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BONUSES AND TRAINING AS AN EB TOOL IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECONOMY 4.0[1]

Summary

Purpose | The purpose of this article is to determine the impact of employer branding tools on the employee's perception of the employer in a selected company from the financial industry

Research method | In the study, the observation method and free interview were used for the initial identification of explanatory variables. The statistical method was chosen for the main part of the study. The exemptions were considered a dependent variable, in this case, and selected EB tools, such as bonuses and training, were used as explanatory variables. The survey was conducted on a sample of employees of a company from the broadly understood financial intermediation industry (30 people). Our research focuses not on the future employees, but on the current employees and those who have decided to leave their jobs. The research is preliminary. We also assess the suitability of the chosen method to achieve the set goal.

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Results | The results indicate that the relationship between the used EB methods, the amount of training and bonuses, and the employees' evaluation of the employer, is statistically significant.

Originality / value / implications / recommendations | We circumvented difficulty in measuring the employee's assessment of the employer by starting from the assumption that the extreme manifestation of dissatisfaction with an employer regards an employee's dismissal from a job, and the extreme manifestation of a good opinion of an employer regards continuity of employment. Employers should therefore take advantage of this knowledge when building appropriate bonus systems and training employees.

Keywords: employer branding, bonus systems, training employees, economy 4.0

JEL classification: J63

1. Introduction

Economy 4.0 regards digitalisation, automation, robotisation, artificial intelligence, IoT, which are penetrating the business world. This specific marriage of the analog and digital worlds allows the creation of a digital enterprise that is not only integrated, but also capable of more holistic, conscious decision-making. The emergence of the idea of Industry 5.0, in which the human-machine relationship, i.e. digital competences of employees, plays an important role, can be described as the ability to think using technological possibilities. There is therefore a need to acquire employees with such competences, to develop them and to maintain them (retention).

In the era of the knowledge economy and economy 4.0 – the struggle for talent has become a kind of competition between companies as to who will get the better employee. Employer branding has become a response to this phenomenon, but also a tool that effectively supports the competitiveness of employers in the market. Employer branding (EB) has thus outlined itself as a concept related to human resources in the area of attracting and retaining valuable employees, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the recruitment position of the organisation and distinguishing the characteristics of the employer from the competition [Grzybowska, 2022, p. 76; Tenakwah, 2021,

p. 209]. Organisations are therefore outdoing themselves in their efforts to differentiate themselves from their competitors in the use of pro-employee initiatives by setting themselves the goal of being an employer of choice [Pološki Vokić, Tkalac Verčič and Sinčić Ćorić, 2023, p. 25]. In the face of the challenges in question, the importance of EB continues to grow.

Building an organisation's image as of an attractive employer can include many instruments, such as flexible working hours, non-wage benefits, work-life balance, CSR/ESG activities, as well as training or bonus systems. In this study, we focus our attention on the last two. Training as a systematic process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed to perform specific tasks or achieve goals [Noe, 2017, p. 5] is an important EB tool because it influences the development of employees' competencies, their retention and reinforcement of their commitment, but most importantly, it increases the value of the employee in the labor market, which is a sign of investment and concern on the part of the employer [Kucharčíková et al., 2015, p. 52]. Performance bonuses, on the other hand, i.e. an additional monetary benefit given to employees based on their performance evaluation, are intended to motivate them to achieve better results and to strengthen their orientation towards organisational goals. These bonuses are an EB tool that, unlike standard salary allowances, reinforces a culture of accountability, recognition and results orientation. By linking individual performance to a specific dimension of gratification, it increases organisational transparency and the employee's sense of influence over his or her own compensation [Armstrong, 2020, p. 372].

When conducting employer branding activities, it is important to measure them. The idea is to check how, and if at all, these activities contribute to the employees' satisfaction, building their commitment or desire to stay with the organisation. It is worth noting that there are many measures of the employer brand appeal. The most popular include: presence in the opinion leaders, level of employee engagement, monthly runoff of spontaneous applications, level of retention of key employees, or activity on the company's website [www 1]. Before selecting the indicators used to analyse EB ROI, it is useful to organise them and to divide them into those that apply to future employees and those that apply to those already employed. R. Mosley [2014, p. 24] proposes to divide the analysed indicators into three areas, i.e. marketing activities, employer brand attractiveness, and conversion of employer brand attractiveness to the company's business activities. Within each area, indicators measuring EB activities inside and outside the organisation should be located, which will bring answers to the key questions for the company, e.g., are we reaching the right employees? (area of marketing activities); what are brand recognition and brand awareness? (area of employer brand appeal); what is the level of employee engagement and retention? (area of brand-to-business conversion)

The next step to achieve the goal is to set a hypothesis (define the variables and indicate what measures will be used for each variable), its verification (choice of method and calculations) derivation of conclusions from the obtained results. The logic of the conducted research, which by design was to study the relationship statistically, while avoiding too much subjectivity of opinion, led to the identification of explanatory and explanatory variables. Layoffs were considered the explanatory variable in this case, and the selected EB tools such as bonuses and training were used as explanatory variables. The research was conducted on a large sample of employees of companies in the broad financial intermediation industry (30 people) in 2018–2020. The statistical survival method was chosen for the study.

