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Summary

In the article the problems related to reasons of lack of young potential employees' interest in working in Polish universities were presented. The paper is theoretical-empirical in its nature. In the theoretical part the meaning of estimating the organization as an attractive employer was underlined. It allows to attract the best employees. The special attention was paid to the necessity of building this kind of image by an university in the role of employer. It results from its character. Three research goals were to realize: to identify the reasons of lack of respondents' interest in working in an university, to order identified reasons etc. The following research hypotheses were to verify: H1 — financial aspects are the main reason of lack of interest in working in an university; H2 — prestige aspects are the main reason of lack of interest in working in an university. The data gathered during primary research were analysed using the average value analysis method and factor analysis method. The results showed that the respondents didn't want to work in an university because they preferred applying the knowledge and skills gained during study in the others organizations. The financial and prestige aspects had smaller meaning. In the case of respondents the both research hypotheses weren't confirmed.

Introduction

Attractiveness, or lack of attractiveness are the effect of a subjective assessment of a particular subject. Its features recognized by one person as attractive can be assessed in a completely different way by other people. That's why every participant of the market should take appropriate measures to be perceived in a positive way by a comparably highest number of other entities. This is particularly important in case of establishing, building and strengthening relations between the employer and employees, where this doesn't concern only the employees currently working in an organization, but also people representing the external labour market. When the employees of a particular organization recognize it as an attractive employer[1] it means the organization is treated as an excellent workplace, or at least that it is perceived this way. Thus, in the process of building its image, the organization has to emphasize its own specific, exceptional character[2] and the ability to satisfy the expectations of employees in a better way than other employers[3].

It is necessary to remember that potential employees, especially those who are about to enter the labour market, cannot form their opinions on the basis of own professional experiences. Thus, when they assess a particular entity as an attractive, or unattractive employer, they rely solely on personal[4] and non-personal secondary sources, creating in their consciousness and subconsciousness particular associations with a particular organization as an employer. In turn, the associations, forming a particular image of this organization can encourage, or discourage from starting work at the organization. This way they constitute exceptionally important reasons for starting a relationship with a particular employer, or abandoning the idea to work for the employer.

According to the author, the whole set of reasons taken into consideration by a potential employee during the decision-making process concerning the choice of a workplace can be divided into three following groups:

1) universal reasons — present in case of almost all employers;
2) branch reasons — occurring in case of the employers representing a particular branch;
3) individual reasons — occurring in case of a particular employer.

Due to the specific character of the university as an employer it seems that what plays a particularly important role for the potential employers are the reasons for branch and individual character. It is because the attractiveness of universities is assessed from the perspective of the perception of the sphere of higher education and from the perspective of the characteristics of the work environment created by a particular organization. Taking into consideration the scientific-research-didactic character of work at a university, universities face an exceptionally big challenge[5] in form of the necessity to convince the people with comparably highest intellectual and relational potential to recognize them as an attractive employer.

Obviously, the fact that a university positions itself in this role won't be enough if the positioning doesn't match the work conditions actually created by the university. In order to efficiently position yourself in the awareness of the potential employees and achieve the above-mentioned consistency, it is necessary to identify and analyse the reasons why candidates make the decision to choose a particular workplace, or why there is no interest in a particular employer. Activities from this area should constitute the first stage of the process of marketing management of relations with the potential employees[6]. Mistakes, or omissions made at this stage contribute to the accumulation of irregularities at further stages, which may lead to problems with acquiring appropriate employee candidates.

However, it is worth pointing out that in literature on the subject not much attention is paid to issues associated with personal marketing at universities, including the process of building relations with the potential employees, or building the image of a university as an attractive employer. There are only some individual publications which concern not that much the image of the university as an employer, but the issue of building an employer's brand[7]. Thus, there is a clearly visible knowledge gap and a research gap[8]. Filling these gaps seems necessary, especially under conditions of growing market problems of Polish universities not only in terms of competing for student candidates, but also in terms of competing for the best scientific-didactic and scientific employees.

