

INTERACTION OF EMPLOYER BRANDING AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: LEVERAGE OF COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYER ATTRACTIVENESS

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Abstract: *The attractiveness of an employer's corporate culture has become an increasingly significant factor for qualified personnel when choosing a job. Employer branding offers companies a strategic approach to actively shape their identity, culture and values. Topics such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), diversity, occupational health and safety (OHS), social inclusion and vocational rehabilitation can all be part of an employer's branding strategy. However, the interrelationship between these subjects has not been adequately addressed by the existing literature. Therefore, vocational rehabilitation as an essential area of human resources and the CSR activity of a company, the strategic fit, as well as their interactions with employer branding have been examined in this paper. The research was based on a literature review, and the selected literature was evaluated following the 'strategy as stretch and leverage' principles proposed by Hamel and Prahalad (1993). The results analytically revealed that the integration of vocational rehabilitation into the employer branding strategy can generate real added value, as the effects of vocational rehabilitation are, in many respects, congruent with the objectives of employer branding. More specifically, it can preserve and regain human resources, which consequently makes a positive contribution to employee motivation, mental health and resilience. Additionally, it strengthens and complements both the leadership and communication skills of management, and the company's values and culture. Furthermore, both the internal and external identity, and the image of a caring employer, can be conveyed effectively and authentically, leading to a significant increase in the employer's attractiveness to qualified potential employees.*

Keywords: corporate culture, employer branding, human resource management (HRM), vocational rehabilitation, corporate social responsibility (CSR).

For qualified workers and talents, the attractiveness of an employer's corporate culture is a significant component affecting the decision-making process of choosing a job in an organisation. Employer branding offers companies a strategic approach to actively shape their identity and culture as well as to ensure that employees live their values and that outsiders are aware of these values¹. Companies should also be well-prepared for the consequences and challenges of demographic changes. Occupational health and safety (OHS) and vocational rehabilitation must, therefore, form an integral part of every company's human resources management due to an ageing workforce and the pertinent increase in chronic illnesses and a growing shortage of skilled workers².

¹ S. Brecht, H. Schmucker, *Employer branding im mittelstand*, Springer Gabler, Heidelberg, 2013; O.O. Popadych, "Theoretical basis of legal education of future employees of preschool education", in *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Pedagogy and Psychology"*, 2021, no. 1, p. 90-94.

² M. Niehaus, B. Marfels, "Competencies and tasks of disability management professionals in Germany", in *International Journal of Disability Management*, 2010, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 67-72.

In addition to OHS, vocational rehabilitation is an essential social responsibility of companies towards their employees as well as the society³. Returning to work after an accident or illness can be a difficult or rather an impossible process. Employees are dependent on chances, either from the current employer or from another company, to find a suitable job in a new workplace. Unfortunately, this is often not the case in reality as evidenced by the high rates of unemployment among people with⁴. Although OHS is an essential aspect that is fully considered in all companies, there is rarely a systematic approach to tackle the unfortunate incident which renders it impossible for an employee to return to his or her previous job⁵. In practice, the efforts and commitment towards supporting the affected employee to return to work and find a suitable job in the company seem to be strongly dependent on a high socioeconomic status⁶. Studies have shown that vocational rehabilitation leads to positive impacts and improves, in particular, the corporate culture and working atmosphere⁷. This also implies that the impact of vocational rehabilitation is in many respects, congruent with the objectives of employer branding⁸.

Employer branding offers an opportunity for companies to present themselves positively in the market amidst the competition between employers

³ M.J. Millington, D.M. Miller, K.K. Asner-Self, D. Linkowski, "The business perspective on employers, disability and vocational rehabilitation", in E. Szymanski and R. Parker (Eds.), *Work and disability*, TX: PRO-ED, Austin, 2003, p. 317-342; B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355.

⁴ B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355

⁵ M.J. Montero, R.A. Araque, J.M. Rey, "Occupational health and safety in the framework of corporate social responsibility", in *Safety Science*, vol. 47, no. 10, p. 1440-1445; B. Miethlich, "Disability as a blind spot in sustainability frameworks and standards", in *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 2019, vol. 8, no. 4, p. 333-337; A.S. Khamzin, S. Aldashev, Y.M. Tileubergenov, A.K. Kussainova, Z.A. Khamzina, Y.A. Buribayev, "Legal regulation of employment in Kazakhstan", in *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 2016, vol. 11, no. 18, p. 11907-11916.

⁶ I. Seing, E. MacEachen, K. Ekberg, C. Ståhl, "Return to work or job transition? employer dilemmas in taking social responsibility for return to work in local workplace practice", in *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 2019, vol. 37, no. 19, p. 1760-1769.

