



PERCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSITY AS AN EMPLOYER AMONG YOUNG POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES



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Summary

The article is theoretical-empirical in its character. The problems of external image of university as an employer were presented. In the theoretical part the different approaches to image and its determinants were analysed. There is the lack of researches related to image aspects of university activities, including aspects connected with its external image. The empirical part of this article is based on the results of the field researches. The way of perceiving of university as an employer by segment of young potential employees was identified and analysed. 4 research hypotheses were verified. They were formulated in the relation to connotations with university as the place of work. It was mainly consociated with possibilities of development and self-realization. Connotations with high salary, feelings of stabilization and high social prestige were weaker. In this way only one hypothesis (H4) was confirmed. It is very important prompt for universities to improve their image activities.

Keywords: image, potential employee, employer, university

Theoretical introduction

Every entity operates in a particular environment. Its participants, observing the activities of a particular entity assess it in a particular way and as a result, form opinions concerning the entity. The results of observations are not the only basis for opinions associated with a particular entity. They are based also on other, more or less subjective premises, which include established stereotypes, opinions of other entities, cultural background etc. The picture of a particular entity formed on the basis of opinions concerning it constitutes its image reflecting the way it is regarded by other entities. This is one of two basic subimages of the general image of a particular entity, that is, its external image.

It is particularly important in case of offerors as the participants of the contemporary market, as to a significant degree it influences the purchaser's process of making market decisions and its results in form of taking advantage of an offer, or ignoring it. It is possible to assume that external image as a decision-making factor plays a comparably greater role in case of offerors of services¹ than in case of offerors of other groups of products. This is associated with the non-material character of services. The fact that they don't have a physical form means that they have to be distinguished by other attributes, among which non-material values, including the image of the service provider and his offer, play a major role.

External image can vary depending on which market role of a particular entity is taken into consideration and on what role entities from the environment serve. Every organization plays many market roles simultaneously, similarly as the participants of its environment play various roles. Among comparably most important roles played by almost every organization there is the role of the offeror and the role of the employer. At the same time the participants of its environment play the roles of recipients and potential employees. Partial images, that is , external image of the offeror and external image of the employer² , they mutually determine each other, influencing the general image of a particular entity³.

Certainly, universities are a special group of employers. Their social and economic role grows along with the development of the civilization built by the society. As the offerors of educational and research-scientific services they contribute to generating intellectual , including innovative, potential

of a particular state, defining its directions and pace of development in almost every sphere of life, starting from the sphere of culture and the sphere of knowledge and ending in the sphere of politics. Educating young people and forming their life conducts, universities prepare consecutive generations of specialists and decision-makers in practically all areas of life, even though in Polish environment the fact whether universities actually play this role efficiently is disputable, it is not the subject of this article.

Universities simultaneously play the role of employers, which is not less significant⁴. The capacity and ability to attract new candidates with the greatest predispositions⁵ who can be educators, inspirers, researchers and scientists, as well as to keep the attracted employees determine the potential of a university and whether they can efficiently play the role of the offeror of above-average intellectual services. The special character of universities results from, among others, the ways of financing universities (especially in case of state-owned universities), or the character of offered services. This special character means that satisfying the growing requirements of the labour market is harder than in other areas of social and economic life. Despite these difficulties universities should obtain from the labour market people with exceptional competences, including inborn skills and attitudes, which cannot be learned, or obtained in any way. Meeting these requirements is undoubtedly very hard. It requires looking for such stimuli which at least partially replace material stimuli, stereotypically regarded as crucial on the Polish labour market⁶.

One of the forms of influencing the participants of the external labour market, especially young people, may be forming possibly best image of the university as an attractive employer following values shared by the potential employees⁷. It is necessary to emphasize that up till recently image-building activities used to be pursued by offerors from others branches, who additionally focused above all on forming their image as a producer, or seller⁸, without paying much attention to building their image as an employer. Even though the role of this image for market activities was noticed some time ago, universities still attach comparably little weight to image policy, almost completely neglecting its aspects associated with building and strengthening their image as an employer⁹. Certainly, this is not a proper conduct and one of the key challenges ahead of these entities will be a change of approach in the direction of conducting

complex image-related activities. Anyway, similarly significant negligence as in case of external image can be observed in case of shaping the internal image¹⁰, which may lead to the emergence of unfavourable opinions passed on by current employees to the participants of the external labour market¹¹, contributing to building an unfavourable image of a university in its surroundings¹².

