

Employer branding concept for small- and medium-sized family firms

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Abstract. The area of this paper is employer branding of small-and medium-sized family firms. Its function is to attract the necessary quantity and quality of labour force to build competitive advantage in the market, differentiate from peers and thus facilitate company's prosperity. Labour shortage and aging society strike Central and Eastern Europe, therefore, employers face a disadvantageous bargaining position. Family firms, that are mainly small companies, are in a unique situation. Although employer branding is a useful and hot topic nowadays in some regions of the world, it is yet greatly underresearched empirically for some kinds of associations. To close this gap, this paper aims to present an employer branding concept. We extracted the output from a two-folded literature review on the existing knowledge about the public image of small family firms and the psychological needs and employee expectations about such workplaces and employers. We narrow down the area by handling a specific pattern of employees and conducting the whole research in Hungary. The solution we are proposing to fill the gap is an employer branding concept created by customization of the Business Model Canvas.

Keywords: employer branding concept, small family firms, motivational factors, public image and reputation, Business Model Canvas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Family firms (FFs) often face serious hardships when recruiting non-family labour force, especially if the region of their location suffers from labour shortage (Reuters, 2016). It is particularly true for highly qualified workers (Arijs et al., 2018; Binz, Hair & Wanzenried, 2014). FFs are not inherently more enticing or adverse in comparison with non-family firms, but simply represent singular virtues (Dawson & Mussolino, 2014). It is suggested by Botero (2014) that employees perceive FFs just as small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Apart from empirical findings, statistical databases in Eastern Europe do not distinguish between family and non-family ownership, to our best knowledge, only qualitative researches do.

According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, more than 80% of the registered companies within the country's borders are SMEs, more precisely, small or micro companies. They are the engines of the domestic economy and more crucially, they drive domestic entrepreneurial potential (Spinelli & Adams, 2010), in contrast with multinationals, whose majority shares are usually owned by foreigners. Therefore, multinationals' public image is incomparable with small family firms (SFFs).

Sageder, Mitter and Feldbauer-Durstmüller (2016) reported that employer branding related researches are very scarce. The present study aim is to contribute to this knowledge base by applying a qualitative research technique and an employer branding concept grounded by a two-folded literature review and the Business Model Canvas of Osterwalder (2004).

Deriving from SFF's size, numerous positive and negative associations are girding about their ownership structure and operational nature. Although the effect and the significance of these marks depend highly on the context, for example, whether a customer or a job seeker is approaching the target company and the global economic situation also counts (Block et al., 2016). As highlighted by Sageder, Duller and Mitter (2015), learning which perception matters to whom is still in its infancy. Besides, Gallucci, Santrulli and Calabró (2015) and Memili et al. (2010) made it clear that being endowed with positive associations on the public's behalf has a favourable impact on financial results. Positive reputation shapes occupational choices of individual workers (Van Vianen, 2000). Although, detecting which element of reputation and to literally what extend is yet unclarified (Block et al., 2016). Moreover, measures that SFF leaders can and do practically take to improve their companies' image is not an old and matured research area (Erdem, 2010).

The other layer of the present work is represented by the targeted jobseekers. Urde and Greyser (2016) examined why someone would opt for working for a SFF, instead of a large, non-family owned organization. A recent study grouped psychological needs that one seeks to fulfil and how a SFF can satisfy or fail to satisfy those (Elsbach & Pieper, 2019).

In order to conceptualize SFFs as a brand, with other words, their public image, reputation and attached associations, Astrachan et al. (2018) elaborated an integrative framework. Their suggestions help to understand the sender as well as the recipient side of branding, although they did not differentiate consistently among stakeholders in this respect.

We concluded that the research area is fragmented and only partially addressed. We shed light to the research gaps we wanted to close. Cited authors, especially Elsbach, Pieper (2019), Astrachan et al. (2018) and Block et al. (2016) have drawn attention to three main research areas: first, the public image of SFFs, second, employees' motives and third, how SFFs can take advantage of their reputation while branding themselves as employers. As a novelty, this paper aims to contribute to all three topics, not in a generalized manner, but in a specific way. First, we addressed to public associations of SFFs from the viewpoint of potential employees. Second, we scrutinized summarized benchmark employee's motives and expectations about the workplace stemming from the opinions of Hungarian FFs employees. Third, we developed a theory of how company leaders can influence their public image. And finally, we presented an employer

branding concept. The point of this concept is to reveal what attributes employers should emphasize, through what channels, in order to make themselves attractive as an occupational choice for a specific kind of employees.