⁷ J.C. Cullen, B.A. Silverstein, M.P. Foley, "Linking biomechanical workload and organizational practices to burnout and satisfaction", in *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 2008, vol. 23, no. 1-2, p. 63-71; S. Csillag, Z. Gyori, R. Matolay, "Two worlds apart? Corporate social responsibility and employment of people with disabilities", in R. Tench, B. Jones and W. Sun (Eds.), *The Critical State of Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe (Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability)*, 2018, vol. 12, p. 57-81.

⁸ M.R. Demianchuk, "Organization of experimental research of vocational training of future junior specialists in nursing in medical colleges", in *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Pedagogy and Psychology"*, 2021, no. 1, p. 66-69.

for skilled workers and specialists⁹. Not only does it serve as traction for new employees, but it also supports organisations to remain attractive to existing employees, thus, strengthening employee loyalty¹⁰. The attractiveness of an employer is primarily determined by the following factors: professional development opportunities; corporate reputation; social acceptance and affiliation; work-life balance; business ethics; and CSR¹¹. For the younger generation (“Generation Z” or “Millennials”), the aspects of job security, corporate culture, working atmosphere, CSR and opportunities to participate actively in CSR activities are particularly¹². Contrastingly, research has shown that health promotion plays only a subordinate role¹³. Nonetheless, the concept of employer branding should be construed as a comprehensive strategic approach, functioning as the targeted planning, management, coordination and control of a brand for the company in its role as an employer¹⁴. It comprises the effort of shaping the employer brand and the company image to enable an internal and external positioning as an attractive employer. A company cannot decide for or against employer branding; the issue pertains to whether the company itself actively shapes and controls it or is passively shaped by others (e.g., employees, media reports, or comments on social media)¹⁵.

Issues such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), diversity, OHS, social inclusion or vocational rehabilitation can be part of the employer branding strategies. Nevertheless, there is little to none knowledge about the interaction of these concepts¹⁶. This article, therefore, aims to examine the

⁹ W. Immerschitt, M. Stumpf, *Employer Branding für KMU - Der Mittelstand als attraktiver Arbeitgeber*, Springer-Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2019.

¹⁰ S. Shree, H. Arora, A. Khan, “Exploring key gender diversity practices which act as determinants of the organizational attractiveness in Indian IT sector”, in *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2018, vol. 8, no. 4, p. 136-156.

¹¹ R. Sharma, A. Prasad, “Employer brand and its unexplored impact on intent to join”, in *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 2018, vol. 26, no. 3, p. 536-566.

¹² J.H. Holste, *Arbeitgeberattraktivität im demographischen Wandel*, Springer Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2012; C.P. Theurer, A. Tumasjan, I.M. Welpe, F. Lievens, “Employer branding: A brand equity-based literature review and research agenda”, in *International Journal of Management Reviews*, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 155-179; M. Steckl, U. Simshäuser, M. Niederberger, “Arbeitgeberattraktivität aus Sicht der Generation Z”, in *Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung*, 2019, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 212-217.

¹³ M. Steckl, U. Simshäuser, M. Niederberger, “Arbeitgeberattraktivität aus Sicht der Generation Z”, in *Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung*, 2019, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 212-217.

¹⁴ B. Sponheuer, *Employer Branding als Bestandteil einer ganzheitlichen Markenführung*, Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2010.

¹⁵ S. Radermacher, “Die herausforderungen des employer brandings”, in H. Künzel (Ed.), *Erfolgsfaktor employer branding*, Springer Gabler, Heidelberg, 2013, p. 1-16.

¹⁶ T. Kupczyk, A. Szymańska, J. Kubicka, A. Oleszkiewicz, “The relationships between diversity management and employer branding”, in *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 2016, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 82-90; K. Klimkiewicz, V. Oltra, “Does CSR enhance employer attractiveness? The role of millennial job seekers' attitudes”, in *Corporate Social Responsibility and*

strategic fit of vocational rehabilitation as a vital human resource and CSR activity of a company and the element of the employer branding strategy in addition to analysing the interactions that arise.

Literature review

Employer branding is an interdisciplinary or interfaced topic localised in companies between marketing, public relations and human resources. For this reason, top management must be in charge of the project, for the successful introduction of employer branding¹⁷. Not only does the employer branding offer an excellent potential in the competition for talents, but it can also reduce overall recruitment costs resulted from a higher level of attractiveness of the company as an employer¹⁸.

