THE ROLE OF CSR IN EMPLOYER BRANDING STRATEGY: FROM LEGITIMACY TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT

Our proposal research intends to understand the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in employer branding strategy. We argue that company's (especially internal) CSR initiatives and good human resources practices can retain highly-qualified employees through positive reputation and legitimacy. The stronger internal legitimacy and higher reputation would lead to stronger organizational identification; the stronger organizational identification would conduct to the higher organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is one measurement of employees' loyalty; which is one goal of employer branding strategy.

Keywords: CSR, employer branding, legitimacy, organizational identification, organizational commitment

BACKGROUND

Nowadays is the era of "talents war". Globalization, worldwide competition and the economy that moves from production to service have caused the human resource as intellectual capital become so valuable. By regarding the influence of companies like Google, Goldman Sachs and Microsoft, we realize that their strength is situated in their intangible asset--their employees.

While from the context of socio-demographics, there is massive departure of workers from baby boomers generation to retirement while young workers enter the employment lately and decrease in number.

The employees at the present rarely have intention to stay 'forever' in a company. They tend to be mobile and volatile. They move from one company to another for many reasons. The expectations of employees from generation baby boomers, X and Y concerning their work and company are also already different [109 quoted by 133, p.55] [117, pp.11-14] [146, p.3] [110 quoted by 3, p.2].

The younger generation of workers (generation X and Y) has higher expectations concerning job challenges and success; they request ‘the job promotion’ more quickly than their baby boomers’ seniors [127 quoted by 149, p.153].

The employees from generation baby boomers expect a long term job. They are loyal, respect the authority, work hard and willing to sacrifice for their company. While the workers of generation X they work hard by putting the balance between professional and private life. Even though they are attached to a company; they are still opened for other jobs opportunities. They don’t accept the authority as it is [18, p.206] [107, p.13].

The workers of generation Y are more demanding than generation X. This techno-savvy generation’ workers outspokenly demand the managers to learn their competences rapidly, to give them challenging job with clear directions, to support them and to accord them freedom and flexibility. For this generation, social responsibility and diversity are a must. Stay in a company for one year, is already a long-term commitment for them. Thus, guarding these young workers is really a work of high maintenance for a company [92, pp.1-3].

From the company’s point of view, a company spends a considerable amount for recruitment process, training, formation and integration of new employees. If talented employees quit the company, it will lose their expertise and experiences with the risk that these crucial expertise and experiences will fall to the competitors [48, pp.24-25].

All of those reasons have caused the evolution in human resource practices, communication, recruitment and marketing to attract potential candidates and retain motivated employees. Employer branding is one of the evolution result.

On the other side, the graduate students (candidates) thought that the companies who have CSR initiatives are attractive as employers because of positive reputation related to it [15, p.445] [2, p.250] [139, p.668]. According to prior studies, CSR initiatives clearly influence employees’ commitment to the organization [22, p.21] [113, p.313] [121, p.540].

INTRODUCTION

The above reasons persuade organizations to revise their strategies to attract, motivate and retain employees. The ways to differentiate human resources practices become so important in the business especially for some companies that have difficulties in attracting and retaining talented employees [152, 133 quoted by 77, p.229].

Organization invests in human resources practices to send signals of good human resources reputation. These signals affect potential employees because they have incomplete information about organization. They translate the information as signals about working conditions in that organization. Then, the future and existing employees react toward this human resource reputation [122, p.9, 32] [28, p.108] [69, p.411] [128 quoted by 77, p.245].

Recently, employer branding is becoming popular. It applies marketing principles in the field of human resource with the intention to attract, motivate and keep talented employees. The essence of employer branding is to create a distinguishable image of an organization as a preferred employer. It could be achieved by managing the organization's identity [12, pp.4-5] [7, 11, 25, 26, 96 quoted by 84, p.S48].

CSR in this proposal research is considered as a means to attract and to keep the talents by enhancing the employer branding because CSR reinforces reputation of an organization. The previous research has shown positive correlation between the good note of a company evaluated by a CSR's evaluation agency (KLD) and its attractiveness as an employer [58, p.85] [57, p.10] [63, p.111].

Organizations blend CSR policies and employer branding to increase not only reputation but also legitimacy [112, p.37] [80, p.92]. Constituents admit legitimacy of an organization by attributing reputation to it based on institutional signals that they received. These signals indicate how well an organization conforms to norms and standards social [55, pp.233-234]. We can say if an organization well reputed, automatically it would considered legitimate by its society.

Reputation of CSR and employer branding send favorable signals about working environment to public through media [28, p.108] [78, p.77]. It seems that candidates and actual employees are interested to work in a company that they thought having excellent working condition and that would treat them well. They are seduced by the social status as members of this organization [8, p.34] [95, p.17]. They are proud being identified with organization that has positive reputation [113, p.299].

