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Corporate branding used by managers for attracting employees

--- A case study of Chinese company, New Oriental

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how corporate branding as the organizational resource with different dimensions used for attracting employees. Corporate branding is the cutting-edge organizational and marketing research field and lacking of empirical work, many researches make focus on the relationship between the organizations and its customers, few empirical researches make the contributions to the relationship between potential employees and organizations. In this thesis, the author conceptualized the framework of brand identity with intangible elements, such as vision, culture and employees to discuss how corporate branding to create values to potential employees for attracting them. The author chose the Chinese leading commercial training school, New Oriental, for case studies and empirical interviews are main source of evidence. The conclusion in this thesis revealed that brand identity is the foundation for providing core values as basic principles for recruitment and value proposition is also very critical factor for local-level company to make and implement HR strategies and activities for recruitment.

Key words: corporate band, brand identity, vision, culture, employee, recruitment

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1. Introduction

In this chapter, I discussed the background of this thesis and formulated the research problem and the research purpose, the outline of this thesis is also discussed at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Problem Formulation

In this increasing fierce business world, few can deny the significance of the quality of employees could directly influences on profits growth as well as sustain competitive advantages. According to the Select Appointment Employment Trends Survey, 2005, it indicated that employee attraction and retention, especially the staff with high-qualifications and right skills would be the fierce challenges for business. Companies have no option to develop a competitive strategy to attract potential employees adding their sustainable competency. Generally, it is widely discussed in human resource management, however, since branding is organizations' valuable asset and consequently brand management is the crucial activity in companies, it may also be used in the area of human resource management.

Currently, corporate branding is the popular issue both in marketing and management. Many studies (Balmer, 1995, 2001a, 2001b, de Chernatony, 2002; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003; Balmer & Greyser, 2003, et al) claim that corporate branding is the strategic resource to create values for their stakeholders and also as a way to attract their employees. Although, facing the present economic downturn, it seems that corporations have an abundance of high quality talents for choosing while it is unnecessary for corporations to pay capital and time to research how to attract the talents. However, there is the clear fact that the large number of talents in markets does not mean all of them are suitable for their companies, in contrast, it is rather difficult to find out the right talents and worse yet many corporations even are spoilt for choice by amounts of candidates for those limited working positions, therefore, the increasing number of "wrong" employees are recruited and make detrimental effects on organizations, such as slowing down the profits gains and diluting the corporation

culture (Maxwell & Knox, 2009).

The unique corporate brand could differentiate the companies from each other (Balmer, 1995, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003; Ind 1997, 2001; et al). Corporate brand is quite different from product and service brand, traditionally, the latter mainly emphasizes on consumers while corporate brand extends its receivers from customers to whole organizational members, such as employees, investors, suppliers and others stakeholder (Balmer, 2001a,b; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003) and there are many studies indicating that corporate branding plays a key role in attracting employees, especially high-quality ones (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Maxwell & Knox, 2009; Wheeler, et al, 2006; Barrow & Mosley, 1996).

The significance of corporate branding is discussed heatedly in many studies (Balmer, 1995; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003; Balmer, 2001a, 2001b; Ind, 1997, 2001). Balmer and Greyser (2003, p246) argue corporate brand is “a superior organizational lens” and Ind (1997) said that it is a series of values that could represent a corporation, while de Chernatony (2002) claimed that it is a cluster of emotional and functional values giving to their stakeholders as a special experience. Besides that, corporate brand is also argued as the corporate design and corporate communications (Einweiller & Will, 2002), the core values of corporations (Urde, 2003) and the interplay of vision, organizational culture and image (Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003). Admittedly, above definitions emphasize specialties and uniqueness of corporate brand, but they do not mention what major elements or components of corporate brand should have.

In my study, I am going to analyze the relationship between corporate branding and potential employees. Specifically, Balmer (1995) and de Chernatony (2000) argue the influence of corporate branding on their existing and potential employees, the corporate brand could be used as an organizational resource to attract and retain their employees. Some researchers said the corporate brand is also considered as a specific type of identity (de Chernatony, 1999; Blamer, 2001a,b, etc), a logical structure which viewed as a channel for stakeholder perceptions (Kay, 2000) and also “a process of creating and maintaining a favorable image and consequently a favorable reputation

of the organization as a whole by sending signals to all stakeholders by managing behaviors, communication and symbolism” (van Riel, 2001, p12).

In my point of view, corporate branding should be the strong “integrated approach with alignment of vision, culture and employee behaviors (internal organizational dimensions) with reputation, image and other stakeholder behaviors (external organizational dimensions)” (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p10). Furthermore, corporate branding is also the strategic resource by forming the unique organizational value proposition (Knox, et al, 2000) for recruitments and retentions. Therefore, in this thesis, I focus on the research between the corporate branding and potential employees.

1.2 The Research Question and Purpose

The research question in this study is to analyze how the corporate branding as an organizational resource used by managers to attract potential employees.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the corporate brand as the organizational resource with multiple dimensions and identify ways of these dimensions to attract potential employees carried on by the corporate and local level. Moreover, I mainly focus on the managers perceptions of corporate branding, however, views from employees are quoted as well.

Additionally, this study is also aiming to provide the practical guidance for managers for making recruitment strategies with theories of corporate branding and I also intend to contribute to new understandings of corporate branding for human resource management, which is not explicitly discussed sufficiently in corporate branding literature.

1.3 The outline of thesis

The outline of this thesis is presented in figure below (Figure 1.1). The whole thesis will be divided into 7 chapters. In chapter 1, I have discussed the background of

my study and then my research problem as well as my purpose. Chapter 2 is the part of my research methodology including the research design and method for this study. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the literature relating to the corporate branding theories and other relating theories with different perspectives from many scholars. The following one, Chapter 4, I will conceptualize my research framework by summarizing theories from the last chapter. Chapter 5 presents the empirical data collected by the firm in the case studies. In the next chapter, chapter 6 is devoted to analyze the empirical data. The final chapter, chapter 7, I will summarize the major conclusions as well as the contributions for the theories and practical suggestions for firms.

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	Methodology
Chapter 3	Literature Review
Chapter 4	Framework for Research
Chapter 5	Empirical Data collection
Chapter 6	Discussion Data
Chapter 7	Conclusions and Contributions

Figure 1.1 the outline of the thesis

2. Methodology

The chapter will present the choice of case company and the research design. Subsequently, the approaches of collecting the empirical data and the approach of analysis will be presented and the quality of the study will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Research design and method

Research design is the platform to offer the plan and structure of investigation to obtain answers for the research questions (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Since the corporate branding is comparatively new field, which is not only developed in marketing literature, but also discussed in the organizational contexts (Balmer, 1995; Balmer 2001a, b; Ind, 1997, 2001), it is very essential for me to make the deep understandings about corporate branding in the firm, therefore, the case study has been chose as the most appropriate research design. The case study is preferred to answer the question of “how” and “why”, which could investigate contemporary phenomenon within its real time context (Yin, 1994). In addition, the study purpose is also to identify the relationship between corporate brand and potential employee, which is also lacking of enough theories and empirical data. Therefore, the case studies would generate new theories (Eisenhardt, 1989) and also offer the ability for scientific research to “uncover the underlying structures and associated mechanisms of the observed organizational phenomenon” (Tsoukas, 1989, quoted from Tarnovskaya, p16).

Obviously, I also need to argue how many cases I will use for my research purpose, in this study, I chose one single deep case study instead of many surface case studies. However, the single case should be the critical case which represents the uniqueness and reveals the nature of phenomenon directly relating to the research purpose (Yin, 1994). Admittedly, one single case does not mean the empirical data come from only one market; on the contrary, it would have some sub-cases under the main case studies umbrella (Tarnovskaya, 2007). Specifically, the same case company

in different markets could become sub-cases with local views.

Another important issue of research design is data collection and analyzed. Bryman & Bell (2007) argued that both qualitative and quantitative research methods could be adopted in the case studies. In addition, data from various kinds of qualitative techniques offers a possibility to understand multiple perspectives of the phenomenon under case study (Yin, 1994). My study purpose is to analyze the relationship between corporate brand and potential employees, which is appropriate for me to collect “soft data” via the varieties of qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews, observations and documents studies (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

2.2 Choice of subject and case company

In this thesis, I present the first reason why the case study as the research design is to make contributions for a theory development. Corporate branding is updating fast, especially in China, which indicates its dynamic trend in business. Presently, more researchers are trying their efforts to develop theories. On the other hand, corporate branding is not only towards the product or service, but also creates values to multiple stakeholders (Balmer, 1995; de Chernatony, 2002; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003; Ind, 1997, 2001). Although there are many researchers who argue the importance of employee playing a vital role in the corporate branding (Balmer, 2001 a,b; de Chernatony & Drury, 2006; Chun & Davies, 2006), lacking of researches about how corporate branding could attract the potential employees. I intend to make the contributions to full up the gap in this part.

In this study, the purpose is to analyze how the corporate brand as an organizational resource to attract the potential employees, hence, it is very important to choose a case study to provide deep insights of a new research and also develop the emergent theory (Yin, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1989). In China, the staggering economic development has already attracted the great attentions of world; the increasing talents demand is the critical issue for all companies in China. However, the skilled talents is rather difficult for companies to acquire, especially talents with high-level English

(Diana Farrell, Andrew J, Grant, 2005), therefore, the proliferation of English in employment has rendered the increasing individuals to come to commercial English training school to improve their English or prepare for the variety of English examinations, such as IELTS, TOEFL and GRE, etc, which are not only for the job interviews, but also for the further education abroad. This situation makes the English training business very profitable, according to the statistics (China Education and Training Industry Report, 2007-2008); the whole profits of English training field in China are over CNY30 billion in 2010 with about 50,000 institutions. In this highly competitive environment, corporate branding is increasingly significant as a strategic resource for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Kowalczyk & Pawlish, 2002). The case company in my study, New Oriental, is a leading and successful one in this field, in addition, it is also the first Chinese private educational institution listed on NYSE (New York Stock Exchange) in 2006. Currently, due to the success of brand they achieve, increasing researches on New Oriental want to identify the elements why it could get those great achievements in less than 2 decades. One of these research issues is why and how New Oriental could attract so many talented and excellent employees, such as a host of outstanding teachers and other intelligent executives, which is also the main reason why I chose New Oriental as my case study.

2.3 Source of evidence

2.3.1 Interview

Considering the purpose of my study, my initial aim is to identify the managers' corporate brand perceptions in my case company. I used the semi-structure interview, which helps me to discuss my topic with the certain focuses without losing points of my study (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The questions which were formulated for interviews provide the guidance for respondents to answer questions; however, I also adopted the open approach to give respondents the possibilities to speak of their own view towards topics rather than I put my theoretical perceptions onto respondents

firstly, what is more, how managers and employees experience their brand without just aiming at interpreting meanings of corporate branding. Furthermore, the final goal of mine is to formulate how my respondents' understandings about the brand as well as to what extent they use these ideas to attract their potential employees.

Because I interviewed many respondents with diverse positions within case company, I would modify questions according to the positions and knowledge of respondents, but the central contents and topics which stem from the analytic framework would always be covered in all interviews. To illustrate, one of these topics was about the corporate brand identity. For example, I asked a HR manager "how the values and corporate culture are used for staff recruitment, reward and development."

Generally, I would present my research purpose before my interview. I also mailed the list of questionnaire of the interview beforehand in order to make the respondents aware of what they would say so that they could prepare them well for interviews with high efficiency. Obviously, sometimes, conversations would be deviated from the initial aims with different respondents according to their specific backgrounds; however, it would also contribute to the deeper sights of this area. The contents of interviews were recorded and then transcribed for decoding. In addition, notes were also taken when respondents provided crucial information or comments during the whole interview.

Since the corporate branding involves diverse organizational aspects and considerable stakeholders, I need to make wide range of interviewees. However, I mainly focus on managerial views and most of my respondents are internal managers both of corporate level and on local levels. The reason why I focus on the managers is that they play a key role in making and implementing corporate branding strategies. In addition, I also interviewed some external stakeholders; however, for the study purpose in this thesis, I focus on the potential employees as the external stakeholders. I collected over 25 interviews with different individuals from various departments, including the one of company founders, one of founders, assistants of CEO, HR director (the corporate level HR manager), the General Teaching Supervisor (the

corporate level manager), general marketing manager and branch school presidents in Beijing and Tianjin, branch schools HR managers and over 15 different departments supervisors (Beijing and Tianjin branch schools). Moreover, I also made interviews with 10 potential and existing employees, including the present teachers, executives from Beijing and Tianjin branch Schools and some trainees who are working as teachers in future.

The time of interviews lasted approximately 1.5 hours for each one and the places were taken in their office rooms and other places in corporations with digital recordings. All of interviews were taken by our native language, Chinese and recording materials were analyzed initially in Chinese as well, some of transcripts were translated into English which are cited in the text.

2.3.2 Secondary sources

Documents studies are mainly used as secondary sources in this thesis. Bryman and Bell (2007) argued that the document studies not only include the “paper material”, but also involve the information from internet, video and pictures. I collected a variety of material as complements of interviews for my research. The internal materials are corporate brochures, projects, business plans, conference notes, internal newspaper, information from New Oriental Homepage and their intranet. The external material mainly collected by many studies for New Oriental, such as articles from newspapers and magazines, published books, printed materials in branch schools and sample of advertisements and so on.

These corporate materials could provide the additional points of views to the corporate branding and its strategies and also help me to develop a deeper understanding of how organizational members and potential employees treat these sources as guidance for their working activities. In addition, many document materials could also provide invaluable information and additional insight and perceptions of corporate image in the eyes of other external stakeholders.