The external image results from, among others, the associations with a particular entity that others have. Thus, universities should try to take active measures aimed at evoking and strengthening possibly best associations with themselves as employers. Identification of the existing associations constitutes the first, necessary step, which should precede activities involving the change of earlier associations, if they are negative, or strengthening them, if they are positive. On this basis it is possible to build a coherent image of the university as an attractive employer for the young segment of potential employees.

Taking into consideration the above deliberations, this article aims at achieving the following research goals:

- 1) Identifying the associations that the respondents have formed with regard to the university as an employer,
- 2) arranging identified associations in a hierarchical order,
- 3) highlighting proposals of actions that universities should take in order to start and conduct complex image-building activities.

In the process of carrying out the above-mentioned goals, the following four research hypotheses were subject to verification:

- H1 — respondents associate universities above all with an employer providing high salaries,
- H2 — respondents associate universities above all with an employer guaranteeing a feeling of stabilization,
- H3 — respondents associate universities above all with an employer guaranteeing social prestige,
- H4 — respondents associate universities above all with an employer providing opportunities for development and self-realization.

Associations of the respondents representing young potential employees with work at a university — research results

Striving to achieve research results and verify the formulated hypotheses, primary research was carried out in the first half of 2016 on the basis of the questionnaire method. The choice of the sample was targeted in character. The survey covered 150 students finishing studies at full-time BA/BSc and MA/MSc courses.

The manner of perceiving a particular entity, or object, including the university as an employer is reflected by the associations with it that the stakeholders form. Considering the subject of this article the aim was to identify associations with work at a university that the respondents representing the participants of the external labour market belonging to the segment of young potential employees have. On the basis of the results of a cognitive-critical analysis of literature on the subject and on the basis of the results of non-structured interviews a collection of 18 associations was prepared. Among them 10 had positive undertones, all other had negative undertones. Each of these associations was supposed to be assessed by the respondents according to Likert's five degree scale, in which 5 means definitely yes, 4 means rather yes, 3 — neither yes, nor no, 2 — rather not, 1 — definitely not.

As table 1 shows, the only association which more than a half of the respondents (77,4%) definitely agreed with (note 5) was the association with the opportunity to share your knowledge with other people. In case of 2 other associations over 30% of people clearly pointed to their existence, where one of them had positive undertones (opportunity for a professional career) and the second had negative undertones (necessity to share your valuable knowledge with other people). At least every fourth respondent definitely agreed with a total of just 4 associations (the fourth one of them was the association with high social prestige). The remaining 14 associations, including 7 positive ones and 7 negative ones received no more than 14% definitely confirming responses each, where less than 10% of people agreed with them clearly and in case of five others no such response was given.

Table 1. Associations of the respondents with university as a workplace (in %)

Assessed associations	Symbol	Definitely yes (note 5)	Rather yes (note 4)	Total of positive responses	Neither yes, nor no (note 3)	Rather not (note 2)	Definitely not (note 1)	Total of negative responses
Very easy and pleasant work	a	3.8	30.2	34.0	28.3	33.9	3.8	37.7
High social prestige	b	26.4	47.2	73.6	17.0	3.8	5.6	9.4
High salaries	c	7.5	43.4	50.9	30.2	15.1	3.8	18.9
Opportunity for a profesional career	d	33.9	45.3	79.2	15.1	3.8	1.9	5.7
Security of employment and professional stabilization	e	13.2	47.2	60.4	32.1	5.6	1.9	7.5
The opportunity to share your knowledge with others	f	77.4	11.3	88.7	7.5	1.9	1.9	3.8
The opportunity to impress others	g	11.3	41.6	52.9	35.8	11.3	0.0	11.3
The opportunity to remain "forever young" thanks to continuous contacts with young people	h	11.3	34.0	45.3	26.4	26.4	1.9	28.3
Amount of free time greater than in other places	i	13.2	28.3	41.5	22.6	32.1	38.0	70.1
Very responsible and hard work, which also brings a lot of satisfaction	j	13.2	47.2	60.4	30.2	9.4	0.0	9.4
Low social prestige	k	0.0	3.8	3.8	24.5	37.7	34.0	71.7
Low salaries	l	0.0	11.3	11.3	26.4	49.1	13.2	62.3
Lack of prospects for professional development	l	0.0	5.6	5.6	11.3	34.0	49.1	83.1
Uncertainty of employment and lack of professional stablization	m	3.8	3.8	7.6	30.2	50.9	11.3	62.2
The necessity to share your precious knowledge with others	n	30.2	45.3	75.5	7.5	15.1	1.9	17.0
Shame of the workplace	o	0.0	1.9	1.9	5.7	22.6	69.8	92.4
Fast exploitation of professional and life energy	p	0.0	7.5	7.5	28.3	51.0	13.2	64.2
Lower amount of free time than in other places	r	7.5	13.2	20.7	20.8	45.3	13.2	58.5