That's why the companies that align their strategies with social values, they attract motivated employees, enjoy strong employees' commitment (organizational commitment) and incur low turnover rate [143, p.80] [20, p.152] [22, p.21].

Prior researches have shown the relation between CSR and reputation [57] [97], employer branding and reputation [77], CSR and organizational identification [47], employer branding and organizational identification [84], reputation and organizational identification [149], CSR and organizational commitment [113] [22] [3, p.2797] and also firm's CSP (Corporate Social Performance) and its attractiveness as an employer [139] [87] [10].

But none of researches if not mistaken, study the correlation between organizational identification and organizational commitment. The existing researches just prove the difference between organizational identification and organizational commitment [34] [144]. Moreover, the relation between legitimacy attributed by employees and organizational identification is rarely been really discussed.

Both of employer image (employer branding strategy) and CSR initiatives have been proven to enhance corporate reputation and organizational identification. Thus, we argue that inserting social values in employer branding strategy can reinforce this strategy to attract potential candidates and retain talented employees. The objective of this proposal research is to show that synergy between CSR initiatives (especially internal CSR) and employer branding strategy would result in stronger legitimacy and reputation that lead to higher organizational identification. The stronger organizational identification would render organizational commitment higher. In this proposal research we focus on talented employees that hold intellectual capital; we exclude potential candidates and ordinary workers.

EMPLOYER BRANDING

Simon Barrow and Tim Ambler [7, p.887] were the first authors that brought out the topic of employer branding into the surface. They defined the employer brand as "the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". It serves to construct image as employer. This image is influenced by the benefits proposed by human resource management [107, p.206]. The implementation of employer branding strategy is called the human resource marketing. HR marketing is the application of marketing and communication's logic and techniques to attract and retain candidates, employees and other collaborators. It considers the actual/potential employees (and other collaborators) as clients [85, p.9].

Talented employees are intellectual capital while brand is an intangible asset; both are the source of competitive advantage [93, p.1] [94, p.12]; that's why the employer branding is worth to talk about.

Firms pursuing employer branding strategy usually give attention to the four factors that render a company attractive for candidates and existing employees [107, p.15]: 1) company's brand image and reputation, 2) remuneration in large terms (including working condition, supplementary benefits, etc.), 3) the job roles, job responsibilities, relations with colleagues and managers, and 4) learning and future development opportunities.

Nowadays, the companies are persuaded to be in the list of « best employer ». Best employer is believed as a strong marketing of employer branding. Companies desire to be in the list “best employers” is an attempt to promote employer branding, hence to obtain reputation in the field of human resource practices. By being in the list, they give signals not only about a favorable work environment but also an assurance that companies would maintain those “good practices”. This kind of reputation leads to attraction and retention of talents [30, p.543] [78, pp.77, 84] [77, pp. 232, 235].

A firm with a good working environment would experience lower turnover level and produce high quality products. In addition, its employees would support innovation and accept the changes easier [81 quoted by 76, pp.228-229].

The examples of best employer list/ ranking are “Best companies to work for” by U.S. Fortune magazine conducted by Great Place to Work® Institute, “Best Employers” by Aon Hewitt, “Best Companies” by Great Place to Work® Institute, “Top Employer” by CRF Institute (in France, Britain), “World’s Most Attractive Employers” by Universum and a lot of more.

We can differentiate best employer’s evaluation methods in three broad outline: 1) evaluation based on HR’s good practices (Top Employers), 2) employees evaluation survey, 3) students evaluation survey (World’s Most Attractive Employers by Universum). Some best employer evaluation methods combine employee opinion survey with evaluation of human resources practice like “Best Companies” by Great Place to Work ® Institute and “Best Employers” by Aon Hewitt.[1]

Sullivan [132] argues that best employer status has benefits to attract talented employees, retain highly-qualified employees, give good image in the eyes of customer and maintain employee motivation and corporate culture [quoted by 80, p.87,88]. Being the best employer is believed to have positive impact on financial performance if it combined with others “performing works system” [16 quoted by 80, p.88, 89]. The trend to pursue the label of “employer of choice” is considered merely mimetic isomorphism actions where the companies “benchmark” other companies in offering benefits to their employees to maintain legitimacy [77, p. 229] [80, p.92].

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Institutional theory explains that policies, procedures and programs of organization are imposed by public opinions, regulations, social and cultural exigencies that organizations must comply with, so they can obtain legitimacy and supports from their environment [98, p.343, 349,350].

