One participant said that they did not realise they did until they were asked the question and thought about it. One participant explained that the attachment they have is keeping them in the organisation. Foster et al (2010) explained that people have a psychological attachment to the organisations and if they are not attached that it will impact turnover. Many of the participants alluded to the fact that they felt they are attached to the organisation however, it is because of the work that they do.

“Yes absolutely. I think in non-profit brand if you don’t have that connection it is not good. You need to believe in your brand and what you are doing and why you are doing it” (Participant 4)

“(Laughs) that is not something that you can say immediately that you do but if you do a self-evaluation or assessment you know that this is true. If not, I wouldn’t be inviting anyone I see that is good to work here (laughs). It is a healthy emotional attachment and I am not talking about sentiment, but it is a very healthy emotional attachment, so I would say yes. But, I wasn’t thinking about that until you asked the question. (Participant 5)

“I do, definitely 100%. I am very much proud of my job and proud of the organisation and I am very proud of the response that we have so yes, I do have an emotional attachment” (Participant 8)

“Yeah I would say I absolutely do. I speak with my friends about it and ill tell them about it. If I hear a powerful story I will share that and that in turn, turns

into not having an issue staying after work and being committed to the job”
(Participant 3)

“Definitely think I would have one and I think it is that attachment is my main reason for not leaving here” (Participant 7)

Only one participant said that they felt they did not have an emotional attachment to the brand and two others described it as being passionate about the brand rather than attached.

“As I am only here a short period of time, I would say no” (Participant 1)

“Yes, I would feel passionate about the cause of the organisation and the work that we do as it has meaning. It is easier to do my job day to day as I am passionate about it” (Participant 2)

“I feel I am totally committed and totally passionate and I feel that I am here for so long that I feel that I am contributing to what we do and at senior management level, I feel I am making a difference” (Participant 6)

Fernandez- Lores, et al (2016) describes that emotional attachment is gained through satisfying the employees needs and wants. However, none of the participants mentioned throughout the interviews about their needs being satisfied in the job. Rather, they mentioned the actual work leading to an attachment.

Chapter 5

Analysis

5.1 Main Objective

The main objective for this research was to investigate if employer brand can improve the attractiveness in non-profit organisations. Nine interviews were conducted in a non-profit organisation and several themes emerged from that. The themes that emerged were trust, brand when applying, attractiveness, internal brand and emotional attachment. The overall research question asks does the employer brand impact recruiting and attracting employees in non-profit organisations in Ireland and from the findings of this research, the answer to that question is yes, it does have an impact. This section of the research will discuss the findings and what the literature states and linking it to the sub-objectives outlined at the beginning of this paper.

5.2 Sub-Objective Three

Sub-objective number 3 of this research stated that this research was going to explore the use of external branding and its benefit for attracting talent to organisations. Several participants of this research stated that trust is a very important factor of the external brand for non-profit organisations. Communicating and demonstrating this trust as part of the external brand appears to have two significant factors. One, that it can be the deciding factor for an employee to work there or not as they will not want to work in an organisation that does not appear to be trustworthy as noted by participant 2 “It could also affect your career” and “people may ask questions why did you stay there when all that was happening?”. Two, it is very important for donations to the organisation “I think it is important for the likes of fundraising and for the funds to come in that people are fully aware of what we do” (Participant 8) and “people that donate must trust that their money is used properly” (Participant 3). These findings from the participants support that of Berthon et al, (2005) where they explain that an organisation must develop and deliver a brand promise and if not, it could be detrimental to the organisation. Wilden et al, (2010) highlighted the importance of fulfilling the brand promise. He explains that not doing so, can lead to poor job satisfaction and poor retention.

The participants of this study would support the views of many scholars in that trust is very important for the external brand. It helps to attract new employees. Many stressed that this is particularly important in non-profit organisations as you are dealing with donations and it is not good for potential employees, current employees or for the donors if the organisation is not doing what they said they said they would. It is vitally important that an organisation fulfils its brand promise to all stakeholders (Foster et al, 2010).

