



MEASUREMENT OF EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS IN THE
CHINESE CONTEXT: AN UPDATED ANALYSIS OF
STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The increasing intensity of international competition among organizations and the elevation of the level of expertise of fresh graduates put employer branding at the heart of today's preoccupations. The war for talents is real and organizations around the world are looking for the best assets beyond the borders of their own countries. Understand the dimensions and criteria that appeal to possible candidates is an undeniable advantage. This study investigates the dimensions of employer attractiveness that are relevant to Chinese candidates by re-using the model developed by Zhu et al. (2014) and assesses the impact of the gender on the perception of this employer attractiveness. A quantitative study has been used to harvest the results of 121 respondents at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu, China. Significant differences have been found for three of the five dimensions, indicating on a general level, that females rated significantly higher than males the three dimensions. These results are then further discussed and interpreted via a theoretical and a managerial approach.

JEL Classification: M31, O15

Keywords: Employer Brand, Employer attractiveness, Chinese Context, Gender, Dimensionality

Abstrato:

O aumento da competitividade entre organizações a nível internacional acompanhado pelo incremento do nível de qualificações dos recém graduados, torna o *employer branding* no centro das atenções da atualidade. A chamada “guerra” por talentos é uma realidade e as organizações em todo o mundo procuram os melhores talentos dentro das suas próprias fronteiras. Entender as dimensões e critérios que levam a um crescimento da atratividade da organização para possíveis candidatos é, sem dúvida, uma vantagem. O presente estudo investiga as diferentes dimensões da atratividade dos empregadores que são relevantes para os recém graduados na China através da reutilização do modelo desenvolvido por Zhu et al. (2014) e pela medição do impacto do género na percepção da atratividade das organizações. Este estudo quantitativo foi realizado com base em 121 respostas de estudantes da *Southwestern University of Finance and Economics* em Chengdu, China. Diferenças significantes foram encontradas em três de cinco dimensões, indicando a um nível geral, que a população feminina atribuiu classificações significativamente superiores que o sexo masculino nas 3 dimensões mencionadas. Estes resultados são discutidos posteriormente e interpretados através de uma abordagem teórica, bem como, uma perspectiva de gestão

Classificação JEL: M31, O15

Palavras-chave: Marca do Empregador, Atratividade do Empregador, Contexto Chinês, Género, Dimensionalidade

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1. Introduction

The emerging interest on the general topic of employer branding is mainly due to empirical evidences sustaining its necessity for organization all over the world. The foundation of the employer branding concept might be attributed to the American literature, with the first definition provided by the equally famous Ambler & Barrow (1996) in the field of employer branding : “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company”, but the expansion of the effect and efficiency of employer branding has been studied around diverse cultures and nationalities. This intrinsic concept can be beneficial to any organization, independently from the culture of origin. Yet, if we look at the number of research related to the general topic of employer branding, the clear majority come from the Anglo-Saxons literature.

This study aims to fill this gap, by investigating one specific aspect of the employer branding concept in China: employer attractiveness. Closely linked with the concept of employer branding, it is defined by the literature as “the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization” (Berthon, Ewing, & Hah, 2005). The literature related to this topic in China is still scarce and needs more understanding and analysis to grasp all the ins and outs associated with the practice of employer branding in China. This need to complete the literature can be explained quite simply since the benefits that a potential employee perceives vary across cultures and nationalities. A study made by Zhu et al. (2014) has already identified five dimensionalities that are salient to the Chinese culture regarding employer attractiveness. This study, which can be qualified as an ethnographic study, deepens this topic by investigated the effect of the gender on the perception of employer attractiveness among graduate students in the University of Southwestern University of Finance and Economics based in Chengdu, China. In the Human Resources field,

gender has been tremendously studied and is highly recognized as an important factor of differentiation. However, there is still a lack of study on the effect of the gender on the perception of employer attractiveness in China.

The central research question here is to find if there are significant differences in perception between male and female graduate students regarding the five dimensionalities previously established by Zhu et al, (2014). In order to examine these precise parameters, our hypotheses will test the moderating effect of gender on the five dimensions scale via the use of a quantitative study.

The rest of our dissertation is organized as follows. In the first place, we will review the existent literature on the topics related to employer branding and all the terms that deserve an explanation. Secondly, we draw our model and present the hypotheses associated with it. Thirdly, we describe the methodology employed and the results. Finally, in our last section, we discuss the findings, debate on the theoretical and managerial implications, present the limitations and future recommendations and draw a short conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview, Concept and history of Employer Branding

Employer Branding has gained a growing interest among organizations but also within the sphere of the research area. This relatively new field is de facto an integrative part of the strategic level of an organization, hypothetically equally sustained by both Human Resource and Marketing department (Edwards, 2009). In reality, despite being already present in a large part of international organizations, this function is mainly endorsed by the Human Resource department in many cases. The place of this field will be further investigated in this section and in section 2.3.

Following the norm, being a new field equally results in being understudied by the literature. Nevertheless, this field has been characterized by a surge regarding the number of publications in the last ten to fifteen years. Some authors such as Ambler & Barrow (1996); Backhaus & Tikoo (2004); Christiaan (2013); Edwards (2009); Sutherland, Torricelli, & Karg (2002) are largely viewed as pioneers or main contributors to the employer branding literature due to the influence and contribution made.

Management gurus and authors, Ambler & Barrow (1996) seem to be the first to evoke the term employer branding in their paper work entitled: "The employer Brand" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996) and provide us the definition of the concept. By finding its roots and using the work of Ambler (1992); Feldwick (1996); Gardner & Sidney J. Levy (1955); King (1991); Kosnik (1991); Kotler (1991); Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong (1996) as frameworks, they were able to adapt their marketing concepts regarding the relation the customers have toward a brand and apply it to employers and came up with the following definition of employer branding: "the package of functional,

economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, p.187).

A more recent definition, given by Backhaus & Tikoo (2004), defines employer branding as “the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity, and the employer brand as a concept of the firm that differentiates it from its competitors.” Additionally, they claimed that the “employer branding concept can be especially valuable in the search of an organizing framework for strategic human resource management”.

According to Branham (2000), employer branding is “applying traditional marketing principles to achieving the status of Employer of Choice [...], the process of placing an image of being a great place to work in the mind of the targeted candidate pool.” The literature usually refers to this term of “image” by either using the concept of employer attractiveness or employer image.

Additionally, this denomination of employer of choice is also described with accuracy by Sutherland et al. (2002) as “[...] those organizations that outperform their competition to attract, develop, and retain people with business-required talent. [...] An employer of choice is therefore an organization whose top talent aspires to work for thanks to its reputation and employer brand message, both of which are tailored to appeal to the target audience.”

The primarily functions of the establishment of an Employer Branding strategy are talents’ attraction and employee retention. The other goals that also deserve this strategy are, namely, to manage and reduce the cost associated with the hiring process, increase employees’ satisfaction and obtain an above-average return on investment and

profitability¹ (Ambler & Barrow, 2005). The benefits related to employer branding has also been extensively studied by the literature; Kucherov & Zavyalova (2012) found evidences that the implementation of an employer branding strategy within an organization brings economic advantages “due to the lower rates of staff turnover and higher rates of HR investments in training and development activities of employees”, organizational advantages “due to establishing a positive image both in the internal and external labour market” (Kucherov & Zavyalova, 2012, p. 102). Furthermore, Heilmann et al., (2013) found out that it can reduce the recruitment time, make it more flexible and get top applicants while reducing the overall recruitment cost. They also underline the fact that the improvement of the employer image² directly leads to a significant increased into the recruitment process and most importantly to a higher job satisfaction.

Finally, as told earlier, the concept of employer branding belongs, equally, to the Marketing and Human Resource management dimension; thus, it should be simultaneously endorsed by both departments in an organization. However, in reality, the role of employer branding is often delegated to the Human resource department. Human Resource management is generally classified according to three levels within a company: Strategic, Tactical and Operational (Garibaldi, 2007). Employer branding is part of a bigger picture: an integrative part of the strategic management process. Therefore, it should be classified as strategic human resource management (Christiaans, 2013a), which encompasses the process to design the human resource strategy for the entire organization and allocate rationally its resources to pursue this strategy. A distinction needs also to be made regarding the concepts of personnel marketing and employer branding, quite often used in the wrong context. Antagonistically to employer branding, personnel marketing echoes to the tactical level of an organization, with the

¹ A parallel can be clearly made with the Resource-based view model established by Barney (1991), whom the Human Resource department of an organization can apply the principles via the implementation of an employer branding strategy.

² As previously mentioned, employer image or employer attractiveness will further develop in the next chapter.

for instance, the implementation of general measures to keep a high motivation among the current employees while attracting new ones. These thoughts are summarized under the Figure 1.

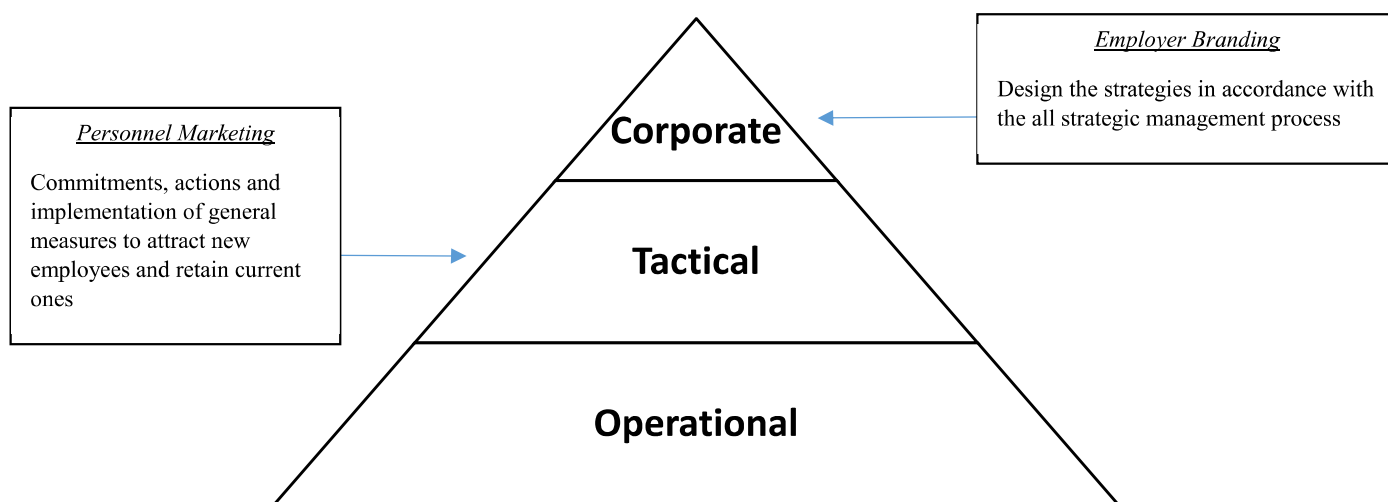


Figure 1: Distinction between Employer branding and Personnel Marketing concepts in the marketing strategic management process

Finally, mentioning the strategic management process previously involves redefining it quickly to fully grasp the whys and wherefores of employer branding. The strategic management process is largely viewed as a rational approach firms use to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above-average returns. It is divided between three distinct levels of strategies : the corporate-level strategy, that specifies actions a firm takes to gain a competitive advantage by selecting and managing a group of different businesses (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2012) and helps the organization to select new strategic positions expected to increase the firm's value (Chari, Devaraj, & David, 2008); the business-level strategy, is an integrated and coordinated set of commitments and actions the firm uses to gain a competitive advantage by exploiting core competencies in a specific product market (Goll, Brown Johnson, & Rasheed, 2008); the operational-level strategy has the task to improve the operation level of an

organization via different methods : marketing , manufacturing, human resources... if we take, for example, the product development, it means that the company has developed a particular strategy for selling its goods and services to customers. Employer branding as part of this strategic management process, implies the same consequences as the overall process ; Luo, (2008) and Reynolds, Schultz, & Hekman (2006) emphasize the fact that an important part of the strategic management process decisions have ethical dimensions due to the interactions an organization have with its stakeholders. Because these ethical dimensions are the results of an organization's decisions, they are a product of the core values that are shared by a vast majority of an organization's members.³ These intrinsic decisions regarding ethics, part of the strategic management process (and by consequence, also the employer branding process), affect capital market, product market and organizational stakeholders (Pastoriza, Ariño, & Ricart, 2008). Applied to employer branding, these decisions are likely to affect employer image for possible candidates and current employees. Subsequently, decisions makers failing to recognize these realities accept the risk of placing their organization at a competitive disadvantage with regard to ethical business practices (Heineman, 2007).