The content of the paper can be summarized like this. First, we describe the methodology creation procedure and the context around our benchmarked employee (Methodology). Afterwards, based on literature review we identified their motivations, psychological needs and on the other hand, gathered what associations are attached to SFFs (Theoretical background). This is followed by the theory of “altering” associations (Theory development). Finally, we proposed an employer branding concept in a form of a tailored Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder, 2004). We offer this study for consideration for small family firms (Discussion and Conclusion). We are aware that our work entails several limitations. We described them and proposed future research agendas to complement and continue (Limitations and suggestions for future research agendas)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research approach and selection criteria of the sample

The applied research method is purely qualitative in nature and inductive (Daly, Hannon & Brady, 2019). To accomplish our goal, to identify employee needs, what shall be considered during employer branding activities, we took a Hungarian family owned SME firm as an example. We were not entitled to name it, so we refer to it as “TechVenture” from now on. It has an international presence in the engineering consultancy industry.

While selecting the benchmark firm, we stuck to a couple of criteria. First, the subject needed to be managed and owned too by a 100% by members of the same family. Apart from that, the company must operate in a highly competitive labour market environment (Keller, 2008). The necessary expertise is in shortage in Hungary (Reuters, 2016), even in the capital, where TechVenture is located. The demographic features we considered were referred as the most significant ones by Adam-Müller et al. (2015). The importance of the length of stay in the same company and whether the employee is in an executive position or not, – particularly, their impact on the changing motivational factors, – was highlighted by Bellas et al. (2014) and Leung-Clegg (2001). How labour market situation varies among blue-collar and white-collar occupations are obvious, as a recent study of Block et al. (2016) confirmed.

The selected “TechVenture” company meets the above requirements.

Creating the benchmark employee, we asked for demographic data of the members of a working team (company department). From the raw data, we created one representative employee by averaging, where it made sense. Starting out of a precise example, instead of conducting a wide-scale survey, was inspired by the problematic nature of generalization as mentioned in the preceding.

The team consisted of sixteen people: 12 males and 4 female. We averaged the demographic data driven by the requirement to have an appropriately homogenous sample. To sum up the demographic profile of the representative employee, who we call Jaden from now on, is a 29 years old male, graduated at bachelor level in a university. He had 3 consecutive years of working experience in the exact vocation he is qualified in; he lives in a metropolitan city. He has never been in an executive position, practices as a white-collar worker, executing intellectual activities.

Based on a literature review about the topic of employee motivation (Glisovic, Jerotijevic & Jerotijevic, 2019; Gottschalk, Guenther & Kellermanns, 2019), we drawn up what psychological needs Jaden seeks to satisfy, so would pose toward any kind of workplace (Vroom, 1964). These expected socio-emotional outcomes (Zellweger, Eddlestone & Kellermanns, 2010) can reflect to the employer, workplace, and the

actual work assigned to him, or even to colleagues or treatment by principals or working environment and atmosphere.

The other main lineage of the literature review was collecting the associations about SFF's in general. We did so through the perception of employees specifically and systematically ignored other stakeholders'. And finally, we merged these two sides of the coin (Hepp, 2017) to resolve the question: how a SFF should brand itself, what association of it are meant to be emphasized during recruitment oriented PR activities to make the potential employee believe that a certain workplace is the most suitable for him. Putting it otherwise: what image to paint of it and by what instruments and measures? Hepp (2017) clarified that theories are also the guide and the result of empirical researches. In the present paper the guides are the psychological desires and SFF associations, and the result is an employer branding concept.

The template offered by the Business Model Canvas (BMC) helps to perceive the business operation as a whole. A model functions as a set of guidelines, standard or unprocessed example that is to be imitated (Osterwalder, 2004). Each guideline hypothesizes assumptions that have to be addressed during the process. The put it otherwise, the reason for the usage of the model is to signal which ones are the right questions to ask. As for the BMC, these questions are about: 1. key partners; 2. stakeholder segment; 3. key activities; 4. channels; 5. key resources; 6. cost structure; 7. value proposition; 8. stakeholder relationships; 9. revenue streams. These elements are organized on a single picture to foster better understanding (Deepa-Baral, 2017). The "nine questions" are answered with the consideration of the SFF's public associations and occupational motivations of the benchmarked employee.

To facilitate the understanding of our methodology and research structure we offer the Figure 1 to examine.