5.3 Sub-Objective One

Sub-objective one of this research stated that this research was going to examine to what extent an employer's brand influences attraction in non-profit organisations. This research found that for most, the brand itself did not initially attract these individuals to the organisation and a lot of them were not even aware of the organisation before seeing the job advert "No, I didn't. I wouldn't have known much about the organisation" (Participant 8) "I didn't know the brand at all before I started" (Participant 1). Once further research was conducted by the participants and it was discovered that the brand appeared to be strong, they continued with the process to apply for the job. The responses from the participants are very interesting as numerous scholars state that the employer brand is what attracts people to organisations but in fact only three of the participants of this research said that was the case. These findings are rather contradictory of what previous literature has found. This could be interpreted as that in non-profit organisations the employer brand does not initially attract individuals. According to Priyadarshi (2011) to attract talent the organisation needs to be seen differently and has to offer a unique service however, according to the findings of this research, that may not be true for this non-profit organisation. For these participants the work itself in the organisation was what attracted them initially and then once they conducted research and established the brand was strong, they continued. Rampl (2014) explains that the job itself is attractive to potential employees rather than just the brand. This would appear to be true for the participants of this research.

Sub-objective one also relates to the theme personal beliefs that came up throughout the findings of this research. Personal beliefs may be linked to attraction to the organisation. Scholars Nolan & Harold (2010) mention that people are attracted to organisations because of the traits that the organisation has or the symbolic meaning. Several of the participants of this study stated that it was their own values, their own beliefs and the attitude of the brand that attracted them “I looked at the ethos and it described how I felt personally” (Participant 5) “Am it was probably my own values” (Participant 7) “It was the values” (Participant 1) “The values here matched mine” (Participant 9). Could this mean in non-profits that individuals are attracted to the cause of the organisations rather than the work or the job itself? It was mentioned in the literature by Nolan & Harold (2010) that people can be attracted to the traits of an organisation and that would appear to be true for this group of participants. This finding would suggest that this could be an area for further research.

5.4 Sub- Objective Five

Sub-objective five of this research stated that this research was going to find out if employees in non-profit organisations think that brand contributes or adds value to the organisation. All participants of this study stated that a non-profit organisation having a strong brand adds value to the organisation. Many referred to this in terms of recruitment “Yes, it does, especially from a recruitment perspective” (Participant 8) “Yes absolutely. If you have a strong brand more people will want to work for you” (Participant 4) “Yes, it can help attract employees” (Participant 2). These quotes from some of the participant corroborates what was suggested by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) and App et al (2012). They explain that the employer brand greatly impacts an organisations ability to attract staff. If an organisation has a strong brand it will be more attractive to potential employees. Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) furthermore mentioned that the brand should engage people and help them understand the culture and values of the organisation. One of the participants recognised the importance of potential employees having access to information about the organisation. They mentioned that having instant access to strategic plans and

annual reports is the selling point of the brand “It is also important to have access to annual reports and strategic plans etc if you are a non-profit, access to information is key” (Participant 5). All this information could give people an understanding of the culture and values of the organisation as mentioned by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004).

5.5 Sub-Objective Four

Sub-objective number four states that this research will explore internal branding to look at its benefits for retaining talent in organisations. Previous literature states that there are many strategies that can be implemented to communicate the brand internally and this in turn will lead to higher levels of commitment from employees. Bergstrom et al (2002) explains to get commitment from the employees that they must genuinely believe in the brand and if they don't, they will not be committed, and it will become an issue. One participant of this research, whom is a senior manager noted same in their interview “In employees overtime you can see when someone doesn't associate or relate with the brand and this associates less engagement and less commitment” (Participant 5). Interestingly, what was mentioned by participant 5 is very closely linked to what was being said in the literature by Bergstrom et al (2002). Other participants noted that they felt the brand was being communicated internally in various ways and three mentioned that the induction held for employees helps with communicating the brand “It might not be in an email I suppose but it communicated from my line manager to me” (Participant 3) “Yes I do because we do so much work with induction” (Participant 7) “In my induction it was made very clear to me what the of the organisation was” (Participant 9). One Participant suggested that maybe an “Intranet” would help with the internal communication going forward. Burmann et al (2009) believes that the employees are responsible for the internal branding. This came across very clearly when interviewing these participants. The researcher felt that they may have felt a sense of responsibility for communicating the brand internally. The fact that several participants mentioned that the induction process was an opportunity for them to inform new starters of the brand. These findings would strongly suggest that the