2.2. Definition and application of employer attractiveness

As explained before, the term of employer attractiveness is also referred in the literature as employer image. The literature describes it as “the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization”(Berthon et al., 2005) ; in addition Christiaans (2013) supplements this definition by adding that employer attractiveness is subsequently adapted from the more general concept of employer brand equity. Therefore, this designation is largely based on the concept of customer-based brand

³ In this case, we are talking about all the members of the organizations from the top-management and CEO boards to the new employees. All the employees inside an organization are the ambassadors of its ethic to the eyes of the outside world.

equity, which is defined by Aaker (1991) as “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers.”; and this employer branding is determined by five main factors: Brand awareness, Brand recognition, Brand trial, Brand preference, Brand loyalty. As one can easily imagine, a parallel between employer attractiveness and brand equity can be easily made, and the five factors can be used in an employer context; a study led by Collins & Stevens (2002) confirmed this adaptation of the customer-based brand equity concept to the recruitment process. Generally speaking, Christiaans (2013) stipulates that the concept of employer attractiveness relates to the concept of organizational attractiveness and candidates place their judgments of an employer according to it. Indeed Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart (1991) showed that the initial applications decisions heavily rely on the general impressions of organizational attractiveness, due to the reality that most of the applicants do not possess enough knowledge and information about an organization in the first step of their own decisions process. Ultimately, as Christiaans (2013) mentioned, this topic of organizational attractiveness has been extensively studied under different angles such as applied psychology (Collins & Stevens, 2002; Jurgensen, 1978), vocational behavior (Soutar & Clarke, 1983), management (Gatewood, Gowan, & Lautenschlager, 1993), marketing (Ambler, 2008; Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy, & Berthon, 2002; Gilly & Wolfinbarger, 1998) and communication (Bergstrom, Blumenthal, & Crothers, 2002). To supplement these studies, Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) demonstrated that the employer image is directly affected by the employer brand associations and that the relation between employer brand association and employer attractiveness is mediated by the concept of employer image.

In his work, Christiaans (2013), raised an interesting question, namely which framework should we refer to in order to describe the employer attractiveness attributes and brand associations. Fortunately, as the author mentioned, most of the literature related to employer branding address this issue by using the instrumental-symbolic

framework (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003; Lievens, Van Hoye, & Anseel, 2007; Martin & Hetrick, 2013) created by Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis (1986). The latest ones divided the consumer needs regarding a brand according to three categories: functional needs, symbolic needs and experiential needs. In his paperwork, Christiaans, (2013) acknowledges that the literature uses interchangeably the term of instrumental attributes, functional attributes (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Park et al., 1986) or objective factors (Behling, Labovitz, & Kosmo, 1968). In a similar vein, symbolic attributes are also referred as emotional attributes (Sponheuer, 2009), psychological benefits (Ambler & Barrow, 1996) or subjective factors (Behling et al., 1968). To simplify our thoughts, we will use the formulation conform to the employer brand literature: instrumental and symbolic. On the one hand from the marketing perspective, instrumental or functional needs refer directly to the objective, tangible and physical attributes of a product; on the other hand, symbolic benefits relate to a more subjective aspect, abstract and intangible attributes and are intimately close to the need for oneself to claim his identity or improve his self-image (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 1999; Aaker, 1997; Katz, 1960; Shavitt, 1990; Solomon, 1983). Finally, the experiential aspect has been identified by Lievens et al. (2007) as the brand's effect on sensory satisfaction or cognitive stimulation. In the sense of internal values and customer personalities in developing a brand loyalty, it has been showed that experiential aspects change according to how customers view the brand's role in their lifestyle (Schultz & Ervolder, 1998). Additionally the experiential aspects also affect the perception of the instrumental and symbolic attributes (Kempf & Smith, 1998). However, the transition to the employer brand context for the experiential aspect has still not been established due to the fact that translating a product perspective to the employment and organizational context does not fit well. On the contrary the instrumental-symbolic needs have been adapted with success to the employer brand context(Christiaans,2013). From an employer branding perspective, instrumental needs refer to concrete attributes of an organization or a job such as salary or leaves

allowances and symbolic needs encompass abstract or intangible aspects of an organization or a job such as the reputation of a firm (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Highhouse et al., 2003).

The all idea is to enhance the positive image and attractiveness of an organization; and to do so, the organization should generate a unique employer value proposition (EVP), which is defined as “a human resource management policy influenced very much by marketing thinking that cuts across the whole of the employment experience and applies to all individuals in the organization. It is the application of a customer value proposition”, and it represents “The holistic sum of everything people experience and receive while they are a part of a company - everything from intrinsic satisfaction at work, to the environment, leadership, colleagues, compensations and more. It is about how well a company fulfills people's needs, their expectations, and even their dreams “ (Sparrow, Cooper, & Jones, 2012). The EVP matches simultaneously the instrumental-symbolic needs by providing respectively employment advantages, benefits and key organization values (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Edwards, 2010; Knox, Maklan, & Thompson, 2000). To conclude this chapter, Christiaans (2013) summarized in table 1, the principal terms and definitions explained in this section, brilliantly explaining their interrelations.

Table 1: Terms and definitions. Note. Retrieved from: *International employer brand management: A multilevel analysis and segmentation of students' preferences* by L. Christiaans.

Term	Definition	Context/Relations
Employer brand	Package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company (Ambler & Barrow, 1996)	Final outcome of all brand-related activities
Employer branding	All decisions concerning the planning, creation, management and controlling of employer brands and the corresponding activities to positively influence the employer preferences of the desired target groups (Petkovic, 2007); Process of placing an image of being a great place to work in the mind of the targeted candidate pool (Branham, 2000)	Process to reach the desired outcome of being an attractive employer
Employer brand equity	Set of employment brand assets and liabilities linked to an employment brand, its name and symbol that add up (or subtract from) the value provided by an organization to that organization's employees (Ewing et al., 2002)	Influences the likelihood that a given employer will be chosen over a competitor due to its unique, favorable employer image that is conveyed through the employer brand; brand equity generates positive affect towards the branded organizations
Employer image	Potential applicants' attitudes and perceived attributes about the job or organization (Collins & Stevens, 2002)	Associations towards the employing company that are conveyed through its employer brand, which can be further specified by means of instrumental and symbolic image facets/ attributes; unlike attractiveness attributes, image facets do not necessarily have to reflect favorable associations
Employer attractiveness	Envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization (Berthon et al., 2005)	Antecedent of employer brand equity; influenced by employer image; the envisioned benefits can be conceptualized, just as employer image attributes, through instrumental and symbolic features, which have to convey favorable associations in order to contribute to attractiveness
Employer value proposition	Application of a customer value proposition – why should you buy my product or service – to the individual – why should a highly talented person work in my organization? It differs from one organization to another, has to be as distinctive as a fingerprint, and is tailored to the specific type of people the organization is trying to attract and retain (Sparrow et al., 2012)	Aims at inducing positive brand associations and hence a favorable employer image; encompasses the most important employment benefits (instrumental attributes) as well as key organizational values (symbolic attributes), which reflect the organization's identity

2.3. The integration of employer branding in corporate brand management

The creation of an employer branding strategy is located at the corporate level of an organization. The brand architecture of an organization differs from one author to the other but it is widely accepted that it is separated in three brand levels: corporate brands, strategic business and operational (Keller, 2013; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2009). The corporate brand was defined in the previous chapter as “specific actions a firm take to gain a competitive advantage by selecting and managing a group of different businesses and help the organization to select new strategic position expected to increase the firm’s value” (Hitt et al., 2012). This being said, the literature considers employer branding as a distinctive part of the corporate brand management justifying that the target in the labor market views the organization as the branded object (Ewing et al., 2002; Petkovic, 2007; Sponheuer, 2009). Grobe (2008) has designed a model addressing the primary target groups of corporate brand management, presented in the figure 2.

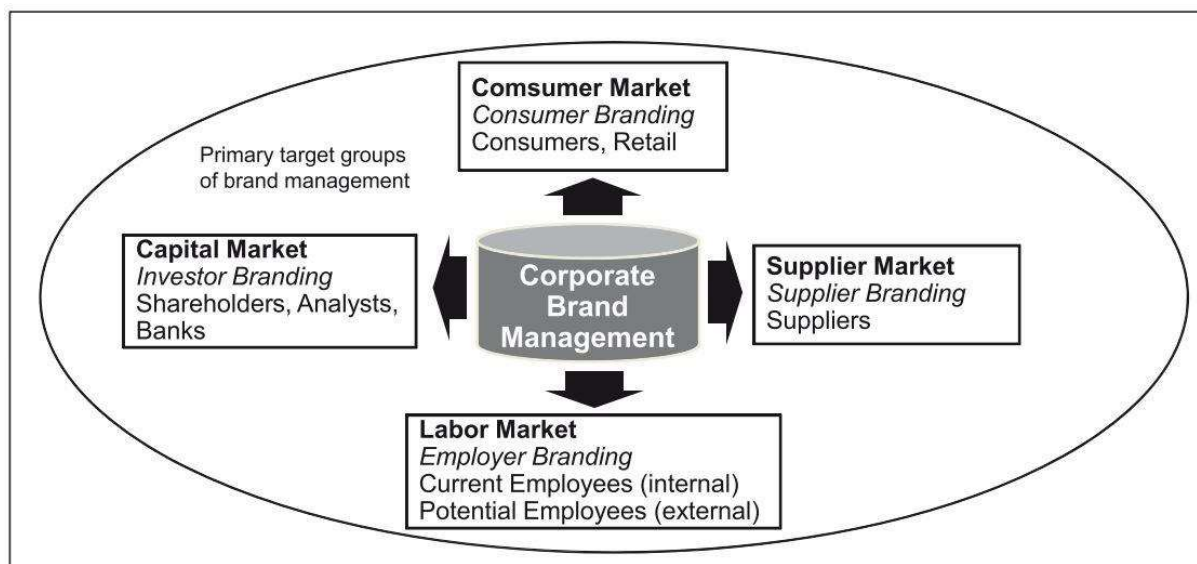


Figure 2: Primary Target Groups of Corporate Brand Management. Note. Retrieved and: Adapted from Grobe, 2008, p. 127

One singularity of the employer brand role, in the corporate branding, is the implicit requirement to consider all stakeholder groups to implement it. Indeed, the synergy between the employer brand and other corporate market should be respected; the conflicted challenge employer brand is exposed to lies in its duality of interest, it should be created and implemented in order to answer the specific needs of the target labor group but also being aligned with the overall corporate brand strategy and the consumer brand with the aim to be consistent in its brand image (Sponheuer, 2009). The reasoning behind this duality can be clearly explained: a potential candidate or a current one, can also be a customer and base their judgement about the whole organization either according to the customer brand or the employer branding; an inconsistent alignment can alter the perception of an organization. Therefore, targeting only employees is impossible, especially in the context of high technology access we are exposed to nowadays (Ewing et al., 2002). Grobe (2008), in his work, highlights the fact that all employees can also be members of other stakeholder groups of an organization at the same time. The goal of an effective employer branding policy goes hand in hand with the whole identity of an organization and serves as a basis to extract inputs for the strategic and operative implementation of the employer brand (Grobe, 2008; Schultz & Hatch, 2005; Sponheuer, 2009).