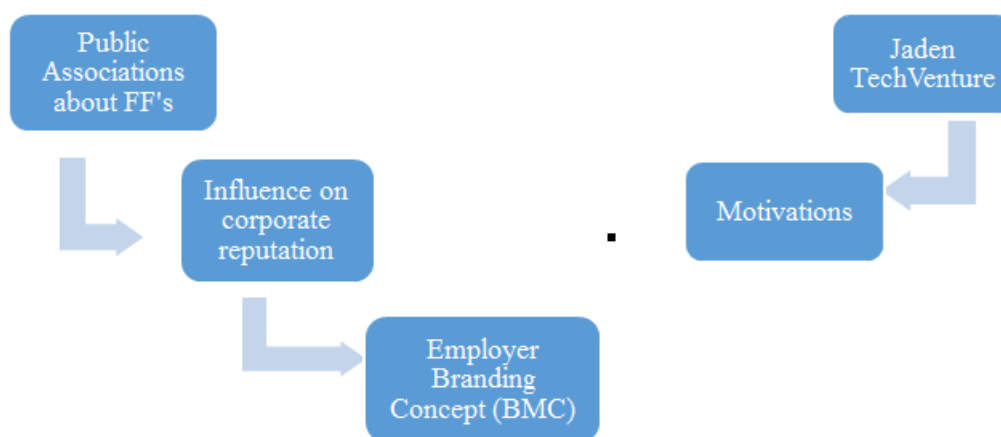


Figure 1. Research concept

Source: Own edition

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Public associations about small family firms

This section sums up reputation researches and family firm researches. Both areas has started to become popular in the middle of the 90's (reputation researches: Fombrun, 1996; family firm researches: Gómez-Mejía, et al, 2011). Unfortunately, we cannot date the intersection of the two subjects.

Good reputation lures in more job applications (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), so it is a vital interest to build it up and deal with it with great care. A remarkable methodological issue is that the relationship among

identity, reputation and image is not handled uniformly (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012). For us reputation is what truly matters, because it is how outsiders, potential employees perceive the firm or any entity (Dyer & Whetten, 2006), while identity and image are concerning the insiders impressions (Zellweger, Eddlestone & Kellermanns, 2010) and intentions (Astrachan et al, 2018). The most significant difference between non-family and family companies is that in the latter case, the family's name is strongly associated with the organization (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013). Therefore, the reputation of the organization and the governing family are hardly separable in the abstract realm (Zellweger, Eddlestone & Kellermanns, 2010). As Anderson and Reeb (2003) claimed, having a family, quasi a trademark, behind the company name, is more likely to bring benefits than drawbacks, if and when the family's name is spotless (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013)!

Name of a natural person gives the impression of strong social relationships. Hauswald and Hack (2013) proposed that the higher commitment to stakeholders are also observable in terms of strong social ties, because it hypothesizes ethical behaviour or striving to establish and maintain long lasting connections and values, such as trust (Krappe, Goutas & von Schlippe, 2011).

There are one huge negative connotation of being a SFF, more accurately, being an SME. Small companies are believed to have limited access to resources, both as money and technological or management know-how are concerned, so poor product quality is associated with them (Kashmiri & Mahajan, 2014). Controversially, service provider SFF's are famous for their customer satisfaction-orientation, regarding especially their helpfulness and willingness to tailor the output exactly to the individual wishes (Orth & Green, 2009).

Sageder, Mitter and Feldbauer-Durtsmüller (2016) compiled a substantial list of both positive and negative associations about SFF's. We complemented their table from lately published literatures' findings (Table 1). In order not to lose the focus of our study, we filtered out two groups of characteristics: which ones are also attached to non-family companies to the equal extent according to the general opinion and what are neutral or incremental for (would-be) employees.

Table 1

Associations about family firms

Association	Source
Trustworthiness	Beck & Kenning, 2015.
Social responsibility	Byrom & Lehmann, 2009.
Loyalty	Hauswald et al, 2015.
Persistence, stability	Micelotta & Raynard, 2011.
Authenticity (personally, organizationally)	Presas & Guia & Munoz, 2014.
Personality	Astrachan et al, 2018.
Professionalism (due to commitment and tradition)	Astrachan & Astrachan, 2015.
Looser formal regulations	Covin, 1994.
Credibility	Urde & Greyser, 2016.
Employee-friendliness, provision	Sageder, Duller & Mitter, 2015.
Limited career opportunities	Covin, 1994.
Nepotism	Feliu & Botero et al, 2016.
Lack of professionalism (due to lack of certain resources or nepotism)	Kahlert & Botero & Prügl, 2017.

Source: Own editing, based on the cited literature

Potential employees bear these features in their mind when approaching the company or simply when making decision about where to work, in a SFF or in a non-FF corporation. The associations can be accumulated into three bouquets of characteristics and each of these stacks encompasses positive and negative perceptions as well. First, they are persistent. It is good to sit on a stable chair in a workplace, although focusing on stability contradicts a basic economist-capitalist creed: nothing ventures, nothing gains (Krappe, Goutas & von Schlippe, 2011). Secondly, authenticity. That is an undoubted competitive advantage of a market brand, although it can hardly be perpetuated in the public's eyes without excluding each non-family member from the management. Whether it is true for the shareholders as well, is not confirmed to the best of our knowledge. Conclusively, outsiders can hope for limited career opportunities (Covin, 1994) and have less say into strategic matters. And thirdly, less formalization, which is maybe the least controversial feature of the three main branches. The absence of formal rules is the common exterminator between FF's and SME's though (Botero, 2014). Sageder, Mitter and Feldbauer-Durstmüller (2016) concluded that the older an SFF is and the more people it employs, more standardized the working conditions are. But, advantageously, the more consolidated and wide-spread the reputation is in the meantime.