2.3.3. Observation

Observations are considered as the very important sources of empirical material and case studies (Yin, 1994; Bryman & Bell, 2007). In my study, I use this approach in part of my study. Because I chose a service organization as the case company, I have to consider the features of service branding, such as intangibility, I need to observe the employees' behaviors whether they are consistent to their statements. Moreover, I also observe their working environments and their conferences, training activities and other brand artifacts. All of evidences collected by observations also help me to understand corporate brand identity for my study.

2.4 The Quality of the Study

The validity and reliability are main factors to determine the quality of qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The issue of reliability in case studies is about whether the data of research could be used by other researchers. Yin (1994) argues that the social world could have some stable properties and researchers could use different methods to describe these properties with high accuracy.

In my research, I chose the interview as the main source of evidence; therefore, the reliability of interviews is concerned. Bryman & Bell (2007) argue that the practice of interview needs to be recoded concretely and transcribed as much as possible, moreover, the questionnaire should be organized well in advance.

I chose the general approaches in my case research, initially, the case study questionnaire lists were organized and data of the case study was collected during the period of February-May, 2010. My database included great amounts of transcripts of all interviews and many corporate brochures, articles from newspaper, magazines and photos and pictures from corporate internally and websites. All of my data sources are from their original language Chinese. In addition, I also made observations notes for adding the material diversity, such as the conference notes and pictures I took.

Another important issue of the qualitative research is validity which accounts the

reality of the social phenomenon (ibid). This mainly talks about the creditability of evidence used in the study and ways of the data are interpreted. As I discussed above, the interview is the main source of data, I made wide range of interviews with different department managers and some experienced employees, moreover, the observations in this company are also adopted. However, the limitation is that I can not interview all of employees in my research with some certain reasons, such as the time and finance problems. The interpretation of data was influenced by the fact that interviews were carried with their original language Chinese, however, since this is my mother tongue, I usually decoding the transcript in Chinese initially and then summarized into English when I was writing the texts. There would be some semantic distortion but I have already tried to compensate this problem with consulting some professional translators.

3. Literature Review

In this chapter, I will discuss the major theories relating to the corporate brand as the strategic resource with different dimensions and to understand the nature of corporate brand. Besides, the perspectives of the employee and employer brands are also discussed in this chapter as the complement of theories studies.

3.1 The key conceptions and perspective of corporate brand

The definitions of corporate brand are diverse. According to the definition from the American Marketing Association (1960), the brand is the combination with many factors, such as the name, sign, symbol, term, design, could identify the goods and services of sellers and to differentiate them from others. This definition emphasize on the tangible characteristic of brand, which much focus on the material products, at the same time this definition also neglect the intangible elements that are important for creating value as well as making relationship (Aaker, 1996). However, the corporate brand has a very strong intangible features. De Chernatony (2001b, p4) argues that the corporate brand is “a cluster of functional and emotional values which promises stakeholders a particular experience”. In addition, there are many studies of corporate brand from different perspectives. The common point is that the corporate brand does not only belong to the marketing and is much more relating to the organization and employees (Balmer, 2001a; Olins, 1995). Keller (2000, p.115) defined a corporate brand as “a powerful means for firms to express themselves in a way that is not tied into their specific products or services”. Chun and Davies (2006) argue that the corporate brand is increasingly relating to organizational members’ behaviors. Knox and Bickerton (2003) think that corporate brand is the expression with the visual, verbal and behavioral features. Actually, all of those different perspectives of corporate brand also reveal the convergence of two academic trends: the marketing and organization theory (Balmer, 2001a; Olins, 1995; Tarnovskaya, 2007). The corporate branding focuses on the understandings of corporate identity, corporate

reputation, etc and all of these relationships managing between employees and customers (Balmer, 2001a). Balmer et al (1997) claim that the corporate brand stand for the organization's ethos, aims, and values and it makes the sense of personalities which differentiates a brand.

In summary, all of these discussions reflect values of corporate brand which is an integral approach of corporate level marketing with focus on different stakeholders and represents different organizational dimensions to make and maintain values for corporations (Balmer, 2001a, Balmer & Gray, 2003). In this thesis, I agree with the corporate brand could be considered as "a logical structure" (Kay, 2006) which means that corporate brand could make the organization as a whole, because it could create and sustain positive image by sending the message to all stakeholders aiming at managing their behaviors or perceptions (Einwiller and Will, 2002). In this thesis, I mainly argue that how corporate branding could be used for attracting potential employees.

Lots of authors pay attentions to its nature, dynamics, core values, values propositions the employee roles in corporate branding, organizational culture and activities and relationships with multi stakeholder (Balmer, 1995, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 1997, 2001, 2003; Ind 1997, 2001; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001, Tarnovskaya, 2007, etc). Generally speaking, the brand is considered as the effective tool as value generator for customers (Aaker, 1996; Ind 1997; Kapferer, 1997, etc). However, as we discuss above, corporate branding does not only makes focus on customers, but also emphasizes on elements of organization internally (Balmer, 1995; de Chernatony, 2001;, 2002, 2003, Blamer, 2001a, b; Ind, 1997; Balmer and Greyser, 2003). The organization theories generally discuss relationships between customers and corporations, which generally formulated the broader framework including the corporate personality, corporate identity as well as their relationships with stakeholders (Balmer, 2001; Olins, 1995). So, it is very obvious to find out that the corporate brand combines with these aspects and formulate a special recognition of both "an 'inside in' customer focus" and "an 'inside out' organization focus" (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p66).

It is important to understand the meaning of corporate brand, but there is very little consensus to define what it means (Ind, 1997). The definitions of corporate brand are various from different scholars' understanding which emphasize different characteristics of corporate brand. As stated above, the corporate brand is not only relating to the marketing, which means that it is not simply concerning the firm's offering, such as the goods or service (Keller, 2005). Ind (1997) argues that the corporate brand is defined by its core values. Chun and Davies (2006) think that the corporate brand increasingly concerns its associations organized by organizational members, at the same time associations influence their behaviors as well. Kay (2006) claimed that the corporate as well as the general brand could be considered as "logical structures", which combined with many associations and representations, including values, myths and stories.

Furthermore, as argued by Balmer (2001b; p12): "a corporate brand involves the conscious decision by senior management to distil and make down the attributes of the organization's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition". In addition, "the corporate brand also has "three virtues": to communicate, differentiate and enhance the essence of organization to its stakeholders" (Balmer, 2001b, quoted from Tarnovskaya, 2007, 68). Additionally, the metaphor of a "superior organizational lens" which was used by Balmer & Greyser (2003) is to describe the features of corporate brand.

In summary, the corporate brand is largely over the conception of product brand. The goal of corporate brand is to create the values to customer and other stakeholders beyond the value of a corporation's tangible offerings.

3.2 Corporate brand as the strategic resources

Many researchers categorize the corporate brand as a strategic resource in the literature (Tarnovskaya, 2007, Urde, 1999). Generally speaking, any brand represents a strategic platform for the firm. However, the brand traditionally is viewed as "unconditional response to the wants and needs of customers", which is criticized by

Urde (1999, quoted from Tarnovskaya, 2007, p70), and he adopted a notion of “brand orientation” and argued that the brand orientation regards the brand as strategic resources, which needs to involve the long-term relationships, not only products and services customers want (ibid). Corporate brand owns the features for success identified in RBV of a firm: strategic value; rarity; durability; inappropriability; imperfect imitability and imperfect substitutability (Balmer & Gray, 2003, quoted from Tarnovskaya, 2007, p70). So, the corporate brand could be considered as the sustainable valuable resource of firm. However, the corporate brand as the strategic resource is the on-going process which implies that the brand needs to develop and improve continuously (ibid).

3.3 Understanding of brand identity and brand image

The conceptions of brand identity and brand image are major conceptions in branding and also have many different definitions from various perspectives. Additionally, these two conceptions also include many other embedded conceptions in the relation to branding in literature.

Van Riel & Balmer (1997) defined that the brand identity is the group of ethos, aims and values of organization that create the sense of personalities which could differentiate the brand. Harris & de Chernatony (2001) gave a simple definition that the identity is in the relation of how managers and employees make their brand special and unique. Some other researchers also define the brand identity involving the external stakeholders’ perceptions, for example, Upshaw (1995) claimed that the brand identity is the total perceptions of a brand in the marketplace.

The brand image often defines from the customer perspective, for instance, De Chernatony & McDonald (2003) argued that the brand image is the reflection of the present perceptions from customers. In addition, some authors also use the corporate reputation instead of corporate image (de Chernatony, 1999; van Riel and Balmer, 1997), since the reputation conception would be less volatile mature (De Chernatony, 1999).

The brand identity argued in the literature acts the main subject in many conceptual frameworks (Aaker, 1996; Upshaw, 1995; Kapferer, 1997). Kapferer (1997) argue that the brand identity has six elements: physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection and self-image. In addition, De Chernatony (1999) modified this model linking many different dimensions, such as vision, organizational culture, brand values. All of these conceptions reflect the stakeholders' aspirations and self-image (Tarnovskaya, 2007). De Chernatony (2001) said that the central element of identity is brand vision which could offer the future, purpose and values of brand. Additionally, the vision also gives the explanations for the brand existence (Urde, 2003) and the brand value is from the organizational culture which defined as the series of common employee assumptions, values and belief. It is very important to stress that the values from culture should be align with brand values to ensure employee to have the consistent perceptions and behaviors (de Chernatony, 2002).

Moreover, the core values should be differentiated from others, which are refereed as brand essence, for example, Upshaw (1995, p25) argue that it is the "unifying common thread" of whole organization and "all-embracing terms that sum up the identity of the brand" (Urde, 2003, sited from Tarnovskaya, 2007; p73), therefore, it is very vital for managers to communicate those core values to their employee, since core values could drive their behaviors. Besides that, core value also play other roles in the organizations, not only organize and guide the development of products, but also are the basis for communicating with all organizational stakeholders (Urde, 2003).

Furthermore, the value proposition is also another important conception in brand identity. Aaker (1996) argues that the final role of brand identity is to provide the value proposition with functional, emotional benefits to customers. The positioning is used as efficient way of communicating the value proposition as well as helps the brand to create the brand personality (de Chernatony, 1999). The clear value proposition is very important to develop the relationship between the internal and external stakeholders (ibid).

Many studies stated the significance of creating the framework to combine the

brand identity and brand image (reputation) for corporate brand. However, the challenge for alignment is from the brand consistency, therefore, many authors argue that the way to balance the relationship between the internal and external dimensions for operating corporate brands successfully (Tarnovskaya, 2007).

Among many frameworks for alignments, one of those is the one built by Hatch & Schultz (2001, 2003) from the organizational perspective. In this model, authors identified three factors: vision, organizational culture and corporate image (ibid).

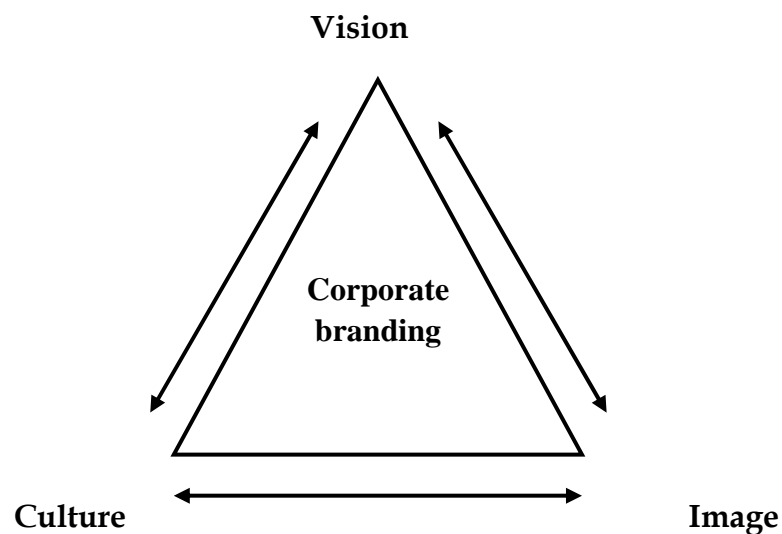


Fig. 3.1 the triangle model with vision, organizational culture and corporate image from Hatch & Schultz (2003)

It is clear to see that the model focus on the interplay of the basic components of identity-vision and organizational culture, however, it does not distinguish between brand identity and image. But this framework considers the corporate branding as the dynamic process and emphasizes the relationship between vision, culture and image while this model also ignores the crucial role of employee in the corporate branding. Many researchers state that the importance of role of employees in corporate branding, some of them make researches about how employees' perceptions and their behaviors make the impact on customers' perceptions as well as their image of the brand (Tarnovskaya, 2007).

Additionally, there are also some researchers arguing that the brand coherency, to illustrate, some authors argue that the internal and external dimensions can be used for

improving the fit between the brand identity and image, specifically, both of employees' and external stakeholders' understandings of corporate brand are emphasized for the brand coherency. For example, Davies and Chun (2002) used brand personality for researching the brand identity and image.

The importance of alignment of identity and image are common in studies, although the perspectives are still various, there is one point that brand identity and image are two major factors in corporate branding, since they hold the role to add values to stakeholders which is the final mission for branding process (Tarnovskaya, 2007).

3.4 Employer branding and employee branding

The employer branding is increasingly noted by companies in the world, according to the data from Conference Board (Donath, 2001), about 40% companies developed their employer brands; however, there is still lacking of academic literature. One of major reason is the shortage of theoretical basis and empirical research (Tarnovskaya, 2007). However, few can deny the significance of this perspective in marketing and organization studies. A host of academic literatures consider it as a way of RVB (resources building values) for considering human capital as an important resource, the internal and external marketing for attracting and retaining the human capital (ibid).