Source: own materials prepared on the basis of the results of conducted surveys.

Comparably smaller percentage of the respondents confirmed the existence of particular associations less strongly (note 4). Among them 9 achieved at least 30%, including 7 with over 40% such assessments. It is

worth adding here that almost all of them had positive undertones. Only 1 association belonged to the group of negative associations and it was the same association which was found among the most commonly mentioned associations that the respondents definitely agreed with. It is also necessary to point out that in case of none of the analysed associations there has been no zero percentage of responses associated with a less clearly confirming opinion.

Taking into consideration the total percentage of the responses confirming the occurrence of a particular association, it is possible to notice that for only 5 associations it was lower than 10% and for 2 it was lower than 5%. It is worth pointing out that every one of them had negative undertones. At the same time for up to 8 associations it exceeded 50%, within this group it was higher than 70% for 4. One of them had negative connotations — this concerns the necessity to share your precious knowledge with other people. Thus, it is apparent that the respondents associated universities as a workplace above all with sharing knowledge, which for them has both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand the biggest share of the respondents recognized that work at a university gives an opportunity to share knowledge and on the other hand more than 3/4 of the surveyed linked it to the necessity to share your knowledge, treating this as an imposed duty.

Comparably, in total the smallest percentage of the respondents associated universities as a workplace with low social prestige and shame related to having such an employer. At the same time, taking into consideration the fact that a high percentage of responses definitely denied the occurrence of both of these associations, it is possible to draw the conclusion that in social awareness the perception of the university as an employer is at least good, or even better than what daily practical experiences of the employees of these organizations themselves suggest. At the same time the association with high social prestige was highlighted by a total of 73,6% of people, that is 69,8% less than associations with low prestige. It is worth adding here that in total over a half of the surveyed linked work at a university with the opportunity to impress other people, which also suggests people see attractive values in work at a university, which allows being positively distinguished from the representatives of other professions.

It is necessary to emphasize that among 8 analysed negative associations in case of only one the total percentage of denying responses was lower than 20%, at the same all others achieved a total of over a half of responses, where 3 of them together received more than 70 & responses each. In other words, the respondents thought that work at a university doesn't evoke associations with shame related to workplace, lack of prospects for professional development and low social prestige.

On the basis of the obtained results it is possible to conclude that the external image of universities as employers is better than their internal image. Thus, there is a lack of image coherence, which has both negative and positive consequences. Absolute image of the university as an employer turns out to be rather good, but its relative image is much worse. What confirms this conclusion is, for example, the fact that most of the respondents (86.8%) didn't take into consideration starting work at a university. Moreover, nobody mentioned universities as the most desirable workplace after graduation.

The analysis of average notes suggests that the most important associations with universities as a workplace were about linking them with the opportunity to share knowledge with other people and the possibility to have a professional career, that is, associations of a positive character. Only in their case average notes exceeded 4.00, where for the first of these two associations the average note was 4.60 (table 2). At the same time for 3 associations the average notes were below 2.00, where in case of one of them the average note didn't even exceed 1.50. This association was shame related to the workplace. Every association with lowest values of average notes had negative undertones.

It is worth noting here that among 10 positive associations two last positions are occupied by linking work at a university with greater amount of free time than in other places and with very easy and pleasant job. The last of the mentioned associations was the only association with positive undertones, for which the value of average note amounted to less than 3.00. At the same time among negative associations the top position was taken by linking work at a university with the necessity to share your precious knowledge, which is the only association with such undertones, whose average note value exceeded 3.00. At the same time At the same time the negative associations with comparably lowest values of average notes were linking work at a university with the lack of professional prospects and with shame of the workplace.