Legitimacy

Suchman defines legitimacy as ‘‘a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions’’ [130, p. 574]. To obtain legitimacy, one must conform to social norms, values and expectations [104 quoted by 105, p.71].

There are three types of legitimacy [24, p.3-5] [40, p.339]: normative (moral), pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy. Normative (or moral) legitimacy is conferred to an organization when its actions reflect socially acceptable norms, standards and values. Stakeholders appraise the organization based on its social correctness and desirability, not whether they could get benefit from it or not. Norms and values are reflected in a society’s communications and writings [42, p.124-125].

Pragmatic legitimacy is evaluated in terms of the extent to which the organization can fulfill the needs and interests of its stakeholders and constituents. It is a function of exchange relationships between an organization and its stakeholders. The organization produces goods and (or) services that benefit for stakeholders. In return, stakeholders give organization necessary support. Legitimacy is one form a support that vital for organization sustainability [24, p.4].

Cognitive legitimacy is accorded when an organization pursues objectives and activities that society understands and values (passively) as appropriate, proper and desirable. Organization should make the stakeholders really aware and less uncertain about organization’s actions, so they can perceive that those actions are ‘making sense’ [126, p. 150 quoted by 115, p.922].

According to Suchman [130], this sense making, works in two ways. First, based on cultural framework and secondly, based on being “taken for granted”. The cultural framework guides the society to understand that the organization acts in comprehensible and reasonable manner that produces meaningful and acceptable results. The society will give cognitive legitimacy to the organization based on comprehensibility. On the other hand, if the organization has structure, procedures and activities that are appropriate and can be understood easily so that society cannot imagine other options better, then the organization would be attributed with legitimacy based on being taken for granted.

To maintain or enhance legitimacy, organizations usually use three legitimacy strategies: conforming, informing and manipulating [130, 29 quoted by 24, p.7]. These strategies are coherence with four legitimacy strategies by Lindblom [86].

Conforming is adopting accepted structures, practices, procedures or systems found in other organizations within the same type that already perceived legitimate. Conforming actions are reflected in isomorphic strategies.

There are three types of isomorphism; coercive, mimetic and normative. The mimetic isomorphism would occur to face the condition's uncertainty [40 quoted by 100, p.663]. The organizations tend to mimic the other organizations with which they have network ties or to follow actions of similar and/or successful competitors/peers. They can also take decision that influenced by high-status leader even though this is doubted to be categorized as coercive isomorphism [61, 71 quoted by 101, p.663]. Apparently, benchmarking is a kind of mimetic isomorphism.

According to institutional theory, isomorphism leads to legitimacy [40, 98 quoted by 40, p.333] because organizations conforming to commonly used standard, practices and norms appear to be rational and acceptable in a social system [54, 138 quoted by 40, p.333].

Informing is communicating organizations' actions, goals and results to stakeholders by using legitimated vocabularies. Organizations inform stakeholders when there is performance improvement. But if the performance expected is difficult to achieve, they try to change stakeholder expectations about their performance (manipulating) [86 quoted by 32, p.2]. It is possible that being in the list of "best employers" or "best companies" is an organization's action of informing its "excellent" human resources practices to gain legitimacy.

The boundary between informing and manipulating is unclear. For example, providing corporate social disclosure is an action of informing that can be considered as a subtle form of manipulation to manage legitimacy (and also reputation). With this kind of report, organizations create the belief that they are well-committed and well-responsible to their community and environment with or without evidences of reality conditions [24, pp.8-9] [32, pp.2-3].

Manipulating is trying to influence stakeholders' perceptions to accept new raisons, beliefs and values that beyond existing and already accepted socio-cultural norms and cognitive schemas. To manipulate, the organizations manage myths, ceremonies and symbols supported by influencing marketing and advertising tools that will reframe socio-cultural reality. The convinced constituents will finally give organizations the cognitive legitimacy [130, 29 quoted by 24, p.7].

The essence of manipulating is changing the underlying logic by which the legitimacy is assessed using persuasive language and rhetoric (the art of persuasion) thus creates new legitimacy criteria. This kind of strategy is common when the new forms of organization, industry, practice or technology that didn't fit into prevailing logic of legitimacy emerge and need to be legitimized [131, pp.35, 36]. Or, when an issue that could threat the organization's legitimacy comes to the surface, organizational actors will try to change stakeholders' perceptions about it or try to distract the attention far away from the issue [86 quoted by 32, p.2].

Organizational legitimacy is usually highly pertinent for NGO/Non-Governmental Organization [24], new ventures [115], new form of industry or organization like internet firm [49], firm or industry facing issues that threat its legitimacy [51] and firm or industry dealing with major environmental changes [72].