In 1996, Ambler and Barrow in their book, "*the employer brand*", gave the definition of employer brand which is "functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996, sited from Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; p501) and also implies the employer branding could differentiate from other company's characteristics as an employer and create values to their employees (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). Moreover, there are plenty of practitioners use employer brand as a very significant tool for their recruitment. The employer branding provides the sense of belonging by the good and credible workplace to their employees, the employer brand generally considers the

employee as “the human capital, “or “the resource” more than the positioning tool or normal labors reflected to their customers or other stakeholders (Ambler and Barrow, 1996). However, some authors also argued that the employer brand also could be a broader strategy to other stakeholders, not only employees, which means that it would be “targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions.” (Sullivan, 2004 quoted in Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, p501).

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) argued that the employer brand needs to establish the identity of its firm as an employer and construct the firm’s value system, policies and behaviors towards its employees. Furthermore, Barrow & Mosley (2005) in their book also discuss that there are a three-step process to achieve the employer branding:

Initially, the company needs to develop the employer brand value proposition which offers the “compelling, relevant and differentiating” reason for employees to choose your company as their ideal workplace, which means why they come to your place rather than others, therefore, the value proposition should include the value statements (e.g. corporate vision and mission statement) of the corporation, and true and specific benefits for working here (e.g. functional and emotional). In addition, the company also needs to communicate with targeted employees by its value proposition development.

However, the external and internal communications to its potential employees should be consistent with all other stakeholders. Internal practices such as training, working environment and HR practices which are highly relating to the employees commitment to their companies (Frook, 2001). Managers also use those as the important approaches to convey their essence of brand to their employees, such as core values and their missions by communications in simple language or employment experiences (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). What is more, the external practices mainly involve the advertising for recruitment which is discussed heatedly by practitioners (ibid). A clear advantage is saving in recruitment and retention cost. Moreover, employees in 100 Best Companies with good employer brand in USA, the turnovers of those staff are twice as low as the industry average (ibid).

For deeper understanding of employer branding, some authors (Backhaus and

Tikoo, 2004) make the focus on influences of employer branding from their employees, including existing and potential ones. They also argue a conceptual framework with terms of brand association to potential employees and brand loyalty to existing employees. In addition, they also discuss the employer brand needs to link employees to the employee productivity and job satisfaction. In their point of view, the employer brand plays a psychological contract between company and their employees. However, lacking of empirical work and theoretical research, the conceptual framework only provides an informative device rather than some practical and real approaches to influence employees' behaviors (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

There is a strong relationship between employer branding and corporate branding discussed in many literature (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Froom, 2001). They mentioned that it is very necessary for employer branding to coordinate with corporate branding, since there is a high percentage of overlaps between their goals respectively (Froom, 2001). What is more, some authors also argue that it should be alignment between the employer brand with the customer-face brand and integrity between the internal and external faces of the corporate brand (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). Therefore, it seems that the employer branding is just the branch or internal version of corporate branding with customer-facing (Tarnovskaya, 2007). Due to lacking of empirical researching as I mentioned above, the employer branding do not have the strong theoretical basis, therefore, I mainly adopt the theories and building framework from corporate branding rather than directly from employer branding.

Comparing with the employer branding, the conception of employee branding has been discussed in many academic literatures (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001; Ind, 2001, 2003; de Chernatony, 1999, 2001; Hatch & Schultz, 2001, 2003). The role of employee is a significant character of corporate branding different from product branding, additionally, the employee's commitment to company is also the major element corporate branding (Chun & Davies, 2006). Therefore, the conception of employee branding is referred to project a consistent image of the company to customers (Miles and Mangold, 2004).

However, the perspectives of employee branding in literatures are diverse. On one hand, Miles and Mangold (2004) discuss that employees firstly receive the ideas of brand from management and then convey the company's image to customers. For example, Miles and Mangold (2004, p68) said: "the process by which employees internalize the desired brand image and are motivated to project the image to customers and other organizational constituents". In other word, the employee branding is not only used as a positioning tool towards customers, potential employees but also to achieve the brand ethos thereby associating them with the brand, (de Chernatony & Drury, 2006; Tarnovskaya, 2007).

Miles and Mangold (2004) also argue the company management initially put the organizational mission and values as the basis and then educate the existing employees for the desired brand image, measure the outcomes as well as providing the feedback. Moreover, the management also needs to provide the effective communication and consistent brand messages to their employees and also ensure their employee understand what the desired brand is and convey those information to customers and finally launch the psychological bonds between companies and employees. The employer branding, the employee branding not only set up the consistent brand image to their customers and potential employees, but also increased the higher level of employees' and customers' satisfactions, decrease the turnover rate and achieve the brand with better reputations (ibid).

In summary, these two perspectives reflect the importance of employee in corporate branding with different views from managerial focus; however, both of them create the sense of belongings to employees firstly in order to convey the meanings of brand to the different stakeholders, such as potential employees. After the employee receive the desired brand knowledge from management and feel respected or meaningful, they would convey the positive information to potential employees or customers, aiming at attracting them effectively. Tarnovskaya (2007) argues that the employer branding seems to be considered as a primary activity towards employees and the employee branding would occur naturally when the staff is involved or motivated by the brand. In one word, the roles of employee branding and employer

branding are both effective approaches to the corporate branding.

4. The Conceptual Framework

The analytical framework is developed in this chapter. In my study, I made the framework with the existing literature of the integrated approach to corporate branding with a focus on the role of employees, which is mainly from the great contributions by Tarnovskaya (2007) in this field.

4.1 The integrated approach to corporate branding

The framework mainly quoted by Tarnovskaya (2007) which reveals the clear relationship of brand identity and image. This conceptual framework developed the model by Hatch & Schultz (2003), the stakeholder theory and the ideas of employer/employee branding perspectives. The aim of this framework in her study is to analyze the mechanism of the market driving approach carried by a global organization with a corporate brand (Tarnovskaya, 2007). Specifically, the author wants to identify the roles of corporate brand dimensions in the value creation process to different stakeholders in market driving (ibid). However, in my study, I just focus on the role of potential employee rather than the board stakeholder and analyze the corporate brand with different dimensions to attract them, which is a very major content of corporate branding research. The framework of Tarnovskaya (2007) is intended to conceptualize corporate branding as “an integrated approach, in which the major intangible factors of the corporate brand identity are used to develop a consistent image with its internal and external stakeholders” (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p97). Brand identity is the critical context in branding with many perceptions and definitions as discussed before, this conceptual framework is discussed as a combination of tangible and intangible elements (de Chernatony, 1999) and an interplay with vision, organizational culture and employees of an organization (Tarnovskaya, 2007). The left-hand triangle below shows the conception of corporate brand (see Fig. 4.1, the identity and image conceptualizations quoted from Tarnovskaya, 2007, p99). The main conceptions of vision, organizational culture and the role of employee have

already discussed in the literature review, vision is the central idea which afford the sense of guidance for the future development (de Chernatony, 1999; Hatch & Schultz, 2003), organizational culture is heatedly discussed in many literature and in this study, which mainly reflects organizational beliefs, values and basic assumptions of the organization (Hatch & Schultz, 2003). Employees constitute a pivotal role in the identity system due to link the brand and its different stakeholders (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), however, Hatch & Schultz (2001, 2003) discussed the importance of vision and organizational culture in corporate branding, but the significant role of employee is not considered as the vital role to conceptualize corporate identity.

A brand image is the perception by organizational external different stakeholders (de Chernatony, 1999; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). As discussed in the literature review, the conception of broad stakeholders in corporate banding is the significant element different from the product branding (Balmer & Gray, 2003). It is viewed as interplay between organizational culture, employees and external stakeholders (see Fig. 4.1, right-hand triangle). Organizational culture is extended as the interface between organization and its customers and is also as “an influential element in image and reputation” (Kowalczyk & Pawlish, 2002 quoted in Tarnovskaya, 2007, p99). In addition, the employees’ behaviors also play the vital role in external stakeholders’ perceptions of brand image (Miles & Mangold, 2004). Therefore, the understanding of corporate image should depend on the associations among its stakeholders, organizational culture and employees’ values and behaviors (Tarnovskaya, 2007).

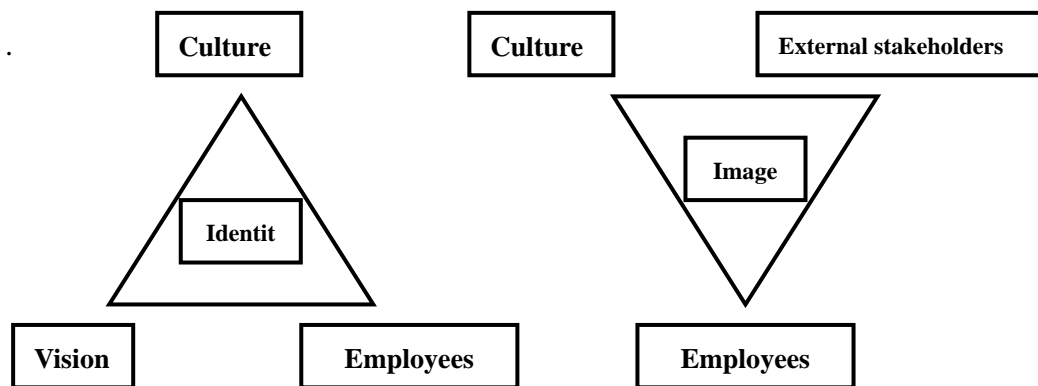


Fig. 4.1 Identity and image conceptualizations (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p 99)

As we discussed in the literature review, the identity and image have the strong relationship, the interplay in Fig. 4.1 reflects they share two vital factors:

organizational culture and employee, which implies that “there is no clear boundary between identity and image”, moreover, “the creation of a strong identity could make the direct contribution to image and vice versa” (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p100). The reciprocal link between identity and image in literature also discusses the primary role of identity in branding, in addition, this integrated approach is stressed by an arrow pointing from identity to image (ibid).

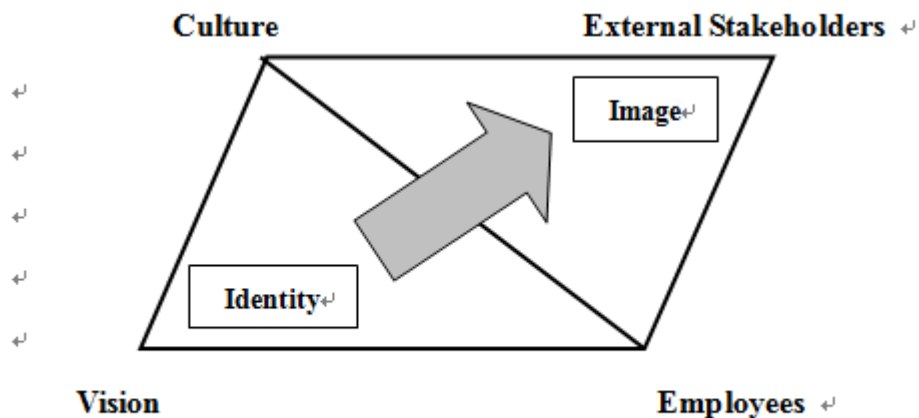


Fig. 4.2 The integrated approach to corporate branding (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p 100)

The integrated approach to corporate branding is viewed as the interplay between the identity and the image, which also reveals “the internal and external branding interlinked processes and the goal are to reach the balance between them” (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p 100).

Now, I will modify this model with some crucial concepts from employer branding and employee branding literature to develop corporate brand framework for analyzing how to attract the potential employee, which would be used as a theoretical model in this thesis.

4.2 The corporate brand framework for attracting potential employees

The corporate brand framework modified in this section is based on the model discussed in 4.2. It is designed to reflect the role of corporate brand as the strategic resource to provide strategies to attract the potential employees. The basic idea behind

the model is that the company's strategies stem from its brand identity which acts as the organizational basis for strategy and reflects how corporate brand identity could be used for creating values for potential employees to attract them.

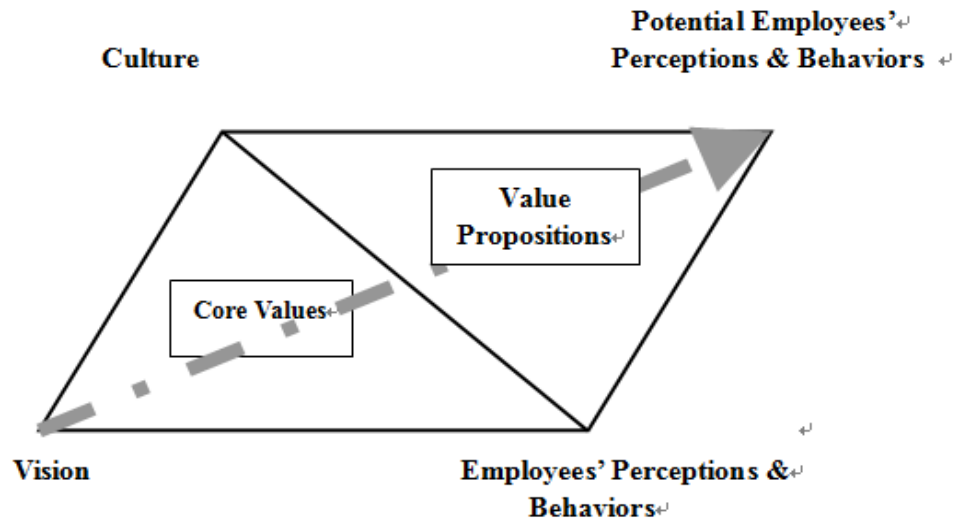


Fig. 4.3 The corporate brand framework for attracting potential employees (Modified from Tarnovskaya, 2007)

As I discussed below, the framework I quoted from Tarnovskaya (2007), which is used for analyzing how the corporate brand identity can be used for the broad stakeholders' value creation in marketing driving. In this thesis, I narrowed down the broad stakeholders to the potential employee and to analyze how the corporate brand is used for attracting the potential employee. Therefore, I need to modify some conceptions for my research purpose. In this model, "the achieved balances of brand identity are strengthened further by anchoring it in core values." (Tarnovskaya, 2007, p101) Urde (2003) argued that the core values are from organizational culture and formulate the dominant part of brand. Moreover, core values also play the vital role in guiding employees' behaviors which make the positive brand perceptions by customers and other stakeholders (Ind, 2001; Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Besides, core values embed in products or services and formulate the basis of the brand's value proposition understood by external stakeholders (Tarnovskaya 2007). "The corporate branding as a process of linking brand identity and brand image provides a mechanism for value creation and then it is conceptualized with the help of value axis: vision-core values-value proposition-external stakeholder" (ibid, p103). In this thesis,

the organization provides values with the clear focus to the potential employees and attracts them to the organization. Therefore, the vision firstly is interpreted into core values which formulate the basis of brand attributes that are translated into stakeholder benefits in the brand value proposition (ibid). Finally, value proposition would add value to potential employees through a series of marketing and organizational activities or strategies (ibid). An even more significant factor that should be taken into account is that the value axis point is not only in one direction but also in reciprocal ways, since some authors (Normann & Ramirez, 1993 quoted in Tarnovskaya, 2007) argue that stakeholder expectations and participation are both interacted to the value creation process.