2. Employer branding

2.1. Describing the concept of EB

The concept of employer branding focuses on the employer brand management. However, an analysis of the literature authorises the conclusion that the concept has a much broader meaning. EB should be equated with the marketing, financial and sales activities of the company (in the internal and external labour market), which, as is emphasised, have an undeniable impact on the business goals achieved by organisations. In Table 1 we present the selected definitions of EB. As can be seen, there are such statements as: “a set of benefits”, “unique aspects”, “appropriate employer actions”, and “a set of attributes” which in the literature are referred to as the so-called “employer value proposition – EVP”. EVP is not only an appropriately tailored financial package, but also other important benefits promised to the employees in connection with their work at a particular company [Barrow, Mosley, 2005, p. 40; Edwards, 2010, p. 15]. In this context, it is necessary to agree with the opinion of H. Rosethorn [2009, p. 12], That EB is "(...) a two-way contract between an organisation and its employees – the reason why employees choose to join a company and the reasons why they choose to stay with it".

TABLE 1
Overview of EB definitions

No.	Author	Definition
1.	[Ambler i Barrow, 1996]	"The set of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with a company."
2.	[Lloyd, 2002]	"The total of a company's efforts to communicate to current and future employees that it is creating an attractive and desirable place to work."
3.	[Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004]	"An employer brand highlights the unique aspects of a company's employment offerings [...] and is a concept that differentiates a company from its competitors [...] through efforts to attract, motivate and retain the company's current and potential employees."
4.	[Kimpakorn, Tocquer, 2009] [Reis, Sousa, Dionísio, 2021]	"The image of the organisation in the eyes of current and potential employees."
5.	[Edwards, 2010]	"Appropriate employer activities in which marketing principles, especially in branding, are applied to HR activities concerning both current and potential employees."
6.	[Saini, 2023]	EB is related to the differential effect that knowledge of the company's brand has on employee responses as a result of internal brand management

Source: the author's own elaboration on the basis: [Ambler, Barrow, 1996; Backhaus, Tikoo, 2004; Kimpakorn, Tocquer, 2009; Edwards, 2010; Reis, Sousa, Dionísio, 2021; Saini, 2023].

Given this, it can be concluded that the main objective of EB is to build such an image of the company as an employer that enables it to retain and attract highly specialised, committed, loyal and motivated employees whose knowledge, skills and attitudes enable the organisation to persist and grow. It is important to remember that a positive employee experience with EB will result in the enhanced business performance, including strengthened relationships with customers, with investors and with other stakeholders with an interest in the company's operations [Miles, McCamey, 2018, p. 760]. This means that organisations must stand out from the competition and be seen as attractive employers to potential candidates and current employees [Highhouse, Lievens, Sinar, 2003, p. 431].

Today's economic reality, shaped by digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, presents new challenges and opportunities for employer branding. Increasingly sophisticated tools such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics and the Internet of Things are revolutionising the way organisations build relationships with employees and candidates. In this context, EB should be understood as a long-term, targeted strategy for managing an organisation's awareness as an employer, based on advanced digital technologies (AI, big data, IoT), with the main goal of successfully attracting, engaging and retaining talent, especially among generations Y and Z [Thomas et al., 2020, pp. 40–48].

Backhaus and Tikoo [2004, p. 504] write about two groups of benefits that increase interest in the employer brand, these are functional benefits (e.g., salary and flexible benefits and perks) and symbolic benefits (related to a person's perception of the organisation, such as the prestige or social approval a candidate feels when joining the organisation).

It is worth citing here the results of the research on people's expectations regarding the benefits they would like to receive when working for a particular company. In a study conducted by Randstad Employer Brand Research [www 2] on a sample of 190,000 respondents in 34 countries, EVB (employer value proposition) components such as adequate compensation and benefits offerings (cited by 62% of respondents), work-life balance (58%) and job security (58%) were particularly important.

Employer branding is consistently associated with the ability to retain and attract valuable employees, the talk is of so-called talent [Ahmad, Khan, Haque, 2020, p. 31; Chandrasekaran, 2020, p. 56; Arasanmi, Krishna, 2019, p. 177] but also higher retention rates [Kashyap,Verma, 2018]. Cable and Turban [2003, p. 2248] studied that candidates from organisations with a strong employer brand remembered recruitment materials better, and L. Rampl and colleagues [2014, p. 5], using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), confirmed these results.