Patterned after the existing relation between employer branding and corporate branding, the concept of employer image and corporate image is also interrelated (Petkovic, 2007). Additionally, a distinction should be made between employer image and employer reputation, the last being briefly discussed in the previous chapter. (cf. ref. Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Highhouse et al., 2003; Sutherland et al., 2002). The literature has been describing it as “[...] a perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects that describes the firm’s overall appeal to all of its key constituents when compared with leading rivals” (Grund & Fombrun, 1996). Corporate reputation is constantly assessed by different groups of stakeholders (cf. Figure 2) via the employment of diverse criteria (Flatt & Kowalczyk, 2008). The main difference with

employer image is that, reputation can be altered positively or negatively according to the company's performances over a long period of time, which is opposed to a faster fluctuation of the image via the use of communication programs (Gray & Balmer, 1998). Although, it is interesting to note that, like most of the notions inherent to employer branding, both concepts are interdependent (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). The main factors associated with a positive perception of the reputation of an organization are being exhaustively listed by the literature as profitability (Cable & Graham, 2000; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988; Preston & O'Bannon, 1997; Turban & Greening, 1996), community and employee relations, environmental policies, product quality, and treatment of social minorities (Turban & Greening, 1996), reinforced by two supplementary ones: the degree of familiarity with the organization and the external rating of corporate reputation (Cable & Graham, 2000). To conclude this topic on a more practical note, authors Collins & Han (2004) and Collins & Stevens (2002) found that the coupling of general corporate advertising and recruitment advertising might be beneficial to the improvement of employer attractiveness.

2.4. Objectives of Employer Branding

The literature provides a concrete definition of the objectives of employer branding, and defines it as "the development and implementation of a definite and favorable profile as an employer, which induces current, future, and former employees to develop preferences towards the given employer" (Sponheuer, 2009). The targets can thus be classified in three distinct groups: current, future and former employees. Correspondingly to this classification, human resources and more precisely employer branding fit to the professional life cycle of an employee and can be resumed under the practice of acquisition and placement, development, motivation, and dispensation. Employer branding has the double function to answer the needs of an organization but also the needs of employees. Krauss (2002) summarized this antagonist perception under a model (cf. Figure 3 below).

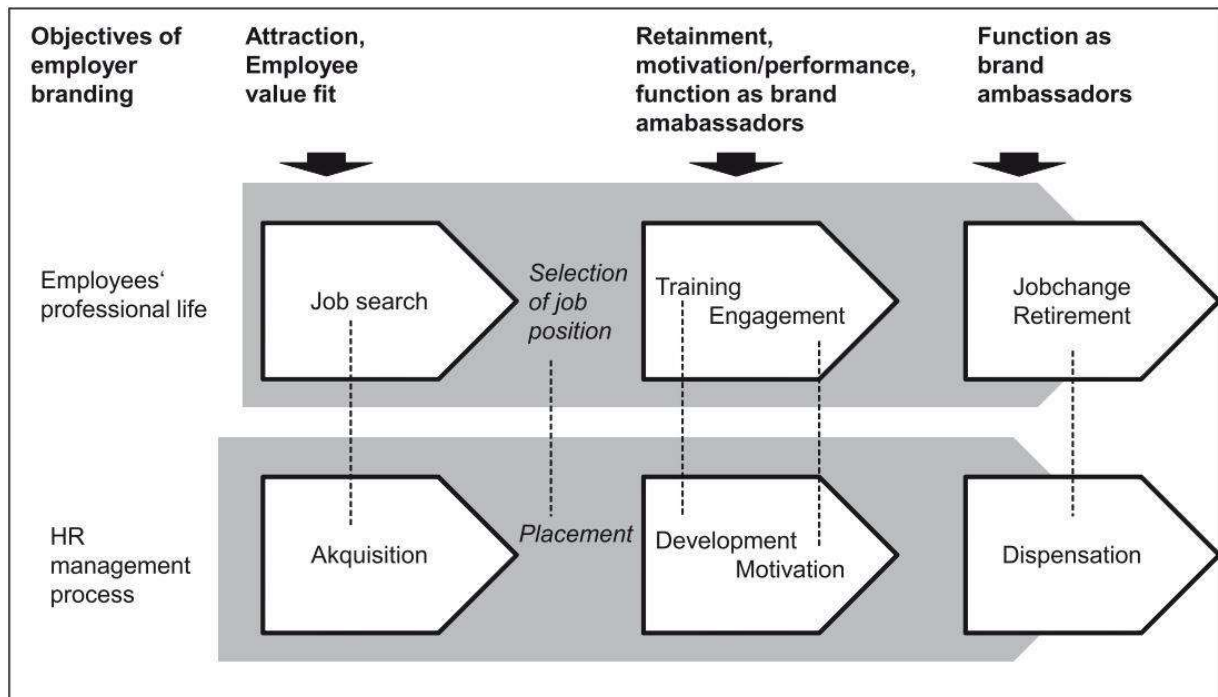


Figure 3: Objectives of Employer Branding. Note; Retrieved and adapted by Christiaans (2013) from Krauss (2002), p.8

The objective regarding future employees is quite simple: be the employer of choice among these future applicants in order to be able to attract the more suitable and best candidates (Sutherland et al., 2002). The advantages coming with this strategy is to, first reduce the acquisition costs by making the whole hiring process more efficient (Sponheuer, 2009), second being able to offer a lower salary package compared to a firm offering a weaker employer brand (Ritson, 2002). The goal is to be able for a company to differentiate itself via the use of a more performant employer brand due to the fact that potential candidates might not distinguish organizations due to their identical positioning (Highhouse et al., 2003; Moroko & Uncles, 2008). In many cases, the instrumental benefits are often quite similar among organizations, the only way to differentiate themselves can be achieved via symbolic or emotional attractiveness (Meffert, 2000; Petkovic, 2007). Petkovic (2007) suggests that the role of this emotional appeal is to shape a feeling of sympathy in the minds of the target groups toward the employer, playing the key role to both attract and retain employees but also to improve the overall satisfaction among them.

Regarding current employees, Petkovic (2007) recommends the use of the employer brand as a catalyst to create a strong emotional bond between the organization and employees. Research has shown that achieving this bond allows employees to increase their commitment and pride toward the organization, resulting in retaining performances that reduce the cost of hiring and training new employees (Berthon et al., 2005; Petkovic, 2007; Sponheuer, 2009), but is also an encouragement of the commitment and identification with the employer that sub-consequently lead to a reduction of sickness leaves (Barrow & Mosley, 2005).

The question of former employees is often under-estimated as they are not an integrant part of the company anymore. However, strong evidence and common-sense show that these former employees can still become current customers of the organizations or influence future employees via word of mouth or recommendations. It goes without saying that these recommendations can be either positive or negative and consequently affect the perceptions of future candidates. One last reason to care about these former employees is the recent trend to re-hire former employees, and in this case retake the position of potential applicants.

2.5. Employer Branding in China

Employer branding is gaining a notable interest in Asian countries, and more especially in the People's Republic of China⁴. The overall level of students is increasing, and universities propose high-quality education. China's recent economic development has proportionally experienced a surge in the amount of highly qualified "students". It is not difficult to imagine that some organizations are looking for the best possible candidate among this high qualified pool. Some fields such as Artificial Intelligence

⁴ Officially registered as People's Republic of China (PRC), we will in this paper refer to it as China in order to simplified our thoughts and avoid any confusions.

(AI), to which some of the biggest Chinese corporations belong (Baidu, Tencent or Alibaba are only the most famous), are aware that some of the most talented people in AI are living in China. Even more, it is a global war in order to attract these precious talents, as evidenced in Fei-Fei Li's interview, chief scientist at Cloud AI for Google: "China is home to many of the world's top experts in AI and machine learning". We witness a new phenomenon, a war for talent that takes place at an international level and where Chinese organizations need to put all the trumps on their side to attract the right people to their companies. This is a worldwide competition that is closely related to one of China's goals: be the leader in innovation by 2050.

Surprisingly, although being the second biggest economy and having a promising future, the English literature regarding employer branding in China is still scarce. Most of the studies conducted in the western world may have different results from those in the Chinese context, as some of Hofstede's dimensions such as collectivism, power distance, and long-term orientation are higher than in the Western context (Froese & Xiao, 2012). Correspondingly, the instrumental-symbolic structure cited above might be predominant in the western culture but it may not be the case in the Chinese culture where only the instrumental one would preponderate (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2007; Van Hoye, Bas, Cromheecke, & Lievens, 2013). Starting from this point, some studies covering the Chinese context have been conducted: Zhu et al. (2014) have measured the dimensionality of the employer branding; Chiu, Tang, & Luk (2001) showed that the financial aspect in a job is predominant regarding the employer of choice, insisting on the instrumental structure; and finally Zhu et al. (2016) highlighted the fact that there were no evident differences between instrumental and symbolic factors for applicants who are in the phase of selection process. The overall observation is that no consensus has been reached yet regarding the use of employer branding in the Chinese context due to the scarcity of studies.

2.6. Dimensionality of employer branding

The dimensionality of employer branding has already been investigated by Zhu et al. (2014), however the context has slightly changed since 2014 and the Government of China has now chosen to promote a particular point: gender equality. The development of the country also increases the awareness on numerous problems that touch mainly developing countries. The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) presented some directions the government wants to head to: “We must adhere to the fundamental national policy of gender equality and protect the legitimate rights and interests of women and minors. We will improve our systems for social assistance, social welfare, charity, and entitled groups’ benefits and services. We will improve the system for supporting and caring for children, women, and elderly people left behind in rural areas”. More specifically, the government underlined that the equality for gender has always been an integral part of the socialist party in China and that some progress has been achieved in the last decades in this area, however the Chinese government is fully aware that “here is an obvious imbalance in the development of women in different regions, social status and groups [...] there is a long way to go and arduous tasks to tackle to achieve gender equality and promote women's development in China to a satisfactory level.”⁵ The challenge is real for China, as women represent roughly half of the population (more than 700 million), their place in the society is vital.

Ironically, despite promoting gender equality at every level, the Chinese Government top leadership members (Politburo standing committee) does not include any women. During the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, President of the People's Republic of China, and Chairman of the Central Military Commission unveiled its top members of the government: six men in their 60's. So even if Mao Zedong proclaimed that

⁵ Source: Chinese State Council Information Office, “Gender Equality and Women's Development in China”

“women hold up half the sky”, the reality may be more complicated. Nonetheless, as the global level of education increases every year, more and more women become highly qualified for jobs with high responsibilities and so represent a considerable force to recruit for the organizations. In the war for talents, women cannot remain forgotten by organizations; they can become a vital member of an organization, missing them equals to reduce by almost 50% the chances to recruit the right talent for an organization.

3. Methodology

3.1. Model and hypotheses

Thus, we wanted to investigate if there is a disparity among male and female regarding the perception of the dimensionality of employer branding created previously by Zhu et al. (2014).