The bottom line is, that the organizations use stories or scripts to justify that their actions are in coherence with the expectations of the society about what organizations should do. Assuring the society is crucial to maintain legitimacy because organizations are dependent on the resources from their environment. But assuring internal stakeholders is not less important to guard legitimacy because they hold resources and support also [98 quoted by 101, p.656] [49, p.734].

Talking about legitimacy, it cannot be separated from reputation because they are closely related.

Legitimacy and reputation

Reputation

Corporate reputation is a collective representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes how key resource providers interpret a company's initiatives and assess its ability to deliver valued outcomes [56, p.9]. Other definitions are available but usually reputation is formed by the stated intent of the organization, its actions and stakeholder's beliefs about its future [45, p.27].

Public constructs the reputation of a company based on received signals as a source of available information. These signals such as accounting and market signals (that give information about performance of a company), institutional signals (that indicate the conformity of an organization towards accepted norms and values) and strategic signals (that show strategic choices) would be utilized by public to take decisions related to that company [55, p.233-234] [21, p.36, 37] [124, p.48].

Different groups of stakeholders can have different images about an organization; they evaluate reputation of an organization differently. Thus, an organization could have multiple images [55, p.235] [90, p.6] [44 quoted by 91, p.18] [12, p.4-5] [39, p.1108] [43 quoted by 73, p.152].

Each stakeholder group evaluates company's reputation based on different outcomes; employees evaluate workplace outcomes, consumers are interested on products, services and marketing outcomes whereas investor prefers business and financial outcomes [45, p.27].

Thus, it seems like the status of "best employers" and other similar status is an attempt to enhance image in the eyes of firm's members [80, p.91] and reputation in the public' eyes.

According to Reputation Quotient, there are six factors to evaluate reputation [59, p.14] :1) emotional attraction, 2) products and services, 3) vision and leadership, 4) working place condition, 5) financial performance and 6) CSR.

One type of reputation is based on CSR activities. Many companies build reputation instantaneously to obtain a competitive advantage by applying philanthropy and non-core CSR programs. But these kind of social programs are not built based on core operations and principal objectives of the company; hence they send signals that incompatible with company's mission. They are also easily copied by competitors thus the advantages given are only for short-term [45, p.26].

Previous researches have proved that firms with higher corporate social performance (CSP) have positive reputation. Potential applicants are aware of firm's social values and they are attracted by these firms than firms with lower CSP. This attractiveness is related with positive self concept when they become members of firms with high CSP. Employees working for firms with positive CSP reputation would have stronger organizational identification than employees working for firms with negative CSP reputation.

But it has to be noted that reputation is mediated by familiarity. Firms that are more familiar, tend to have more positive reputation. This familiarity is influenced by firms' size, media exposure and advertising budget [139, p.666-668].

The relation between reputation and legitimacy

From the perspective of social identity theory, organizations need to comply with minimum accountability standards for a social identity; for them to be recognized, to be classified as a certain type of organization; hence they can be perceived legitimate. But after an organization satisfies the minimum criteria, it would strive to fulfill the next elevated standards. Organization that meets high or ideals standards will enhance its reputation, its level of desirability and its chance to survive [156 quoted by 151, p.15-17].

Conversely, reputation is linked to attributes that differentiate an organization with other organizations in the same social category. But constituents tend to identifying attributes that are considered not merely different but elevated. Therefore, to reinforce reputation, organization should excel in having positive, distinguished self-defining attributes that socially desirable within the society [152, p.17].

The judgment that an organization and its actions are legitimate or illegitimate is socially constructed. Thus, this judgment would change depending on the social environment the organization is based in [13, p.9]. It means that legitimacy and reputation would always change.

Legitimacy standards guide organizations activities that seek for reputation. These reputation-seeking activities in turn change the minimum standards to be in certain organization's category. Changes in the ideal standards of reputation would change the minimum standards of legitimacy [152, p.20].

Differentiation strategies that once enhance organization's reputation could be less effective over time. More companies adopt a differentiation strategy, more this strategy would be considered not only ideal by other companies but also a necessity to be accomplished [151, p.27.28]. It would become standard demanded by stakeholders [41, p.150, 151].

Hence, CSR initiatives and employer branding strategy could be seen from the perspective of legitimacy and reputation that would put an organization in a win-win solution between its need to stay competitive and its obligations to society [112, p.37] [80, p.92].

Apparently, CSR is only one composition of reputation and probably doesn't have big impact to reputation [143, p.76]. But the combination between social actions addressed to employees and good working condition will form the reputation that highly appreciated by public [91, p.17].