3.2 Workplace motivations and expectations of benchmark employees'

The focal point for our motivation exploration is a fictional employee, Jaden, who is 29 years old. Reader, Gurtner (2014) and Twenge (2010) acknowledged, that young professionals' expectations toward their employers differ from those what middle-aged people have. Independently from their assumptions, changing patterns of the labour market also make their own impact. Young employees, in comparison with older counterparts, are more career development- and recognition-oriented (Kowske & Rasch & Wiley, 2010). Furthermore, they highly value flexibility and put more emphasize onto the social side of the work, both in terms of work-life balance and good relationship with colleagues (Bellou, 2009). However, Lub et al. (2012) noted, that in certain occupations, such as in health care or education, preferences seem to differ.

Reader and Gurtner (2014) conducted a study, whose sample was similar to Jaden's demographic profile on average about educational level, age and gender. During their work the following motivational factors crystalized out: opportunities to acquire new skills; opportunity to make personal impact; ethical and responsible behaviour of the company as a legal as well as social entity and of the managerial board in general; demand for regular and systematic feedbacks and see the appreciation of hard-work on the supervisors' behalf and having fun while working. Flexibility weighted moderately, just like space, time and possibilities to gather international experience. Remarkable though, that sometimes there was high difference in scores between the two genders. For women flexibility counted much more, while for males, digital networking did. Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons (2010) also reported influential effect of gender; this area also calls for more scrutiny in the future.

Hamilton (2000) found that young professionals are extremely interested in freedom. He also claimed that this fact is in correlation of entrepreneurial propensity of young intellectuals. It is not necessarily in contradiction with the demand for feedbacks, mentoring and superior reinforcement, quite the contrary: external "counsellors" assist them to improve their skills or to foster knowledge-sharing. Furthermore, delegated authority resolves the threat of boredom, because there is constant room provided for the free flow of new ideas; for realizing and implementing them. That is in line with Sonewane's (2008) discussion. He marked "full appreciation of work"; "interesting tasks", and "sense of responsibility" as the cores of motivation. Freedom results in free competition respectively (Feranita, Kotlar & De Massis, 2017), that grants equality among colleagues, which belonged also to the remarkably relevant job features.

The research materials presented so far all conflicted Taylorism. We had the impression, stemming from the deduction of Sagan, Tomkiewicz, Adeyemi-Bello and Frankel (2008), Bu and Mckeen (2001) that

financial aspects indeed matter in relatively underdeveloped parts within a country. Hosain & Hossain (2019), Cassar & Meier (2018), Cabrera-Suárez, Déniz-Déniz & Matrn-Santana (2014), Shujaat, Cheema and Manzoor (2014) evidenced, that it is not necessarily true. They respectively compared the meaning of the work itself and the firm-climate with financial aspects, particularly, the volume and stability of income and concluded that money has no primal importance, however Hosain and Hossain found job security has higher significance, but still it scored below job environment and atmosphere, which are again social, non-monetary pillars. The same conclusions are equitable especially for the social enterprises which are often family owned: social atmosphere and job conditions can be more important reasons for activity and employment than profits and remuneration (Bilan, Mishchuk & Pylypchuk 2017). This field also requires more attention and careful generalization. Moreover, after Sagan, Tomkiewicz, Adeyemi-Bello and Frankel (2008), Bu and Mckeen (2001) had expanded their study, they found that citizens of a developing country put more emphasize onto external motivational factors (salary or wage typically). But people in America or in Europe are more interested in intrinsic ones, just like the previously listed “intangible” items.

Based on the second part of the literature review and additional (older) concepts, we presented the following table (Table 2) to summarize the potential motivational incentives and expectations Jaden is likely to set toward his employer/workplace. We summarized the findings and had ignored the elements, what did not suit his demographic profile or occupational characteristics. Preferences are listed in a random order, because of the lack of consensus about which is relatively more affectual than others. Relative weight and interrelations are beyond our area. Closely related aspects are organized together, disclosed by double lines between the brackets.