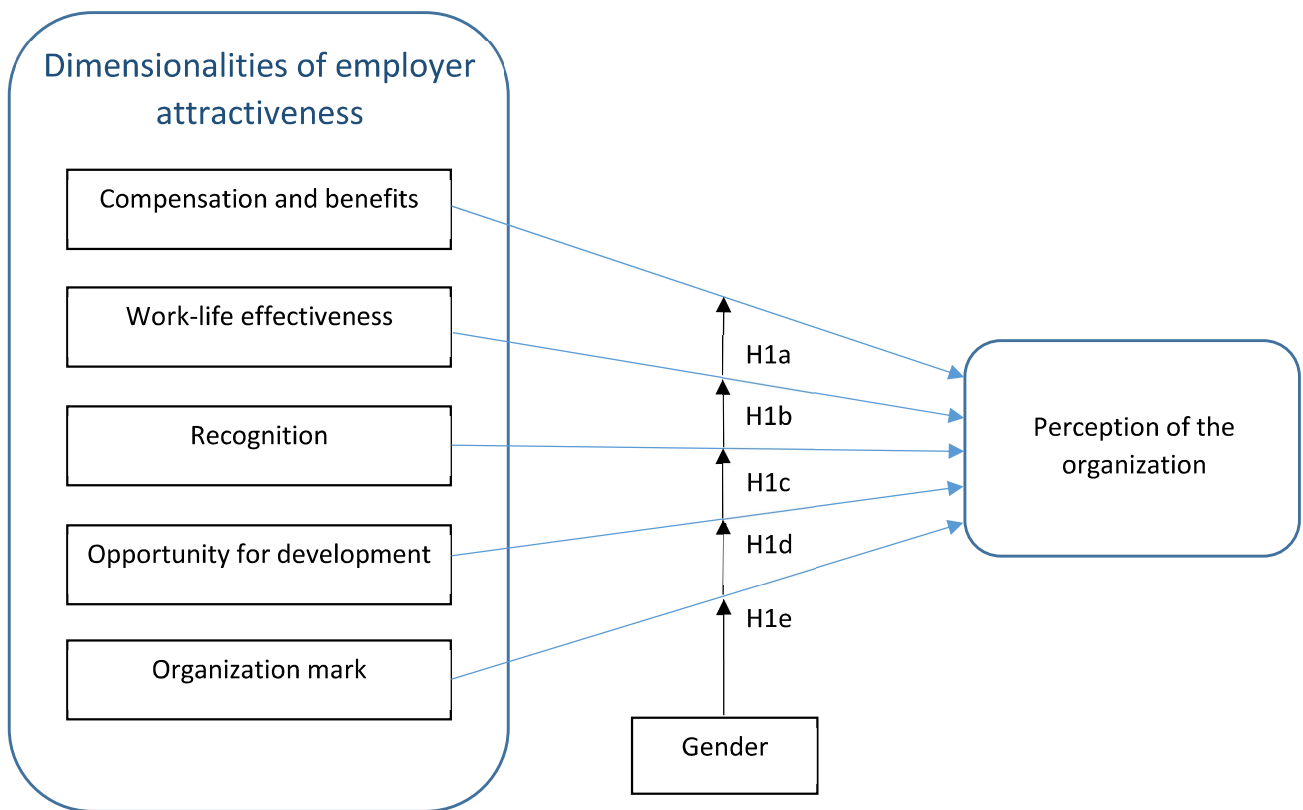


Figure 4: Research Model

We hypothesized through our research model in Figure 4 that:

Hypothesis 1a: The perception of the image of an organization is moderated by the gender of the respondent based on the dimension compensation and benefits.

The literature has already investigated the effect of the gender on the importance of employer attractiveness in an international context⁶ (Alınacıık & Alınacıık, 2012) and proved to have a significant difference on the employer attractiveness, unless other moderators such as age or employment status that have proven not to have a direct effect on the importance of employer attractiveness. However, to our best knowledge, no research has been conducted regarding the effect of the gender on the importance of employer attractiveness in a Chinese context. The first dimension used by Zhu et al. (2014) is the construct compensation and benefits. It is defined by the authors as “The economic reward and job security that applicants expect to get in the employment relationship” and are characterized by the six following items: Pay competitiveness, Pay equity, Pay stability, Long term incentive, Social insurance and Job stability. The idea with this hypothesis is to test if males give a different level of importance to this dimension compared to females.

Hypothesis 1b: The perception of the image of an organization is moderated by the gender of the respondent based on the dimension Work-life effectiveness.

On the same model than the hypothesis 1a, we are inspecting the effect of the gender on employer attractiveness in a Chinese context. Zhu et al. (2014) summarize the second dimension under this simple quotation: “Policies and efforts supporting the employee in managing work and life effectively that applicants expect to get in the employment relationship, rather than work-life balance.” The items comprise in this construct are the following ones: Meaning of work, Management participation, Flexible working time, Paid vacation, Health welfare, Family-friendly and Working environment.

⁶ The study took place in Turkey, giving an interesting insight to the international literature.

Hypothesis 1c: The perception of the image of an organization is moderated by the gender of the respondent based on the dimension Recognition.

Still following the same model of the other hypotheses, we are inspecting the effect of the gender on employer attractiveness in a Chinese context. Zhu et al. (2014) summarize the third dimension as “Self-actualization and recognition in multiple ways that applicants expect to get in the employment relationship.” The items comprise in this construct are the following ones: Performance bonuses, Performance feedback, Recognition incentives, Trust and respect, Self-value actualization.

Hypothesis 1d: The perception of the image of an organization is moderated by the gender of the respondent based on the dimension Opportunity for development.

In the four hypotheses, we are inspecting the effect of the gender on the dimension opportunity for development on the employer attractiveness in a Chinese context. Zhu et al. (2014) summarize this fourth construct as “The opportunity for learning and development, skill improvement, and career advancement that applicants expect to get in the employment relationship.” The items comprised in this construct are the following ones: Training system, Career mentor, Skill improvement, Career advancement, Organization prospects.

Hypothesis 1e: The perception of the image of an organization is moderated by the gender of the respondent based on the dimension Organization brand.

Finally in our last hypothesis, we are inspecting the effect of the gender on the dimension organization brand on the employer attractiveness in a Chinese context. Zhu et al. (2014) summarize this last dimension as “The explicit or implicit image or symbolic factor of the employer identified by prospective employees in the labor market.” The items comprise in this construct are the following ones: Organization culture, Leadership, Organizational image, ownership, Fair procedure and Working experience.

3.2. Subject of the study

In order to test the five hypotheses concerning the dimensionality and measurement of employer brand in the Chinese context, we used the previous scale established by Zhu et al. (2014).

To be able to conduct our research objective, scilicet update and reassess the dimensionality of employer brand in the Chinese context, we chose to use an existing quantitative study survey shaped by Zhu et al. (2014) addressing the Chinese context. The aims of this quantitative study is to provide a quantitative or numerical description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population (Creswell, 2013), which in our particular case correspond to the harvest of different opinions regarding employer brand in order to establish a trend intrinsic to the Chinese context.

The scale employed has the advantage to be highly reliable and additionally, previously tested in the Chinese context since the researchers assessed its psychometric properties in terms of reliability and validity. Thus being said, we can consider that the work done by Zhu et al. (2014) is one of the rare studies that is reliable and valid in the Chinese context.⁷ Re-using this scale for our study ensures that we can produce a reliable and viable work. The subject of this study represents a reiteration of the work of Zhu et al. (2014) and aims to bring clarification to the literature on this very specific topic. The first step of our study consists in a quantitative study quite identical to the previous one conducted by the above authors, with the introduction of a moderator: the gender; the idea is to assess the impact of this moderator on the dimensionality and measurement of the employer brand but also to re-actualize the results obtained by the authors.

The reasons and justification for this quantitative study will be discussed in the section dedicated to the quantitative approach (3.4). Secondly, we will discuss and interpret the

⁷ We deliberately omit the Chinese literature published in traditional Chinese characters (*hànzì* : 汉字), which inevitably are not accessible to the majority of the English speaking public.

results that have been harvested in the quantitative study to extract some theoretical and managerial implications for organizations.

3.3. Inductive and deductive approach

Over the study we choose to use both a deductive approach. This approach is used to explain the relation between theory and field research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

A deductive approach will be use in correlation with our quantitative study as its role is to deduce hypotheses from theoretical frameworks in order to be submit to empirical testing (Yilmaz, 2013). In our case, the theoretical framework extracted from Zhu et al. (2014) will be used in order to determine if the results are still consistent with the findings made by Zhu et al. (2014) or whether they have evolved over the years.

In a similar way, an inductive approach is used in correlation with a qualitative approach. Depicted by the literature as the used of empirical evidence, observations and findings that can lead us to the construction of theories (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study, the inductive approach will not be employed, but the approaches can be used interchangeably.

In most cases, quantitative research is associated with the use of a deductive approach, due to the common aim to generalize and test theories (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009; Yilmaz, 2013). On the contrary, inductive approaches often correlate with the use of a qualitative approach as it strives for the observations and explanations of specific patterns (Russel Bernard, 2006). Nonetheless, Bryman & Bell (2011) specified that even if the link between these two approaches and their respective methods is obvious, it should not be considered as an axiom as a qualitative research could be conducted in a deductive basis and vice-versa.

3.4. Quantitative study

3.4.1. Justifications

The study is mainly sustained by an ethnography theory, and so we would like to collect the perceptions different individuals have about the dimensionalities intrinsic to the employer brand in a Chinese context. The idea is to re-actualize the results found by Zhu et al. (2014) and re-use the scale created in a specific context: the Sichuan province and more specifically Chengdu. The results that will be found can either be consistent or inconsistent with the previous outcomes. This quantitative study can be justified via two main points: at first, Chengdu and the Sichuan Culture comprise some unique features.

Sichuan is highly regarded as a unique province thanks to distinctive assets: Chengdu and its cuisine is registered as a UNESCO city of gastronomy⁸, the multitude of tea houses scattered around the city or even home to a notorious endemic species: Giant Pandas. Moreover, this slow-paced city is the gateway to western China and Tibet, and for that reason home to a considerable number of travelers over the history. Given these provincial specificities and the size of the Chinese territory, the Sichuan basin could be regarded as another country if we oppose it to Beijing. These differences can lead to slightly distinct results and interpretation of the dimensions judged important to the choice of an employer. Secondly, the study of Zhu et al. (2014) took place in 2014, the economic development of China has evolved and the position held by the government has also changed. The milestone of this change is undoubtedly the vision that has been unveiled by Xi Jinping during the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Some of the highlights of the congress will shape the future of China and the Chinese people; here are some of the points that could affect the perceptions of the dimensionalities of the employer brand: 1. Furthering supply-side structural reform,

⁸ The Sichuan cuisine, consider as one of the four major style food in China, is famous for its unique flavors of spiciness such as the use of garlic and chili peppers, as well as the unique flavor of Sichuan pepper.

aiming “to work faster to build China into a manufacturer of quality and develop advanced manufacturing, promote further integration of the internet, big data, and artificial intelligence with the real economy ...”; 2. Making China a country of innovators⁹ : “Innovation is the primary driving force behind development; it is the strategic underpinning for building a modernized economy”; 3. Making new ground in pursuing opening up on all fronts : “Openness brings progress, while self-seclusion leaves one behind. China will not close its door to the world; we will only become more and more open.” 4. Promoting green development: “establish a legal and policy framework that promotes green production and consumption, and promote a sound economic structure that facilitates green, low-carbon, and circular development.” 5. “Solving prominent environmental problems: “We will continue our campaign to prevent and control air pollution to make our skies blue again”. Some of these actions could have a direct effect on the dimensionality of the employer of choice; for instance, by promoting a campaign ensuring a green development and protecting the environment¹⁰, organizations with a defined and well communicated Environmental Business Ethics strategy will be more likely to be associated with a positive image.