The aspect of human and work-related responsibilities has the most significant influence on a company's perceived CSR commitment¹⁹ which concern both the company itself and the entire value chain. Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that the perception of a company's CSR is not primarily shaped by negative headlines in the media (for example, child labour or suppliers' poor working conditions), rather, it is influenced by the treatment of employees with whom customers have direct contact. Furthermore, the customer perception of a company as an employer is closely interlinked with the loyalty and willingness to pay an additional price for products and services²⁰. Managers in socially responsible companies are also perceived as more ethical, trustworthy, considerate and fair in decision-making processes in contrast to the companies that do not engage in CSR. In view of that, CSR activities can be considered as an indicator of ethical leadership within a

Environmental Management, 2017, vol. 24, no.5, p. 449-463; A.T. Verčič, D.S. Čorić, "The relationship between reputation, employer branding and corporate social responsibility", in *Public Relations Review*, 2028, vol. 44, no. 4, p. 444-452; J.Carlini, D. Grace, C. France, J.L. Iacono, "The corporate social responsibility (CSR) employer brand process: integrative review and comprehensive model", in *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 35, no. 1-2, p. 182-205; K. Łazorko, "Work safety as an element of external employer branding strategy", in *Zeszyty Naukowe. Quality. Production. Improvement*, vol. 2, no. 11, p. 16-25.

¹⁷ M. Krengel, C.M. Schmidt, "Jobwahl", in H. Künzel (Ed.), *Erfolgsfaktor employer branding*, Springer Gabe, Heidelberg, 2013, p. 35-46; W. Immerschitt, M. Stumpf, *Employer Branding für KMU - Der Mittelstand als attraktiver Arbeitgeber*, Springer-Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2019.

¹⁸M. Krengel, C.M. Schmidt, "Jobwahl", in H. Künzel (Ed.), *Erfolgsfaktor employer branding*, Springer Gabe, Heidelberg, 2013, p. 35-46

¹⁹J. Anselmsson, U. Johansson, "Corporate social responsibility and the positioning of grocery brands: An exploratory study of retailer and manufacturer brands at point of purchase", in *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 2007, vol. 35, no. 10, p. 835-856.

²⁰ J. Anselmsson, N. Bondesson, F. Melin, "Customer-based brand equity and human resource management image: Do retail customers really care about HRM and the employer brand?", in *European Journal of Marketing*, 2016, vol. 50, no. 7/8, p. 1185-1208.

company²¹. This further implies the significance of social responsibility towards employees in a good employer branding²² and, like CSR activities in general, social responsibility can significantly strengthen the employer brand²³. Accordingly, the employer brand and employer branding should be equally treated with the same importance as a product and price image²⁴. Nevertheless, Puncheva-Michelotti, Hudson and Jin²⁵ suggested that even multinational companies have hardly ever used their CSR commitment in the employer branding strategy and did not make any reference to it either in personnel recruitment or in external employer branding communication; the same applies to OHS²⁶. This shows that there is still a lot of potential for synergies and leverage in business practice by linking these individual strategies.

The communication of the values further assumes an essential function in employer branding. Due to increasingly globalised markets, it is also necessary to consider the diversity of target groups of both employees and customers and incorporate this element into branding. Since employees are perceived as the face of the brand²⁷, their engagement in communication activities regarding cultural diversity, gender-balanced working environments and the workplace are highly encouraged. For instance, this type of direct involvement can be demonstrated through active use of social media sites²⁸. As employer brands rarely incorporate the elements pertinent to CSR, the

²¹ Z. Kirchmayer, A. Remisova, A. Lasakova, "Ethical leadership in the context of CSR", in *Proceedings of the 28th International Business Information Management Association Conference (IBIMA)*, 2016, vol 9, p. 7146-7158.

²² J. Anselmsson, N. Bondesson, F. Melin, "Customer-based brand equity and human resource management image: Do retail customers really care about HRM and the employer brand?", in *European Journal of Marketing*, 2016, vol. 50, no. 7/8, p. 1185-1208.

²³ Y. Kuznetsova, B. Yalcin, "Inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream employment: is it really all about the money? A case study of four large companies in Norway and Sweden", in *Disability & Society*, 2017, vol. 32, no. 2, p. 233-253; S. Csillag, Z. Gyori, R. Matolay, "Two worlds apart? Corporate social responsibility and employment of people with disabilities", in: R. Tench, B. Jones and W. Sun (Eds.), in *The Critical State of Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe (Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability)*, 2018, vol. 12, p. 57-81; A.T. Verčič, D.S. Ćorić, "The relationship between reputation, employer branding and corporate social responsibility", in *Public Relations Review*, 2018, vol. 44, no. 4, p. 444-452.

²⁴ J. Anselmsson, N. Bondesson, F. Melin, "Customer-based brand equity and human resource management image: Do retail customers really care about HRM and the employer brand?", in *European Journal of Marketing*, 2016, vol. 50, no. 7/8, p. 1185-1208.