Table 2. Hierarchy of associations with the university as a workplace

Undertone of associations	Assessed associations	Symbol	Average note	Position among all associations	Position among either positive, or negative associations
Positive	Very easy and pleasant job	a	2.96	11	10
	High social prestige	b	3.85	4	3
	High salaries	c	3.36	8	7
	Opportunity to have a professional career	d	4.06	2	2
	Security of employment and professional stabilization	e	3.64	5	4
	Opportunity to share your knowledge with others	f	4.60	1	1
	Opportunity to impress others	g	3.53	7	6
	Possibility to "remain forever young" thanks to continuous contact with young people	h	3.26	9	8
	Greater amount of free time than in other places	i	3.15	10	9
	Very responsible and difficult work, at the same time work bringing a lot of satisfaction	j	3.64	5	4
Negative	Low social prestige	k	1.98	16	6
	Low salaries	l	2.36	14	4
	Lack of prospects for professional development	ł	1.74	17	7
	Insecurity of employment and lack of professional stabilization	m	2.38	13	3
	The necessity to share your precious knowledge with others	n	3.87	3	1
	Shame of the workplace	o	1.39	18	8
	Burning out professional and life energy fast	p	2.30	15	5
	Lower amount of free time than in other places	r	2.57	12	2

Source: own materials prepared on the basis of the results of conducted surveys.

All analysed associations with a university as an employer may be grouped on the basis of the values of average notes. Assuming the following ranges of the values of these notes, it is possible to distinguish the following 5 groups of associations (table 3):

- 1) values 4,00 and higher — group "A" — key associations (2 associations);
- 2) values from 3,50 to 3,99 — group "B" — very important associations (5 associations);

- 3) values from 3,00 to 3,49 — group "C" — important associations (3 associations);
- 4) values from 2,00 to 2,99 — group "D" — associations of medium importance (5 associations);
- 5) values below 2,00 — group "E" — associations of little importance (3 associations).

Table 3. Classification of associations with the university as a workplace

Assessed associations	Symbol	Average note	Position among all associations	Group of associations
Opportunity to share your knowledge with others	f	4.60	1	A (key)
Opportunity to have a professional career	d	4.06	2	
The necessity to share your precious knowledge with others	n	3.87	3	B (very important)
High social prestige	b	3.85	4	
Security of employment and professional stabilization	e	3.64	5	
Very responsible and hard work, but work which brings satisfaction	j	3.64	5	
Opportunity to impress others	g	3.53	7	
High salaries	c	3.36	8	C (important)
Opportunity to "remain forever young" thanks to continuous contacts with young people	h	3.26	9	
Greater amount of free time than in other places	i	3.15	10	
Very easy and pleasant work	a	2.96	11	D (of medium importance)
Lower amount of free time than in other places	r	2.57	12	
Insecurity of employment and the lack of professional stabilization	m	2.38	13	
Low salaries	l	2.36	14	
Burning out professional and life energy fast	p	2.30	15	
Low social prestige	k	1.98	16	E (of little importance)
Lack of prospects for professional development	ł	1.74	17	
Shame of the workplace	o	1.39	18	

Source: own materials prepared on the basis of the results of conducted surveys.

Looking at groups "A", "B" and "C" together for which the values of average notes amounted to at least 3.00, it is worth pointing out that among them there are mainly positive associations. The only exception was

linking work at a university with the necessity to share your precious knowledge. At the same time, within the two remaining groups there were above all negative associations, except for linking work at a university with very easy and friendly work, where the value of its average not was only slightly lower than the assumed threshold value of 3.00.

It is possible to assume that the associations of the respondents with the university as an employer point to needs that could be satisfied thanks to work at this kind of organisation. It is necessary to point out that groups "A" and "B" are formed by associations rather linked to higher levels in Maslow's pyramid, namely the needs for security and self-realization, as well as social and psychological needs. However, comparing the sequence of analysed associations with the hierarchy of needs worked out by A.Maslow, it is possible to notice that associations reflecting the psychological needs placed in comparably more distant positions than associations linked to satisfying social needs and need for security. Taking into consideration the specific character of particular associations and their position in the defined hierarchy, it is possible to conclude that at the current stage of research hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 haven't been confirmed, but hypothesis H4 has been confirmed.