Since this is the case, branding efforts of a good employer must be conscious and purposeful. These activities can be divided, by direction and by their addressees. This gives rise to a distinction between internal – which is the subject of our interest in this publication – and external EB. Internal employer brand refers to the image of the employer that has been formed in the minds of current employees [Lievens, Slaughter, 2016, p. 413]. This is a set of perceived benefits that these employees have identified in their workplace [Arachchige, Robertson, 2011, p. 30]. These benefits are intended – in the employer's mind – to provide an increase in employee performance, motivation and commitment. In other words, it is the way employees evaluate an employer based on their employment experience. The internal employer brand plays an important role in promoting the external employer brand [Itam Misra, Anjum, 2020, p. 680] because it presents a true picture of the work in the organisation – since current employees are the best ambassadors and spokespeople for EB. This state of affairs can be achieved, among other things, through [Grzybowska, 2022, p. 79]:

- proper shaping of internal communication (this includes providing clear, up-to-date, understandable information, and creating programs, periodic conversations with employees, periodic meetings, or spaces for exchanging views, such as employee forums),
- building a positive atmosphere in the workplace,
- properly shaping working time (e.g., using various forms of working time organisation about the needs of employees, such as individual working time, mobile working time, etc.),
- ensuring work-life balance,

- investing in employees (e.g., development programs, training, creating clear career paths),
- recognising employee expectations (e.g., by conducting satisfaction and commitment surveys or periodic employee evaluations, building appropriate motivation systems),
- team building (e.g., organising employee integration, business trips),
- proper introduction of the employee to the organisation,
- building an organisational culture based on clear, transparent values.

It should be remembered that a satisfied employee, whose needs are met at the enterprise, will speak flatteringly about his employer thus influencing the perception of the enterprise by various groups interested in its operation. It has been written in the literature that employees perpetuate a certain image of the enterprise, that is, its image, and are "business cards" or "ambassadors" in its external environment. This image is an image formed in the consciousness of employees based on their personal experiences largely related to the satisfaction of their expectations.

Of the numerous groups of indicators used to measure EB activities, the most popular are [www 1]:

- presence in opinionated rankings,
- level of employee engagement,
- level of positive recognition in the target group of candidates,
- monthly level of runoff of spontaneous applications,
- number of citations in national or industry publications (hr, ceo statements),
- referral rate,
- retention rate of key employees,
- positive statements about the company from recruitment competitors,
- rate of willingness to return to the company of employees who voluntarily left the company in the past few years,
- activity on the company's website,
- benchmarking,
- average time and cost of hiring an employee,
- level of employee turnover.

The multiplicity of these metrics should prompt those responsible for measuring branding activities to properly organise them to divide them into those that will apply to employee candidates and those that will apply to employees currently employed by the company. We suggest dividing the metrics into three areas [Mosley, 2014, p. 44]:

1. marketing activities,
2. employer brand attractiveness,
3. conversion of employer brand attractiveness to company business activities.

Measuring the effectiveness of employer branding activities can be completed by conducting surveys among employees. Taking such surveys seriously, and therefore responding to employee suggestions related to their needs and expectations, but also their pains, can prove to be an effective way of measurement.

3. EB in Economy 4.0

The question that needs to be asked is how can the achievements of Economy 4.0 be harnessed to implement EB tasks? Two perspectives overlap here: employee expectations and employer expectations, capabilities and limitations (technical, personal, financial, security and others). It is obvious that a company's entry onto the path of transformation of Economy 4.0 shapes its image as a modern company. And this builds the first sieve in the recruitment process, selecting people with digital competences and clear expectations. This also applies to the HR sphere, where EB tools are located. The fundamental phenomena noted in the HR area accompanying Economy 4.0, in a general sense, include [Madhumithaa et al., 2025 pp. 134–140; Jahri et al., 2025, pp. 80–83].

- data-based information about employees – collecting employee observations and learning about their requirements, desires and goals, using an approach to data analysis and machine learning,
- personalised employee experiences – individual career paths, specialised communication channels and personalised learning and development plans,

- digital platforms for employee engagement – give employees the opportunity to participate in initiatives where they can demonstrate their knowledge and interact with the company's culture and values,
- gamification and rewards – using industry 4.0 technologies to monitor and reward employee achievements and contributions,
- employee care – monitoring health, work intensity, working environment conditions.

However, several HR areas can be defined in detail, supported by the achievements of Industry 4.0; these include [Vidhya, Sundharesalingam, 2022, pp. 41–47; Da Silva at al, 2022, pp. 5–7]

- recruitment and selection process (based on transparent principles) – development and training program (recognition of talent and development in line with abilities),
- transparent employee evaluation system, aimed at improvement – coaching recommendations, not harsh judgment,
- remuneration system based on reliably measured results, eliminating discretion and bias (e.g. bonuses for achievements),
- various/flexible forms of work provision,
- shaping communication systems (from instant messengers, newsletters, to virtual teams, platforms),
- relieving employees of routine activities, allowing them to focus on important things (automation),
- relieving employees of dangerous activities (robotisation),
- decision-making support (AI),
- monitoring organisational behaviors (negative, e.g. mobbing, and positive, e.g. support, trust),
- helping employees with problems and navigating the new digital world,
- improving the process of introducing them to the company (virtual training, conversations, tests, quizzes, etc.).

Most of the above-mentioned achievements of the 4.0 economy in the HR area have a significant impact on the implementation of the aforementioned EB tasks. We focused our research on examining the relationship between the amount of training and bonuses obtained by an employee and leaving work.