internal brand does in fact lie at the heart of the employees as stated by Burmann et al (2009).

Chapter 6

Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Recommendations & Costing

To improve attracting and recruiting employees to non-profit organisations, the following recommendations are made:

- Some of the participants of this research mentioned that internal communication of the brand could be improved upon. Some participants felt that as an employee they are last to hear when new services are opening or what fundraising events may be coming up. To improve on this, a communication Intranet could be introduced to the organisation. An Intranet would improve the internal communication in the organisation and keep all staff informed of what is coming in the pipeline.

The cost associated with an Intranet can vary due to the size of the organisation and what software is selected. It is estimated that for the size of this organisation that it would cost €5000 to €10000. If this improves staff morale, it can be seen as a very valuable investment.

The timeline associated with implementing this Intranet is estimated to take a couple of months. Research of different packages will need to be conducted by the IT department and plan for implementing this new software will need to be out in place.

- As it was noted by some of the participants in the research that they were not aware of what this organisations brand was prior to seeing the job advert, this has led to the recommendation that the external brand will need to be developed. This could be developed through organising more college visits and talks to get students familiar with the brand while they are studying in the hope of when they complete college, they would apply for a job. It is also recommended that a member of the HR team could talk at a relevant conference in relation to the challenge that some non-profit organisations are up against when it comes to attracting talent. It is also recommended that further work could be completed on social media to promote the brand externally. Social media is a big part of modern day society and it is important for organisations to remain current. It is advised that a social media strategy is developed to promote the brand.

The cost associated with this recommendation would be low. There may be a fee of approximately €500 to attend a conference and €100 to attend a college fair. The cost for this recommendation is more associated with the time cost of the individuals attending these events. Attending conferences and colleges could not only add to the external brand but it could also lead to donations and people applying to the organisation.

There would be no set timeline for implementing this recommendation as this would be an ongoing project. There would be planning involved in this recommendation to map out what college fairs would be best to attend and what conferences. It is advised that those involved should meet on a regular basis for continuous updates.

6.2 Conclusion

This research concludes that employer brand does have an impact on recruitment and attraction in non-profit organisations. Through thematic analysis in this research, several themes emerged. The theme trust emerged as being a very important part of the brand for non-profit organisations. It is important from a recruitment perspective that an organisation is honest and transparent. The brand when applying was the second theme that emerged from this research. Some scholars say that the employer's brand can help an organisation become an employer of choice (App et al, 2012). Out of the nine participants, only three were aware of the organisations brand before they applied for a position. However, the other participants did take the brand into consideration as they conducted research on the organisation. The third theme that emerged was attractiveness. Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) explain that the brand is the most important element for attracting people to an organisation. Several of the participants in this research agreed that the brand does assist in attracting people and that the brand is important for attracting talent. The fourth theme identified in this research was the internal brand in non-profit organisations. Some scholars believe that the internal brand has an overall impact on the external one. This research showed several of the participants felt that the brand was being communicated internally efficiently however, three did feel that more could be done

on the front of internal brand. The fifth theme that emerged from this research was personal belief/values. Nolan & Harold (2010) mention that individuals are attracted to organisations because of the traits that an organisation has. Many of the participants in this research said that the values of the organisation attracted them to it. This could be an area for further research as many of the participants seemed attracted to the cause of the organisation rather than the job itself. The final theme that emerged from this research was emotional attachment. Foster et al (2010) explained that employees have a psychological attachment to the organisation and this attachment contributes to them staying in the organisation. This research showed that most of the participants felt that they had an attachment to the brand.