That's why this article is an attempt to achieve the following research goals:

1) identifying the reasons for the respondents' lack of interest in starting work for a university,
2) hierarchical arrangement of the identified reasons for the lack of interest in the university as an employer,
3) carrying out a comparative analysis of the identified reasons for the lack of respondents' interest in starting work at a university with the associations with this type of organization playing the role of an employer.

In the process of carrying out the above-mentioned tasks the intended goal was to verify the following research hypotheses:

H1 — the main reason for the unwillingness to start work at a university are financial aspects;

H2 — the main reason for the unwillingness to start work at a university are the aspects of prestige.

General characteristics of empirical research

For the purpose of achieving the research goals and verifying the formulated research hypotheses questionnaire surveys were conducted[9] on a sample of 150 students ending studies at first cycle and second cycle full-time programmes, as potential employees[10]. The surveys were direct, they required personal contact between the interviewer and the respondents. The surveys were conducted in 2016. All survey questionnaires were qualified for statistical analysis. In course of the above-mentioned analysis the method of analysis of the average assessment values and the method of factor analysis were used.

Factor analysis was used to reduce the number of factors influencing the investigated category (that is, respondents' associations with the university as an employer) and in order to detect internal, hidden correlations in relations between these variables. For the purpose of distinguishing factors the method of main components was used. The number of common factors was determined by means of the technique of Kaiser's criterion. At the same time, factor rotation was conducted by means of the normalized

varimax method. Within particular factors the variables with the highest factor loadings, in relation to the given factors (> 0,6)[11].

The respondents were presented with 12 statements reflecting the reasons for the lack of will to start work at a university and 18 statements illustrating associations with the university as a potential employer. They were formulated on the basis of the results of cognitive-critical analysis of literature on the subject and on the basis of unstructured interviews. Each of these statements was supposed to be assessed by the respondents according to the five-degree Likert scale, in which 5 means definitely yes, 4 — rather yes, 3 — neither, yes, nor no, 2 — rather not, 1 1- definitely not. The application of this scale is the necessary condition for using the method of analysis of average assessments and the method of factor analysis.

Research results

The conducted surveys suggest that none of the respondents named the university as a place, where he or she would like to work after graduation. At the same time, merely every tenth respondent (13,2%) took into consideration the possibility of starting work at a university. Thus, it is possible to assume that universities are not attractive employers, according to the respondents and that the respondents wouldn't like to attach their professional career to such an employee. Just the opposite is true. For a vast majority of the respondents entities representing other branches are more attractive employers.

This leads to the question what reasons are behind the unwillingness to identify the university as a future employer. Among 12 analysed reasons in case of 3 the percentage of positive answers was lower than 10% and one of them didn't receive any positive response confirming its occurrence (table 1). This reason is low social prestige associated with work at a university. Thus, it is possible to make a preliminary conclusion that hypothesis H2 is not true in case of the surveyed respondents.

Among three reasons that the comparably smallest share of the respondents agreed with there was also being ashamed of your workplace (a total of 4,3% of positive responses) and uncertainty of keeping your job (8,7%). This means that according to the respondents work at the university isn't associated with low social prestige and thus is no reason to feel shame. Thus,

it is possible to conclude, whether the reasons taken into consideration for the choice of a future workplace unequivocally correlate with the respondents' associations with a potential employer. Both variables belonged to the group of associations with the university as a workplace, which had comparably lowest significance[12]. What at the same time confirms this conclusion is the fact that opposing associations (that is, high social prestige and the possibility of impressing others with the fact of working at a university) belonged to the group of very important associations (their average assessments exceeded the value of 3,50). What's more, the variable associated with the feeling of shame due to work at a university received the highest share of negative responses — respondents denied that they agree with this statement — and at the same time the lowest share of indecisive answers among the reasons for not considering universities in their professional career plans.