4. Research methodology

The research question is: do the internal employer branding methods used by the company, such as training and bonuses, improve the image of the entrepreneur in the eyes of employees? The purpose of this article was to determine the impact of employer branding tools on the employee's perception of the employer. Since, by way of the conducted analyses, it was recognised that the extreme attitude of an employee's negative evaluation of an employer is his resignation from his job, it was this measure that was considered adequate to measure this phenomenon. The research was conducted on a large sample of employees of a company in the broad financial intermediation industry (30 people). To achieve this goal, the following research procedure was adopted:

- identification of EB tools that are used in the company, for this purpose the method of observation, interviews and analysis of documents describing the strategic objectives of companies in the area of EB was used,
- determining the impact of the EB tools used on the number of layoffs in the organisation, for this purpose survival analysis is used, which is a set of statistical methods for estimating the probability of the occurrence of a certain final event after a certain period. The survival analysis is based on the statistics and probability calculus.

The interviews and observation also indicate that employees have a clear career path, which is viable and confirmed by numerous examples. The interviews showed that the sample only included high-earners, which means that the reason for changing jobs based on the desire to increase their salary was not generally relevant. Analysis of the reasons for dismissal did not reveal bullying as a reason for resignation. There may have been other reasons for resignation that were not identified. After excluding these three significant reasons for layoffs such as low pay, lack of promotion opportunities and bullying, it can be concluded that the reason for layoffs is the lack of opportunities for personal development and other factors improving the employee's self-esteem. These factors are significantly influenced by the EB tools used such as training, and bonuses (recognition of the employee's achievements). One must conclude from this that in the analysed case the explanatory variables Data for the analysis were obtained from source documentation of HR departments.

There are many tools used in the employer branding, but in the case of the analysed employers, we do not focus on all of them. Therefore, a hypothesis was adopted for verification:

H1: The use of bonuses as EB tools significantly affect the employee's perception of the employer.

H2: The use of training as EB tools significantly affect the employee's perception of the employer.

As previously written, the number of resignations was considered a sign of the attitude of the employee's negative perception of the employer.

5. Survival analysis

There comes a certain point in everyone's life when they decide to change something and decide to leave their job. For a company, the loss of an employee can be a source of valuable information in terms of further development. This information can be extracted by analysing, respectively, the time between hiring and leaving an employee. Survival analysis, which is a set of statistical methods for estimating the probability of a certain end event occurring after a certain period, is used for this purpose. The survival analysis is based on statistics and probability calculus. The prelude to survival analysis is a clear definition of the starting point and the endpoint, which can occur only once in a given period. The resulting data set consists of two categories of observations. The first one is censored (truncated) observations relating to objects for which the final event did not occur. The second category, on the other hand, regards complete observations relating to objects for which the final event occurred. Survival analysis allows comparison of "survival" for different groups of objects. The survival function can be determined using the estimator formulated by Kaplan and Meyer, calculated according to the given formula:

$$S(t) = \prod_{t_j \leq t} \left(1 - \frac{m_j}{n_j}\right),$$

where:

m_j – the number of objects for which the final event occurred in the j-th period,
n_j – the number of objects, threatened by the occurrence of the final event in the j-th period

The period can be any unit of time, e.g., week, month, year. The proposed estimator determines the estimated probability of survival of t periods, where t is an integer.

The obtained survival curves can give information about the duration of employment of different groups working in different conditions, and positions, with or without benefits. When several curves for different groups need to be compared, the log-rank test can be used. The long-rank test, otherwise known as the Mantel-Cox test, is a non-parametric test comparing the survival function of two or more samples for which information can be censored. The test allows comparison of the obtained results adjusted for the probability of certain factors. It is constructed by calculating the observed and expected number of events for one of the groups at the time of each observed event and then summing these events to determine all time points for the event. The test compares the number of endpoints observed in the study groups with a hypothetical value determined by itself. The value of the log-rank test is compared with a distribution with the correct number of degrees of freedom, and on this basis, the p-value – the statistical significance between the curves – is determined. The log-rank test is considered to be a reasonably strong test, i.e. one that has a high potential for rejecting the null hypothesis of equality of hazards across groups. However, its limitations should also be borne in mind, the main one being the lack of range for estimating the population effect accompanying the p-value. Survival analysis is a very useful tool in assessing the risk of losing an employee. It enables determining the reasons for resignation, as well as identifying measures to prevent it. [Balicki, 2006].

5. Research results

Survival analysis is also called duration analysis. It is used to study the timing of two events. One should occur earlier than the other. In the case of this study, the time between an employee's employment with the company and his dismissal was analysed. The impact of employer branding tools, on the length of an employee's retention in the company, was developed. The research was based on information taken from an employee of the company and covers the years 2018, 2019, 2020. In order to perform the study, a Log-rank analysis had to be performed. This is a non-parametric test for survival analysis, allowing to compare the survival function of two or more variables. The study includes the effect of the number of employee training and the number of bonuses awarded on the length of employment. To analyse with the Log-rank test, the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis must be defined to explain the observed phenomenon. The calculated p-value tells about the rejection or acceptance of the hypothesis in question, based on a comparison with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Working people are sent to various training courses, to continuously develop and improve their skills. Each employee may receive a different number of them in a year.