²⁵ P. Puncheva-Michelotti, S. Hudson, G. Jin, "Employer branding and CSR communication in online recruitment advertising", in *Business Horizons*, 2018, vol. 61, no. 4, p. 643-651.

²⁶ K. Łazorko, "Work safety as an element of external employer branding strategy", in *Zeszyty Naukowe. Quality. Production. Improvement*, vol. 2, no. 11, p. 16-25.

²⁷ M. Kaiser, A. Regjepaj, "Impact of employer branding on employee commitment and satisfaction", in *Management*, 2019, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 49-70.

²⁸ M. Ahmadi, R. Eilert, A. Weibert, V. Wulf, N. Marsden, "We want to push the industry via communication", in *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 2020, vol. 4, p. 1-26.

employer value proposition would tend to include concept pertaining to payment and benefits. It is, thus, worth highlighting that social media platforms allow customers and potential candidates to interact with the brand more effectively. This interaction will consequently help to address the different brand aspects, CSR and values which are essential for the employer value proposition²⁹.

Given the demographic change and the shortage of skilled workforce, a positive and authentic employer branding is seen as a considerable advantage in the competition for talents and the retention of existing employees³⁰. Employer branding allows the company's values to be relayed to the general public which will further facilitate more opening of new pools of applicants.

Materials and methods

The evaluation of findings in the literature was underpinned by the leverage of competencies or resources using the “strategy as stretch and leverage” principles after Hamel and Prahalad³¹. Accordingly, the “strategy as stretch and leverage” and its principles for achieving resource and competency leverage, the employer branding and its value in today's globalised competition, and the impacts of vocational rehabilitation as an essential human resource and CSR activity in companies are discussed in details.

Everything that has the potential to add value to the organisation or that which can contribute to the corporate strategy to achieve its mission and vision can be considered as corporate resources. Both economic and non-economic corporate resources are of equal significance for the organisation. Resources are defined as services and assets that can be employed for producing goods and services, encompassing financial, material, human resources as well as non-tangible resources such as knowledge and skills³². The availability and effective usage of resources will define the profitability of the organisation. It should be highlighted that the strategies of collaboration can be employed to improve and multiply internal resources. Efficient vision and commitment are necessary

²⁹ T. Kupczyk, A. Szymańska, J. Kubicka, A. Oleszkiewicz, “The relationships between diversity management and employer branding”, in *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 2016, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 82-90.

³⁰ Y.A. Buribayev, Z.A. Khamzina, “Gender equality in employment: The experience of Kazakhstan”, in *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law*, 2019, vol. 19, no. 2, p. 110-124; R.U. Rakhmetova, K.A. Abenova, “The main demographic trends of rural and urban population of Kazakhstan”, in *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 2013, vol. 27, no. 13 A, p. 273-277.

³¹ G. Hamel, C.K. Prahalad, “Strategy as stretch and leverage”, in *Harvard Business Review*, 1993, vol. 71, no. 2, p. 75-84.

³² K.M. Nagymzhanova, R. Aikenova, M.Z. Dzhanbubekova, S.S. Magavin, N.M. Irgebaeva, “The importance of educational quality management in improving student's capital”, in *Espacios*, 2018, vol. 39, no. 30, p. 1-8.

for better management of resources as well as for development and refinement in core competencies. One primary objective of resources management is to attain competency which refers to the typical ability or capability of an organisation to achieve its goals. Core competency forms the basis of an organisation to develop abilities, consequently leading to better use of resources in order to achieve competitive advantages³³.

Leverage of resources stems from their scarcity and strategic management. It consists of two aspects, namely reducing the ineffective usage of resources by curtailing possible structural reformations and getting the maximum out of these resources by optimising their usage. Leveraging competencies denote taking advantage of existing abilities and core competencies of the organisation. Typically, this process implies utilising the advantages through well-defined strategic planning and a more structured approach towards gaining competitiveness and better outcomes³⁴.

The “strategy as stretch and leverage” approach aims at the continuous development of competencies and resources to shape the products and markets of tomorrow. Therefore, it is less about the strategic use of existing resources and more about achieving leverage and developing the resource base. Leveraging of resources, as well as the competencies, can be achieved by a typical strategy of concentrating, accumulating, conserving, complementing and recovering the resources. Apart from developing and maintaining competencies, leveraging competencies is also a popular corporate strategy to attain a competitive positioning. It is worth highlighting that the typical strategy for leveraging competencies is contingent upon the type of competencies such as whether they are knowledge, skills, technology, human resources or expertise. “Strategy as stretch and leverage” is an incremental action plan that functions to execute the vision in short steps towards accomplishing the outcomes and project the resources on a longer horizon.