Table 1. **The reasons for the lack of willingness to start work at a university chosen by the respondents (in %)**

Chosen reasons	Sym-bol	Definitely yes (grade 5)	Rather yes (grade 4)	Total of positive responses	Neither yes, nor no (grade 3)	Rather not (grade 2)	Definitely not (grade 1)	Total of negative responses
Low social prestige	a	0,0	0,0	0,0	26,1	43,5	30,4	73,9
Low salaries	b	2,2	15,2	17,4	8,7	54,3	19,6	73,9
Lack of prospects for professional development	c	2,5	14,9	17,4	8,7	45,6	28,3	73,9
Uncertainty of employment and lack of professional stabilization	d	2,2	6,5	8,7	19,6	50,0	21,7	71,7
The necessity to share your precious knowledge with others	e	2,1	24,0	26,1	19,6	28,1	26,2	54,3
Feeling shame of your workplace	f	0,0	4,3	4,3	6,5	30,4	58,8	89,2
Burning out professional and life energy quickly	g	4,3	19,6	23,9	10,9	50,0	15,2	65,2
Less free time than in case of other employers	h	6,5	15,2	21,7	15,2	43,5	19,6	63,1
Negative general experiences from studies	i	4,3	10,9	15,2	28,3	30,4	26,1	56,5
Negative experiences associated with contacts with lecturers when you were a student	j	4,3	15,4	19,7	25,9	28,1	26,3	54,4
The will to cut all kinds of relations with the university	k	2,5	8,4	10,9	21,7	37,0	30,4	67,4
The will to use the knowledge and skills acquired during studies at work, in a place other than a university	l	54,1	24,1	78,2	6,5	13,2	2,1	15,3

Source: Own materials prepared on the basis of conducted surveys.

Interesting conclusions can be drawn from the factor analysis conducted for the associations with the university as a workplace and with the reasons for the unwillingness to attach yourself to the university as an employer highlighted by the respondents. Even though the results of factor analysis of associations with the university as a future employer allowed distinguishing 6 factors — among them the first one explaining the biggest share of the variability of the set included the variable associated with low social prestige — but this means only that there is a segment of respondents who have clearly negative associations with the university as a workplace (table 2). Probably, it is people who belong to this segment of the respondents, displaying lack of interest in the university as an employer, took into consideration mainly the aspects of prestige.

As table 1 shows, in case of 5 analysed reasons, the total percentage of positive responses was in the 10–20% range. Due to their specific character, they can be allocated to two main areas: associated with the negative experiences of the respondents as students and associated with the negative perception of the possibility of satisfying your professional and financial needs[13] Thus, despite the fact that both variables representing the second area regarded as associations with the university playing the role of an employer made it into the first main component (table 2), this doesn't negate the conclusion about the compatibility of associations with the reasons for the lack of will to start work at a university. It only highlights the existence of a segment of the surveyed, who had unequivocally negative associations with the university as a potential employer. It is worth recalling here that both variables belonged to comparably less important associations that the respondents had. Taking into consideration the comparably small share of people highlighting low salaries as the reason for the lack of will to work at a university, hypothesis H1 cannot be recognized as true for the surveyed people.

Four remaining reasons for the lack of will to attach your professional career to a university received in total more than 20% of positive responses each, where over a half of the surveyed (78,2%) agreed with one of them. This concerns the will to use the knowledge and skills acquired during studies in a workplace other than a university. It is worth pointing out that 54,1% of the respondents definitely confirmed that for them this is the reason for looking for an employer other than a university. This was the only reason for which the value of average assessment exceeded the threshold of 4,00 (table 3).

Table 2. **The results of factor analysis of the associations with the university as a workplace**