In addition, the model argues the importance of relationship of internal employee and external stakeholder in the corporate branding literature (Ind, 2001), since the organizations need the employees with values and principles delivered by managers to convey to the external stakeholder, in other word, the values and principle act as the guidance for employees' behaviors and activities to the stakeholders. However, in this model, the role of manager also belongs to the existing employees and also should be identified clearly (Tarnovskaya, 2007). Managers on different levels are also involved in all external relationships and exert propound impact on allocation of organizational resources (ibid). The role of local staff is very important to attract potential employees, due to their contributions to local stakeholder relationships, specifically, they would be living and vivid examples to the potential employees who want to join this company. Therefore, recruitment strategies from corporate branding perspective to attract potential employees are not only the job of HR departments, which are corporate-level strategies (Balmer & Greyser, 2003; Balmer & Grey, 2003; Balmer, 2001a, 2001b).

Among external stakeholder, Tarnovskaya (2007) argues that customers, suppliers, potential employees and societal actors are four main groups. Both the stakeholder and corporate branding literature argue the significance of those as being strategically important for the company (Jones, 2005; quoted in Tarnovskaya, 2007, p104). The organization needs to adopt the consistent approach of corporate banding

with its values and principles as the basis for all interactions to all stakeholders. However, in this modified model, I just focus on the potential employee as the targeted external stakeholder and analyze how corporate branding strategies to attract them.

In summary, this modified model argues the integrated approach of corporate branding as well as uses corporate branding as the organizational resources for creating organizational and marketing strategies for potential employees.

5. Empirical Data

In this chapter, I will identify the information relating to my research problem from my case company, New Oriental, all of information I summarized came from the interviews, observations and other documents related to my research.

5.1 The brand perceptions under corporate level control

This main purpose of this chapter is to explore the nature of New Oriental corporate brand identity under corporate level. As I mentioned above, the corporate brand identity combines with three main elements: Vision, culture and employee perceptions and behaviors. In other words, it is understood as a combination of organizational perceptions by employees and the organizational background. In this chapter, I mainly discuss the understandings of corporate brand identity from the corporate level thereby focusing on the perceptions of managers and supervisors who are responsible for the corporate brand development. The evidence is mainly from respondents in senior management and others from Beijing and Tianjin branch companies, in addition, other corporate materials are also complemented in this part.

I have structured the chapter in accordance with the different understandings of the corporate brand from the framework in Fig. 4.3 with different brand identity dimensions: organizational vision, culture and employees' perceptions and behaviors. In addition, I also discuss other contents in this part as the great complement including the role of organizational founder, the ownership of brand.

5.1.1 The overall impression in New Oriental

The story of New Oriental company seems to be a legend in Chinese students' mind, especially Chinese students are studying abroad, according to one respondent, he told me that 3/5 students studying in overseas had the studying experiences in New Oriental and this percentage is increasing rapidly, besides that, New Oriental schools have already occupied 35% of English training shares in China with 48 franchise

schools in 39 cities for training over 9 million people since 1993.

I started my interview firstly in Tianjin Branch and already acquired many kinds of information relating to the New Oriental; therefore, when I prepared to make interviews in Beijing headquarter with some senior managers, I felt very excited and was looking forward to giving me totally different impression from their working surrounding or other brand artefacts. However, the working surrounding in headquarter in Beijing for those senior managers are quite similar to the Tianjin Branch. Actually, the whole surrounding in Beijing headquarter, Beijing branch and Tianjin branch are overall similar with opening office rooms, the busy but quiet executive staff and the simple furniture and huge corporate logo in green colour. Moreover, the atmospheres of interviews from headquarter to local branch were very relaxed and less-missionary way as I imaged. The respondents for interviews were not very serious and seemed that they have already been used to do interviews, importantly, they did not give me the impression that they were missionaries, on the contrary, after I presented my main research purpose and contents I needed to know, they showed their great interests, since they told me my research question was also great interest. During the whole interviews, they neither showed religion-style talking nor provided the serious faces in my many interviews. The average time of interview was less than 1 hour with senior managers' precious time and less than about 2 hours from local managers and other respondents. However, it is very important to stress that I was also a student of New Oriental before, thus I also need to keep objective for understanding the essence of New Oriental values as an outsider and can not trap into their "religion".

5.1.2 The ownership of New Oriental Brand

It is very necessary to make clear that the ownership of corporate brand (Tarnovskaya, 2007). Actually, the brand of New Oriental is not only for New Oriental English training school, since the full name of New Oriental is New Oriental Education & Technology Group, which is a huge business structure with 48 schools,

324 learning centers, 25 New Oriental bookstores and over 5,000 third-party bookstores, moreover, New Oriental press, Distant education, Software design and private colleges in some regions. Most of these institutions are totally owned by New Oriental Group (New Oriental homepage, www.neworiental.org).

According to one respondent, the ownership of New Orient brand belongs to the group, including the concepts, trademark, some course design and internal textbooks as the intellectual properties. This huge and complex ownership of brand could offer an effective way to strengthen the corporate sustainable advantages and prevent to dilute the brand after some main founders retired or left the group.

“It is very important to keep the values of brand since the school is also the service organization, the enormous values of school are from the good-reputations and any form of dilutions or damages of brand would exert the detrimental impact on New Orient, however, New Oriental also faces some challenges about their brand management, since in 2006 we have already been listed on the stock exchange, on one hand, it brought great compliments to us, on the other hand, to be honest, the pressure from stock exchange ask us to continually explore the new and unclear market which could bring the profits, but it also put great pressure to maintain our brand qualities and try our best to avoid the damage to the brand from risks. ” (General Marketing Supervisor)

Therefore, it is very clear that managers of New Oriental have the strong awareness about their brand and in the while try their best to develop and protect the brand.

5.1.3 New Oriental Way and the founder Minhong Yu

With the development of economy in China, the proliferation of English promotes the development of English training business in China, according to the data from their website, there will be over 4.4 billion dollars business and 50 thousand schools or institutions in 2015.

The founder of New Oriental, Minhong Yu launched the school at 1993, after the great development in less than 20 years; New Oriental is the biggest private educational company in this field as well as also driving this market in China. New Oriental presently has a wide range of educational programs, services and many products not only includes English training, but also other language training course, including kid English training course and various other software or online training. Besides the short-term English training, it also provides the long-term education in China and overseas, such as the preparation courses, primary and secondary school education (New Oriental Homepage, www.neworiental.org).

In 2006, New Oriental which is the first private educational group was listed on the NYSE and this founder Minhong Yu also becomes the richest English teacher in the world. Presently, New Oriental has become the most recognized brand in Chinese training field. Until 2010, New Oriental has already got about 9 million students enrollments, 48 schools, 324 learning centers, 25 bookstores and over 5,000 third-party bookstore and about 7000 teachers in 40 cities, besides those, the online education with over 5.5 million registered users.

What make New Oriental so special and successful in China? There would be many answers for this question. But some researchers argue that the most important factor to make New Oriental so successful is not big mansion in Beijing CBD, not the shares of New Oriental in NYSE; Minhong Yu said that the New Oriental Way makes it successful and excellent in China, he made comments in the corporate brochure and on their website:

“In the beginning, there were no roads in the world; only as people began traveling did roads come into being. Successful roads are formed not when people

roam aimlessly, but when they are headed in the same direction. The same is true for New Oriental; it was formed as people gathered to study. And like a successful road, it did not achieve its success by chance. People who shared dreams and aspirations worked together to forge an exciting trail.” (homepage, www.neworiental.org)

Therefore, New Oriental Way is considered as a kind of spirit for fighting for our studies, lives and dreams. This special spirit strongly is different from other agencies or educational institutions. In the present situation of China, companies and individuals increasingly pay more attention to the profits and ignore the more important thing human being needs—“the hope and confidence of life”, Minhong Yu gave his company these special and necessary ways to help students or other people who are fighting for their lives overcome their difficulties by their hearts. He made the school motto:

“Hew a stone of hope out of a mountain of despair and you can make your life a splendid one” (homepage, www.neworiental.org)

This sentence reflects his philosophy of life and his vision of New Oriental. Minhong Yu is always called by everybody “Lao Yu” (a kind name by others). He said that when he started to run this school in Beijing, he found that there were two major reasons for Chinese students who can not master English well, the first is that they lack of right methods for guiding them to success, the second is that they do not have confidence to English and even do not have the great power and confidence to do things in their lives. According the New Oriental Way, 2004, he said that the first reason would be easily to be addressed by showing their right methods and teaching their practical skills, they would improve their grades very fast; however, the second reason is very difficult to resolve by techniques or skills, they need to be cultivated for a long-term period. But more seriously, there is few person who takes the charge for that, therefore, Lao Yu felt it is not only problem about their business, their schools, in fact, this is the vital issue relating to Chinese future, therefore, he thought there should be a kind of power to encourage students who struggle for their lives, respects and studies. That is the basic reason why Lao Yu proposes New Oriental Way in his place. Some individuals argue it wastes their time and money, since the most important thing

of training school is to earn money, they do not believe that it is reasonable for the existence of New Oriental way in this world, however, when I made observations and interviews in New Oriental, I could feel those vision and culture around the New Oriental place. Obviously, this special feeling is definitely from the persons who are working here, not only their core human capital, teachers; but also many other executive offers. All of them persons showed up a kind of impression of New Oriental: passionate, aggressive, humorous and knowledgeable. As explained by a manager in Beijing Branch:

“The things you felt would be called the characters of New Oriental Way as well as our core values from our culture and vision, actually all of them are from New Oriental Way, so now you know how important it is to us”

After that, I do not doubt the existence of New Oriental way; moreover, it also could stand for the core values for recruiting employees. A HR manager in Beijing Branch School told us that it is very common that they just look for persons who share similar values and then they will take care of English skills or educational background; we have our own value system.

In fact, the source of New Oriental Way is not only from Lao Yu himself, which is from people having studied, worked and grown up with New Oriental. As commented by Xiaoping Xu (another founder of New Oriental):

“when you entered into the New Oriental, you are a member of New Oriental Way, because, New Oriental values are not material, it is not desk, windows, which is the values and make the sense in your mind, therefore, we believe that when your flesh is gone, but your minds have already transferred to others, you would be living for ever, there are millions of celebrities who transfer their attitude, vision and wisdom to others, New Oriental is the same, when you feel that, that means you already got be infected, huh...”

There are some between corporate identity and New Oriental Way, specifically, corporate brand with intangible dimensions: vision, culture and employees' perceptions and behaviors while New Oriental Way could reflect the corporate vision, culture and have already embed into their stakeholders minds. Therefore, to some

extent, the New Oriental way is the corporate brand identity of New Oriental.

5.1.4 The employee-facing brand under corporate level

The term of employee-facing brand in this thesis is aiming at the group of stakeholders, not only existing employees but also potential employees, however, for the research question in this thesis, I just focus on the main employees, English Teachers, not the whole employees in my case company. The employee-facing brand actually is the version of how the role of employee understands their corporate brand. Therefore, according to the framework in Fig. 4.3, I mainly discuss the employee-facing brand from the corporate vision, culture, core values and values proposition from managerial perspectives to reflect the corporate-level understandings.

5.1.4.1 Vision offers people the obligation to do the job

As discussed above, the vision of New Oriental is to offer the high-rank level English training for students and also to transfer a spirit of self-made success for students. Therefore, it should be obligations for the teachers to encourage their students in class to fight for their future success, not only for English studying but also for their lives. However, it is very broad for employee to understand what the spirit of self-made success is and how to achieve that successfully. A senior HR respondent expressed the vision for employees:

In New Oriental, working as a teacher is not only teaching English, more importantly, they also need to know how to stimulate them for self-improvement and encourage them to persist to fight for their goals. For example, teachers should have their own understandings or opinions to describe success for students.

Because of this point, the New Oriental teachers have the obligation to do this thing, which is quietly different from other training institutions and thus Lao Yu also says:

Teachers in New Oriental do not only know how to express knowledge to

students but also have capabilities to convey a kind of 'fighting force' to others and stimulate those students who do not have confidence or passions to like to study English and indeed need to know how they can transform themselves from now on. In addition, how to estimate a teacher is good or not in New Oriental, which is not from your educational background and how high score you made in English examination or how high level you have. All of these are not the root criterion, the most critical one is whether you could satisfied your students and whether they adore you. I need to emphasize the role of student is most important.

Therefore, although there are many talents who hold the high level about English, it is obvious that not all English teachers are eligible to serve in New Oriental and individuals who want to work for New Oriental need to have the required capabilities and also need to adopt the New Oriental culture and values.