The null hypothesis is that the probability of laying off employees does not depend on the amount of the received training.

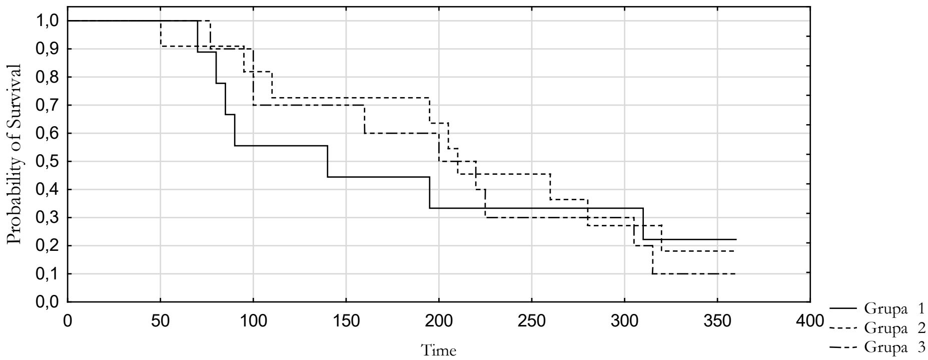
In contrast, the alternative hypothesis states that the probability varies.

The graph consists of an X-axis, on which time in days per year (0–365) was marked. While on the Y-axis, the probability of survival (0–1) The curves marked on the graph represented:

1. employees participating in one training during the year – (group 1 in the chart),
2. employees participating in two trainings during the year – (group 2 on the chart)
3. employees participating in three trainings during the year – (group 3 in the chart)
4. employees participating in four trainings during the year – (group 4 in the chart)

CHART 1

Kaplan-Meier's Probability of Survival – training perspective, 2018

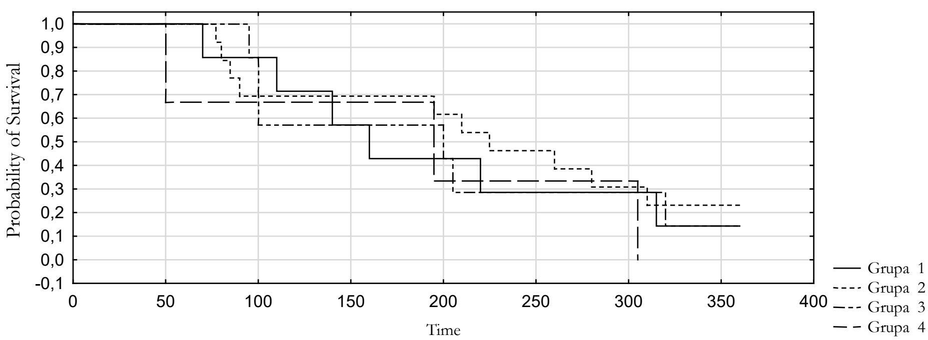


Source: the author's own elaboration.

Figure 1 shows the stepped curves after the Log-rank test. The curves along the entire length of the graph overlap, which is also evidenced by the calculated p-value 0.65917. This value is greater than the given degree of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. This proves that the null hypothesis is true. In conclusion, in 2018, the probability of firing an employee did not depend on the amount of the received training.