Table 2

Motivations and expectations of the benchmark employee toward the employer and workplace

Motivation/expectation	Source
Career development opportunity	Kowske, Rasch & Wiley, 2010
Sense of appreciation of hard-work	Sonawane, 2008
Regular feedback from superiors about the performance	Reader & Gurtner, 2014
Financial compensation	Sagan, Tomkiewicz, Adeyemi-Bello and Frankel, 2008
Obtaining new knowledge and skills	Cassar & Meier, 2018
Strong social ties	Zellweger et al, 2012
Good relationship with colleagues	Benz & Frey, 2008
Room for idea-sharing	Hosain & Hossain, 2019
Autonomy and freedom	Hamilton, 2000
Participation in decision making	Reader et al, 2009
Work-life balance	Bellou, 2009
Flexibility	Walk, Handy & Schinnenburg, 2013
Good working environment	Belias et al, 2014
Application of digital networks granted	Ng, Schweitzer & Lyons, 2010
Ethically responsible behaviour of the firm's management	Koiranen, 2002
Equal treatment	Shujaat, Cheema & Manzoor, 2014

Source: Own editing, based on the cited literature

Through it is a longer list, volume of this paper could manage to address, we highlighted some bullet points with thick letters. We did so after ascertaining that they reoccur frequently in the literature and that

they are excessively relevant accordingly to Jaden's characteristics. Those groups will be what we concentrate on in the next section.

3.3. Theory development

In the preceding section, we identified, on one hand, what potential employees have in mind about family firms and, on the other, what motivational factors and expectations young professionals pose toward their workplace and employer. We took on the question here of how to convince target employees that the given employer (SFF) is capable as well as willing to satisfy their demands. Before assessing it, it is required to acknowledge what, how and to which direction certain activities or happenings formulate an SFF's image (Astrachan et al, 2018).

Santiago, Pandey and Manalac (2019) and Tong (2007) suggested the family's involvement into the business operation has a positive impact on reputation. It functions as a differentiator from peers (Urde & Greysier, 2016) and thus it is a valuable intangible asset (Wang-Yu-Chiang, 2016). Anticipated family ownership and management (usually indicated by family name) gives the impression of responsible and conservative strategy on the track of business (Kammerlander & Ganter, 2015). Expansion-oriented SFF's focus the most on reputation, although Chen et al (2010) observed that the targeted stakeholders, meaning: to whom the firm overwhelmingly fights to appeal to, varies throughout the life-cycle stages of the company. Here, we scrutinized only employees.

A SFF has always been comparatively "eager" to develop strong social ties with the community and stakeholders, basically through the governing family's friends and relatives (Zellweger et al, 2012; Webb, Ketchen & Ireland, 2010). It is pointed out that the stronger the social embeddedness is, the more positive the firm image is respectively (Marques, Presas & Simon, 2014; Miller, Le Breton, Miller & Scholnick, 2008). It is stemming from the family's excessive involvement in these connections are established mainly by interactions from private life. Consequently, the perspective of the firm is bounded by the family's attitude and its members' behaviour (Memili et al, 2010).

Exemplified by Kashmiri and Mahajan (2014), a proven track record of trustworthiness is an invaluable intangible treasure. It suggests conscious, responsible behaviour as well (Othman, Darus & Arshad, 2011), that is directly monitored by job seekers. The same authors have also noted that among trustworthiness' indicators are legal adequacies or its failure. But no doubt, that adherence to moral "requirements" upholds by a society always counts to the same extent historically (Guidice, Mero & Greene, 2013).

Economic merits weight less for them respectively (De la Cruz & Cabrera-Suárez, 2005).

Company size indirectly formulates reputation too (Roberts & Dowling, 2002). Large ones engage with environmental protection and product quality insurance to a greater extend (Block & Wagner, 2014). Zellweger and his co-authors (2012) confirmed that size; activities beyond the firm's frameworks, such as green initiatives for example, strengthen public awareness of the company and thus fuel competitive advantage. These positively regarded activities intertwine with the family's surname.

Conclusively, trust is embedded into the family members and not into the company itself. Reflecting to Deephouse and Jaskiewicz's (2013) study, we added that family member's private-life matters pose their impact on professional, business relationships.

Conclusively, our disposition is that social sensitivity, reputation and competitive advantages are bounded together in a linear relationship. These things foster better accession to various kind of resources (Yang, 2010), we clarified although, that we regarded everything on these pages only employees. Items, concerning other areas of business were ignored entirely.

Our scope is not meant to go beyond Hungary, knowing that cultural differences might need to be taken into the account. It is a very crucial implication for export-oriented firms that should be analysed.

We accorded the findings of the preceding two sections: the literature review of employee motivation and SFF associations; and the theories about the formulation of corporate reputation. Our theory is that employers can and should formulate their public image circumspectly. Our work did not concern whether the expectations are satisfied or not. Our question is: Can an employer – in this case an SFF – convince potential employees that he/she is able to meet those demands? According to the developed theory the employer is indeed capable of that. In the next section we present a concept and explain how to accomplish it.