Conclusions

The achieved results confirm the earlier made conclusion that the external image of the university as an employer is rather positive. However, it is necessary to remember that associations reflect the subjective way of perception of a particular entity and do not always comply with the actual state. Taking into consideration the fact that the respondents represented young, potential employees, they couldn't base their opinions on own professional experiences. In vast majority of cases they couldn't take advantage of the experiences of other people either. As the conducted surveys show, among the respondents' friends and family members there were no university employees. Thus, perhaps the image of the university as an employer wouldn't be that good if the survey covered the representatives of current employees. On the one hand, it is certainly optimistic that the

university as an employer is associated with positive aspects of not just a non-measurable, but also measurable character (e.g. high salaries made it to the top of the list of associations in group "C"). On the other hand, the possible confrontation of these associations with the actual state may lead to far-reaching, unfavourable consequences. That's why it is necessary to strive to achieve image coherence by reducing the possible gap between the way potential and current employees regard the university as an employer.

The conducted research is naturally subject to certain limitations associated with, among others, the fact that the research covered only young potential employees representing the Polish labour market. At the same time these limitations define the directions of future research which will cover the representatives of other age groups among the potential employees, current employees and the representatives of both of the above-mentioned labour market segments in other countries. This will allow carrying out a comparative analysis between them and taking into consideration the cultural aspects in the way the university as an employer is perceived.

References

¹ Particularly great challenges faced by service providers in terms of creating such values as employer brand or his reputation is discussed in case of, among others, aviation services, by S.J. Miles and W.G. Mangold (Positioning southwest airlines through employee branding, "Business Horizons" 2005, vol. 48, pp. 535–545) and with regard to gastronomic services A.M. Gould (Working at McDonalds: Some redeeming features of McJobs, "Work, Employment and Society" 2010, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 780–802). However, the role of employer image in the activity of service-providers, especially in case of universities, a very special employer due to their social-cultural-educational mission, hasn't been analysed.

² In literature on the subject usually "employer brand" is discussed. Also, its growing importance on the market is emphasized. It is possible to get the impression that it is incorrectly treated as a replacement of image (or even reputation, or identity — see F. Lievens, J. E. Slaughter, Employer Image and Employer Branding: What We Know and What We Need to Know, "Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior" 2016, vol. 3, iss. 1, pp. 407–440). However, it is necessary to remember that brand and image are not synonyms and image constitutes a composite of various factors including, among others, brand. For example, P. Berthon, M. Ewing and others point out that an employer whose brand is highly valuable is regarded as more attractive than an employer with a lower value brand (see: P. Berthon, M. Ewing, et al., Captivating company: Dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding, "International Journal of Advertising" 2005, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 151–172; V. Franca, M. Pahor, The strength of the employer brand: Influences and implications for recruiting, "Journal of Marketing & Management" 2012, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 78–122). Naturally, a brand influences image, a similar relationship exists in case of image and its value.

³ The mutual relations between employer brand and other non-material attributes are discussed by, among others, K. Backhaus and S. Tikoo (Conceptualizing and researching employer branding, "Career Development International" 2004, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 501–517) and S. Barrow and R. Mosley (The employer brand: Bringing the best of brand management to people at work, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester 2006). Naturally, such relations exist also in case of various subimages of a particular organization and its offer.

⁴ Thus, universities have to pay particular attention to consistent perception of the rules of social responsibility, applying it with regard to all stakeholders, including potential and current employees. In fact, in literature on the subject the concept of sustainable human resource management is discussed (see, among others: S. App, J. Merk, et al., *Employer branding: Sustainable HRM as a competitive advantage in the market for high-quality employees*, "Management Revue" 2012, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 62–278). However, considering the fact that a definitely better alternative making it possible to stand up to the contemporary market challenges is the application of marketing approach, instead of resource approach, we should rather talk of ethical personnel marketing.

⁵ It determines to a major degree the ability to attract and keep the best employees, which to an ever greater extent influences the competitive position of an organization, defining its potential for development (see: C.J. Collins, J. Han, *Exploring applicant pool and quality: The effects of early recruitment practices, strategies, corporate advertising, and firm reputation*, "Personnel Psychology" 2004, vol. 57, pp. 685–717).