CHART 2

Kaplan-Meier's Probability of Survival – training perspective, 2019

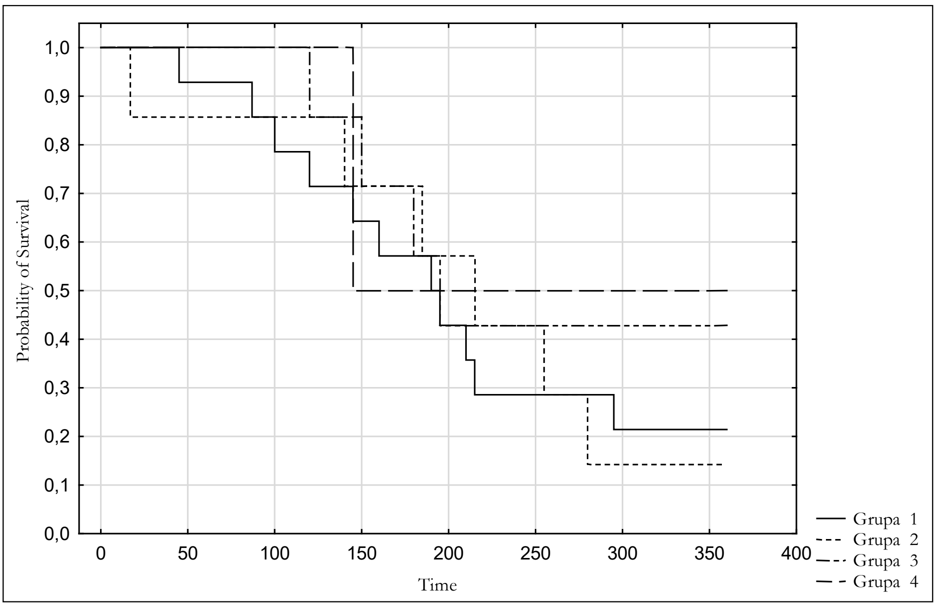


Source: the author's own elaboration

The stepped curves shown in Figure 2 represent the survival analysis according to the Log-rank test for 2019. The curves intersect or are close throughout, which is also characterised by the p-value = 0.86519. This is greater than the preset significance level α = 0.05. This allows the alternative hypothesis to be rejected. In summary, in 2019, the probability of firing an employee did not depend on the amount of the received training. The staircase curves shown in Figure 3 were made using the Logrank test for the 2020 data. The curves are very far apart, which is also indicated by the p-value = 0.00020. This indicates a breakthrough year regarding the analysis looking at studies of previous years using the same test. In summary, in 2020, the probability of firing an employee depended on the amount of the received training.

CHART 3

Kaplan-Meier's Probability of Survival – training perspective, 2020



Source: the author's own elaboration

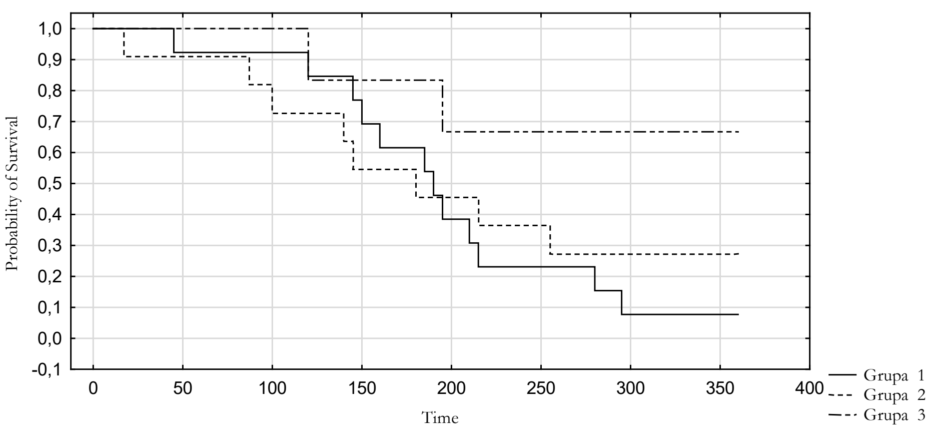
Another used employer branding tool is the awarding of bonuses. This has the purpose of motivating further cooperation and better performance. **The null hypothesis is that the probability of awarding a bonus does not affect layoffs. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis states that awarding bonuses to employees has an impact on their length of employment.** The graph consists of an X-axis on which time in days per year (0–365) was marked. On the other hand, on the Y-axis, the probability of survival (0–1) was depicted as 40. The curves marked on the graph represented:

- employees who received one bonus during the year (group 1 on the chart),
- employees who received two bonuses during the year (group 2 on the chart),
- employees who received three bonuses during the year (group 3 in the chart),
- employees who received four bonuses during the year (group 4 in the chart).

The survival curves shown in Figure 4 are for the Log-rank test performed for 2018. The functions intersect or are close to each other, which is equivalent to a p-value = 0.885. This allows us to conclude that the null hypothesis is true. This indicates that in 2018, the probability of awarding a bonus does not affect the dismissal of employees.

CHART 4

Kaplan-Meier's Probability of Survival – bonus perspective, 2018

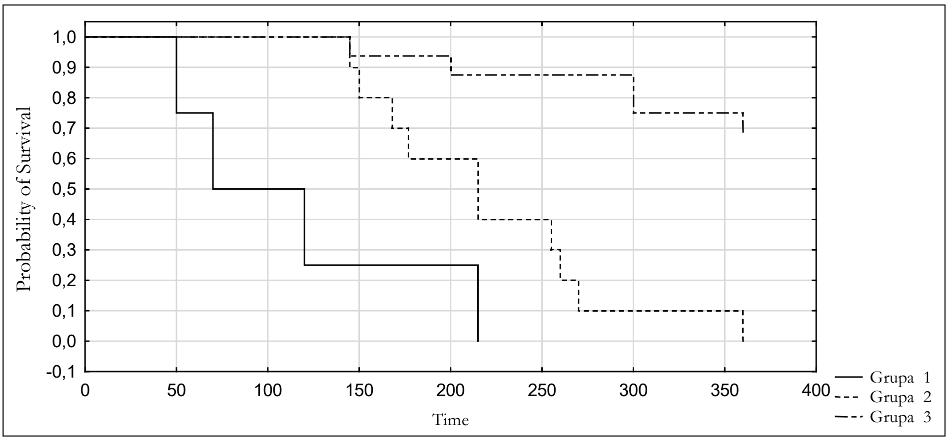


Source: the author's own elaboration

The survival curves presented in Figure 5 show the result of the Log-rank test for 2019. The group 2 curve (representing employees who received two bonuses) and the group 1 curve (employees who received one bonus) overlap or are close to each other, while the group3 curve (employees who received 3 bonuses) is close to the other functions at first and then moves away from them. This is also indicated by the p-value = 0.20455 based on which we reject the hypothesis alternative. In conclusion, in 2019, the probability of laying off employees was not affected by the number of the awarded bonuses.