3.4.2. Subject of the study

To retest the five dimensionalities created by Zhu et al. (2014) and to give consistency to our study, we chose to align with other research (Berthon et al., 2005; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Zhu et al., 2014) and focused on the final-year undergraduate students at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, in the area of Chengdu. These targets are the more susceptible to apply for a job after graduation and then the more qualified to already have in their minds the items important to them coming to the employer of choice. They are meanwhile the main target of the organizations, looking

⁹ The decision to focus on innovation will be further discuss in the section discussion (4.)

¹⁰ The Chinese province of Anhui built a massive floating solar farm on top of an abandoned coal mine. An even larger floating solar plant will come online by May 2018. Real actions are already being implemented in order to reduce the pollution in China.

for fresh graduates to enter their firms, and develop a good perception of the characteristics of prospective employers (Ma & Trigo, 2012). The focus given on the area of Chengdu can be summarized with the definition of a convenience sample; Bryman & Bell (2011) define it as a sample that is easily accessible or available for the researcher. Myself studying at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, the harvest of the data is easier and has the advantage to be less expensive to obtain than other sampling techniques.

3.4.3. Procedure

To collect the data from the respondents, we elaborated a questionnaire using Zhu et al.'s (2014) framework. The first step of the survey is constituted by an informative/consent letter that explains the purpose of the study and informs respondents about their rights related to the survey and the confidentiality. Then, we created a small survey in order to harvest respondents' personal information such as gender, age, university level and department. Coming to the core of the survey, we used the dimensionalities designed by Zhu et al. (2014); however we adjusted the structure of the question into the following five points Likert scale: "Strongly disagree / Disagree/ Neutral/ Agree/ Strongly agree". The choice given to the respondents answer a general question usable for all items: "Regarding the employer of choice, I personally think the following item is important".

A total of 250 questionnaires were sent to the students in the Southern Western Universities of Finances and Economics in Chengdu. The return rate of the questionnaires was around 50,4%, with 126 surveys completed. Finally, among these 126 surveys, we had to exclude 5 of them which were incomplete. To complete our study, we will so consider 121 valid surveys. SPSS 13 was used to process the data and to provide information on descriptive statistics and to look for mean differences.

3.4.4. Measurement

The survey employed the scale developed by Zhu et al. (2014)¹¹. This survey has shown good validity and reliability and has already been adapted and used in the Chinese context through an inductive approach, that consists of “gathering emotional, cognitive, or behavioral descriptions from respondents” (Hinkin, 1995), among a panel of 29 students from three Universities in Beijing. The results of this inductive approach highlighted some dimensions consistent with the existing literature, namely compensation and benefits, opportunity for development, and recognition (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Berthon et al., 2005; Highhouse et al., 2003; Sutherland et al., 2002), but also unique dimensions, intrinsic to the Chinese culture, work-life effectiveness and the brand of the organization. It is interesting to note that the instruments used in the scales of Berthon, Ewing, & Hah (2005) and by extension the one of Zhu et al. (2014) have been reviewed by the literature (Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013) and proved to significantly influence employer attractiveness from the perspective of possible candidates.

According to Zhu et al. (2014), they pre-selected 44 items from the inductive approach they conducted. Therefore, they submitted these 44 items to a series of validity and reliability tests. First of all, a content validity was done, resulting in a valid content of the all 44 items, representing the facets of employer branding. Secondly, a scale purification has been made during a pilot test of 100 students and the totality of the data harvested have been subject to EFA (Exploratory factor analysis); 3 criteria have been chosen to strain the items (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003; Nunnally, 1978): (a) the item has a minimum loading of .40 in a certain factor, (b) the item has no cross-loadings at two or more factors, and (c) the meaning of the item should be consistent

¹¹ The scale established by (Zhu et al., 2014) is itself based and inspired from the one previously created by Berthon, Ewing, & Hah (2005) and Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar (2003), which have already been employed by diverse international studies and add credibility to it (Almıaçık & Almıaçık, 2012; Arachchige & Robertson, 2011; Braga, 2016; Roy, 2008; Wallace, Lings, & Cameron, 2012).

with those of other items loading on the same factor. Filtering 7 items and constituting a formal scale of 37 items. Thirdly, they applied an oblique rotation with ProMax that gave them four items with a loading below .50 and 2 items “two items with cross-loadings on factors other than the intended factor” (Zhu et al., 2014) ; they were consequently excluded, resulting in a remaining of 31 items. Consecutively, they used the CFA (confirmatory factor analysis) to assess the construct validity, deleting 2 more items under the 0.70 loading requirement; the remaining 29 items after CFA confirmed that the five-factor model fit the data well with “fit indices of comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) surpassing all cutoff criteria. (Zhu et al., 2014). Finally, they processed a reliability test, proving that all the 29 items were reliable with a Composite Reliability (CR) superior to 0.70. (cf. Table 2 and 3).

Table 2: Results of exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Note. Retrieved from: Reconsidering the dimensionality and measurement of employer brand in the Chinese context by Zhu et al. (2014).

Table 2. Results of Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Items	Compensation and benefits		Work-life effectiveness		Recognition		Opportunity for development		Organization mark		Reliability	
	A	(B)	A	(B)	A	(B)	A	(B)	A	(B)	A	(B)
Pay competitiveness	.75	(.72)										
Pay equity	.69	(.71)										
Pay stability	.74	(.76)										.85 (.86)
Long-term incentive	.57	(.75)										
Social insurance	.74	(.85)										
Job stability	.78	(.81)										
Meaning of work			.65	(.73)								
Management participation			.84	(.82)								
Flexible working time			.69	(.84)								
Paid vacation			.78	(.75)								.79 (.92)
Health welfare			.59	(.72)								
Family-friendly benefits			.63	(.76)								
Working environment			.75	(.82)								
Performance bonuses					.67	(.77)						
Performance feedback					.66	(.86)						
Recognition incentives					.76	(.74)						.87 (.84)
Trust and respect					.61	(.79)						
Self-value actualization					.71	(.73)						
Training system							.72	(.72)				
Career mentor							.65	(.72)				
Skill improvement							.61	(.73)				.79 (.82)
Career advancement							.73	(.75)				
Organization prospects							.71	(.71)				

Table 3: Results of exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Note. Retrieved from: Reconsidering the dimensionality and measurement of employer brand in the Chinese context by Zhu et al. (2014).

EMPLOYER BRAND IN THE CHINESE CONTEXT

Table 2 continued

Items	Compensation and benefits	Work-life effectiveness	Recognition	Opportunity for development	Organization mark	Reliability
	A (B)	A (B)	A (B)	A (B)	A (B)	A (B)
Organizational culture					.63 (.76)	
Leadership					.64 (.84)	
Organizational image					.62 (.76)	.84 (.85)
Ownership					.72 (.74)	
Fair procedure					.83 (.83)	
Working experience					.77 (.79)	

Notes. Column A indicates factor loadings in exploratory factor analysis, and column B indicates factor loadings in confirmatory factor analysis. Column A of reliability indicates Cronbach's α coefficient, and column B indicates composite reliability.

3.5. Analysis

3.5.1. Descriptive statistics

For each hypothesis depicted in part 3.3, we have its opposite called null hypothesis that states that males and females do not perceive differently the dimensions present in the scale. The introduction of the null hypothesis is necessary for the use of SPSS. Thus, as an example for H1a, we also have a null hypothesis H0a which states that male and female have similar perception regarding the dimension compensations and benefits. It goes for every hypothesis.

The descriptive table, presented in table 4, extracted from the descriptive analysis showed us some basic numbers related to the main constructs and the gender of the respondent. We observed that we have 121 participants, with a mean of 1,61 which indicates a larger population of female than male.¹² The five dimensions obtained a respective score of 3,97 (Compensation and benefits), 3,95 (Work-life effectiveness), 4,32 (Recognition), 4,21 (Opportunity for development) and 4,01 (Organization brand). Surprisingly, if we have a look at the standard deviation (it measures how concentrated the data are around the mean), the dimension number four, which obtained the highest score (4,21) also obtained the higher value for standard deviation meaning that even though it has the highest value mean, the scores are not concentrated around the mean. In other words, this dimension harvested more different results, some respondent rated it very highly, but others also rated it quite poorly.

The demographic information of the respondents is summarized in table 4. Most of the respondents are quite young, with a mean age of 21,5 years old. Regarding the gender of the respondents, 38,8% are males and 61,2% are females. (74 females and 47 males). Our respondents are likely to be graduating soon and so are susceptible to have a concrete idea of the dimensions of an organization they found attractive to them. We

¹² In our statistical analysis, we labelled the number 1 as male and the number 2 as female.

need to add that the majority of the respondents come from the business school department at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in Chengdu, China; some examples of the departments the students come from are: Business administration, Economics, Logistics, Marketing or Human Resources.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics extracted from IBM SPSS Software

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Gender of the respondents	121	1	2	1,61	,489	-,464
Meancomp_benef	121	3,17	5,00	3,9725	,47256	,333
Meanwork_life	121	2,57	5,00	3,9469	,54652	-,361
Meanrecognition	121	2,60	5,00	4,3179	,59228	-,883
Meanopp_dev	121	1,80	5,00	4,2127	,73295	-1,286
Meanorg_mark	121	3,17	4,33	4,0102	,26509	-1,082
Valid N (listwise)	121					

3.5.2. Hypotheses testing

The comparison of the means are consistent with the work done by Zhu et al. (2014) and point in the same directions. According to the results, the mean score for the dimension compensation and benefits reach 3,97; the dimension work life effectiveness is 3,95; the dimension recognition obtains 4,32; the dimension opportunity for development summarize a high 4,21; and finally, the dimension organizational brand gets a mean of 4,01. The five dimensions scored quite high and reflect well the dimensions established by Zhu et al. (2014). As a reminder the authors showed the following score in their study: opportunity for development (M = 4.01), higher than the

dimension compensation and benefits (M = 3.85), or recognition (M = 3.81). The two missing dimensions have not been communicated in their paperwork, but they found to be significantly important among the five dimensions as well.

We decided to run an independent-sample T test to evaluate the difference between the means of two independents groups, namely in our case the means between male and female. More precisely, the goal of this test is to assess if the mean value of the test variables for the male differs significantly from the mean value of the test variable for female.

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of this independent T tests and so we will decrypt the hypotheses one by one.

Table 5: Group Statistics according to gender and dimensions.

Group Statistics

	Gender of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Meancomp_benef	Male	47	3,9574	,48463	,07069
	Female	74	3,9820	,46781	,05438
Meanwork_life	Male	47	3,6778	,52062	,07594
	Female	74	4,1178	,49394	,05742
Meanrecognition	Male	47	3,8993	,60591	,08838
	Female	74	4,5838	,40104	,04662
Meanopp_dev	Male	47	3,7943	,88452	,12902
	Female	74	4,4784	,45368	,05274
Meanorg_mark	Male	47	4,0000	,19349	,02822
	Female	74	4,0167	,30302	,03522

Table 6: Independent samples test.