4. RESULTS

In this section, we present the final result of our research, which is an employer branding concept.

Employer branding is a “targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perception of employees and potential employees, (...) with regards to a particular firm” (Sullivan, 2014). Potential employees’ assign a value proposition to SFF’s (Backhouse & Tikoo, 2004). That theoretical value proposition stems from the public associations about SFF’s (Gnan & Lambrechts, 2018), to put it otherwise, it is not the abstraction of the firm itself. On the other hand, the individual companies’ branding activities serve to shadow the picture and overwrite it (Astrachan et al, 2018).

Companies have to manage a two-folded task effectively: defining the message and transmitting it (Wickham, O’Donohue & Hanson, 2008). Deepa and Baral (2017) studied employer branding strategies through the Business Model Canvas (BMC), invented by Osterwalder (2004). They also agreed that employer branding is two-folded, composed of attention driver attributes and communication channels. The BMC model operates 9 key pillars, complemented with various sub-questions. We went through them one by one and also answered them relying on employer branding. So the model is already adjusted to our research. The “raw”, theoretical structure is not presented comprehensively and detailed. As for the final product of our work, we organized the result into a Business Model Canvas tailored to our findings. Below it, we described it in detail, explained the function of the main groups their related cells.

After working with a fixed model, we provided with guidelines, confines to approach employer branding. Therefore, it would have been superfluous in this paper to theocratize employer branding any further. Similarly, assessing the Business Model Canvas’ pertinence was not within our scope of research.

Table 3

Employer branding concept applying the Business Model Canvas

Key partner	Key activities	Value proposition: the triangle	Employee Relationship	Employee segment
employee	engage in social and environmentally friendly activities	well-established family name (good reputation)	psychological contract: manifestation of value proposition	Jaden
	demonstrate loyalty between employer and employee	direct care for the employee even beyond work	must be harmonized with the initial proposition to preserve trust and good faith	
	turn messages fitting to the preferential communication channels	friendly, informal corporate culture		

Key resources	good, strong relationship with colleagues	Channels
web designers		social media platforms
computer literacy	flexible working hours	company website
interviewers	trust-based freedom	world-of-mouth advertisement
good interpersonal skills of the competent HR workers	absence of hard control mechanisms (trust)	referrals of friends and relatives
	feedbacks and appreciation for efforts	
Cost structure		Revenue streams
expenditure on resources and communication channels		employee loyalty
		high-quality work, productivity and profit
		lower recruitment and training cost
		good employer image, well-established employer brand

Source: Own editing

Key partners. It reflects to the stakeholders and what organizations need from them, which are here only targeted employees and their expertise, commitment to the job.

Employee segments. The organizations' segmentation of employees, grounded by the analogues needs and attitudes of them. In this paper we are working with one model person so we did not dig into this issue. The point is that different segments of the labour force shall be approached differently. We talked about it detailed in the theory development section.

Key activities. The foundation here is how to convert proposed values into communicable messages, while considering a way they will fit to the communication channels. Put it otherwise, what signs should be seen by target employees. As noted before, SFF's build strong ties with the community. To reinforce the relationship, companies should engage in socially positively referred activities. Those can embody in various forms. Among the hottest topics of today's is environmental protection. Presenting environmental-friendly ways of waste disposal, organizing events to draw attention to climate change are signaling toward the public that the firm relates thoughtfully to the issue, and consequently, to the wellbeing of local inhabitants. It further contributes to favourable reputation and image. Henceforth, the demographic segment Jaden belongs to is quite sensitive to this specific topic.

Another key area, although less visible, is employee turnover. If it is high, it means that the company "forces" its employees to leave – openly or latently. If it is low, then the firm have earned loyalty and long-term retention and that is beneficial for both counterparts.

The activities and signs should also be adjusted to the chosen communication channel. Widely-experienced thing from daily life that environmental activities are usually "advertised" in social media platforms, although employee turnover is (compulsorily) declared in annual financial statements, but should be highlighted in company websites, if the figures are sound in this manner. Social media usage as a tool of market reputation increase has different effectiveness for different generations of potential customers and employees, however it always influences the brand value positively (Mičík, & Mičudová, 2018).