"New Oriental in China is not only a training school, if we just consider us a training school and do not care other things, probably we have already sunk in the sea of English training business world and can not be listed on stock exchange in New York and not to mention to be the leading one." (Organization Management Center Supervisor)

Thus, New Oriental's vision is not only simple to ask Chinese student to study English; in fact, it offers a kind of inspirational values to students.

Yu described the vision as *"to offer students not only knowledge of English, but also offer your inspirations to encourage yourself until to achieve your own values in the world."*

"Probably that is the reason why so many training schools in China come and go so soon even without some memories, I am convinced that the profit is very important for a company, however, it is not enough if you want to make your company excellent and leading in the future, therefore, I never stop instilling this spirit for encouraging my students to fight for themselves until dreams come true, which is more important besides the applied English knowledge itself." (The founding father New Orient, CEO)

Thus, it is obvious that the vision of New Orient combines making large profits

and more importantly provide a kind of passion to their students. He also argued that it is kind of spirit which is not only conveyed by himself, but also is transmitted by their teachers and hence this vision plays an key role in training their employees and in the meanwhile offer an possibility to cultivate their employees.

5.1.4.2 Culture is the guidance for how we do things in New Oriental

Generally speaking, the corporate culture is very difficult to express simply and clearly for employees since the nature of it is very abstract and is also perceived by different perspectives. As we discussed above, the New Oriental Way, this way not only reflects the vision of corporate, but also formulates the culture in this organization. For example, comments by Xiaoping Xu (a founder of New Oriental):

Actually, the culture is from the New Oriental Way, all of us should agree and obey the values from this way in New Oriental, from Lao Yu to the normal teacher; it is like a torch and a servant for our students. If you go to any New Oriental branch school, you can feel the strong culture in New Oriental like this, which is not only for teachers and students but also for parents, for the public who needs some values which help them to make their future clear. Culture in New Oriental is the values we people in the schools stand for. So it becomes a power around us and in our minds and pushes us to do thing in New Oriental and if anyone wants to work here, they firstly should agree these values, otherwise, it is impossible for them to work here.

As commented by him, New Oriental culture is also from New Oriental Way which requires all of them to follow, therefore, culture in New Oriental is the tool for positioning and also ask employees to agree those values firstly.

Many respondents said the New Oriental Way is manifested as valuable cultural sources and the new teachers are also required to get training by these information in Beijing headquarter or other training places in other cities. However, some people would argue that the born place of New Oriental Way is from Beijing with strong

cultural characters and it would be very difficult for distant branch schools to “train and cultivate their internal values”. So the New Oriental launched a group of trainers for the corporate culture training for filling gaps of distance and ensuring that freshmen understand New Oriental Spirits and culture.

There are also many specific cultural rules in New Oriental culture. For instances, tones of teachers, same decorations of schools and united textbooks. When I observed teachers in their classes, I found they have one similar language tones with passions and none of them ever sit down on chairs when teaching. Moreover, all of teachers use stories of Lao Yu for jokes, such as his stories in village and how stupid and funny mistakes he had when managing New Oriental. However, all of these jokes do not criticize him; on the contrary, those stories reflect how tough success is and how much pain you need to pay for it, teachers want to give students some enlightenment by his jokes. There is another reason that this tone style could make the class vivid and relaxed. A senior marketing manager commented for the New Oriental expansion:

We should make the consistent image to our customers; we are trying to create our image like McDonald's with big M and Apple, Inc with big apple that has been bitten, therefore, we use the same logo figure, same green color and same exterior and interior décors, we want to convey the information that you could feel the same corporate culture when you are studying in New Oriental, no matter which school you attend.

We found that the corporate culture values are also overlapped into their service to students. When you go to New Oriental school; you have already aware that it is the New Oriental with clear and strong impression.

5.1.4.3 Core values as principles for being a New Oriental teacher

As discussed the vision and corporate culture of New Oriental and the New Oriental spirits values, according to those values, the corporate founders and

managers set up and developed well a group of core values for being teachers in New Oriental. These cores values are used for recruitment and rewarding (a HR managers in Beijing Branch school commented). In addition, the core values are also necessary to communicate New Oriental culture and vision for other external stakeholders, such as the public schools, the media press and others. For example, a NPO (non-profit organization) in Tianjin had asked New Oriental Tianjin branch school to make speeches about and study activities for disabled students in Tianjin, since they know the passionate style teachers and humanistic value of New Oriental could make great contributions to those disabled students fighting for their future (comments by the President of Tianjin New Oriental Branch). A HR manager in Tianjin also stressed that the main task of core values is also to attract the “right and competent” talents to New Oriental.

New Oriental believes their corporate vision and culture and then formulates the corporate core values which strengthen their relationship between school and students. The below table claim the core values for being a teacher in New Oriental from the corporate brochure “New Oriental Ways” (2004).

New Oriental advertises these core values externally, not only for conveying their values for potential employees but also for other external stakeholders, these values could be received

from their any of their brochures and its website

<p style="text-align: center;">Students-oriented Passionate and characteristic Industrious and Aggressive Effective & Innovative Knowledgeable & Eloquent Humorous & Freedom Humanistic & Social Responsibilities</p>

Fig. 5.1. New Oriental’s Core Values

New Oriental believes their values and searches for the right talent with these values as principles, since “the values stand for their behaviors, we need to find out the suitable persons at beginning and cultivate our values to them successfully, our teacher should be special but also similar inside” (the HR manager in Beijing branch school). In addition, they also argue that these values should be translated into some

certain capabilities. For example, how the value of “student-oriented” is specified:

- *Respect the students, because they are our customers*
- *Fulfill needs of students until they are satisfied*
- *Show your love to students and move them with your sincerity*

This value is the first core value and always emphasized by Lao Yu who claims the merchant should respect their customers while teachers should respect their students, since all treasure of New Oriental comes from students (New Oriental Ways, 2007). He also has one commented: “*you would be evil if you did not respect your students, if students feel disappointed and unsatisfied, no matter what reason they hold, we must refund their tuition.*” The brevity he can say like this is from the strong confidence of New Oriental teachers. He also commented:

The core competitive advantages of New Oriental are from teachers and New Oriental Ways, not anything well. New Oriental is a company for humans, our students and staff, depending on our New Oriental Ways rather than some high-technologies (ibid).

New Oriental put the students as the top status which is consistent to its vision and culture. He also said that all teachers should obey and respect opinions from students. In New Oriental, whether you are a good teacher or not, you have to follow the “*scoring*” from students, therefore, you do not need to know how to please your supervisor. Because “*your real bosses are not sitting in the back-line office room, they are sitting in your classroom now*” (a senior manager comment). They ask all of teachers to have this value otherwise they can not stand on the teaching stage of New Orient (New Oriental Ways, 2004).

- *“Passionate and characteristic”*

I spent nearly 4 four weeks observing them in Beijing and Tianjin Branch Schools respectively. I found that there are no teachers sitting on chairs while teaching. “The average age of a New Oriental teacher is from 25-35, they are very young. However, we never have the rule for teachers who are forbidden them to sit on chairs while teaching. We just ask teachers to have the passions for your students, interestingly, it is very hard to show off your passions while sitting on a chair,

probably that is the reason” (Comments by HR respondent in Beijing).

As we discussed above, New Oriental tend to offer more than knowledge of English on class, they also need to elevate students’ minds. They need to encourage students for fighting for their future and to find out ways for supporting themselves, therefore, their teachers should have the positive and passionate personalities to infect their students. However, “it is also impossible to ask all teachers to adopt same way to encourage and then teachers should have their own characters to ensure their students to love them, admire them and even worship” (HR Manager in Tianjin).

I have identified some main styles for New Oriental teachers’ individualities from Beijing and Tianjin Branch Schools: 1) Encouraging-style; although it is the basic capability for teachers, there are still many who are really good at this part by their vivid words or speech, they could use simple word to illustrate profound life philosophy clearly. 2) Academic-style; comparing with the first style, they look very humble, calm and rational who are similar to the “real” scholars, however, they are not “boring” in class. 3) idol-style; they seem to be some singer or movie stars, since they have fantastic talents in arts, such as singing or playing instruments, good looking, special voice, etc. we have to admit that students are all youngsters from middle school to college, it would be very attractive for them to like stars..

- *“Industrious & Aggressive”*

It is not very easy for teachers to work in New Oriental, since “they need to face the rigorous criticism from students, if students are not satisfied with their teacher’s performance, the teacher would always lose their job in New Oriental” (President of Tianjin Branch School). Therefore, there is only way to solve this potential threat which is to be industrious and aggressive for their teaching preparations. As an experienced and famous teacher in Beijing commented on:

“It is very tiring for teaching actually, since if you want to show well in two hours of class, you probably need to prepare for 10 days, only each of your sentences is elaborate for students, you could achieve great performance for teaching your students by your knowledge and your encouragement.”

Teachers need to be very diligent and aggressive for their teaching; a senior HR

argued that employees in New Oriental can not stop for updating their knowledge, since we adopt the stiff competitive system, they must strive for improvement to make them perfect in classes, and otherwise, they would be instead of other teachers who are better than you.

- Effective & Innovative

Admittedly, New Oriental is a commercial English training school with the main task to offer the high-level English training course for helping students crack English examinations or improve their communication skills. Hence, teachers should provide the effective skills or knowledge for students, which should be taken into account as the top status, since this is the first motivation for students to choose New Oriental. In addition, teachers should have capabilities or awareness to improve continually their teaching ways which are very important for New Oriental to differentiate from other places.

As commented by President of Tianjin Branch School:

“New Oriental has the awarding system for our teachers to achieve innovation in their teachings, since we emphasize that innovation is the propellant to maintain and improve New Orient values, just like Peter Drucker (a famous scholar in management) said that every organization has to prepare for the abandonment of everything it does. In the past, students chose us for the effective and useful examination skills or techniques, such as TOEFL or GRE, currently, they also choose us for long-term English studying for communication. In my opinion, the reason is that we always focus on the needs of market and driving market, however, if without the innovation in teaching subjects, teaching ways and teaching facilities, we can not make it come true. New Oriental spends millions of dollar in China for innovation, we believe we could have strong competitive advantages comparing with others. ”

-Knowledgeable & Eloquent

New Oriental considers the critical factor for teachers is not what you have in you mind or on your resume. “The things from your degree or educational background are only stand for that you are a good candidate. To be a good teacher for us, you have to make your students satisfied, therefore, you need to know how to

express your knowledge and how to make your class more sense. We do not want teachers that only know English, you need to express more to them besides English, you should be very eloquent for defending your arguments, otherwise, you can not make them follow your course.”

-Humorous & Freedom

This is considered as the most interesting point of New Oriental; they claim that English studying should be vivid and funny, meaningful and attractive. Teachers should be humorous so that students could be attracted by them and would like to study without boring or other depressive moods on class. As explained by a supervisor of a teaching department in Beijing:

“we do not mean that teachers should tell jokes all the time, on the contrary, but the jokes should be considered as a way to make the atmosphere of class relaxed and vivid and make both of teachers and student without stress, you know, generally, the number of students in one class would be 100-300, if you do not know how to make them happy and relax, it would be disaster, therefore, we need laugh and happy on the class.”

New Oriental tends to strongly differentiate from some other institutions or traditional schools, who are very conservative and monotonous for English class. They do not prefer the teachers who are serious and unmotivated. They emphasize that teachers should know how to teach boring knowledge vividly and interesting with their specialties. As emphasized by Lao Yu in *New Oriental Ways* (2004):

In New Orient, we do not prefer to recruit part-time teachers who have already taught in traditional public schools over 2 years, at first, they probably do not care for our values and culture only with focus on money, secondly; they may have the negative teaching behaviors from traditional schools we dislike. Therefore, we spend millions of dollars for cultivate and training our own teachers, New Oriental teachers.

-Humanistic & Social Responsibilities

New Oriental is a commercial school, their first task is to make profit for surviving in this stiff field in China, but, it is not “greedy” organization, since it is also

educational institutions in society, and they also shoulder the responsibilities to raise the young people as well as our employees. It is very precious in New Oriental employees could feel the warm and considerations from top management as well as their co-workers around them, which provides a kind of belongings to employees.

With the development of economy, the correct values views toward life and future are very vital to youngsters as well as the future of China, therefore, Lao Yu always emphasize that if New Oriental wants to be outstanding, they should connect with the social issues and takes more social and moral obligations. As explained by Xiaoping Xu:

New Oriental is the special symbol of Chinese education, we need to show out our considerations to Chinese youngsters, since they are the future of China, we also need to understand what they really need for studying or lives so that to encourage them and help them, in 2006, New Oriental spend about 3 million dollars for launching the scholarship funds for Chinese university students. We will continue to do things like this with our hearts.

Those above core values of New Oriental could identity the vision and culture of New Oriental, which are not only some individuals' comments, but they are common beliefs held in whole organization, when they present those values, they always use the words of "we believe and we should".

To summarize, the core values of New Oriental brand for employees make the great contributions to attract talents and while it is also a tool to present New Oriental brand externally. However, these values should not be the dull rules to restrict their employees what they really are, they are the just basic ground for employees, New Oriental also needs to help employees grow in the organization and fulfill their potentials. New Oriental try their best to research for the suitable talents and it is very hard to ask the employee with all of values already, they need to know what value is driving you, since all of values are interconnected (a HR respondent), New Oriental could offer employees training and make them better for working here. Working with these core values, the management level needs to convey those values information to their employees and it is necessary to interpret those values by different ways, such as

corporate brochures (New Oriental Ways, the corporate periodical), intranet, all staff conference and direct training. However, it is rather difficult to convey values to all employees, since different persons would have different views towards the same issue. As explained by a respondent (supervisor of Organization Management Center):

The biggest challenge of our values is how to make it alive, since everyday we do not say values, actually we are doing our values, how to avoid the mistakes and how to achieve the better result, because we all know we can not do everything at 100% for each day.

