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OPPONENT'S REVIEW

Doctoral Thesis

Author: Cleophas Attor

Title: Internal Employee Branding as a Strategic Tool for Building a Brand Image within the Banking Industry: Evidence from an Emerging Economy

Degree Program: Economics and Management

A) Topic Relevance

Internal Employee Branding as a Strategic Tool for Building a Brand Image within the Banking Industry: Evidence from an Emerging Economy is an investigation into the relationship between internal employee branding initiatives and developing positive brand image within the banking industry. Utilizing two very well-known theories of social exchange theory and brand equity theory to support and develop hypotheses is a modern approach to further developing current understandings. The approach overall is relevant to today's financial environment as well as furthering theoretical understanding and application.

B) Achieving dissertation stated goals

The objectives of the investigation were met as this investigation furthered the body of knowledge in the theoretical sense, as well as indicated direction for practitioner use in the banking industry. Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 involved the theoretical background of the two main theories utilized in the endeavor: Brand Equity Theory (BET) and Social Exchange Theory (SET). What was written was acceptable, however, adding more depth and citations

would increase the effectiveness of the paper. For example, the two sections combined are less than a page of writing. Major theories such as these have hundreds (or more) citations, possibly many of which are directly related to the financial industry and/or banking specifically.

The conceptual framework (section 2.2) was an effective visual tool. Figure 1 was clear and allowed any reader to visualize the study. The author did well elucidating and explaining the four factors of IEB (Communication, Trust, Empowerment, and Engagement) and BEB (Brand Attachment, Brand Consistency, Brand Salient, and Brand Appreciation). These concepts are utilized in each hypothesis, and the previous definitions and descriptions allow for greater understanding.

Sections 2.3.1 through 2.3.7 were well written, logical, and clear in explaining the intent of the research. For example, section 2.3.2 Trust was superb. The logical build, along with citations for each statement delivered and exceptional development and support for Hypotheses 4a through 4c made very clear and supportable explanations,

For improvement, this same format should be applied to sections 2.3.6-2.3.9. The lack of consistency with previous sections was noticeable. The lack of development and support for these hypotheses was noticeable by comparison.

Section 2 of the paper was overall the strongest of all the sections and very well done.

C) Research methodology and dissertation outcomes, mentioning contributions and benefits made by student

The methodologies used are described in section 3.1 and are relevant to the research questions and the theme of the thesis. The methodologies of the thesis reflect understanding in the use of descriptive research. The section is somewhat limited in depth. Section 3.1 could be improved by specifically stating which design is chosen and the specific reasons why the design type was chosen. Application would be enhanced for practitioners with this addition as well.

Section 5 was the weakest portion of the paper. I was looking forward to the author's interpretation of the results. There was no discussion of the quantitative aspects. Section 5.1 included Table 3, which provided a summary of the qualitative data. However, this could have been presented in a much more effective manner. Again, discussion for both qualitative and quantitative results would be invaluable to any reader. This section needs significant development to be publishable.

D) Importance for practice and development of the science itself

The two sections of Theoretical (6.1) and Practical Relevance (6.2) were very well done. The theoretical relevance demonstrated an understanding of the material and the ability to utilize current theory, as well as add to existing knowledge bases in future endeavors. The practical relevance was lesser quality but still good. The final paragraph of this section needed to be previously mentioned, cited, etc. especially in the discussion section to maximize effectiveness.

E) Formal aspects and the language level of the dissertation

Overall, the thesis is well-written but included a few typos. I'd suggest proofreading the thesis to check the accuracy of language use and edit when necessary. Any basic grammar and punctuation software would fix these issues. Also, ensure using the correct format listing your publications.

There are also cases of word choice that harm the effectiveness of delivering the value of a particular concept. It may be difficult to follow especially for the practitioner, who lacks theoretical or higher-level knowledge on the subject: (e.g., "In trade, a party may incur costs in addition to receiving rewards; as profit, the difference between the two approaches maximum, the party's behavior is less likely to occur." p. 6). The candidate would improve the effectiveness of the paper by revising this and similar sentences to ensure clarity of the point being made.

F) Student's publishing

The PhD student list four conferences and a doctoral seminar presentation. More recently, the student has published three articles in reputable journals. This is a good start for a new academic.

Thesis constitutes an adequate understanding and contribution to the knowledge of the field. The thesis is generally well-written. It requires minor modifications in reference to the comments above. Therefore, **I recommend this thesis to be accepted**, though minor corrections are suggested.