Variables	Factors					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Lack of prospects for professional development	**0,876**	–0,052	0,141	0,023	0,023	–0,055
Low salaries	**0,789**	0,115	0,095	–0,170	–0,055	0,290
Uncertainty of employment and the lack of professional stabilization	**0,766**	0,134	0,190	0,221	0,081	0,118
Low social prestige	**0,704**	–0,029	0,240	–0,368	–0,125	–0,210
Opportunity for a professional career	–0,696	0,198	0,224	0,143	–0,171	0,101
Less free time than in other places	–0,006	**0,873**	–0,020	0,122	–0,075	0,072
More free time than in other places	0,113	–0,850	0,017	0,045	0,039	–0,138
Burning out life and professional energy quickly	0,389	0,514	0,076	–0,326	–0,069	–0,202
Certainty of employment and professional stabilization	0,003	–0,073	**0,853**	–0,032	0,065	–0,021
Being ashamed of your workplace	0,329	0,069	**0,844**	–0,084	–0,055	–0,059
Very easy and nice work	–0,073	0,051	0,077	–0,706	–0,005	0,053
High social prestige	–0,458	0,084	–0,034	**0,645**	0,138	0,056
The possibility of impressing others	–0,116	–0,294	0,077	0,035	**0,776**	0,058
The possibility of sharing your knowledge with others	–0,021	0,307	–0,104	0,209	*0,651*	–0,037
The possibility of staying "forever young" thanks to regular contacts with young people	–0,257	0,143	–0,049	0,209	–0,499	–0,086
The necessity to share your precious knowledge with other people	0,050	–0,043	–0,025	–0,216	0,016	*0,788*
High salaries	0,039	0,164	–0,078	0,178	0,141	0,518
Very responsible, hard work, which at the same time brings a lot of satisfaction	–0,135	0,034	0,079	0,436	–0,194	0,462

Source: Own materials prepared on the basis of the results of conducted research and of A. Baruk, A. Goliszek, (2017). Zewnętrzny wizerunek uczelni w roli pracodawcy jako podstawa segmentacji młodych potencjalnych pracowników. *Marketing Instytucji Naukowych i Badawczych*, vol. 23, iss. 1, pp. 79–96.

Table 3. **Average assessments of the reasons for unwillingness to start work at a university**

Chosen reason	Symbol	Average assessment	Position
Low social prestige	a	1,96	11
Low salaries	b	2,26	7
Lack of prospects for professional development	c	2,18	8
Job insecurity and lack of professional stabilization	d	2,17	9
The necessity to share your precious knowledge with others	e	2,47	3
Being ashamed of your workplace	f	1,56	12
Burning out your professional and life energy	g	2,48	2
Less free time than in case of other employers	h	2,46	4
Negative general impressions from studies	i	2,37	6
Negative experiences associated with your (as a student) contacts with lecturers	j	2,43	5
The desire to cut all ties with the university	k	2,16	10
The will to use knowledge and skills gained during studies in a workplace other than a university	l	4,15	1

Source: own materials prepared on the basis of conducted research.

Taking into consideration the values of average assessments, all analysed reasons for not considering the university as a workplace can be divided into 4 groups. Adopting arbitrarily the following bands of the values of these assessments, it is possible to distinguish the following groups of reasons (table 4):

Table 4. **Classification of the reasons for unwillingness to start work at a university**

Chosen reason	Average assessment	Position	Group of reasons
The will to use the knowledge gained during studies for work in a place other than a university	4,15	1	
Burning out professional and life energy quickly	2,48	2	B (important)
The necessity to share your precious knowledge with others	2,47	3	
Less free time than in case of other employers	2,46	4	
Negative experiences associated with your (as a student) contacts with lecturers	2,43	5	
Negative general experiences from studies	2,37	6	
Low salaries	2,26	7	
Lack of prospects for professional development	2,18	8	C (moderately important)
Job insecurity and the lack of professional stabilization	2,17	9	
The will to cut all ties with the university	2,16	10	
Low social prestige	1,96	11	D (of little significance)
Being ashamed of your workplace	1,56	12	

Source: Own materials prepared on the basis of conducted research.

1) group "A" — key reasons — values of average assessments amounting to at least 4,00 (1 reason);
2) group "B" — important reasons — values of average assessments amounting to 2,20 to 3,99 (6 reasons);
3) group "C" — reasons of moderate significance — values of average assessments amounting to 2,00 to 2,19 (3 reasons);
4) group "D" — reasons of low significance — values of average assessments amounting to less than 2,00 (2 reasons).