The different between reputation and legitimacy

To improve legitimacy, organization can perform isomorphism actions. But the effects of isomorphism on reputation are dependent on the organization's reputation itself. Organizations with low reputation can improve their reputation by imitating their peers' strategies in the same industry. Conversely, organizations with already high reputation can maintain or increase their reputation by conducting strategies that are different from their peers (differentiation strategies). Therefore, companies search for competitive advantage must be different legitimately possible [38, p.148].

Higher financial performance can increase reputation, but it does not increase the legitimacy of high performance organization. On the other hand, organization with mediocre financial performance still considered as legitimate [40, pp.328, 350].

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Organizational identity is different with organizational identification. Organizational identity is about organization's essential features that believed to be central, enduring and distinctive [1 quoted by 34, p.587].

Organizational identity is a specific type of social identity; socially constructed through thoughts, feelings, and comportments of individuals and group members. This identity is embedded in the organizational context [8 quoted by 144, p.20]. Whereas organizational identification is the degree to which a member defines him/herself by the same attributes that he/she believes define the organization [47, p.239]. These attributes are influenced by organization's history, traditions, symbols, practices and philosophy that widely held and deeply shared [62, 79 quoted by 34, p.587]. Put another way, organizational identification is the cognitive process through which members align their individual and social identities with the organization's identity [8, 47, 79 quoted by 145, p. 21].

Organizational identification captures the alignment between the perceived organizational identity (members' perception of what the organization stands for) and the construed external image (members' perception of what outsiders think the organization stands for) of that organization [46, 47 quoted by 84, p.S46].

This identification is associated with groups that are distinctive and prestigious compared with other groups [8, p.34]. An employee has strong organizational identification if : 1) his or her organization member's identity is more salient than other possible identities, 2) he or she believes that his/her characteristics are closed with organization's characteristics and 3) he or she incorporates organization's characteristics into his or her self concept [47, pp.239, 241, 242].

Organizational identification gives a psychological attachment by aligning the member's attitudes and interests with the attitudes and interests that benefit organization [47, p.242, 256]. It is coherent with the attitudes of commitment [102 quoted by 47, p.242] like loyalty, productivity, organizational citizenship and conformity to the organization's regulations [70, p.361].

When firm as an employer is viewed positively by its employees and outsiders, being the members of that firm will enhances members' self-esteem; hence organizational identification is likely to be strong [84, p.S45].

Employer branding is one form of organization's identity management because it creates an employer image that is viewed distinct and desirable by internal and external stakeholders [7, 11, 12 quoted by 84, p.S48].

From the side of CSR, members who aware about company's CSR initiatives would likely to display greater organizational identification with that company and would probably willing to commit personal resources for it [125, p.164].

Therefore, individuals would have strong organizational identification if they work in an organization conducting social responsibility activities and/or employer branding strategy [88 quoted by 139, p.667] [147, p.20].

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization [102, p.226]. It characterized by three factors: 1) acceptance of organization's goals and values, 2) voluntarily exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, 3) a desire to maintain the membership in organization [115 quoted by 129, p.46]. In other words, engaged employees; 1) strive to give the best result and performance, 2) want to stay with their employers, and 3) say good things about their employers [17, 65 quoted by 77, p.235].

There are four forms of organizational commitment: continuance commitment, affective commitment, moral commitment [76, p.952] and normative commitment [4 quoted by 36, p.23].

Continuance commitment is developed following employee's satisfaction due to compensation and incentive that an organization offers. This compensation must be sacrificed if employee quit the job. There is awareness about the costs of leaving the company [76, p.953]. This kind of commitment is depending on the need to stay [100, p.11].

Affective commitment is an emotional attachment to an organization, where individual identifies and enjoy the attachment with it, strongly implicated and want to stay [4, p.2] [100, p.11]. This type of commitment is based on sentiments like membership, affection, warm feeling, loyalty and other positive sentiments to the organization [105 quoted by 76, p.954] [4, p.13]. Loyalty is one composition of affective commitment [76, pp. 984-985].

Moral commitment is based on coherence between goal and values between an individual and an organization. An employee hesitates to quit the organization where she/he has this kind of relation [105 quoted by 76, p.954].

Normative commitment is grounded in the belief that there is an obligation to remain in the organization because of benefits received.

The benefits of organizational commitment (specifically affective commitment) are lower turnover [115 quoted by 113, pp.299-300], lower intention turnover [34, p.598], lower absenteeism, higher work performance [53, 99 quoted by 113, p. 299-300], higher worker motivation [113, p.313], higher job satisfaction and higher in-role and extra-role performance [95, 100 quoted by 144, p.573].

Employee perceptions about company's CSR initiatives have been proven to be positively correlated with organizational commitment. External CSR (philanthropy actions and community relations' policy), procedural justice (the fair treatment of employees of different gender and race) and training provision (company's investment in training for employees) are seen to contribute positively to organizational commitment. Female employees prefer strongly external CSR and fair treatment while male employees prefer training provision [22, pp.21-23].