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Meancomp_be	Equal variances assumed	,768	,383	-.277	119	,782	-.02454	,08848	-.19974	,15067
	Equal variances not assumed			-.275	95,485	,784	-.02454	,08919	-.20158	,15251
Meanwork_life	Equal variances assumed	,376	,541	-4,676	119	,000	-.43995	,09409	-.62625	-.25365
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,621	94,226	,000	-.43995	,09520	-.62897	-.25092
Meanrecognitio	Equal variances assumed	10,142	,002	-7,482	119	,000	-.68449	,09149	-.86564	-.50334
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,850	71,663	,000	-.68449	,09992	-.88370	-.48528
Meanopp_dev	Equal variances assumed	34,527	,000	-5,601	119	,000	-.68405	,12212	-.92587	-.44223
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,908	61,573	,000	-.68405	,13938	-.96272	-.40539
Meanorg_mark	Equal variances assumed	7,722	,006	-.336	119	,738	-.01667	,04963	-.11494	,08160
	Equal variances not assumed			-.369	118,990	,713	-.01667	,04514	-.10604	,07271

Hypothesis one states that male and female have different perception regarding the dimension compensations and benefits. The results given by the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances showed a Sig .383, therefore because the Sig. value is higher than our alpha of .05, we accept the null hypothesis (no difference) for the assumption of homogeneity of variances and so we can conclude that there are no significant differences between the two group's variance. In that case, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is met. We will use the data results associated with the label "Equal variances assumed". One remark can be made regarding the violation rule of the assumptions of the T test for independent groups; if the two groups are estimated to be proportionally equal and each sample to be equal or higher than 30, the T test for independent groups remains valid even if we noticed a small or moderate violation of the normality and/or the homogeneity of variance assumptions (Pagano, 2012). Groups can be considered equal if the size of the bigger group does not exceed by 1½ times the size of the smaller one (Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner, & Barrett, 2004). In our case, the sample size for the female group is 74 and the male group is 47, which represents a ratio of 1.57 and a size bigger than 30 for both group, which can qualified as acceptable. Furthermore, an additional test such as the Mann-Whitney U test is not required in our situation.

After having verified the assumptions of the variances, we will investigate the T tests for equality of means that will test our hypothesis for each dimension. To do so, we will use two methods in order to reinforce the validity of our results¹³. Having a first look at the Sig. (also commonly called P-value), we will compare it to our alpha value (similar method as the one used previously in the assumptions of the variances): Sig.,782 is higher than our alpha 0,5. Secondly, we examine the confidence intervals and determining whether the upper and lower boundaries contain zero (the hypothesized mean difference), if it does not contain zero, we reject the null hypothesis of no

¹³ Three methods can be employed to assess the acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis in the case of independent-samples T test.

difference, if it does contain zero, we accept the null hypothesis of no difference; our analysis for the first hypothesis displayed a lower score of $-.19974$ and an upper score of $.15067$, it does contain zero. Consequently, we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that male and female have a similar perception regarding the dimension compensations and benefits. In other words, male and female do have a similar views regarding the items understood inside the dimensions compensation and benefits and value them almost equally.

Hypothesis two posits that male and female have different perception regarding the dimension work-life effectiveness. Once again, the results given by the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances showed us a Sig.,541, therefore because the Sig. value is higher than our alpha of .05, we accept the null hypothesis (no difference) for the assumption of homogeneity of variances and so we can conclude that there are no significant differences between the two group's variance. In a similar case than the first hypothesis, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is met. We will use the data results associated with the label "Equal variances assumed". For the t tests for equality of means: Sig. ,000 is lower than our alpha 0,5. Secondly, we examine the confidence intervals, our analysis for the second hypothesis displayed a lower score of $-.62625$ and an upper score of $-.25365$, it does not contain zero. Conversely to our prior finding, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that male and female have a different perception regarding the dimension work-life effectiveness. Male and female do not have a similar view regarding the items comprise inside the dimensions work-life effectiveness and value them significantly differently; the male group has an average mean of $3,6778$ out of 5 and the female group has an average mean of $4,1178$ out of 5, meaning that the female group give more importance to the dimension work-life effectiveness than male.

Hypothesis three inspects the fact that male and female have different perception regarding the dimension recognition. Here, the results given by the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances display a Sig.,002, therefore because the Sig. value is lower than

our alpha of .05, we reject the null hypothesis (no difference) for the assumption of homogeneity of variances and so we can conclude that there are significant differences between the two groups' variance. To sum up, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is violated (not met). We will use the data results associated with the label "Equal variances not assumed". For the T test for equality of means: Sig. ,000 is lower than our alpha 0,5. Secondly, we examine the confidence intervals, our analysis for the third hypothesis displayed a lower score of -,88370 and an upper score of -,48528, it does not contain zero. On the same model than the hypothesis 2, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that male and female have a different perception regarding the dimension recognition. Male and female do not have a similar view regarding the items comprise inside the dimensions recognition and value them significantly differently; the male group has an average mean of 3,8993 out of 5 and the female group has an average mean of 4,5838 out of 5, meaning that the female group give more importance to the dimension work-life effectiveness than male.

Hypothesis four refers to the idea that male and female have different perception regarding the dimension opportunity for development. The results given by the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances display a Sig.,000, therefore because the Sig. value is lower than our alpha of .05, we reject the null hypothesis (no difference) for the assumption of homogeneity of variances and thus we can conclude that there is a significant difference between the two group's variance. To sum up, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is violated (not met). We will use the data results associated with the label "Equal variances not assumed". For the T test for equality of means: Sig. ,000 is lower than our alpha 0,5. Secondly, we examine the confidence intervals, our analysis for the fourth hypothesis displayed a lower score of -,96272 and an upper score of -,40539, it does not contain zero. On the same model than the hypotheses 2 and 3, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that male and female have a different perception regarding the dimension opportunity for development. Male and female do not have a similar view regarding the items comprise inside the dimensions opportunity

for development and value them significantly differently; the male group has an average mean of 3,7943 out of 5 and the female group has an average mean of 4,4784 out of 5, meaning that the female group give more importance to the dimension work-life effectiveness than male.

Finally, the **hypothesis five** implies the idea that male and female have different perception regarding the last dimension organization brand. The results given by the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances display a Sig.,006, therefore because the Sig. value is lower than our alpha of .05, we reject the null hypothesis (no difference) for the assumption of homogeneity of variances and thus we can conclude that there is a significant difference between the two groups variance. To sum up, the assumption of homogeneity of variance is violated (not met). We will use the data results associated with the label "Equal variances not assumed". For the T test for equality of means: Sig. ,713 is higher than our alpha 0,5. Secondly, we examine the confidence intervals, our analysis for the second hypothesis displayed a lower score of -,10604 and an upper score of -,7271, it does contain zero. On the same model than the hypothesis 1, we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that male and female have a similar perception regarding the dimension organization brand. Male and female have a similar view regarding the items comprise inside the dimensions opportunity for development and value them almost identically.

We decided to run a more precise analysis on hypotheses two, three and four, aiming to identify which items in each construct are perceived differently between male and female. The method is identical and uses the independent t test; results are summarized under tables 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

Table 7: Group Statistics according to gender for the dimension work-life effectiveness. Note. Retrieved from IBM SPSS Software

Group Statistics

	Gender of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Meaning of work	Male	47	3,77	,813	,119
	Female	74	4,20	,811	,094
Management participation	Male	47	3,15	,780	,114
	Female	74	3,99	,561	,065
Flexible working-time	Male	47	3,04	1,351	,197
	Female	74	3,70	,806	,094
Paid vacation	Male	47	3,70	,954	,139
	Female	74	4,28	,731	,085
Health welfare	Male	47	4,09	,952	,139
	Female	74	4,14	,746	,087
Family-friendly benefits	Male	47	3,85	,807	,118
	Female	74	4,09	,528	,061
Working environment	Male	47	4,15	,691	,101
	Female	74	4,42	,497	,058

Table 8: Independent Samples Test for the dimension Work-life effectiveness. Note. Retrieved from IBM SPSS Software

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Meaning of work	Equal variances assumed	,732	,394	-2,885	119	,005	-,437	,151	-,736	-,137
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,883	97,816	,005	-,437	,151	-,737	-,136
Management participation	Equal variances assumed	16,108	,000	-6,863	119	,000	-,838	,122	-1,079	-,596
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,389	76,065	,000	-,838	,131	-1,099	-,576
Flexible working-time	Equal variances assumed	1,056	,306	-3,368	119	,001	-,660	,196	-1,048	-,272
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,026	67,018	,004	-,660	,218	-1,096	-,225
Paid vacation	Equal variances assumed	8,780	,004	-3,783	119	,000	-,582	,154	-,886	-,277
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,568	79,770	,001	-,582	,163	-,906	-,257
Health welfare	Equal variances assumed	3,968	,049	-,323	119	,748	-,050	,155	-,357	,257
	Equal variances not assumed			-,306	81,144	,761	-,050	,164	-,376	,276
Family-friendly benefits	Equal variances assumed	6,614	,011	-2,008	119	,047	-,244	,121	-,484	-,003
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,835	71,086	,071	-,244	,133	-,508	,021
Working environment	Equal variances assumed	1,270	,262	-2,498	119	,014	-,270	,108	-,484	-,056
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,324	76,003	,023	-,270	,116	-,501	-,039

The following results appeared for the dimension Work-life effectiveness¹⁴ : the item “meaning for work” has a Sig. ,005; “Management participation” has a Sig. ,005; “Flexible work-time” has a Sig. ,001; “Paid vacation” get a Sig. ,001; “Health welfare” has a Sig. ,761; “Family-friendly benefits” a Sig. ,071; “working environment” a Sig. ,014. To sum up rapidly the results, only two items showed similar perceptions between the male and female groups: “Health Welfare” and “Family-friendly benefits”. All other items showed divergence in perception.

Table 9: Group Statistics according to gender for the dimension recognition. Note. Retrieved from IBM SPSS Software

Group Statistics

	Gender of respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Performances bonuses	Male	47	4,19	,711	,104
	Female	74	4,59	,494	,057
Performance-feedback	Male	43	3,47	1,260	,192
	Female	71	4,45	,501	,059
Recognition incentives	Male	47	3,83	,564	,082
	Female	74	4,59	,494	,057
Trust and respect	Male	43	4,26	,759	,116
	Female	74	4,82	,383	,045
Self-value actualization	Male	47	3,79	,832	,121
	Female	74	4,43	,575	,067

¹⁴ The procedure analysis remained exactly the same as the one previously demonstrated in the independent t test. The results of the Levene’s test for equality of variances is not showed but as also being respected preliminary.

Table 10: Independent Samples Test for the dimension Recognition. Note. Retrieved from IBM SPSS Software

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Performances bonuses	Equal variances assumed	4,610	,034	-3,677	119	,000	-,403	,110	-,620	-,186
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,399	74,149	,001	-,403	,119	-,639	-,167
Performance-feedback	Equal variances assumed	13,497	,000	-5,880	112	,000	-,986	,168	-1,318	-,653
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,899	50,153	,000	-,986	,201	-1,390	-,582
Recognition incentives	Equal variances assumed	1,705	,194	-7,849	119	,000	-,765	,097	-,958	-,572
	Equal variances not assumed			-7,620	88,539	,000	-,765	,100	-,964	-,565
Trust and respect	Equal variances assumed	41,954	,000	-5,382	115	,000	-,569	,106	-,778	-,359
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,585	54,674	,000	-,569	,124	-,817	-,320
Self-value actualization	Equal variances assumed	14,925	,000	-5,041	119	,000	-,645	,128	-,899	-,392
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,655	73,863	,000	-,645	,139	-,921	-,369

The following results appeared for the dimension Recognition: the item “Performance bonuses” obtained a Sig. ,001; “Performance-feedback” a Sig. ,000; “Recognition incentives” a Sig. ,000; “Trust and respect” a Sig. ,000; “Self-value actualization” a Sig. ,000. In this construct, we can observe than male and female have a different perception for all the items.