It is worth pointing out that between group "A" and group "B" there is a big difference of values. It is because none of the analysed reasons achieved an average assessment fitting in the range from 2,50 to 4,00. Moreover, it is noteworthy that these are reasons of individual and

branch character, which confirms the assumption included in the introduction that in case of universities it is these reasons that play a relatively greater role than the universal reasons.

Conclusions drawn from the analysis of the respondents' answers, shown in percentages, are confirmed by the hierarchy of reasons developed on the basis of the values of average assessments[14] (table 4). It is possible to conclude that the surveyed respondents looking for a future employer, without taking universities into consideration, had in mind above all the need to test their knowledge and skills in a different environment. To a lesser extent they were afraid of reducing their professional potential due to burning out, treating the duty to share their knowledge with other people as a threat to their professional position. The above-mentioned reasons occupy the top 3 positions (table 4), even though in case of the first one of them the value of average assessment was much higher than in case of the further two reasons.

Summary

On the basis of the above deliberations it is possible to say that the respondents declaring that they are not interested in starting work at a university to a comparably small degree took into consideration the aspects of finances, or prestige. Thus, it is possible to make a preliminary statement that both research hypotheses haven't been confirmed with regard to the respondents. Obviously, it is also necessary to remember that this requires verification through the application of the methods of statistical testing, which defines the direction of further research.

The basic reason why the respondents wanted to look for work among entities representing other branches was the desire to stand up to new challenges and test the knowledge and skills gained during studies in a different environment.

However, we cannot forget that in case of a certain group of respondents the reason for their unwillingness to start work at a university were negative experiences from studies. Thus, already at the stage of building relations with students universities should regard them as potential employees, focusing on the most talented students, mentoring them,

according to the assumptions of the talent management concept. The awareness of the reasons for the lack of interest in work at a university among the potential employees is an important hint for this group of entities. Universities, due to their specific character, should attract and keep the most talented people, which is certainly hard, but not impossible. However, this requires applying a marketing approach both to potential and current employees, especially regarding them as co-creators of a university's success as an organization, which determines the individual success of each of them.

References

[1] Various aspects of employers' attractiveness are discussed by, among others, A. Sivertzen, E.R. Nilsen, A.H. Olafsen, Employer Branding: Employer Attractiveness and the Use of Social Media, "Journal of Product & Brand Management" 2013, vol. 22, no. 7, pp. 473–483; S.S. Pingle, H.K. Sodhi, What Makes an Attractive Employer: Significant Factors from Employee Perspective?, "A Journal of IES College and Research Centre" 2011, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 18–25; I. Bakanauskiene, L. Žalpyte, J. Vaikasiene, Employer's Attractiveness: Employees' Expectations vs. Reality in Lithuania, "Human Resources Management and Ergonomics" 2014, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 6–20. However, they don't analyse the issue of attractiveness of a university as an employer.

[2] As the reports titled "Hewitt's Global Best Employers Study", the uniqueness of organizational culture, along with inspiring leadership, focus on the development of talents and perfecting practices from the area of HR, for years has been the trait of best employers (see: http://www.aon.com/human-capital-consulting/thought-leadership/talent/2016-Trends-in-Global-Employee-Engagement.jsp, (accessed on 11.07.2017)).

[3] This concerns, among others, satisfying expectations associated with the professional development of an employee. The key element in this professional development is help in discovering the talent of a particular person, looking after it and developing it. This requires complex implementation of activities from the area of talent management, as discussed by, among others, T. Jiang, P. Iles, Employer-brand Equity, Organizational Attractiveness and Talent Management in the Zhejiang Private Sector China, "Journal of Technology Management in China" 2011, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 97–110.

[4] Personal sources are of particular significance, as among them there are people from the direct environment of a potential employee, people he or she trusts the most. An oral message from a friend, or a family member is certainly more credible than the messages coming from other sources. Such a message may be the basis for the positive image of a particular organization (see: J.F. Uen, S. Peng, S. Chen, S. Chien, The Impact of Word of Mouth on Organizational Attractiveness, "Journal of Applied Social Psychology" 2009, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 239–253) or its partial images, including its image as an employer.