Besides, a strategical gap may also be created between company targets and what is feasible due to the availability of resources. This tense situation should cause a productive restlessness of the organisation, which subsequently leads to a willingness to learn and innovate³⁵. Anyhow, “strategy as a stretch” will extend the existing boundaries of the company³⁶. In principle,

³³ C.K. Prahalad, G. Hamel, *Strategische Unternehmensplanung - Strategische Unternehmensführung*, Springer, Heidelberg, 2006.

³⁴ G. Hamel, C.K. Prahalad, “Strategy as stretch and leverage”, in *Harvard Business Review*, 1993, vol. 71, no. 2, p. 75-84; Y.A. Buribayev, G. Mukaldyeva, G.G. Nurahmetova, B. Uteyev, Y. Nessipbekov, Z.A. Khamzina, “Pension reform in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Main directions, conditions for implementation and development prospects”, in *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 2016, vol. 11, no. 18, p. 11611-11619.

³⁵ M. Osterloh, J. Frost, *Prozessmanagement als Kernkompetenz*, Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2006.

³⁶ G. Hamel, *Breaking the frame: strategy as stretch and leverage*, London Business School, London, 1991.

competencies allow better use and transformation of resources into benefits and potential competitive advantages. Hence, a company should focus primarily on the competencies and resources that it can achieve in order to generate sustainable competitive advantages³⁷. Better use of resources alone can contribute to a significant reduction of costs without employing the cost-cutting measures. It should also be noted that creativity is essential to expand the resource base as well as to promote better utilisation of resources³⁸. Accordingly, it is not surprising that effective communication within a company is an essential prerequisite for better use of its resources³⁹. However, real competitive advantage can only be achieved through an added value for the customers. The same applies to the labour market to remain successful in the competition for talents. An added value is necessary for companies to be perceived as an attractive employer by both employees and potential employees.

Results

Employer branding pursues the primary goals of creating a positive identity as an employer and conveying a unique selling proposition to stand out from other companies. The achievement of uniqueness as an employer is a central aspect of employer branding⁴⁰. This uniqueness, described in the literature as Employer Value Propositions, is achieved by combining employer branding with the employer's value proposition and positioning⁴¹. The processes of creating and sustaining the image of an attractive employer are only possible through strategic long-term development, and consistent internal

³⁷ J. Papula, J. Volná, *Core competence for sustainable competitive advantage*, MAC Prague consulting, Praha, 2013; K.M. Abisheva, K.M. Nagimzhanova, R.A. Aykenova, A.K. Kapanova, Z.S. Koldasbayeva, A.D. Kanapyanova, "Cross-cultural competence of communicators as a way to create a positive eco-informational environment", in *Space and Culture, India*, 2019, vol. 7, no. 2, p. 76-88.

³⁸ E. Papulova, Z. Papulova, *Competitive strategy and competitive advantages of small and midsized manufacturing enterprises in Slovakia*, 2006. Available at <http://www.g-casa.com/download/Papulova-CompetitiveStrategy.pdf>; K. Nagymzhanova, "Formation of creative thinking of teachers in educational environment of higher education institute", in *Life Science Journal*, 2013, vol. 10, no. Spl. Issue 12, p. 439-443.

³⁹ Z. Stacho, K. Stachová, J. Papula, Z. Papulová, L. Kohnová, "Effective communication in organisations increases their competitiveness", in *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 2019, vol. 19, no. 1, p. 391-403

⁴⁰ U. Kanning, *Personalmarketing, Employer Branding und Mitarbeiterbindung: Forschungsbefunde und Praxistips aus der Personalpsychologie*, Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 2017.

⁴¹ W. Kriegl, *Praxisbandbuch Employer Branding - mit Arbeitshilfen online: Mit starker Marke zum attraktiven Arbeitgeber werden*, Haufe-Lexware, Freiburg, 2012.

and external communication of the employer brand⁴². However, it is crucial to note that this effort is concerned with the entire corporate identity rather than focusing exclusively on the corporate brand. The strategic design of the corporate culture values that are perceived and lived by the employees is central to employer branding⁴³. An excellent example of the significant factor in shaping employer branding is a management culture that represents the corporate values. The existence of a good relationship with superiors and colleagues increases the likelihood of employees staying with the company, despite poor general conditions and lack of opportunities for development. Employee loyalty can be reinforced significantly through leadership quality at hierarchical levels⁴⁴. Other than the increased commitment among employees, they will also demonstrate a high level of identification with the company⁴⁵.