CHART 5

Kaplan-Meier's Probability of Survival – bonus perspective, 2019



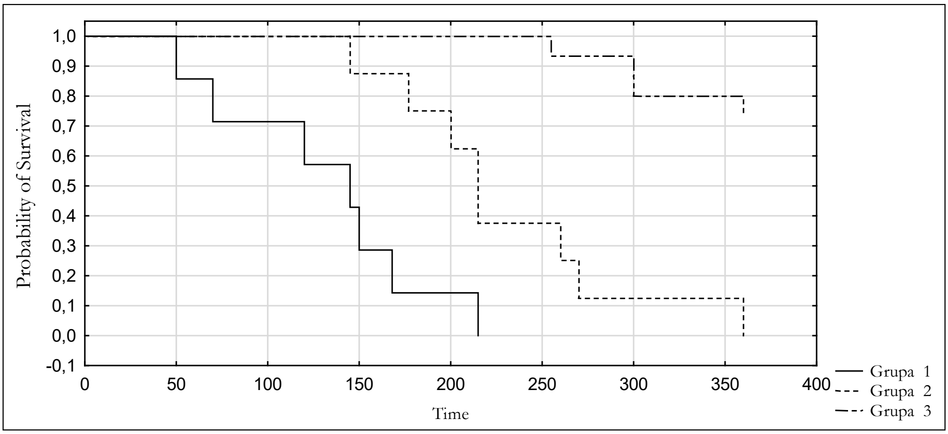
Source: the author's own elaboration

The survival analysis in Figure 6 shows the Log-rank test performed concerning the year 2020. The staircase curves do not overlap at all and are far apart. The p-value = 0.00001, indicating that the alternative hypothesis is true. In summary, in 2020, the number of bonuses affected the probability of employee layoffs.

One has to wonder why the results obtained for 2020 are different, whether it is related to market changes, changes in the labour market, the occurrence of COVID-19, a change in organisational culture resulting from training. The answer to this is not easy, we can only see that the number of layoffs decreased and indicated a correlation with the number of bonuses and training. Some resilience to the indicated external factors is indicated by the trend, the change in the p-value index, for bonuses, which was 0.885; 0.20455; and 0.00001 in successive years. The situation is slightly different for the amount of training, in this case we do not see a trend, which may mean a significant impact of external factors on the degree of influence of training on the employee's perception of the employer. In the case of training, the change in 2020 is not so significant and the p-value ratio is finally at 0.00020. Summarising the result of the study, we can clearly see a strong relationship between employer image and the amount of paid bonuses.

CHART 6

Kaplan-Meier's Probability of Survival – bonus perspective, 2020



Source: the author's own elaboration

Verification of Hypothesis 1

After the analysis, it can be concluded that over the years 2018, 2019 and 2020, the effect of the amount of training on the length of employment of employees in the financial intermediary company significantly increased. This can be seen by comparing 2018, where the p-value was quite high and amounted to p = 0.65 while in 2020 the value significantly decreased and amounted to p = 0.0002. This is clear from the fact that the probability of laying off employees is influenced by the amount of training they receive. This shows how important the employer branding tool of employee training has become in the company over the 2018–2020 period.

Verification of Hypothesis 2

Based on the above research, it can be concluded that the importance of employer branding tools in the company has developed significantly over the three years. They have begun to have a major impact on the length of employment of employees at the company. This can be seen by comparing 2019, where bonuses had no impact on the probability of employee layoffs, and the p-value was quite high. In contrast, in 2020 there was a breakthrough in the aspect of the impact of the amount of bonuses on the length of employment and the p-value significantly decreased ($p = 0.00001$). This demonstrates an increase in the importance of motivators in the company, which indicates a concomitant increase in the importance of employer branding.

6. Discussion

In our research, training and bonuses are an important part of shaping a company's image. In the context of training, Da Silva and colleagues' research [2022, pp. 1–2] confirms this. They point out that in an era of the ongoing digital transformation processes, employees need to have the skills necessary to collaborate between people and machines, in the process of digitisation, and in the areas of technology and human resource management. Digital transformation requires having the skills to ensure usability and efficiency in the use of digital technologies. This means that the labor market must adapt to the related requirements, as the increase in intelligence in technological systems and the generation of complex data require increasingly skilled workers to make decisions in very different areas of work. Training statistics are worth noting. They indicate, among other things, that [www 4]:

- companies that have comprehensive training programs have 218% more income per employee than companies without formalised training programs.
- when employees participate in the training they need (and want), companies are 17% more productive.
- 59% of employees believe that training directly improves their productivity.