Channels. Intersections of the communicable messages and of the target audience's attention. Through SFF's, deriving from their size, have limited resources that can be allocated on communication channels. Young professionals were asked to judge the usefulness of communication channels (Deepa & Baral, 2017). Company websites, pre-placement talks, relative- and friend referrals (word-of-mouth advertising) and social

networks ranked the highest. Word-of-mouth and referrals are what no firm can influence directly. They are the culmination of recent intentional or non-intentional (e. g. scandals) marketing activities. On the other hand, an attractive and up-to-date company website and presence in a wide-range of social sites raise awareness in the public and the content itself shapes the company image. Consequently, it impacts the word-of-mouth channel too (Deepa & Baral, 2017). Through these focal points, direct influence may be exercised. These are favourable implications for SFF's because these "mediums" are not among the most expensive ones.

Key resources. The set of human, physical, intellectual and financial resources, those can be applied for the execution of the branding strategy. Financial resources are dominant in this manner, particularly, considering the brand perception by potential investors (Derun & Mysaka, 2018). To remain by the preferential channels, managing social media platforms, editing company websites require a certain level of computer literacy of marketing people. The appearance and logic overview of the website are very important to be appealing and easy to navigate in. Conducting pre-placement talks is purely a HR responsibility. Excellent interpersonal skills are the determining resources there. And finally, word-of-mouth advertisement is the one the firm has no control of. That is the reason behind its reliability in the perception of job seekers. Translating resources into financial figures concerns accounting and the actual market conditions, so it is beyond our scope.

Cost structure. The cost of attracting and retaining employees, beside salaries and non-monetary benefits. The expenditure of employer branding, particularly, the cost of channels and resources. Even the estimation of the cost of resources and communication channels would require a comprehensive market analysis (White, 2018), which reaches over the limits of the present study. As an example: the frequently cited word-of-mouth advertising is impacted severely by societal and even political happenings and thematic.

Value proposition. What compensations the employer can and does offer for the work and what needs of the employees it satisfies. At this point we could have repeated the "associations about FF's" section. To sum up, SFF's offer membership in a friendly and informal corporate culture, a well-established family name to work under, but direct caretaking for the employees, even beyond the workplace, is also remarkable. These are in line with Jaden's desire for strong social ties and good relationship with colleagues. In certain service sectors that are operating with high intellectual value-addition, SFF's are willing to permit flexible working hours. Absence of hard control mechanisms and thus freedom for the employees hence informal relationships, and it allows them to organize their workload at their discretion. Granting this autonomy is inherently important for Jaden, as clarified above and it signalizes as the appreciation of high-quality work exerted by him.

Employee relationships. The kind of relationship the firms aim to establish with the individual – or segments of – or all of its employees. It is highly dependent on a wide range of features of the association: the size, the organizational culture, the leadership style, the national culture of the management, the financial situation and so on. The summary of obligations of both groups of interest – employer and employee – is compassed into the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995). It is unique in all associations (sometimes even in departments), moreover, it varies among the seemingly similar companies as well. The psychological contract should be understood as the realization of the value proposition (Santos et al, 2019), thus we waived to mull it over again. In accordance with that, the value proposition is presented for the potential employees; in contrast, the psychological contract evolves during the employment, partially, laid down in the work contract or job description. It is beyond our research area. The psychological contract is not an explicit item, on the contrary, the value proposition is. The employer is ought to harmonize them. With other terms, they cannot afford to violate the value proposition by the psychological contract, because that is interpreted as a deceptive employer branding and results in disappointment and resentment on the employee's behalf.

Revenue streams. The outcomes of the appropriately planned and implemented employer branding concept can manifest in several benefits. Employee loyalty, high quality of work, strong commitment, long-term employee retention, low turnover rate, low recruitment costs, low training expenditures, so after all, higher profitability (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016). But neither our study, neither the Business Model Canvas refer to none of the listed items. The measuring methods are beyond the scope of this paper. And, just like in case of the cost structure, the exact cash flow is in the power range of accountancy and highly dependent on local economic conditions and labor market characteristics.

We accomplished the target of the study and presented an employer branding concept, tailor made to the unique characteristics of small family firms. The template, of the BMC considered two knowledge-bases: features of small family owned companies and job expectations and motivations of Jaden. The corporate features represent the weaknesses or strength's that SFF's inherently bear. Jaden's expectations mean the set of requirements that has to meet with the corporation's during the implementation of the branding concept. Shortly: the firm features are the tools to achieve the goal, to meet his demands.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite the increasing attention targeting family businesses, approaching them as a unique segment of employer has not been done by too many research agendas. To close some research gaps, data were gathered from the respective literature to address the following questions: first, how SFF's are perceived by the public, what characteristics feature them exclusively, differentiate them from their competitors in the eyes' of the potential workers. Secondly, what expectations and desires are posed by our benchmarked employee toward his chosen workplace and employer. We grounded it on his demographic and psychological profile. After the two-folded literature review, we developed the next theory: SFF employers can and should formulate their public image to attract the necessary quantity and quality of workforce. They might accomplish it by consciously and circumspectly managing their certain activities or external happenings, those affect potential employees' occupational choices.