It should be emphasised that a successful employer branding must be useful both inside and outside of the company. Such a consistent outcome conveys a high degree of stability and security for outsiders and further acts as an attractive force for potential applicants and employees⁴⁶. The most crucial success factor for employer branding is the fulfilment of employer promise in order to avoid being perceived as inauthentic⁴⁷. Other adverse effects may include a high risk of discouraging job seekers, the decline of motivation and employees leaving the company prematurely⁴⁸. Accordingly, the authenticity and credibility of employer branding can be improved by involving and presenting employees in company campaigns. The contact with and expectations of an employer branding vary according to the connection with the company. Thus, employees, former employees and job seekers have

⁴² J. Fratričová, Z. Kirchmayer, "Best employer surveys in Slovakia: their role in employer branding", in *Proceedings Global Scientific Conference: Management and Economics in Manufacturing*, 2017, vol. 1, p. 44-51; K. Klimkiewicz, V. Oltra, "Does CSR enhance employer attractiveness? The role of millennial job seekers' attitudes", in *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 2017, vol. 24, no.5, p. 449-463.

⁴³ S. Brecht, H. Schmucker, *Employer branding im mittelstand*, Springer Gabler, Heidelberg, 2013.

⁴⁴ V. Radovanovic, G. Rendulić Davidović, "Leadership in the role of motivators and creators of employees performance", in *Ekonomika APK*, 2021, no. 5, p. 64-76.

⁴⁵ E. Menzel, "Coaching", in H. Künzel (Ed), *Erfolgsfaktor employer branding*, Springer Gabler, Heidelberg, p. 107-119.

⁴⁶ N. Blaga, V. Hobela, "Improvement of information security of the communication process at the enterprise", in *Social and Legal Studies*, 2021, vol. 13, p. 156-162.

⁴⁷ S. Brecht, H. Schmucker, *Employer branding im mittelstand*, Springer Gabler, Heidelberg, 2013; J. Carlini, D. Grace, C. France, J.L. Iacono, "The corporate social responsibility (CSR) employer brand process: integrative review and comprehensive model", in *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 35, no. 1-2, p. 182-205.

⁴⁸ J. Fratričová, Z. Kirchmayer, "Best employer surveys in Slovakia: their role in employer branding", in *Proceedings Global Scientific Conference: Management and Economics in Manufacturing*, 2017, vol. 1, p. 44-51; K. Klimkiewicz, V. Oltra, "Does CSR enhance employer attractiveness? The role of millennial job seekers' attitudes", in *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 2017, vol. 24, no.5, p. 449-463.

different information needs and expectations of the communication⁴⁹. The potential points of contact with employer branding are manifold and they can be divided into three phases: (i) Recruitment, (ii) Entry (on-boarding) and (iii) Employee Retention⁵⁰. An overview of the essential points of contact are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Contact points of employer branding

Phase	Contact points with employer branding
Recruitment	Career website, image advertisements/job advertisements, online job exchange, employer video, social media/mobile recruiting, media relations (HR-PR), university marketing, cooperation with educational institutions, career information fairs, personnel service providers, employee recommendations, applicant events, evaluation portals, recruitment for regions and industries
Entry (on-boarding)	Job interview, employer brochure/information material, coaching/ mentoring
Employee Retention	Corporate culture, employee management, career-promoting structures/employee training and further training, employee interviews/performance appraisal, internal communication, salary/fringe benefits, incentives/employee events, work-life balance, farewell to former employees

The effects of vocational rehabilitation on organisations identified in the literature were assigned to these three phases. An overview of the interactions of vocational rehabilitation with employer branding is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Interactions of vocational rehabilitation with employer branding

Phase	Interactions of vocational rehabilitation with employer branding

⁴⁹ W. Immerschitt, M. Stumpf, *Employer Branding für KMU - Der Mittelstand als attraktiver Arbeitgeber*, Springer-Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2019; M. Steckl, U. Simshäuser, M. Niederberger, "Arbeitgeberattraktivität aus Sicht der Generation Z", in *Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung*, 2019, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 212-217.

⁵⁰ W. Immerschitt, M. Stumpf, *Employer Branding für KMU - Der Mittelstand als attraktiver Arbeitgeber*, Springer-Gabler, Wiesbaden, 2019.

Recruitment	Job advertisements with explicit reference “persons with a handicap are welcome”, access/approaching new applicant pools (e.g. persons with disabilities), accessible online forms and services for the application, portrait of an employee who has undergone vocational rehabilitation (success story) on social media or company homepage, cooperation with universities and social security institutions, employee recommendations from persons who are or have been in vocational rehabilitation, regional awareness of the company, reputation through vocational rehabilitation, barrier-free or accessible homepage, online services and application process
Entry (on-boarding)	Barrier-free or accessible premises and job interviews, individual adaptation of the workplace, job content and working hours, induction, training, coaching, mentoring
Employee Retention	Improving corporate culture, leadership qualities and communication, incentives for enabling and participating in vocational rehabilitation processes, opportunity to actively participate in CSR activities, training and development, more differentiated performance assessments (experience from vocational rehabilitation processes), authenticity (lived values; employer branding confirms reality), employee recommendations, vocational rehabilitation independent of socioeconomic status (equal treatment), promotion of health through psychological safety, reduction of stress-related illnesses, improved resilience

The identified interactions were evaluated according to the leverage of competencies or resources using the “strategy as stretch and leverage” principles proposed by Hamel and Prahalad⁵¹ underpinned by these criteria: concentrating, accumulating, complementing, conserving and recovering resources (Table 3).