Table 11: Group Statistics according to gender for the dimension Opportunity for development. Note. Retrieved from IBM SPSS Software

Group Statistics

	Gender of the respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Training system	Male	47	3,51	,748	,109
	Female	74	4,43	,575	,067
Career mentor	Male	43	3,33	,837	,128
	Female	74	4,31	,639	,074
Skill improvement	Male	47	4,02	1,132	,165
	Female	74	4,41	,595	,069
Career advancement	Male	43	4,26	,978	,149
	Female	74	4,59	,494	,057
Organization prospects	Male	47	3,94	1,292	,188
	Female	74	4,65	,481	,056

Table 12: Independent Samples Test for the dimension Opportunity for development. Note. Retrieved from IBM SPSS Software

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Training system	Equal variances assumed	4,807	,030	-7,631	119	,000	-.922	,121	-1,161	-.683
	Equal variances not assumed			-7,202	79,940	,000	-.922	,128	-1,176	-.667
Career mentor	Equal variances assumed	4,446	,037	-7,156	115	,000	-.985	,138	-1,258	-.712
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,668	70,630	,000	-.985	,148	-1,280	-.691
Skill improvement	Equal variances assumed	29,555	,000	-2,439	119	,016	-.384	,157	-.696	-.072
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,145	62,337	,036	-.384	,179	-.742	-.026
Career advancement	Equal variances assumed	22,722	,000	-2,487	115	,014	-.339	,136	-.609	-.069
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,119	54,697	,039	-.339	,160	-.659	-.018
Organization prospects	Equal variances assumed	38,531	,000	-4,305	119	,000	-.712	,165	-1,040	-.385
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,624	54,176	,001	-.712	,197	-1,107	-.318

The following results appeared for the dimension Opportunity for development: the item “Training system” got a Sig. ,000 “Career mentor” a Sig. ,000; “Skill improvement” a Sig. ,036; “Career advancement” a Sig. ,039; “Organization prospects” a Sig. ,001. Once again, we observe that male and female have a different perception for all the items present in this dimension.

Last but not least, it is important to note that among these three dimensions, all items have been rated higher by female than male even in items that show similar perceptions in the two groups. It can be clearly seen in tables 7, 9 and 11 where we have the details associated with the items comprised in each dimension.

4. Discussion

4.1. Findings

The results obtained in this study point in the same direction as those obtained by Zhu et al., (2014). Indeed, the results of the means for each dimension are consistent with the previous study. The mean value for the dimension compensation and benefits scored 3,97 in terms of importance; in comparison the value obtained by Zhu et al. (2014) was 3,85. The dimension work-life effectiveness scored a mean value of 3,95. The value obtained by the study lead by Zhu et al. (2014) did not specify the value of the mean for this dimension. They just mentioned the fact respondents highly rated this dimension and thus consider important. For the dimension recognition, we obtained a score of 4,32 for the value of the mean while in Zhu's study this dimension scored a value mean of 3,85. The dimension opportunity for development has a mean value rated a high 4,21, opposed to 4,01 as found in the referenced study. Finally, the last dimension saw a score of 4,01 for the mean value which cannot be compared due to the absence of data in the work of Zhu et al. (2014). Overall we can say that the study conducted by Zhu et al. (2014) was appropriate for us to replicate in terms of the dimensions chosen since all the dimensions have been rated high by the respondents meaning that they attach importance to the five listed in the employer attractiveness scale. In our study each dimension has been rated higher than in the original one, showing that respondents emphasized the importance of the constructs and were receptive to the scale.

First of all, the dimension opportunity for development scored high in the two studies. Paraphrasing the findings of Zhu et al. (2014), these high results can be explained by the needs for Chinese applicants to enhance their employability, especially at the beginning of their professional career. They are aware that nowadays, their professional career will most likely be punctuated by different employers and different positions. Thus, increasing their employability is crucial to ensure their next job applications. This employability planned on a long term perspective can probably be associated with the

Hofstede model (Center, 2015) for China; Chinese individuals scored very high on the long term orientation dimension, meaning they project themselves in the future.

Secondly, the dimension work-life effectiveness is still relevant and consistent with previous findings. Pointing out the fact that Chinese respondents do not value work-life balance but are more eager to simultaneously achieve a greater quality work and successful family life. The problem which was pointed out by Chinese respondents in what concerns work-life balance was the issue that good work or good life (mostly refers as family or personal life) can only be achieved at the expense of the other element (WorldatWork, 2015), on the same scheme as a scale. This desire to not sacrifice one element over another but on the contrary to perform well in both fields can be attributed to the very specific organization of the family in China. As Zhu et al. (2014) highlighted in their paperwork, the one-child policy¹⁵ that aimed to reduce the growing number of births in China has a singular impact on the shape of the family. The nuclear family has the form of “4-2-1” (one child with two parents and four grandparents), putting the child at the center of the attention resulting in a particular perception of the work. These parents do not want their child to focus only on work or only on family, but to achieve both successfully. A recurrent mistake that individuals would like to correct at the end of their life is to devote less time to work and more to their family. It is conceivable that having a single child pushes them to advice their single child not to devote their life only to work or only to family.

Thirdly, the high rating obtained for the dimension organizational brand can be explained by being the signal for functional factors (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Zhu et al., 2014) such as compensation for benefits or opportunity for development. Functional factors are important to Chinese candidates and it can be rooted via three components closely related. Chidester & Inglehart (1998) showed that in the case of developing countries they have an important place in the process for employment

¹⁵ A practice unique in the world present from 1979 until 2015.

decision; secondly, the concept of “saving face” (面子 "MIANZI") is paramount in the Chinese society: in the business life but even more in a business context, reputation or dignity are extremely important. One must appear and show honor, prestige, and respect in any circumstances. Losing face is an embarrassing situation for the individual but also for his/her family, that is why functional factors are the symbolization of a good reputation; thirdly, and probably the most important concept that roots beneath the two other components, is that the special importance of functional factors can be attributed to a Chinese historical and cultural particularity: Confucianism. More specifically the concept of filial piety (孝) which occupies a central value in the traditional Chinese culture for centuries. It is based on strict principles of hierarchy, obligation and obedience. Two interpretations can be made from this concept and explain the appeal for functional factors (especially money): the younger generation should support the older one; the goal of the family is to perpetuate the family line. Numerous examples in the Chinese literature¹⁶ preached the virtues of filial piety according to which a child should be able to support his/her family at any cost. Supporting in this case also means financing them. One could consider the Chinese culture simply as materialistic, but the reality is far more complex. It is not based on the concept of individualistic or hedonistic materialism quite common in the western society, but the importance given to functional factors emanates from the moral and hierarchical Confucian ideal of familial interdependence. The explanation can be attributed to the importance of the family in the Chinese society which Chan & Tan (2008) describe as a “reciprocal bargain”. The parents will in first place take care of their children, and then the children would later give back to their parents. In the concept of filial piety, love is not expressed or given with words, and is not shown through feelings. Love is shown and displayed through material care. A Chinese saying quote: “Of all virtues, filial piety is the first” (百善孝

¹⁶ References to the filial piety have been made in “The Oil Vendor and the Queen of Flowers: A Tale From Ancient China” under the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644) or “24 Exemplars of Filial Piety” (二十四孝) compiled by Guo Jujing, under the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368).

為先), underlining the priority of it and probably acknowledging the above referred collectivist culture.

Finally, the highest score for a dimension was attributed to recognition with a mean value of 4,32. Among all the items that composed this dimension, the item “trust and respect” scored the highest with 4,54 for the mean value. The explanation can be correlated and potentially explained with the concept of ““saving face” (面子 "MIANZI"): the perceived reputation of an individual is vital. It is not a coincidence if the item “trust and respect” scored so high since the reputation of an individual is largely based on the trust and respect of other individuals. Logically and this is no surprise, the differences noted in relation to western counter-parts can largely be explained by the history and the culture a group of people is sharing. Unique features in a culture will largely influence the importance this group gives to the employer of chance.

Regarding the results of our hypothesis testing the influence of the gender on the five dimensions in the Chinese context, we found some interesting results. First, among the five dimensions, three of them show significant differences between male and female perceptions. The dimensions work-life effectiveness, recognition and opportunity for development saw a significant difference, but the dimensions compensation and benefits and organizational brand did not show any significant differences. All the dimensions and items that composed them have been rated higher by the group female than the group male. We will try to understand the reasons behind this difference. In most cases, the variation in the differences between the two groups can be explained via psychologic concepts. We will examine in this section the psychological concepts that derived from explicit factors such as anatomic and emotional, but also refer to implicit and more subtle factors such as society.

The construct work-life effectiveness showed a mean value for male of 3,68 and a female of 4,12. All the items that composed this construct showed significant differences except the item “Health Welfare”. These differences in perceptions can be attributed to a stronger need from the female group to give importance to their family life and the flexible work-time if needed. It can be explained by the importance of the female group to what many refer as the biological needs to procreate. In fact, if we look back at a psychological analysis of this need, there is no real evidence to support the notion that there is a biological process that creates that deep longing for a child , on the contrary it has been proved that it is induced by notions of pronatalism that were implemented long ago when society encouraged people to have more children (Carroll, 2012). Additionally, society pushes women to have children in order to be in the “norm” and follow the normal path to fulfillment in life; if they do not follow this path as established by society, something is wrong with them. So, Carroll (2012) summarized this concept with the following statement: “the deep feelings of wanting to have a child have their roots in a learned desire from strong, long-standing social and cultural pronatal influences — not biological ones. And we have been influenced so strongly and for so long that it just feels “innate”. Leta Stetter Hollingworth (Roweton, 1990), a pioneer in the area of woman psychology, proved that point by a very simple statement: “If the “urge” was actually innate or instinctual, we would all feel it, she argues — and we don’t.”

Then the construct recognition notified a mean value of 3,90 for the male and 4,58 for the female. Once again, the need for recognition is higher for women than male in average. All the items showed significant differences in perception between the two groups. So, does it mean that women are more emotional and need more support than male? The answer can be found once again in the “norm” established by the society. Simon & Nath (2004) tested the emotional responses of male and female and found no sex differences in the respondents’ frequency of feelings, but they did find that women are more likely to express such feelings. The fact is that emotions are an intrinsic

function of the human being and the brain, not a function of genital system. A general belief is that women seem to be more emotional than men, but the reality is slightly different: they are more likely to display emotions than male. More precisely, Levant (1992) introduced the notion of “restrictive emotionality” among male. Indeed, men have the tendency to disguise feelings, remain stoic, and inhibit expression of their emotions¹⁷. The majority of men characterize this masculinity under a psychological concept first mentioned by Stacey & Connell (1988) called hegemonic masculinity—being heterosexual, aggressive, competitive, and homo-social (men preferring to associate with other male friends). It appealed to a majority of cultures around the world (Chinese culture is not an exception) but moderated by the characteristic of the defined culture. However we need to mention that not every man recognized themselves in this hegemonic masculinity concept – “subordinated masculinities” (Connell 1987) do exist and group such as homosexual or racial minorities might have a different perception of what is masculinity. Shelley (2007) added that men and women agree that cultural norms demand that males and females display their emotions in different ways; in the case of masculinity, a regulation of emotions as one part of “doing gender” for men (West and Zimmerman 1987) is required from the society. Nonetheless, these psychological differences might be the sources of the difference notified in the recognition dimensions in our study. Men are less susceptible to display their emotions and consequently do not want to show they need as much support as women.