[5] Standing up to this challenge requires displaying a high level of innovativeness, which as a rule should be a feature of universities. Innovativeness constitutes the necessary condition for attracting and keeping the best employees, as discussed by, among others, J.C. Meister, K. Willyerd, The 2020 Workplace: How Innovative Companies Attract, Develop, and Keep Tomorrow's Employees Today, Harper Business, New York 2010.

[6] These activities should be individual in character (see. C. Dahlström, Matchmaking Employers with Employees: The Era of Personality Targeting, "Journal of Corporate Recruiting Leadership" 2011, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 10–12), considering as much as possible the expectations and needs of a particular person, which fits in a modern approach to marketing highlighting its micro-segmentation and holistic character.

[7] One of few publications from Polish authors is the work of K. Wojtaszczyk, Employer branding po polsku na przykładzie uczelni wyższych, "E-mentor" 2008, nr 3 (25), http://www.e-mentor.edu.pl/artykul/index/numer/25/id/547 (accessed on 12.12.2016). As can be seen, the title of the work itself suggests that the author deals with brand, rather

than image. Moreover, the text mentions employees working at a university as the recipients of image-related activities (references to external marketing) and not potential employees representing the external labour market.

[8] Apart from the research conducted by A. Baruk, one of the isolated attempts of Polish researchers to conduct empirical research on the image of the university as an employer is the research conducted in 2016 under the title "Badanie wizerunku uczelni wyższych jako dobrego pracodawcy" (Investigating the image of universities as a good employer). However, it was conducted only on a sample of the employees of technical universities. (https://www.pw.edu.pl/content/download/25310/147135/file/BADANIE%20WIZERUNKU%20UCZELNI%20WY%C5%BBSZYCH%20pracownicy.docx, (accessed on 12.12. 2016). Thus, it concerned solely the external image of a particular group of universities and didn't cover the external labour market.

[9] They were preceded by unstructured interviews conducted on a sample of 50 people.

[10] Non-random choice of the sample was applied.

[11] See. H. Abdi, L.J. Williams, Principal component analysis, "Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Computational Statistics" 2010, vol. 2, iss. 4, pp 433–459.

[12] Associations with the university as a future employer were analyzed in detail in the article by A. Baruk, Postrzeganie uczelni jako pracodawcy przez młodych potencjalnych pracowników, "Marketing Instytucji Naukowych i Badawczych" 2016, nr 3.

[13] In 2016 the median salary in higher education was PLN3,800 (http://wynagrodzenia.pl/artykul/wynagrodzenia-w-nauce-i-szkolnictwie-w-2016-roku, (11.07.2017)), which means that compared to other branches it was rather low. However, as the research results suggest, this wasn't the key variable discouraging from starting work at a university. Among 12 branches analysed by Sedlak&Sedlak in case of companies with dominant Polish capital (including Polish universities) in most of them the salaries were substantially higher. (http://wynagrodzenia.pl/artykul/wynagrodzenia-w-firmach-polskich-i-zagranicznych-w-2016-roku, (11.07.2017)).

[14] Moreover, it is worth pointing out that the identified hierarchy of the reasons for the respondents' lack of interest in work at a university at the same time reflects the incentives that would attract them to such an employer. These are not financial aspects. This matches the trend present in other countries, in case of other branches (see: A.B. Thompson, The Intangible Things Employees Want from Employers, "Harvard Business Review" 2015, 03 December, https://hbr.org/2015/12/the-intangible-things-employees-want-from-employers, (accessed: 11.07.2017)). As the research conducted there shows, employees expect the employers to take actions going beyond satisfying their individual needs. They want them to implement ventures serving the whole community, the natural environment etc., relying in its relations with employees and other entities on trust, responsibility and empathy, that is, non-material values.

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8. http://www.aon.com/human-capital-consulting/thought-leadership/talent/2016-Trends-in-Global-Employee-Engagement.jsp, (accessed on: 11.07.2017).
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