Table 3: Identified interactions of vocational rehabilitation with employer branding

Principle of leverage of competencies or resources	Identified interactions of vocational rehabilitation with employer branding
Concentrating	Vocational rehabilitation and employer branding have overlapping strategic goals, this enables corporate values to be authentically

⁵¹ G. Hamel, C.K. Prahalad, “Strategy as stretch and leverage”, in *Harvard Business Review*, 1993, vol. 71, no. 2, p. 75-84.

	experienced by employees in their everyday work. The commitment to vocational rehabilitation further facilitates the values of a caring employer to be demonstrated in an authentic manner.
Accumulating	Vocational rehabilitation could improve the problem-solving skills of those involved, as well as promote innovation, facilitate the optimisation of jobs for older workers and raise awareness of customer needs, especially concerning elderly people or those with disabilities.
Complementing	Vocational rehabilitation makes disability-friendly values visible in the workplace. Investment in human capital is preserved if workers can change jobs within the same company and are not forced to change companies. A disability-friendly employer appeals to new pools of applicants, such as people with disabilities.
Conserving	The knowledge and skills gained through vocational rehabilitation can be transferred to other operational areas such as workplace adaptation and optimisation to increase productivity and promote employee health. This also has a preventive effect, supporting differentiated and qualitative improvements to the evaluation of all employees to prevent sick or injured employees from leaving the company. As a result, the loss of talented employees and specialists to the competitors can be avoided.
Recovering	Sick or injured employees can return to work much more quickly through vocational rehabilitation. It permits new forms of cooperation with colleges and universities for talent recruitment, and with social security insurance companies. Vocational rehabilitation for external individuals also offers an exciting opportunity to recruit skilled workers and specialists.

Concentrating resources (convergence and focus): Based on its long-term focus, employer branding should be seen as a strategic and continuous process. It can create a long-term convergence in combination with other concepts and efforts of the company, such as CSR, diversity, OHS, social

inclusion or vocational rehabilitation, due to overlapping aspects and objectives. While employer branding and vocational rehabilitation must be strategically implemented in organisations, the commitment and set of priorities must originate from the top management⁵². These factors are crucial to avoid the high probability for other operational aspects, like production pressure or urgent projects, being prioritised by individual managers. Therefore, certain framework conditions must be in place to ensure that vocational rehabilitation can be executed successfully. For an employer branding to have the external effect of attracting talents as well as the internal impact in retaining employees, the commitment and corporate values should be authentically experienced by employees in their everyday work. In addition to OHS measures, employers who care for their employees must also consider the case when workers are having any illnesses or accidents which prevent them from returning to work immediately. A solid commitment to vocational rehabilitation denotes that the company is a socially responsible and considerate employer. It should also be noted that in addition to the individual affected, the supervisor and other employees are also often actively involved in the rehabilitation process. This commitment further facilitates the values of a caring employer to be manifested in an authentic manner. Thus, it can be deduced that vocational rehabilitation and employer branding interact and can converge and thus create leverage of resources and competencies.

Accumulating resources (extracting and borrowing skills): The implementation of vocational rehabilitation is usually an individual process being adapted to the affected person which requires correspondingly unique framework conditions (i.e. an adaptation of the workplace, job content and working hours)⁵³. Therefore, the commitment to vocational rehabilitation can improve the problem-solving skills of those involved as well as promote innovation. Social security insurance companies that support vocational rehabilitation can simultaneously provide training and raise awareness among the employees involved. The experiences gained through vocational rehabilitation can also optimise the workplace and job of older employees, thereby increasing their work productivity and encouraging them to remain with the company beyond retirement if necessary. It also contributes to raising awareness about customer needs, especially concerning elderly people or those with disabilities. All in all, the knowledge and skills developed through vocational rehabilitation can be transformed or utilised in different corporate

⁵² E.I. Kiselyova, K.R. Koroshchenko, G. Robson, “Content of the job description: Features and areas of concern”, in *Legal Horizons*, 2021, vol. 14, no. 2, p. 63-69.