Therefore, New Oriental set up a series of policies to maintain their values and brand alive. Lao Yu said that New Oriental is the humanistic corporation, the human capital is considered as the biggest treasure, “the outstanding employees should be the best value and culture ambassadors, we choose the excellent teachers to be the supervisors of a department and choose some of excellent supervisors to be the presidents in different cities, we call this system ‘the elite rule’ in New Oriental” (a senior HR manager). These talents become the good ambassadors to express New Oriental values continually, because those people are cultivated by themselves rather than from recruiting externally, they become the pillars of New Oriental culture and values, since “they could translate those to the local employees”. Many of my respondents said that they are the culture and values ambassadors of New Oriental in different departments and levels.

5.1.4.4 New Oriental brand as an employer to attract talents

Organizations need to adopt specific activities to their existing and potential employees. Specifically, organizations need to offer the sphere of belongings by management level and these activities should be planned centrally but implemented by locally in different markets (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The corporate advertising of New Oriental as an employer to their potential employees is considered as one of the important activities. In fact, New Oriental emphasizes its corporate brand values by providing the employer branding for attracting employees. In the past, New Oriental recruitments advertising varied from each market to another, which would be

considered as isolated HR and marketing communications. However, with the development of internet in China, it has been presently standardized with the united style to market and promote the brand of New Oriental to potential employees. As expressed by a respondent from OMC (Organization Management Center):

What we are doing now is to create the united style appearance of New Oriental in China, you can not only identify us by color and logo, but also understand what we really are and what we are really care, we think it is very important to a brand, all of money for investing are worthy.

New Oriental are using their core brand values as a basis for their recruitment positioning, though the specific talents attracting activities should be done by the local branches, the central strategies are very important to be a foundation and also make their basic New Oriental values visible in all public announcements.

It is also important to stress the HR function in New Oriental is different from the normal administrative role for employees. On the contrary, since some of core value, “characteristic, Freedom and innovation”, which require their teachers should be freely to show their positive personalities to their students, therefore, HR also needs to give enough support to help them express their personalities and also need to help them fulfill their potentials and reward them for their innovations in teaching.

There is another significant different attitude of New Oriental in their recruitment phase. A normal way of recruiting is in companies to starting from an opening position to fill a talent with necessary competences and capabilities and then begin to train the new employee. By contrast, New Oriental adopts the reversed way to recruit which use their core values to attract right talents, after that, New Oriental start the value training to them by their culture and value “ambassadors” or senior trainers in Beijing or other headquarters. Then, they will get chances to make “trial lectures” until students give them a “high-score”. Thirdly, they have to join a series of “teaching research seminars” until they fulfill the requirements of being a New Oriental teacher.

As mentioned already, these HR activities in New Oriental make great contributions to the good employer brand development.

5.2 The brand perceptions under local level control

In this chapter, the primary purpose is to explore the nature of New Oriental's corporate brand identity for existing and potential employees on the local market level of the firm. To achieve this primary goal, I mainly focus on the perceptions of New Oriental's managers and some existing employees of local branches. I mainly discussed corporate brand identity from vision, culture and employee perceptions and behaviors, core values, value proposition from perceptions of local branch level. The interviews of branch managers and some experienced employees are sources of respondents and corporate brochures have been also widely used in this research. These respondents have 8-13 years working experience with the company, which means they have wide range of knowledge in their positions. These respondents have their responsibility for interpreting the brand for local employees with their critical roles in this process.

The discussion of corporate brand identity in this chapter is aiming at local existing and potential employees. I would use the framework in Fig. 4.3 as theory to discuss how local schools' managers interpret New Oriental's values, culture, vision and translate them into the specific promise for local employees to formulate "an employer value proposition" for attracting the staff, therefore, I focus on the specific activities on the local level in this part.

5.2.1 Vision: Part-time staff is "a potential problem"

As we discussed above, the corporate vision is very broad to the local employees, they need to translate it into specific contexts, and the idea of growing with New Oriental is the general attitude to employees at New Oriental. However, on one hand, New Oriental open for all talents and does not care for their major, working experience or their educational backgrounds, on the other hand, New Oriental is looking for the "right" people who can share the same values with the company. In fact, it is very difficult to do perfect in practice, managers need to keep the balance between the diversity and compliance of talents to ensure the further development of

the whole company. Therefore, the managers in local branches have to adopt some different measures to deal with these problems.

“we should recruit right people who could deeply share the values we have in New Oriental”, expressed by president of Tianjin Branch, “we bring our core values from Beijing to Tianjin, although it seems that these two cities would be similar, since they are very close, in fact, they show out the quite different view towards New Oriental.”

The full-time and part-time employees own the different attitudes towards the New Oriental brand. In 2000, New Oriental started their branch school in Tianjin; the president led a team from Beijing headquarters that was considered as a group of “core values and culture” holders and they need to set up a local team as soon as possible to occupy substantially this market of Tianjin City.

They actually recruited two teams, one is the full-time team and the other is the part-time team, they both share the same values and culture with New Oriental, however, there was a big difference between their attitudes toward to New Oriental, the “full-time” teachers always said they are the “New Oriental teachers” and “part-time” teachers call themselves “working for New Oriental”, However, the teachers in Beijing branch commonly call themselves “people of New Oriental”, no matter they are full-time or part-time employees.

“Probably they have another job outside New Oriental, so they do not think they are our people” Tianjin HR manager commented, “But we don’t make any difference to treat them, the reason perhaps comes from the local people culture, they think New Oriental which belongs to Beijing are their school or home.”

Many manager respondents said they dislike distinguishing themselves from local employees. They should share common values and were trying to make the team with corporate values rather than a team with only local characters, which would inconsistent to the corporate brand, hence, some respondents would think the local employee would be a problem.

“We understand why they hold different attitude towards us, we are trying to build the kind of belongs to those employee to ensure we could build a strong team

rather than a team with individuals”

Therefore, Tianjin local branch invests more training of corporate core values for local part time employees and make the increasing belongs for them and amplify the values of New Oriental in their minds.

“Some part-time teachers should be a problem for our core values, but they are very excellent teachers, very good co-workers, they need to be cultivated by our training, we do not want to treat them like the earning-machines, which is very inconsistent to our core value-‘humanistic’”, as explained by HR manager in Tianjin.”

5.2.2 Culture: New Oriental Way is everywhere

“Sometimes, it is very funny, you know, many individuals ask me where New Oriental Way is? Actually, I know they doubt our New Oriental way. many CEO’s of commercial training institutions focus on the profits, they ignore the intangible things, even consider them useless, a waste of time and money, however, we do not agree with them, we have our strong core values, although we do not have over 20 years history, we have confidence to our core values, we have already very different and excellent in this field in China, that’s true, you know, Starbucks is only a kid, if compare with McDonald’s history, we are the Starbucks in Chinese English training business” (from the interview of Xiaoping Xu, 2010).

The senior management of New Oriental commented that the key success factor of New Oriental is from their core values and culture, they summarized as “New Oriental Way”, however, the corporate needs to translate those into very tangible and specific ways to the local employees’ minds and continually to cultivate and train for ensuring employees who share the same perceptions for further development of company. Therefore, the typical local tangible activities, the brand and cultural artifacts are used to create the cultural atmospheres for local employees.

“I still remembered the impression when I had interview in New Oriental, the huge logo and many pictures, those pictures involve the history of New Oriental and

the pictures of New Oriental social and charity activities, which all reflected the core values of New Oriental Way.” (a teacher respondent)

“we don not need the suit, we just wear jeans, sneakers, all of us are very young, we do not want to distinguish us from students, they just call our names directly and we are very equal, we are servants and friends, we are not teachers as traditional schools who are boring, serious and unmotivated, huh... ” (a teacher respondent)

The culture atmosphere in Tianjin branch school is the same to Beijing branch school and Beijing headquarter. The opening office rooms with class windows, the color of whole surrounding is green, livable and vivid. The employees are equal and relaxed. Some employees told me jokes about the reason why they use the green color is that Lao Yu was from poor village so that green color could make remind him of his farming land which fed his whole family when he was a kid.

Another aspect of culture in teaching area could typically reflect the core values of New Oriental, “humorous and passionate”, according to the observation in Tianjin, the atmosphere is always full of laugh and applause and there are full of hopes in students’ eyes when I observe on the classes.

“We must make our classes vivid and happy, if you can not motivate their passion and cause their attention, which means you are fail, since our purposes are not only to teach English, we have to do differently comparing with traditional schools, we should give them methods, skills for English examination and confidence for studying, belief for future life.”

The whole culture atmosphere of teaching is set up by their teachers who are guided by New Oriental Way. Tianjin branch school managers think they just convey the core values to teachers but more importantly teachers should have these values already, in other word, they should have stories or experience about these values to infect their students further. Otherwise, the culture of New Oriental would be the religions without the specific and real contents inside.

“we need to maintain and develop our core values, but we can not make values by ourselves, we need the teachers with these values, specifically, they should have these core values and encourage those to students, since they are the representative of

New Oriental way, they are the living New Oriental culture” (President of Tianjin Branch)

5.2.3 The brand perceptions of local employee: “I am the New Oriental Teacher”

The local employee respondents have formulated the positive value propositions of New Oriental which mainly provides “growing opportunity, self-improving, belongings in working, good social reputation and attractive income”, therefore, majority of employees expressed their pride to be New Oriental teachers.

“An important thing of my job is to share my core values with New Oriental, which means that you could have a close friend work together, the feeling is happy and relaxed. I do not need to worry about others’ behaviors. Because all of us share common values, we could fight for our goal together and help each other, I have been in New Oriental for 5 years, I grow up with this school, I am familiar with everything here.”

The corporate brand for employees could be characterized as “a chance to grow without limits”, employees could develop themselves in this place, since they have shared the same values which would avoid the conflicts of goals between corporate and employees. In addition, employees are core values holders, “they do not only maintain their cultures and values, but also instill new blood for their core values which ensure their values to be motivated.” (Manager respondents in Tianjin and Beijing branch schools)

Moreover, New Oriental offers their employee “the feeling of belonging”, for example, most of respondents commented that they are attractive by New Oriental Way and surroundings; they call them “New Oriental family member”, some newcomers commented on:

“New oriental gives a feeling of a big family, we are not individuals, therefore, we could make our contributions to New Oriental and make it increasing bigger and

stronger.”

“we are newcomers here, but we are soon to find out common persons here, since everybody gives helps to me, I was moved, we do not have the bureaucracy here ”

New Oriental is described by majority of respondents as “an employer with high creditability”- the company that keeps its commitments to the local employees. New Oriental offers very attractive salaries to teachers which are much higher than those of other English training schools and traditional school. In addition, they have very good salary system including the bonus rewards, insurance and welfares.

“It is very important for New Oriental to offer the attractive salary to our employees, since although values and culture are very important for attracting them; the nice salary is the fundamental factor to attract and maintain the high-level talents”

New Oriental is very clear to their salary strategies. They keep the balance between the money-focus and their values systems, a manager in Tianjin said that New Oriental knows money is the critical factor to our employees but we can not lose our values and turn to be money-focus to attract and retain our employees, since we believe “values and culture-attraction” are more important. As expressed by an experienced teacher:

“I have spend 5 years here and many other companies also offer me higher salary and positions, however, I don’t want to do that, you know, I have the strong belongings here which are from the values and cultures we share with New Oriental, I do not want to be a money-hunter, I need to achieve my values, New Oriental could give me the ideal surrounding here, it is very good employer, I have a good loyalty to New Oriental”.

Therefore, the good employer makes New Oriental attract their employees who have deep psychological connection to New Oriental brand and reduce the cost for HR activities as well.

“you know, I feel very honorable when I told my friends I am working for New Oriental, I know my friends are also familiar with its brand values, they know New Oriental Way, we have a very good reputation in society, which means I have the same

values, too, in addition, I also have nice incomes, that's perfect. ” (A new teacher respondent)

In summary, majority of respondents present the positive view towards New Oriental brand proposition. Vision and culture are used as the foundation for recruiting the right talents in local branch. However, they need to translate vision and culture into the specific activities to attract and retain the employee and in the meanwhile the problem is also identified on the local level. Corporate culture which has been overlapped with New Oriental Way is tangible around whole branch school. Furthermore, many respondents praised that New Oriental brand is perceived by a good employer which not only offers the belongings and attractive salary system, but also could set up the strong psychological connections to employees to achieve their life values.

5.3 Recruitment with values in local market

The external advertisement for recruitment is the major way to attract the employee in the local market. It is not similar to normal companies to make the recruitment in fall or spring season, New Oriental makes the whole-year recruitment. Usually, they would present the opening position on their website or cooperate with other external recruitment agencies.

The core values are the basic principles for recruiting activities. New Oriental core values for recruiting teachers are identified very clearly, however, there is one more core requirement which is the English skills, although New Oriental makes the strong focus on the core values of candidates, but it means that you have already reach the high-level academic requirement, such as high-score in English examinations, English qualifications and so on. For the job-hunters, they are easily to find out the recruitment page with core values below.

High-level English skills
Great patience for detail work
Humorous and knowledgeable
Well-developed sense of responsibility for work
Very excellent communication and expression skills
Strong team spirits and also very independent player
Have passions for English training and education career

Fig.5.2 The ad of recruitment values table on New Oriental website

Besides the website, the word of mouth communications or recommendation from existing teachers and managers is also a major way to offer the candidates for recruitment. After the information collection of candidates, the recruitment process would have three steps to get the final talents in local branch.

The first step is to find out the possible talents by run-through candidates' CV and opening questions they answered, HR specialists mainly focus on their basic qualifications and requirements, such as English level and educational background, although they do not care for which university the candidate come from, they still have the bottom-level for recruiting talents, such as the bachelor degree or college certification. Admittedly, there are still some special talents with attractive points for HR without these certifications.