⁶ What points to the crucial significance of remuneration in the context of the employees' feelings associated with work are the results of research conducted among Polish employees (M. Hajec, *Czy zarobki decydują o zadowoleniu z pracy?*, <http://wynagrodzenia.pl/artukul/czy-zarobki-decyduja-o-zadowoleniu-z-pracy> (22.06.2016) and among employees in other countries, among others, USA (see: *Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement* 2015, The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), <https://www.shrm.org/Research/SurveyFindings/Documents/2015-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Report.pdf>, (21.06.2016)). It turns out that according to the declarations of most respondents remuneration determined the feeling of satisfaction with work. Moreover, it was a factor highlighted regardless of age, sex, position in organizational hierarchy (except for top management) or national culture represented by the respondents. However, it is necessary to emphasize that for example in 2012 remuneration was third among factors determining the employees' feelings associated with their work satisfaction, which points to clear changes in the hierarchy of their determinants.

⁷ It should be included in the strategy of development of a particular organization, as image-related activities are long-term in character. Within the strategy of development it is necessary to apply multi-channel internal and external communication using diversified forms of reaching the participants of the external labour market, including social media (see: J. Russell, *Web 2.0 technology: How is it impacting your employer brand?*, "Nursing Economics" 2009, vol. 27, no. 5, pp. 335–336; T. Minton-Eversole, *Quality measurement: Key to best-in-class talent acquisition*, "HR Magazine" 2009, no. December, pp. 64–66), whose significance is growing dynamically, especially in case of the segment of young potential employees analysed in this article.

⁸ Perhaps this is one of the reasons for the decrease of value of the indicator of employee engagement seen in Eastern Europe (see: *Trends in Global Employee Engagement — 2016*, Report by Aon Hewitt, <http://www.modernsurvey.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-Trends-in-Global-Employee-Engagement.pdf>, (27.06.2016)). Since 2014 it has dropped by 3% and currently amounts to 62%, where a drop was observed in 13 out of 15 analysed dimensions, which are the basis for calculating this indicator. What is important from the point of view of the subject of this article, among the 13 dimensions where drops were recorded is a dimension associated with company reputation.

⁹ This requires a change of approach and redefining the manner of action. What can help in this respect is achieving favourable attitudes among current employees. Their influence on the course of changes in an organization is discussed, among others, by S. van der Smissen, R. Schalk and C. Freese (*Organizational change and the psychological contract: How change influences the perceived fulfilment of obligations*, "Journal of Organizational Change Management" 2013, vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 1071–1090).

¹⁰ This happens despite the fact that in literature on the subject there are calls for introducing the assumptions of an organization concept favourable for people, which takes into consideration the expectations of employees, as thanks to this also the employer achieves certain benefits (see: A. Bodak, M. Gableta, *Oczekiwania pracowników związane z bezpiecznym funkcjonowaniem w środowisku pracy*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej" 2015, z. 83, p. 45–54). However, it is worth pointing out here that these proposals concern above all companies, even though obviously it would make sense to implement them also in other organizations, including universities. They are to a certain extent convergent with the assumptions of personal marketing (see A. Baruk, *Marketing personalny jako instrument kreowania wizerunku firmy*, Difin, Warszawa 2006). Its implementation leads to the creation of an organization which is friendly towards the employees and other stakeholders.

¹¹ What may be one of the consequences of dysfunction in the area of relations with the current employees is the so-called presenteeism, which means an employee is physically present, but mentally absent (see: B.

Gilbreath, L. Karimi, Supervisor behavior and employee presenteeism, "International Journal of Leadership Studies" 2012, vol. 7, iss. 1, pp. 114–131). Obviously, this doesn't allow the employee to engage in activities supporting his own development and the development of a university and thus reduces the university's attractiveness as an employer.

¹² This suggests current employees are undervalued as sources of image-related messages, despite the fact that in literature on the subject it is emphasized that potential employees get information about employers among others from them (see: R. Wilden, S. Gudergan, Employer branding: Strategic implications for staff recruitment, "Journal of Marketing Management" 2010, vol. 26, no. 1–2, pp. 56–73), not stopping solely at formal image-related messages created by them.

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