- 45% of employees say they are willing to stay in their jobs if they receive training
- 92% of employees indicate that on-the-job training has a positive impact on their job commitment
- 40% of Fortune 500 companies use learning management systems to remain competitive.

In the context of bonuses as an employer branding tool, it is worth citing the results of the "Nationwide Survey of Bonus Systems 2025", which reveal a somewhat different state than in our survey. They show that although bonuses have motivational potential, their effectiveness is often limited. As many as 32% of employees are dissatisfied with current bonus systems, and 33% consider them unfair.

The key problems include [www 5]:

- Lack of transparency – 49% of employees find bonus rules unclear.
- Subjectivity – at 29% of companies, bonuses are discretionary, which undermines the sense of fairness.
- Low motivation – while 85% see bonuses as beneficial to the company, only 30% feel truly motivated by them.
- Expectations – 66% of employees prefer a raise with the possibility of a bonus rather than solely a higher base salary.
- The amount of bonuses – they usually represent only 5–10% of annual salary.

In summary, the main problem is the unpredictability and the lack of connection between bonuses and the actual performance, which reduces their value as a motivational and image tool. Meanwhile, in our study, the respondents may have been a group with a higher level of commitment, which causes them not to depreciate the importance of bonuses. The results confirm the Pareto-Lorenz principle of 20–30% engaged employees. The surveyed company has very clear criteria for employee bonuses, which distinguishes it from many other companies.

7. Conclusions

Employer branding has been defined as building an employer's image. These are all activities that help to build the brand of an attractive employer. The brand of an attractive employer is nothing more than an employer who is desired by the prospective employees. Employer branding in its essence is based on strategy. It is essential for a company to build its attractive image. With the help of the tools used in employer branding, it is much easier for an enterprise to achieve the set goal. The purpose of this article is to determine the impact of employer branding tools on the employee's perception of the employer (measured by the number of dismissing employees in the analysed company). A subsidiary objective was: to identify the EB tools that are used in the company. Identifying EB tools at first required learning about the EB concept and the tools it uses. In this light, an analysis of the tools used in the company was conducted. The main objective was achieved with the help of the conducted survival analysis. It examined the impact of tools such as employee training and the number of bonuses on the length of staff employment at this company. The study covered the years 2018–2020, in a group of 30 employees. Over these years, it was possible to see a significant increase in the impact of the aforementioned tools on the amount of layoffs. This could be determined by the p-value, which was decreasing. The year 2020 was a turning point. It was in this year that a significant impact of EB tools could be seen, as it was in this year that the fewest layoffs occurred. In conclusion, the introduction of employer branding activities will benefit the company if the activities are properly aligned with the company's strategy and goal. In the case of the analysed company, the goal was to retain more employees through EB/motivation tools for employees. Such tools mainly included high salaries, financial bonuses and training. The company, acting by motivating employees in these three ways, achieved a specific goal which was to reduce the number of employees who were laid off.

As for the directions of further research, it is important to emphasise the importance of the analysed issue in the company. The need to retain experienced knowledge workers with high competence and to attract new ones with the expected competence and personal profiles is the key to the long-term success of the company. This means that the issues analysed in the article should be deepened, and emphasis should be given to the study of the relationship: type of generation vs effectiveness of EB tools, age vs effectiveness of EB tools and others. It is also interesting to try to look for metrics that will be embedded in the concrete decisions made by employees.

Limitations: the main limitation is to conduct research on a small sample, hence the nature of preliminary research. The second limitation is that the research was conducted in one company in a specific financial intermediation industry, so the results of the research are true for that company and for companies of a similar nature. The third major limitation is the specific period of the research, 2020 is the year of COVID-19, which may have strongly affected the level of activity in the search for a new job by the surveyed employees. On the other hand, already in 2019 there is a noticeable tendency to reduce the number of layoffs in those with more training and bonuses.

The practical usefulness of the work indicates that training and bonuses should be an important element of shaping the company's image. Therefore, a significant part of the remuneration should be bonuses. The practical usefulness of the work indicates that training and bonuses should be an important part of shaping the image of the company. Thus, bonuses should be a significant part of compensation. This is especially important in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the accompanying social changes. Committed, productive people expect adequate remuneration. The active use of bonuses in remuneration systems helps to improve retention of employees important to the company. Interestingly, surveys conducted universally by their nature will always support the majority position. However, given the Pareto-Lorenz principle, out of 100% of employees, only 20–30% are highly engaged and active, the results of the employee surveys will tend to be representative not of this group, but of the group of less engaged employees. This is especially true for bonuses as a component of compensation. The less engaged will inherently eliminate bonuses, while the engaged will support them. This is particularly important for the direction of further research. So, it would be necessary to look for the meaning, the impact of the compensation system in the various groups of employees separated according to the degree of involvement.

It should also be mentioned that in an economy based on knowledge and innovation (I 4.0), constantly keeping up with changes is necessary to maintain one's attractiveness in the labor market, hence the importance of training for both the employee and the employer.

The introduced research method is not often used in management and quality sciences, it seems that this method gives interesting results and the possibility of visualisation, which allows to better understand the results of the research.

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