“we admit that there are some very special talents without the basic requirements we require, but they have the special points to attract us, if we find there is a candidate like this, we are really happy, since we need to person with their own individuality, which is like we are a star-agents for Hollywood.” (a HR manager in Tianjin branch)

The second step is to arrange interview for looking for the right person who could share same values with New Oriental. As commented by Tianjin HR manager commented on:

“we usually keep silent in this stage and play a corporate video of our corporate

history and ask them to identify some core values inside and then to talk about themselves relating to the understanding of New Oriental, teacher and education career plain in future.”

Besides the talking about the video and themselves, they also are asked to a case in a group. During this period, the HR managers need to identify those candidates' core values and tell who are right persons possibly. This stage is very crucial for the whole process of recruitment and some candidates never receive this kind of interview for recruiting teachers, generally, schools just focus on their English level and ask how much do they want per month. However, as we discuss above, New Oriental have very strong vision and culture, all of their teachers are not only simple teaching machine, they are living culture and values holder, which means that if their teachers without these core values they need, New Oriental would not have their attractive values for students as well as their development. There is still one point to argue that even though the candidate could pass this step, it not mean that they are the totally right persons, after that, they need to adopt a series of training from New Oriental way and teaching preparation.

The last part is aiming at the training for these possible candidates, they would arranged into different departments they applied for the positions before, the managers and some experienced teachers would be responsible to their further training for 1-2 months until they are eligible for making the “*model lectures*” for some volunteer students.

In summary, the dominant role in recruitment process is not the academic skills, obviously, they could offer your training for teaching, more importantly, they emphasize whether you are the right people for New Oriental, as explained by senior HR manager in corporate brochure:

“we need value holders, not only teachers, we need the talents with broader view for students and education career in China rather than the profits only you would get. Please remember we could provide your repay which is worthy of your efforts in New Oriental.”

Therefore, the corporate brand values are their basic principles for recruitment,

although there are many talents who can be a good English teacher, New Oriental needs more than that.

5.4 Staff development

Some people doubt New Oriental can not provide talents good staff development, in fact, Lao Yu answered this question in corporate brochure, “*New Oriental Way, 2006*”, he commented on:

“In New Oriental, we provide the non-stop process for staff development, we actually not only provide the staff’s very good salary, but also give our staff development in future, we have a very strong HR system, each talent could find out their career design in New Oriental, but the prerequisite is that you should love your job and want to grow up with New Oriental together.”

As we mentioned above, the starting phase for all new teachers was training by New Oriental culture. It is usually operated by watching videos of company development and listening to the lectures by their local branches presidents, managers and the headquarters trainers from Beijing. Sometime, the founder of Lao Yu or Xiaoping Xu will make lectures by themselves. Many talents teachers generally started their career as the part-time or full-time teachers or teacher assistants, senior teachers, program supervisors, department supervisors and branch school president, or working in the headquarters for middle or senior positions. Many teachers are trained after a period of time and working as the internship teachers or teacher assistant. The major part of training is to understand New Oriental Way in society and also other core competences such as teaching method and skills, how to communicate with others and how to encourage students skills, teamwork, sharing opinions with others, etc. All of these were considered as basic qualifications for a successful career in New Oriental. However, as an English training organization, New Oriental also requires the high level for their teachers, in order to maintain the high-level, the corporate will require teachers to take part in series of professional trainings and internal qualification test.

As commented by respondents of HR in Tianjin and Beijing Branches, they

commonly practice “supervisor guidance” and “group work” approaches. These two approaches not only combine the academic learning styles but also involve their culture studying contents.

In New Oriental, presidents and managers of branch schools are all from their front-line teachers, even including marketing and sales department. President of Tianjin Branch commented on: “In New Oriental, we do not care too much about your majors or degrees, of course, we also pay attention to your universities, since as a teacher, it would be very attractive to students, however internally we just focus on two things, the first is whether you could be a very excellent teacher, the second is what your potential is.”

The talents in New Oriental do not care about your background, even for English teacher, many HR respondents said that they have the core values “effective and innovative; knowledgeable and eloquent”, which requires teachers are very diverse for their knowledge and they do not think there are only English major graduates could teach English well. “we just focus on if you could teach well and if they are satisfied”(Tianjin Branch President). Moreover, talents without major requirements could make New Oriental get diverse talents in many fields, such as business, accounting, marketing and management. Therefore, they actually have a huge diverse talents resource with same core values of New Oriental.

The first approach called “supervisor guidance”, which seems to the style that master student or PhD student get guidance from their supervisors in universities. The new teacher will get the suggestions from their department supervisor and experienced teachers, sometimes, their department managers are also experienced teacher who are responsible to courses new teachers will teach later. Generally, supervisor would present the requirements of this course and show their some internal documents about corporate culture and a series of corporate activities relating to the culture and meanwhile new teachers also need to be arranged for working in marketing or sales department for a period of time aimed to understand how New Oriental promote themselves and help them to understand how core value and culture are translated into practices. During this period, the supervisors just give their

“students” some suggestions and schedules and in the meanwhile ask them to submit the reports about their working and listen to the suggestions from these new comers. After that, supervisors will arrange newcomers with an experienced teacher and push them to study and improve by requirements of the course. As a supervisor respondent commented on:

We do not give them fixed requirements for courses and religious understandings about our culture, we just ask them to feel, to understand and to improve by themselves and everything would depend on them, if they can not make us and students satisfied finally, we would continue to extend their training period.

The advantage of New Oriental is that they have many experienced teaches and managers who can secure their teaching styles and traditions to express others, as commented by a manger in Beijing:

Some said we are just McDonald’s, we prefer to call ourselves Starbucks, since we do not “make” the teachers, we “cultivate” our teachers, because everybody has their own characters, it is also impossible to shape them totally same, the ideal situation for us is that all of us have the same vision and culture, but we still have diverse characteristics, we pursue our dream together for students who see the colorful and powerful New Oriental.

Some manager respondents commonly said they need their teachers should be liked as a “sponge”, they need to be active after they entered New Oriental, because they think the more teachers are curious and ask the more they could understand, they do not want to “push” them. As explained by some new teachers:

“actually we really appreciate for New Oriental, we have chances to understand the management styles here, although we know something about New Oriental before we came, in fact, it is not enough, we do not know New Oriental have so much commons with us, we did so much things so far to our society, I got great improvement in teaching, I must show my many thanks to my supervisor and my predecessors, they give me great encouragement by New Oriental Way, obviously, I would continue to convey this spirit to my students in future. ”

The second approach called “group work”, which is especially for the

newcomers in new programs in New Oriental. English training is a stiff developing industry, many new programs are emerging in different markets, in the past, New Oriental was good at TOEFL and GRE, presently and increasing students who want to study abroad pay attention to IELTS , SAT, besides that, the Kids English training program and many domestic English examination programs made New Oriental develop their business fast. However, these new programs need many talents to research initially, thereby New Oriental set up the team to prepare these new business. The newcomers would receive the training not only by individual, “they would train together and devote their talents and share from other co-workers”, commented by a manager supervisor, however, which do not mean that teachers could not train from New Oriental, actually, they still need to get the culture training after the recruitment, “group work” needs the talents to make the contributions to their job firstly, moreover, they also need to get the guidance from other experienced team in this program and need to visit different branch for furthe education. A manager respondent commented on “group work”:

“we call for the ‘elite’ in new programs, which means we need to promote these new business and thereby cultivating experts by ourselves, in other word, newcomers are not only trainee in these programs, but also the potential trainer in future.”

In addition, New Oriental thinks culture and values training in this approach are very important, since they should find out the right talents for new program by value recruitment, otherwise, if they use the “wrong ” person to take charge of new business which would bring much bigger risk in future, one of them is that “newcomers would leave New Oriental with their research and then to join other schools and what worse yet, you need to spend more time and money to cultivate other suitable person, therefore, which brings bigger cost not only in HR but also in business development” commented by many managers respondents in Beijing and Tianjin Branches.

These two approaches are typical ways for staff development, however, no matter what kind of approaches they adopt to train their staff, they all need to face their students and should insure whether students satisfied their jobs and efforts, which is consistent to the core value of New Oriental, “Student-oriented”, otherwise,

all of their efforts would fail and restart to do.

6. Analysis

In this chapter, I mainly discussed findings I have already presented in the previous and aimed to formulate the answers to my research question.

6.1 The primary brand dimensions: vision, culture and employees

In this chapter, I am going to analyze findings I did in the previous chapter. I have already presented my empirical material from corporate level and local level which were guided by my framework in Chapter 4, mainly including the aspects of vision, culture and employees. My research question is to analyze how corporate brand with multiple dimensions as the organizational resources to attract the employees. The empirical materials are structured by following the logic of my existing framework and now I will continue to analyze by my framework to answer my research problem.

In the methodology part, I conceptualized the framework of corporate brand and the brand identity is considered as the most critical contexts for my research in this thesis. In this chapter, I will formulate the brand dimension into the primary brand dimension and secondary dimension and I will discuss these two aspects respectively.

In my study, the corporate brand vision, culture and employees' perceptions and behaviors are referred to as the primary brand dimensions because they are the foundation of brand identity. In the empirical part, the primary brand dimensions have already presented by my respondents. To illustrate, the corporate managers presented clearly their vision and culture not only from the corporate level but also the local level.

The corporate level perceptions of vision is to "offer students not only knowledge of English, but also offer students' spirit to encourage yourself until to achieve your own values in the world." It is very clear that the corporate needs to offer not only the high level English training course, but also to give students more

things besides the English knowledge itself. The vision is the foundation of company to develop in future. However, as we discussed above, the vision is too broad for employees' perceptions, therefore, the corporate needs to translate their vision into the employee-face for directing and attracting the employees. As commented by many manager respondents, they translated corporate vision is "the place is to fight for their lives, students in New Oriental would get the power to encourage themselves to make their dream come true."

In addition, the vision is also the foundation of culture; actually, vision and culture are interacted and formulate the basis of the brand identity. New Oriental culture is from their vision and formulates special perceptions and behaviors, which are called "New Oriental Way", many manager respondents emphasized the importance of New Oriental Way which is the key success factor and is also the significant factor which differentiates from others in this business field. As discussed in the previous chapter, the New Oriental Way is a series of spirits such as "the attitude toward their life", "a power to make the dream come true" and "a self-made success method", etc. all of them perceptions formulate the special values for their students, other customer and their employees, especially for their potential employees. These values also become the strong sustainable competent advantages for development.

Therefore, the vision and culture formulate core values for employees which are also depicted as the core principles to attract the employees. These core values play both static and dynamic roles in corporate brand identity, on one hand, it conceptualized the explicit brand values to their receivers, on the other hand, they also could be developed depending on the different situations and markets, which could make corporate managers adopt different measures to attract employees.

In summary, for the primary brand dimension, the vision is final goal and the basis to develop their corporate and in the meanwhile it also constitutes the culture as well, the core values are formulated by vision and culture for the employees. In my study, the core values are the basic principles to attract employees.

6.2 The secondary brand dimensions

As we discussed above, the primary brand dimensions are conceptualized as the brand context for the brand identity, the secondary brand dimensions in this study are core values and value proposition which offer the brand transfer with the dynamism and the sense of direction (Tarnovskaya, 2007). In the framework chapter, the process of stakeholder value creation with the corporate brand follows the value axis:

“Vision-core values-value proposition-external stakeholder values”

It is very clear that the elements are linked with each other in the whole value creation process. Since in my study, I focus on attracting potential employees and hence the external stakeholder is instead by the potential employees. In the secondary brand dimension level, the core values and value proposition are very active elements which are used by adding marketing or HR activities by corporate managers on both corporate level and local level. However, there would be somewhat different between the corporate level and local level. For example, the senior managers or CEOs would make the very developed presentations about the vision and culture but the local managers need to translate those into the specific activities and benefits for the targeted stakeholders groups, in other word, the corporate needs to be an employer, create the specific brand promises to attract their employees, just like to make the good products for customers to purchase. The empirical material in previous chapter provides some examples in recruiting activities, for instance, when the corporate are doing their HR activities, core values to be New Oriental teachers are clearly presented in the corporate level as:

Students-oriented Passionate and characteristic Industrious and Aggressive
--

However, in fact, it is very obvious too broad for potential employees; therefore, they need to translate these core values by specific values as:

Well-developed sense of responsibility for work Great patience for detail work Have passions for English training and education career Very excellent communication and expression skills
--

Beside that, the local value propositions should not only have the statements of their core values, they also need to offer the very competent salary system as the important corner stones for attracting talents as well as “the belongings”, ”the opportunities to grow with company together”, etc. As expressed by some respondents, New Oriental is an honest employer, since “they meet their promise, offer me the chance to grow with company together”, “I feel honor to be a teacher in New Oriental, I really want to wear T-shirt with our logo”.

6.3 The process of corporate branding for attracting employees

In last sections, I already discussed briefly about the primary brand dimensions with vision, culture and employees and the secondary brand dimensions with brand core values and values propositions. In this section, I am going to analyze how the corporate branding used by managers for attracting employees, the below diagram show the procedure that corporate branding is used as the organizational resource to attract the employees.