6.3 Personal Reflection

Carrying out this thesis has helped me develop both professionally and personally. Professionally this research has helped me develop my skills in the area of primary and secondary research. It has equally helped me with my time management and planning skills. Personally, it has helped me to gain confidence and made me focus on having a positive can-do attitude. One of the challenges faced throughout this research was at the beginning following the literature review. I had decided originally to carry out quantitative research, but it was decided that qualitative may be more suitable to answer the research question. The researcher found this difficult as from the research proposal stage, quantitative research had been the focus.

Time management was another challenge that I faced throughout this research. At the beginning it was difficult to manage working full time along with completing this research. As time went on I feel I managed this adequately and set realistic expectations for myself in terms of setting deadlines and timeframes.

Reflecting over the research, if I was to do anything differently next time it would have been just before I was carrying out my interviews. As I had to await sign off from senior management in relation to the participants chosen, I would have started that process a few weeks prior so that I would have been ready to start straight away. I had to wait approximately two weeks before I could start the interviews.

This research was the most testing part of completing the Masters programme in National College Ireland however, it has equally been the most rewarding and gives a great sense of achievement.

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Appendix 1

Participant Information Form

I am inviting you to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Masters Degree in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland, Dublin. The following details will outline this study for you.

Title of Research: “An Investigation into the Impact of Employer Brand on Attracting and Recruiting Employees in a Non- Profit Organisation in Ireland”

Outline of Research Objectives: The main purpose of this study is to investigate how employer branding influences on recruitment and attraction in non-profit organisations. A gap identified is that a large body of research on employer brand, has been conducted on for-profit organisations and the research on non- profit is limited. This research will ascertain if this impact is positive or negative on recruitment and attraction. This research sets out to examine to what extent an employer’s brand influences attraction in non-profit organisations. It will examine different approaches and methods that are used in non-profit organisations to build the employer brand and to find out if this adds value to the organisation.

This study is a strictly voluntary process, which is underpinned by confidentiality and will involve, with participant permission, an audio recording of the interview process. The detail will subsequently be transcribed for analysis but at all times, names will be withheld to protect confidentiality obligations.

These interviews will take approximately 20 minutes.

If you have any questions at any time in relation to this study, you can contact Leah Hughes on 0860617662 or by email on x16126360@student.ncirl.ie

You may also contact my research supervisor Rachel Doherty through email on rachel.doherty@ncirl.ie

Appendix 2

Participant Consent Form

By signing and returning this consent form you are indicating your agreement with the following statements:

- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study
- I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions, where I have had a query
- I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I wish to do so
- I understand that this interview is strictly confidential and that my name will not be associated with any of the work either in the transcripts or the finished Thesis.
- I understand that the interview will be audio recorded
- I understand I am free to withdraw from the study at any time until the transcripts are anonymised.
- I understand that I can request a copy of my own interview transcript
- I agree to take part in the study.

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness Name: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3

Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working in this organisation?
2. What is your understanding of employer brand?
3. What is your understanding of this organisations brand?
4. Did you take this organisations brand into consideration when applying for this job?
5. How important is it to you for the organisation you are working with to have a good employer brand?
6. Do you feel that you have an emotional attachment to your employer brand?
7. Do you have a strong sense of belonging to the organisation?
8. Did the induction process help you understand the employers brand?
9. Why did you decide to work in this organisation? (career development, core values, rewards, good conditions of service)?
10. Do you think the brand of this organisation is contributing to you staying in the organisation? If not, what is?
11. Do you think that an organisation having a strong brand adds value to it?
12. Do you think that an organisation having a strong brand contributes to the attractiveness of an organisation? If not, what does?
13. What methods do you think are used in this organisation to build the brand?
14. In your opinion, what makes a non-profit organisation brand strong?
15. Do you think that the employer brand is communicated internally?
16. Is there anything more you feel that this organisation could be doing to add to the employer brand?