The last dimension to show a significant difference between the male and female group is opportunity for development. Male displayed a mean value of 3,79 and the female a mean value of 4,48. All the items showed considerable differences between the male and the female group. The reasons behind this difference can probably be sustained by the explanations given for the other two dimensions, however we can also point out another reason which is undeniably inter-related with the other concepts previously

¹⁷ The only emotion that men appeared to less restrained is anger, often associated with violent behavior (Fischer, 2000; Shorter, 1981; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000).

enunciated. The big five personality traits proposed by Goldberg (1993) describe the personality of an individual according to five different aspects: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. Among these five traits, three of them have proven to be higher for women across Western and Asian cultures: extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Weisberg, De Young, & Hirsh, 2011). Interestingly, a study lead by Afshar et al. (2015) showed that “extraversion and agreeableness had the most significantly positive correlation with positive reinterpretation and growth.”. Equally meaning that a higher level of extraversion and agreeableness among women result in a higher need for development which is consistent with our findings about the perception of employer attractiveness. Besides this, the latest authors also found that extraversion is highly related to social support, supporting the high score given by the female group in this dimension. Indeed, some items of this dimension can clearly be perceived as supporting items such as training system or career mentor, but also reconfirm our findings about the second dimension just discussed above — the item trust and respect of the dimension recognition can be viewed as a supportive item and sub-consequently highly rated by the female group.

4.2. Managerial implications

On a managerial level, the recommendations are consistent with the findings of Zhu et al. (2014): “only functional factors and those organization brand factors that are closely linked with functional factors are really attractive to young Chinese job seekers”. But we can add more recommendations that aim to shape an employer branding strategy to a specific gender and culture. The promotion of specific jobs or specific features of the organization should be made in accordance to the target group. Attracting women to an organization can be done by insisting, for instance, on the flexible-time policy of the organization or by a strong supporting system that provides training and support for women. Having a female leader occupying non-stereotypical office (CFO for instance)

also enhances the employer attractiveness among women (Iseke & Pull, 2017). On a more general note, paying attention and understanding the needs of a specific target group including different parameters such as age, gender or culture should be paramount. Organizations around the world already vastly apply this segmentation strategy to customers by offering different products; however especially in Asian countries, too often attracting different candidates is done via a unique recruitment method. The attractiveness of an employer will increase consequently if the targeted candidate perceives that the dimensions important to them are also valued by the organization.

4.3. Limitations and future research

This study puts in evidence some interesting data but also comprises some limitations.

First of all, in resonance with Zhu et al's. (2014), we have conducted this research only on a small and specific sample, namely students at a university level in Chengdu. De facto, the perceptions cannot be generalized to all the population. It is very likely that our sample, based on student who will graduate soon do not have exactly the same perceptions about employer attractiveness than candidates who are actively looking for or job or even current employees of an organization.

Relatively close to the first limitations, we can highlight the fact that the study was done in a very specific part of China: the Sichuan basin. As mentioned before, the culture own to Chengdu and the Sichuan area is very specific and might not represent the culture present in Beijing for instance. Unique specificities of this culture might influence the answers the respondents provided. Due to the inclusion of different cultures only in China, we might find slightly different results in other regions or provinces. Additionally, we used the scale already pre-established by Zhu et al. (2014) and nothing guaranteed us that it fitted our sample the best way. It was made and

claimed to reflect a Chinese perception of employer attractiveness, but it might not be the most suitable for all sub-cultures present in China.

Still related to the scale employed, another question can be raised. Established in 2014, does it still reflect the perceptions of employer attractiveness among respondents or on the opposite do some changes in the culture made it less relevant? Among the literature, we can notice shared opinions on a more general scale. Some argue that culture changes very slowly (G Hofstede, 1980; Geert Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004) but others sustain that economic development, for instance, contributes to distance oneself from traditional values and norms and to shift away towards more rational, tolerant, and participatory values (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). It is a question that we can ask ourselves due to the rapid economic development China has been through in the last decades. A re-actualization of the scale could be undertaken in future research.

The fourth point concerns the provenance of our respondents. The totality of them come from the Business school at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics. The input of our study was thus examined under only one perspective. Future research could focus on the perceptions of employer attractiveness from other departments such as engineering. The items they valued could get different results due to the fact that perceptions are partially shaped by the respondents' field of study. Thus, testing perceptions in different majors could allow us to determine the role and importance of the major in the perceptions towards employer attractiveness.

Finally, our last recommendation would be to do a cross-finding with the view of employer attractiveness from an employer perspective. Having the perceptions of employer attractiveness from the candidates and the employer perspective could help to draw a more complete picture of the employer branding landscape in China. It would be interesting to see if both views are aligned and compatible.

We can also prescribe for future research to have a closer look at the dimension innovativeness which was found not salient by Zhu et al. (2014). Quickly redefining this term would help us to understand its importance, more especially in the Chinese context. One definition is that “innovation is the specific function of entrepreneurship, whether in an existing business, a public service institution, or a new venture started by a lone individual” (Drucker, 1985), Drucker completed this definition by saying that innovation is “the means by which the entrepreneur either creates new wealth-producing resources or endows existing resources with enhanced potential for creating wealth”. Judged as extremely critical for firms, innovation and entrepreneurship are, by observation of the twenty-first century competition landscape, judged to associate with the position of market leader. The innovativeness process equally sustained by the will of the Chinese government (discussed briefly in the literature review section) could become salient and attractive to the respondents in a couple of years. Further study needs to be done regarding the role of this dimension in the employer attractiveness process.

5. Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature by improving the knowledge already present about the Chinese culture and the gender differences that exist regarding the employer of choice. In the first place, the contribution is made by re-validating the scale created by Zhu et al (2014) by re-using it in a different context with a four-year interval. Our findings showed that all the dimensions of the scale are still prevalent today and that the respondents of our survey highly valued the five dimensions. Possible explanations were given to sustain the high score obtained; the Chinese culture has been one of the most important criteria that influence this high rating, namely by Hofstede's study and the approach to the Confucianism principle that has shaped Chinese culture: the filial piety (孝). Naturally, numbers of parameters enter into account and we evoke some unique measures and features of the Chinese culture such as the "one-child" policy or the concept of "Mianzi" (面子).

Then, among the five dimensions, we found that three of them showed significant differences between male and female. The dimensions that found to have a significant different perception are the dimension work-life effectiveness, recognition and opportunity for development. The variation in results due to the gender differences was explained mainly via psychological theories. We supported the ideas that these differences are not anatomically-based but rather found their roots in notions of pronatalism induced by societies, "norms" that force individuals to display their emotions differently and on the big five personality traits (Goldberg, 1993) fortified by cross-gender studies. On a managerial level, these results mean that managers should value these dimensions when establishing their employer branding strategy, but they should, most importantly, adapt it to their target groups. We have seen that employer attractiveness can be perceived differently according to the gender of the individual and thus the accentuation of some aspects or dimensions should be considered.

This study also includes some limitations, namely our sample is limited and cannot reflect the features of a population, because we conducted our study in a very specific part of China: the Sichuan basin and consequently the results harvested in this area might be different from those in Shanghai or Beijing. Our study might seem small in terms of contributions made but it may open the way for further investigations in a country where much still remain to be explored and where the conception of sex-equality just begins to arise. It would be interesting to see, on a psychological level, what contributes to the differences between male and female concerning their employer of choice, but also to extend this study to other areas of China to get a bigger picture of the whole country. The journey to enrich the literature about employer branding in china is still long and needs further completion.

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7. Annexes

Annex 1: Questionnaires in English/Chinese

Survey

Informative/Consent letter

Hello !

Thank you for your participation, the responses you will provide us will be extremely valuable to us.

This questionnaire will take you no more than 3 minutes to fill in.

We would like to remain you that any participations to this survey is voluntary and anonymous. We won't, in any case, use the data you will provide us to any commercial purposes.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the choice of an employer from a student perspective. We want to understand what freshly graduates value regarding their application to an organization. In other words, why do you choose this company?

The survey, part of our master thesis, is about personal preferences regarding the employer choice after graduation at University. The first part of the survey concerns the completion of basic information about yourself (gender; age etc...); then the second part, will address the core of this study and offer you to answer to different thematic regarding the preferences of your future employer.

Thank you for your time and good luck!

If you have any questions regarding this survey or the thesis in general, please free to contact Maximilien Guery by e-mail : mgyna@iscte-iul.pt

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School of Business Administration

Personal information

1. What is your gender? Male / Female
2. How old are you?
3. Which year are you at university?
4. Which department do you belong to? (Marketing etc...)

Employer Branding

Regarding the employer of choice, I personally think the following item is important:

Compensation and benefits:

1. Pay competitiveness (The salary compare to competitors)
2. Pay equity (Individuals in the same workplace be given equal pay)
3. Pay stability
4. Long-term incentive (reward executives for achievement of the company's strategic objectives : stock options, restricted stock, performance shares, cash, or stock-settled performance units)
5. Social insurance
6. Job stability

Work-life effectiveness

7. Meaning of work
8. Management participation
9. Flexible working-time
10. Paid vacation
11. Health welfare
12. Family-friendly benefits
13. Working environment

Recognition:

14. Performances bonuses
15. Performance-feedback
16. Recognition incentives
17. Trust and respect
18. Self-value actualization

Opportunity for development:

19. Training system
20. Career mentor
21. Skill improvement
22. Career advancement
23. Organization prospects

Organization marks:

24. Organizational culture
25. Leadership
26. Organizational image (perceptions individuals have about the company: fame, prestige etc..)
27. Ownership (Who is the owner of the organization...)
28. Fair procedure
29. Working experience

Scale

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

Thank-you ending

Thank you for your participation!

调查问卷

告知/同意信：

您好！

感谢您的参与，你提供的反馈对于我们来说是十分有价值的。这份问卷将花费您不超过三分钟的时间来完成。

这份问卷的目的是为了了解影响学生对雇主的选择的因素有哪些，通过大学毕业生对组织机构/公司的选择来明晰其价值取向。总的来说就是，分析毕业生选择某一企业就职的原因。

这个调查是我们关于“大学毕业后雇主选择的个人取向”的硕士论文的一部分。问卷的第一部分需要您填写一些个人信息（性别、年龄...），第二部分是本调查的核心部分，我们将通过不同的主题设定来了解您对于未来雇主的选择倾向性。

（此问卷在自愿条件下匿名填写，我们不会将您的任何信息运用于商业盈利。如果您关于此问卷或者此文章有任何问题，请通过邮箱mgyna@iscte-iul.pt来联系本文作者Maximilien Guery。）

Maximilien Guery

西南财经大学

工商管理学院在读研究生

个人信息

- 1.性别：
- 2.年龄：
- 3.年级：
- 4.专业：

雇主品牌

关于雇主的选择，我认为以下几项内容是重要的：

报酬和利益

- 1.薪酬竞争力（相较于竞争对手的薪水而言）
- 2.薪酬平等（不同个体在相同的工作场所下薪酬水平相同）
- 3.工资稳定性
- 4.长期激励机制（为达到公司战略目标而施行的奖励，如：股票期权、限制性股票、业绩股票、现金等）
- 5.社会保险
- 6.工作稳定性

工作、生活间的效率平衡

- 7.工作的意义
- 8.管理参与

- 9.灵活的工作时间
- 10.带薪假期
- 11.卫生福利
- 12.易于家庭的福利
- 13.工作环境

个人认可：

- 14.绩效奖金
- 15.绩效反馈
- 16.激励机制
- 17.信任与尊重
- 18.个人价值的实现

发展机会：

- 19.锻炼系统
- 20.职业规划引导
- 21.技能成长
- 22.职业发展
- 23.组织前景

组织标志：

24.组织文化

25.领导

26.组织形象（个人对公司的看法：名望，声望等）。

27.所有权（谁是组织的所有者.....）

28.公平程序

29.工作经验

赞同度：

1.完全同意

2.同意

3.中立

4.反对

5.完全反对

感谢您的参与！