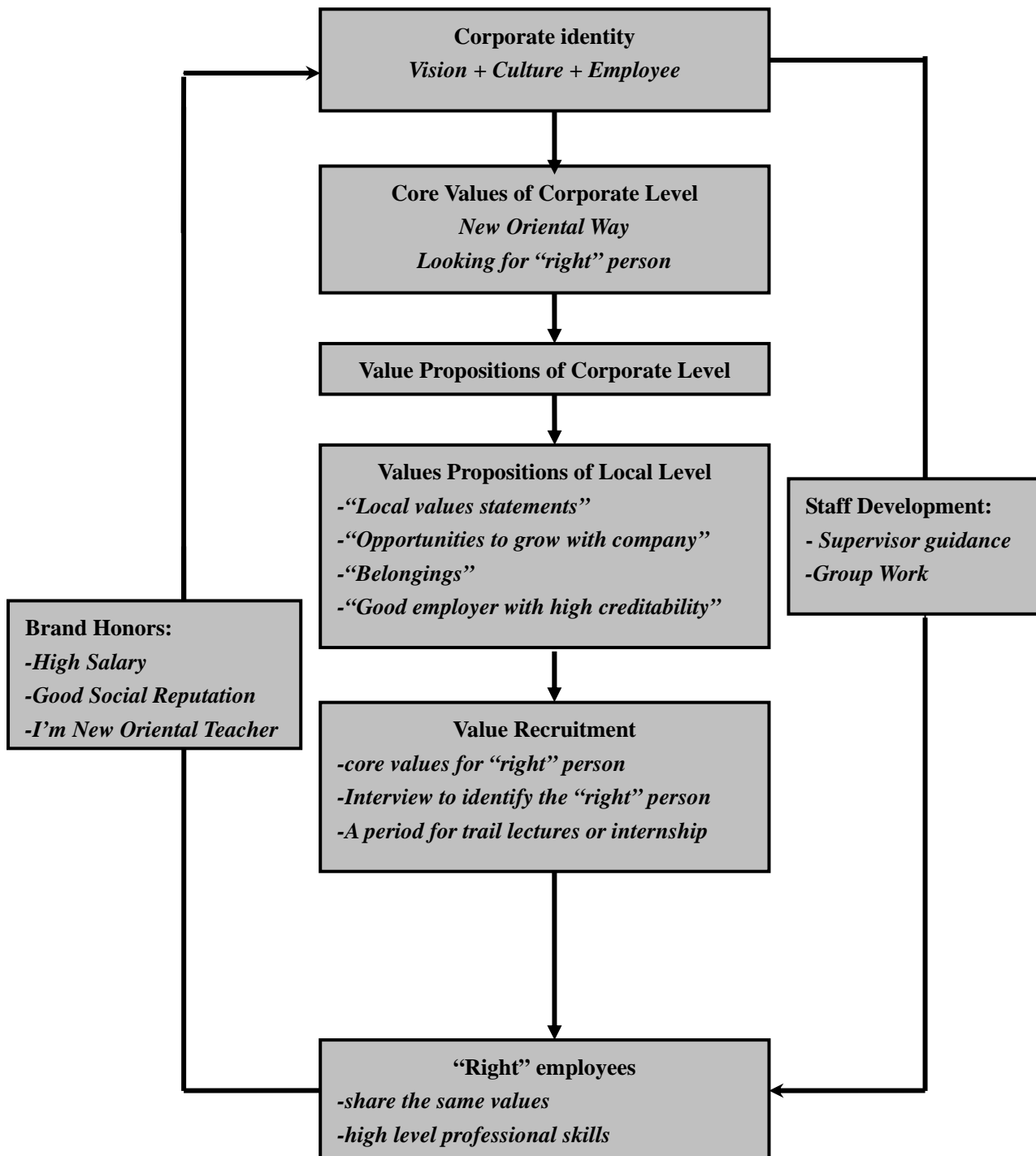


Fig.6.1 The process of corporate branding for attracting employees

The role of corporate brand identity with vision, culture and the employee formulates the unique organizational resources—“core values” which are the fundamental principles to look for the “right” persons, all of the strategies for recruiting employees should follow the guidance of their core values, however, core

values are actually the “product” of their vision and culture, the corporate could not make the simple propagations for these values. To illustrate, New Oriental makes the emphasis on their culture—“New Oriental Way”, since the CEO, Lao Yu argues that New Oriental Way is full of stories which are vivid for targeted groups and thereby attracting more attentions from different external stakeholders. Therefore, the New Oriental Way is not only internally for their employees but also for the public and becomes their “intangible product” besides training courses. For the HR activities, New Oriental Way is developed as the value proposition at corporate level, as explained by Lao Yu, all of New Oriental employees must agree with New Oriental Way, otherwise, they are not “right” persons there. So in this stage, the company should have the strong corporate vision and culture to formulate their special and unique organizational core values and then value proposition should be set up for HR ideas at corporate level.

The local companies are responsible to the recruitment, as I discussed above, the local managers need to adopt local measures to recruit talents. The core values in this stage are translated into the “local job fair values”, which does not mean the local companies change their core values, on the contrary, they do not want to the “broad core values” , they need the specific value propositions, in other words, the core values are developed as the “local recruitment tool for positioning, we still market New Oriental Way, which is still our representations of our vision and culture” (HR manager in Tianjin), besides that, the local values proposition should also be the employer, Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) argue that the good employer brand could strengthen the employees’ psychological connections with brand thereby improving the brand loyalty and belongings, New Oriental provides the attractive local value proposition in this stage, including “high-salary”; “opportunities with company growing ”; “strong belongings”, etc. As commented by a HR manager in Tianjin branch:

“New Oriental does not use core values to cheat employees, we are very honest to our core values, we need employees with same values, your repay is the worth of your values here.”

The value recruitment is the typical local recruitment activity, the local core values are used as major communication and recruitment tools for the potential “right” employees, the local HR specialists make the job ads with core values and recruit them internally, they choose the “right” persons with growing with company.

However, the corporate branding as the organizational resources also needs to offer the non-stop staff development for training the new employees and keep them approaching with corporate core values; in addition, the company also should provide the professional skills training for improving employees’ competencies for the stiff competitions. Therefore, the company uses their core values to find the “right” to develop itself and staff could share same values with company as well as work for company with high belongings and good repays and thereby improving their brand honors to the company, as commented by an employee: “I am the New Oriental Teacher!”

6.4 The potential problems of research

The core values from corporate vision and culture would be deviated from its true meaning of corporate level, lacking of experienced managers in some branch schools could maintain their core values and translate those into the local markets appropriately, especially for the fast expansion in different market, the values of vision and culture would be diluted with profit-oriented purpose and increasing “wrong” persons would affect negatively on the corporate culture and vision, for example, the local school in Tianjin, part-time employees even do not care too much about their vision and culture, although they would be persons who hold same values with New Oriental, the local corporate still need to invest more training for them to integrate those with corporate vision and culture, otherwise, there would make the detrimental effect on the corporate brand identity and core values.

There is another potential problem that the conflicts between talented persons and core values, specifically, at the starting of new local company, the big need of talents would dilute the importance of core values, managers would make focus on the

high-level talents for profits and have to make the compromise with core value recruitment or want to train those talented employees with later core values training, as commented by a local HR managers:

“this would be very common phenomenon for the new local companies and it is also a dilemma, some talents come to New Oriental with same values we share, on the other hand, some others just want to earn money, however, we indeed need them to make profits by them, so we are trying to address this problem presently.”

Some managers insist they should use core values to train them by non-stop process and others hold the opinion that they need to adopt more “right” person in local company thereby increasing the percentage of “right” employees, which could consolidate the vision and culture in the local company.

In summary, the corporate brand identity should emphasize on their vision and culture so that it could create the clear and strong core values as the basic principles to attract the “right” persons, however, HR activities are implemented in the local companies, the specific values propositions should be identified with local branch characters and real situations.

7. Conclusions and contributions

The chapter is going to present major conclusions of my study in this thesis and in the meanwhile I also state the contributions to theories, in addition I also present the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.

7.1 Brand identity is the propellant for attracting potential employees

In this thesis, my research question is to analyze how the corporate branding as the organizational resource with different dimensions used for attracting employees. In my study, I argue that the corporate brand identity with vision, culture and employees could formulate the strong core values and value propositions for attracting the potential employees.

As I discussed in the literature review chapter, corporate branding is not only conception for the marketing research, but also for the organizational research. Thus, in my research, I consider the corporate brand as the logical constructions with intangible dimensions provides values for targeted groups, I narrowed down the targeted stakeholders as potential employees and research how corporate branding could be used for attracting them. For answering this question, I identified the conceptual framework of corporate brand identity with different intangible dimensions including vision, culture and employees' perceptions and behaviors. Since the importance of vision and culture in corporate brand identity have been already stressed in literature (Hatch & Schultz, 2003; de Chernatony, 2005, etc), I made the focus on these aspects and also referred vision, culture and employee as the primary brand dimensions and formulated the core values and value propositions as the secondary brand dimensions. The vision is a fundamental factor for providing the value and direction as well as the creation process. The primary brand dimensions create core values and formulate values propositions which provide corresponding

local market strategies and activities for attracting potential employees.

The core values from the corporate brand identity is the basic principles for local companies to look for “right” talents and in the meanwhile core values from the primary brand dimensions also formulate the brand value proposition which are the critical factor to create values for attracting potential employees in local companies.

It is very important to stress that the value proposition plays a key role in the values creation, especially it plays the profound role between local companies and employees in my study, since the local company is responsible to the recruitment, the local brand value proposition plays critical role in values creation for recruitment. Most of literature pay attention to the value proposition to customers while ignore the importance of value proposition to other stakeholders, such as the potential employees, therefore, I made the contribution to this part. In addition, the positive value proposition from stakeholders could make them develop the brand loyalty and strong positive relationship with brand. For example, in my research, the good local value propositions make the employees feel honor about New Oriental brand.

In summary, based on the conceptual framework I present above, the corporate brand identity is the propellant to create values for attracting potential employees, since the corporate brand identity with its intangible elements, such as vision, culture, which is considered as the organizational strategies to formulate the core values and value propositions for local companies to implement HR strategies for attracting talents.

7.2 The contributions of my study

My research made the contributions to the theoretical and practical aspects. My research question is to analyze how the corporate brand as the organizational resource with different dimensions used for attracting the potential employees.

Firstly, my research made a deeper understanding of the nature of the corporate branding as the value creation process with multiple intangible elements, moreover, the corporate brand is also as the organizational resource which are used for the HR

aspect research, since it is mainly due to the framework I quoted and made the modification from Tarnovskaya (2007), the framework she conceptualized made the great contributions to explore the nature of corporate brand identity to create values for stakeholders, in my study, I just focus on the potential employees and corporate brand identity.

In addition, the understandings of core values and values propositions are also developed in my study, core values from vision and culture are developed as the basic principles for recruiting employees and in the meanwhile the value proposition are the critical context for local companies to implement HR strategies and activities for attracting employees.

My study also made some contributions for adding the empirical work of corporate branding, since there are lacking of the empirical work in corporate brand research, in addition, many researchers pay great attentions to research the issues of corporate brand and customers, however, I made the arguments about the corporate branding and HR activities and then give some suggestions for companies which want to implement the HR strategies with their advantages from corporate brand. Besides that, my research is closely related to the corporate vision and culture which would help companies acquire some aspiration to construct their vision and culture to also formulate core values not only for recruitment, but also face other external and internal stakeholders.

7.3 Suggestions for future research

In my study, I considered the corporate brand as the strategic organizational resource for attracting potential employees, thus, the perceptions of potential employees should be taken into accounts, however, I mainly focus on the corporate brand identity based on the managerial perceptions, although I made many interviews from job candidates, many of their opinions are not main source of my study in this thesis. In addition, existing employees' perceptions and behaviors were not paid much attention in this thesis, the understandings of corporate branding lack of internal

perceptions and accounts. Therefore, the internal and external perceptions on corporate branding should be argued and compared in future research.

My case company is a domestic service company; although it is developing very fast, the history of company is only less than 20 years. Therefore, comparing with the global companies, the corporate brand of my case company is still not very developed and the validity of findings are quite limited. Therefore, the future researches need to choose companies with strong corporate brand identity and more importantly I also need to interviews with more local companies so that the findings could be much more convicted and valid.

In addition, I chose a service company for the case research, however, I do not discuss the differences between product brand and service brand. Therefore, it would be a possibility in future to make researches focus on service sectors carried out by its corporate brand.

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Appendix 1

New Orient corporate questionnaire guide

Corporate level

1. What are goals of New Orient Group?
2. What are main differences from other schools in China?
3. What do you want the consumers and employee perceive New Orient?
4. How can you describe the management style used in New Orient?
5. How can you describe the New Orient organizational culture?
6. What role do they play internally in the organization? (e.g. recruitment, training of personnel, reward system)?
7. What is the New Orient Spirit? And does it change over time? And how? To what extent are the New Orient and organizational culture overlapping?
8. Is the corporate culture a very critical factor to attract employees? And how it influence them?
9. How do you understand the employer branding? And how do you implement strategies?
10. How does New Orient choose employee?
11. What are main and critical requirements for your employees? Why?
12. How does New Orient deal with the relationship with employee?
12. What are standards of being an excellent employee? (e.g. teacher)

Appendix 2

Branch School (Beijing City & Tianjin City)?

1. What is role of New Orient brand in the employee attractions? What are the main challenges related to establishing the brand and projecting right image now and as you foresee in future?
2. What is the New Orient general HR strategy in Tianjin City? Do you different from others (e.g. Beijing School)
3. How do you describe the organizational culture? how do you understand New Orient Spirit? How do think it would help you to make strategies for attracting employees?
4. Who are main competitors in Tianjin and what their HR strategies for attract employees?
5. How do you want an ideal employee (e.g. the teacher) to perceive New Orient?
6. How do you think you could offer the belongings to employee and how do you improve the stratifications for employees?
7. Do you train the employees? and how do you train them? Including what?
8. What New Orient values are most appreciated? And valued by your employees and customers? To what extend is the New Orient concept/brand perceived similarly or differently in Tianjin as compared with branches in other cities?
9. How do you position New Orient in this field in Tianjin? What are differences and similarities from other branches? (e.g. Beijing)
10. What advertising is used in Tianjin for attracting employee: media, types of ads, who decides how to develop them, whether ads are based on local market data or on knowledge from other cities, other types of promotion activities, including PR, Marketing, HR?
11. how do you think about the employer brand? Do you implement some strategies by guidance of that? And what they are?
12. What measures are using to encourage, reward and evaluating employees' working?