From the side of employer branding; companies in the list of "best employer" experience low turnover rate [77, p.242]. Low turnover has been said as the outcome of organizational commitment as one condition of loyalty [34, p.598] [129].

DISCUSSION

Employees' loyalty is one goal of employer branding strategy. Based on Psychological Contract Index (PCI), employees are considered loyal when: 1) they stay in a company for at least two years, 2) they don't have intention to find another work and 3) they would like to work in that company for a long time [118, 119 quoted by 67, p.63].

Companies would like to retain their qualified employees mostly for economic reasons. Companies spend considerable amount for integration and formation of the new employees. If employees quit the companies there are disadvantages because of the lost of working experiences that inseparable from those employees. In addition, employees that quit then working for competitors could transfer the knowledge and images from previous company to recent company [48, pp.24-25]. Conversely, the loyal employees would work hard and they would act as public relation by transferring good image to public [103, p. 93].

In this proposal research, we prefer to measure organizational commitment than loyalty. Loyalty is just one composition (an attitude) of commitment [76, pp. 984-985, 102 quoted by 47, p.242]. Employees can be loyal to an organization without engaged to its ideas or values [103, p.96]. While organizational commitment generally includes a strong emotional and values attachment to an organization [33, p.1153] [75, pp.380-381] [101] that would make employees give their best efforts. Moreover, organizational commitment is correlated with lower turnover intention that is considered as one condition of loyalty [34, p.598].

Organization actions in social problems can enhance or destroy its reputation. Employees are affiliated with and identify themselves through their organization (organizational identification). This organizational affiliation reflects their social status as members; and public judge employees through organization's characteristics and organization's reputation. Employees as organizational members interpret reputation and external image given by public. This reputation and external image are influenced by media that publishes information about organization. Thus, this good or bad image seen by public can influence self-image of employees and/or future employees [47, pp.241, 247] [46, pp.547-548].

This organizational identification is stronger when employees work in a firm with excellent reputation of social responsibility activities compared with employees that work in a firm with reputation less positive in social actions. Positive reputation from CSR initiatives could enhance employees' pride, self image and self concept. Thus socially responsible firms would retain employees easily than firm with reputation less positive [140] [77, p.246] [139, p.668] [113, p.229].

Moreover, candidates and employees are interested to work for firms with the characteristics, comportments and values that similar to them [143, p.79] [83, pp.76, 81]. Thus, highly-qualified candidates and employees that appreciate social values, they would strongly attracted to firms conducting socially responsibly actions [63, p.111].

Corporate social performance in ethical domain has big impact on organizational commitment than other domains because employees assume that if the company acts ethically, it will treat them ethically [113, p.313-314]. The dimensions of CSP that are considered as signals of good working condition are the treatment of woman and minorities and also employee relations; these dimensions are appreciated higher than other CSP dimensions like environmental concern [139, pp.666-668]. Therefore, companies that conduct employer branding strategy by giving more concern in ethical domain (for example good treatment of minorities) and employee relations would probably result in higher organizational commitment.

But it has to be noted that organizational commitment of employees would be highly influenced by organization's social responsibility practices if those employees values highly social and ethical values [113, p.314]. The employees (and/or candidates) that demand positive reputation in social performance from their (future) employer, they are usually talented employees with good education [143, p.80] [107, p.213]. The goal of employer branding strategy is not merely to attract and retain candidates/employees, but the talented ones.

Internal legitimacy: legitimacy attributed by internal stakeholders

Concerning legitimacy, just few of preliminary researches investigate the probable relation between legitimacy and organizational identification; probably because reputation itself already contains legitimacy. The companies with good reputation automatically considered legitimate by public. That's true but we are interested with cognitive and pragmatic legitimacy attributed by employees to their companies that pursue employer branding strategy. Many articles have discussed about organizational legitimacy but they concern more with legitimacy awarded by external stakeholders (external legitimacy) and neglect legitimacy attributed by employees (internal legitimacy) whereas employees are a salient stakeholder group.

Reputation is the outcome of legitimation process [115]. Most of reputation is given by public as external stakeholder whereas each stakeholder group would have different interpretation of reputation [55, p.235] [90, p.6] [42 quoted by 91, p.18] [12, p.4-5] [39, p.1108] [43 quoted by 73, p.152]. If reputation is evaluated differently, thus we argue that legitimation process of each stakeholder group is also different.