As a result, we presented an employer branding concept for consideration for family owned, small-sized companies. Particularly for those, what are recruiting highly qualified labour force, but have limited working experience. To structure our implications, we chose a holistic framework, the Business Model Canvas. It compasses the strategic-level activities and methods regarding the practical implementation of the concept.

Within the framework of the Canvas, we identified variables, dependent on specific organizational (internal) or market (external) characteristics. These unknown factors raise numerous further questions. Those are meant to be examined individually in each case. While making progress in completing the concept by fixated variables the path opens up for the actual execution of the employer branding strategy.

5.1. Implications of the results

Our goal was to present an employer branding concept for small family-owned firms. The result is a holistic model of an employer branding concept for SMEs. Our findings made four fundamental implications.

First: the firms' value proposition should focus on two major tracks: socially responsible behaviour toward to the indirect surrounding community, as well as its stakeholders.

Second, the family ownership itself should be emphasized, because it represents tradition, trustworthiness and uniqueness.

Third: the elements of the value propositions are: working under a reputable name, granted trust-based freedom and minimal amount of hard control mechanisms.

Fourth: the communication channels to be used are basically soft streams or online platforms.

Brands are excellent tools to build competitive advantage. It differentiates any organization from its peers, which is crucial in a confined labour market and saturated with job opportunities. The “family nature” (Astrachan et al, 2018) is the core of this matter. The responsibility of SFF leaders is to identify those affectual features that can attract the attention. Afterwards, there are the task is to manage them effectively and communicate clearly. In order to cope with these challenges a comprehensive concept is required. That challenge is what we offered a solution for.

6. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDAS

Limitations occur at several level of the analysis. By taking one particular employee as the basis – even if he is only an imaginary one – we eliminated the problem of generalization. As a drawback though, we had to sacrifice general applicableness. Psychological characteristics and demands vary by time (economic cycles or seasons for example), age, culture, religion, by the given country’s/industry’s labour market conditions, etc. The influence of such items tends to be determining one by one in regard of workplace choices. What we conclude is that a substantial amount of combinations of demographic features can be used to create a benchmark employee. Each combination can ground an entirely new study.

On the other hand, we can name a couple of corporate attributes, what are not compatible with our findings. Non-family enterprises and large corporations, with more than 50 employees, can hardly benefit from the results. However, the methodology might be remarkable for them as well. We recommend for them to apply our methodology and draw up a concept that lays on their own public image and their own target employees.

There is another issue to clarify: how brand components interact with each other and with the family. That can be a very problematic gap; it should be analysed by more methods to evade biased conclusions: experiments, observations, case studies, in-depth interviews with both company leaders and their stakeholders, and so on. Deephouse and Carter (2005) put the example: death of the funding father, might underpin legitimacy for employees, and the remaining stakeholders. So, once the role of the individual components revealed, their impact on the financial performance can be addressed as an ultimate purpose of employer branding researches.

There has emerged a dividing debate over the product-quality of SFF’s. Some researchers claim that SFF’s are associated with high-end outputs, hence by accumulated expertise as generations pass by. On the contrary, others blame them for deficiencies deriving from the limited access to financial resources. Which side is correct, or in what circumstances need more investigation in the future.

As for the influence of gender on employee expectations, exactly the same can be said after reading Ng, Schweitzer and Lyons’ (2010) article. To the best of our knowledge, its actual effect is not yet proved statistically, it is still in a theoretical stage. During our literature review, we did not find regarding evidences, although Jaden was male, so this gap did not concerned our work at all, but we took the chance to report the gap.

Our results are conducted in the Business Management Canvas. This option inherently entails all the limitations what the model bears, but addressing the validity of the construct did not belong to our scope of study. And finally, upon the acceptance of the concept’s specific suggestions, some of brackets require further scrutiny before implementation. For example, a comprehensive market analysis of the communication channels’ market and the media sector (Deepa & Baral, 2017). The execution of the strategy should be also monitored and documented by qualified researchers. Each firm’s each “implementation-project” can provide a case study. The Canvas can also be customized for other stakeholders, ranging from

suppliers, to investors. Thus a firm is not only an employer, but an investment opportunity, purchaser or many else simultaneously.

A common handicap of each practical study is actuality. They are meant to be valid for a specific period of time, but grand tipping points of social and economic progression usually made them obsolete and call for new ideas, theories (Block et al, 2016) or whole research agendas. If too much time passes by between the start of the examination and the publication, utilization of the results, the findings' value suffers (Hauck et al, 2016).

Small family business branding is a young and prolific research area. Positive implications of the field are unquestionable, conceptualizing SFF's as a brand develops useful streams in family business knowledge base.

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