Organizational legitimacy is a continuous and often unconscious adaptation process in which the firm reacts to external expectations [130 quoted by 106, p.73]. The environmental changes that lead to "talents war" have pushed the firms to revise their strategies by offering and focusing more benefits for employees; where the importance of employer branding strategy. More firms follow this strategy; employer branding strategy becomes mimetic isomorphism action. Firms pursuing employer branding strategy are differentiating themselves from "similar firms" to gain more reputation by being in the list of "best employer" or "best companies".

Employer brand or best employer title, we argue, it is a short of symbol supported by media advertising so stakeholders could accept this new practice, value or belief. Firm tries to manipulate stakeholders' perceptions by giving information to them using legitimate vocabularies. The goal is to convince concerned stakeholders to confer cognitive legitimacy [86 quoted by 32, p.2] [130, 29 quoted by 24, p.7].

Besides cognitive legitimacy, we will measure pragmatic legitimacy from employees' point of view. Employees will evaluate the extent to which the firm can act to fulfill their needs and interest by assessing benefits that firm offers [24, p.4]. Legitimacy from talented employees is important because they hold intangible resource which is intellectual capital as a source of competitive advantage [94, p.12].

CSR is a legitimacy tool [86 quoted by 32, p.2] thus CSR practices can reinforce the legitimation process. If cognitively employees perceived that their firm is legitimate, it will increase their intrinsic motivation to work for that firm and to be creative. This legitimacy will contribute to their identification process [6, 74, p.361 quoted by 49, p.734]. We can say that if the legitimacy conferred by employees is eroded, it could lower the organizational identification.

Legitimacy is a preliminary condition a firm must fulfill before reputation is conferred [153, p.75]. If candidates and/or employees understand and aware about firm's strategies, then they believe that these strategies are acceptable and suitable with their values [153, p.75] [152, p.2], finally they will perceive that their firm (or future firm) is legitimate cognitively.

If public consider that firms conform to standards, norms and values of society, even though in minimum level of acceptability; public will attribute legitimacy. If those firms are perceived excellent or favorable in their conformation towards standards and norms, public will attribute reputation to them [130, p.573] [152, p.2]. Once firm fulfilled the minimum standards of legitimacy, it will be subject to elevated standards and so on until it accomplishes the ideal standards to achieve high reputation [152, p. 16, 20].

We believe that it is important to verify legitimacy conferred by external and internal stakeholders because organization's environment is always changes. The intense competition between similar organizations can render the ideal standards becoming norm. It means that the ideal organization identity or ideal performance level today can become standards in the future. Put another way, the standards for achieving reputation today can become standards to be considered legitimate in the future [152, p.22]. For example, nowadays, best employer status confers high reputation. But one day, being best employer could be a standard to fulfill before legitimacy could be awarded.

In this proposal research, we are interested to find out the correlation (relation) between: 1) reputation (including the congruence between reputation and image) and organizational identification, 2) legitimacy (including the congruence between internal and external legitimacy) and organizational identification, and 3) organizational identification and organizational commitment.

We will ask employees in four groups of companies to answer our survey questions. The four groups of companies are: 1) companies pursuing employer branding strategy without clear CSR initiatives, 2) companies pursuing employer branding strategy and internal CSR initiatives (diversity, employee relations, etc.), 3) companies pursuing employer branding strategy and external CSR initiatives (in the domain of community relation, environmental stance, products issues), and 4) companies facing legitimacy's and reputation's threats.

CSR initiatives can be classified as internal or external CSR initiatives; depending whether company wants to satisfy internal or external stakeholders. Internal CSR activities comprise employees' wealth and business ethics (non discrimination policies, vocational training etc) [149 quoted by 68, p.557] whereas external CSR initiatives include philanthropy actions and community relation policy [22, p.9].

We will differentiate CSR practices based on five dimensions from eleventh dimensions of Corporate Social Performance (CSP). These five dimensions are the dimensions considered the most relevant for job seekers: 1) employee relations, 2) diversity and treatment of minorities, 3) community relations, 4) environmental stance and 5) products issues [10, p.297] [139, p.662].

We will then test two main propositions:
Proposition 1:
The higher reputation and legitimacy conferred by employees, the stronger organizational identification and the higher organizational commitment.
Proposition 2:
Reputation, internal legitimacy, organizational identification and organizational commitment are stronger/higher in companies that combine employer branding strategy with internal CSR initiatives.
We will code the reputation of companies based on whether they are in the "best employer" like-list or in the "socially responsible companies" like-list. We will code also the congruence level between organizational reputation and organizational image; also between legitimacy attributed by employees and by public, because we suspect that the incongruence would affects organizational identification, hence organizational commitment.

For control variables we will differentiate the firms based on size and industry. Big firms attract attention more than small firms; they are more visible and public is more demanding to big firms before attributing the legitimacy [37, p.113] [108 quoted by 32, p.6] [55, p.240] [40, p.343-344].

Concerning of industry, some industries have clear impacts on the environment (mining exploitation, industry of oil and gas, chemical, etc.), considered irresponsible (tobacco, weapons, alcoholic drinks industry, etc.) produce controversial products by using high risk technology (nuclear energy and chemical industry) and subject to high supervision because they are regulated by regional or regional politics (aero spatial and defense industry, etc). Legitimacy of these types of industry is often questioned; hence their reputation is often in risk [32, p. 67] [143, p.56] [55, p.240].

Reputation and organizational identification

Public judge employees continuously by the characteristics attached to the organization. Public's judgment is based on information about this organization that publicized by media. Organization's members or employees interpret the reputation and adjust it with the construed external image (what a member believes outsider think about organization) and organizational image (what organizational actors would like outsider to think of the organization). Reputation describe the attributes public attach to organization. This public impression can strengthen or erode employees' self concept, hence organizational identification [47, p.241] [46, p.547] [151, p.401].

Why? Organizational reputation is not merely an external assessment. It includes perceptions and predictability about organization's capacity and the likelihood that organization will meet stakeholders' expectations [147, p.323] [123, p.3]. The mismatch between organizational image and organizational reputation will lead to organizational identity crisis [51 quoted by 151, p.403], thus degrade organizational identification.

Public reputation is viewed often by members of organization as a judgment based on limited information [151, p.401]. Whereas outsiders thought that reputation is merely the result of organizational communication and advertising to gain popularity [150, p.403]. We believe that the congruence between organizational image and organizational reputation is important in organizational identification. The type of reputation is also really matter.

Positive reputation from social actions can reinforce organizational identification [47, p.240] [139, p.668]. Working in organization that engages in CSR initiatives can ameliorate employees self concept, self image [139, pp. 660, 664] and pride [113, p.299]. The effect is almost the same for employees working in "great place to work". Being identified with reputable organization in HR practices can increase employees prestige [85 quoted by 35, p.6], social status [46, p.547] [8, p.34] and self-confidence [8, p.22] [46, p.548] [47, p.242]. Therefore, organizations with positive reputation will be able to attract high quality candidates [140] and retain their employees easily than their less reputable competitors [7,120, 89 quoted by 147, p.20].

Organizational identification and organizational commitment

Organizational identification and organizational commitment is a different concept. But there are overlaps in the measurement of the constructs of these two concepts. It means that the overlaps are also in the conceptual level between the organizational identification and organizational commitment [50, p.223-225]. Thus, it is necessary to be clear on their differences. Identification reflects self-conception whereas commitment reflects attitudes toward the work and organization that derived from social exchange processes [144, p.572].

Organizational identification implies that members and organization is one entity psychologically, while organizational commitment implies a relationship where member and organization are separate entities psychologically. One possible explanation that correlates these two concepts is the fact that organizational identification could leads members to experience the organization's interest as their self-interest. Thus, this identification could motivate members to exert efforts in behalf of organization [8, 145 quoted by 144, p.579]. The level of organizational identification that indicates the degree to which members see the organization as part of themselves is a part of the commitment process [115, 102 quoted by 46, p.242].

Organizational commitment can be explained by social exchange process where the relationship between employees and their employer is based on an exchange between efforts, loyalty and benefits like salary, support and recognition [19, 52, 64, 82 quoted by 144, p.574]. Organizational commitment is also correlated with perceived organization support [144, p.574]. The argument is that the practices and treatment of employees will encourage or discourage them to be organizationally committed [50, p.226].

Organizational identification and organizational commitment, both are negatively correlated with turnover intention, but in different group of employees. Commitment is negatively correlated with turnover intention in officers and middle management group while identification is negatively correlated with turnover intention in worker group [34, p.598].

The turnover rate that is lower in "best employer" than "non-best employers" is the proof of high organizational commitment in companies with excellent branding strategy [77, p.242]. On the other hand, companies that engage in CSR activities, they have been proven to experience high organizational commitment [22, p.21] [113, p.313] [121] [3, p.2799-2801]. Strong organizational identification (because working in company with reputable human practices and CSR initiatives) would makes employees to act on the behalf of the company's interest (company's interest is their self-interest). Thus, we propose that the high organizational commitment could be mediated by organizational identification.

We believe this role of mediation is played by determinants of organizational identification. One of them is prestige. Prestige is an antecedent of identification and commitment. Organizational prestige is said to be a core determinant of organizational identification. Organization's prestige reflects in member self prestige [47, 8 quoted by 144, p.579]. Organizational prestige makes an organization attractive, hence influence organizational commitment [100 quoted by 144, p.579].

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