⁵³ B.A. Zhetpisbayev, G.T. Baisalova, K.K. Shadiyev, A.S. Khamzin, Y.A. Buribayev, Z.A. Khamzina, “Legal support of the process of Kazakhstan accession to the OECD: Potential for improving quality of individual’s labour rights regulation”, in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2017, vol. 8, no. 7, p. 2302-2307.

aspects. The development of particular resources and competencies (e.g. leadership, diversity, innovations) will further lead to a positive contribution to employer branding.

Complementing resources (blending, balancing, multiplying resources and new skill combinations): Vocational rehabilitation makes certain values such as those of disability-friendly visible in the workplace and also allows employees to experience them. This strategy also leads to cost reduction such that the sick or injured employees are able to return to work more quickly. If it is possible to prevent employees from leaving the company due to any type of inevitable repercussions, the investments made in the development of employees (e.g. recruitment or training) can be maintained. Consequently, additional costs may be saved as there is no demand for new recruitments or training. The investment made in human capital is also retained in circumstances which force the employee to assume another job – instead of the previous one – inside the same company. The experience and skills gained in vocational rehabilitation can also be utilised by the organisation as a disability-friendly employer to appeal to new pools of applicants, such as people with disabilities. It can be deduced that the combination of employer branding and vocational rehabilitation allows more effective use of resources and exponential increase of their value.

Conserving resources (recycling, co-opting and shielding): The knowledge and skills gained through vocational rehabilitation can be transferred to other areas of operations. For example, workplaces can be ergonomically adapted and optimised in order to increase productivity and promote employee health, which also has a preventive effect⁵⁴. The continuous and differentiated performance assessment (quantitative and qualitative) that is required for vocational rehabilitation can lead to a differentiated and qualitatively improved evaluation of all employees. Subsequently, the findings can be used for further development and performance appraisal of the employees. Vocational rehabilitation can also prevent sick or injured employees from leaving the company; hence, the loss of talents and specialists to the competitors can be avoided. Company-specific knowledge and skills are also retained for employees who can no longer be deployed in their previous job but in another position within the company. Overall, vocational rehabilitation has a positive influence on all employees as it strengthens their psychological security, promotes resilience and reduces stress-related illnesses.

Recovering resources (expediting success): Sick or injured employees can return to work much more quickly through vocational rehabilitation, leading to an increase in productivity and reduction of costs. The knowledge and skills

⁵⁴ N. Dochynets, “On the problem of human resources in Ukrainian private health care”, in *Economics, Entrepreneurship, Management*, 2021, vol. 8, no. 2, p. 17-24.

generated through vocational rehabilitation also allow jobs to be rapidly adapted to employees' individual needs. This is particularly important when it comes to hiring people with disabilities. However, it should be highlighted that workplace adaptations merely forms one part of the process. The acceptance and support from other employees which are also equally important can only be achieved through an appropriate corporate culture. Accordingly, vocational rehabilitation makes it possible to appeal and utilise the new and relatively untapped pools of talents and specialists. This further permits new forms of cooperation with social security insurance companies or colleges and universities for talent recruitments⁵⁵. Moreover, the implementation of vocational rehabilitation for external individuals offers an exciting possibility to recruit skilled workers and specialists. This implies a long-term competitive advantage, in which the larger pool of potential employees mitigates the shortage of skilled workers and specialists.

Based on the results of this analysis, it is evident that involvement in vocational rehabilitation can lead to leverage of competencies and resources in the context of employer branding. This is primarily facilitated by the value as a caring employer, health promotion, preservation and retrieval human resources, improved leadership competencies and corporate culture⁵⁶. Therefore, employer branding and vocational rehabilitation can be assumed to be a strategic fit.

Discussion

Vocational rehabilitation enables people with temporary, threatened or permanent disabilities to access, return to or remain in employment⁵⁷ which also comprises coordinated medical and non-medical interventions that take place in parallel with their return⁵⁸. The process of returning to the previous work can be difficult if not impossible for employees after having an accident or illness. The lack of strict enforcement of legal obligations in most countries means that those affected are dependent on the goodwill of companies to

⁵⁵ G.N. Mukhamadiyeva, G. Mukaldyeva, Z.T. Karasheva, A.S. Khamzin, Y.A. Buribayev, Z.A. Khamzina, "Modernization of social security system legal regulation in Kazakhstan: Experience and standards of the OECD members implementation", in *Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics*, 2017, vol. 8, no. 8, p. 2498-2503.

⁵⁶ Suprayitno, R. Triastity, L. Zakiya, "The influence of leadership style, work motivation and work environment on employees' job satisfaction", in *Scientific Bulletin of Mukachevo State University. Series "Economics"*, 2021, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 117-122.

⁵⁷ BSRM, *Vocational rehabilitation: the way forward*, British Society of Rehabilitation Medicine, London, 2000.

⁵⁸ C. Gobelet, F. Franchignoni, *Vocational rehabilitation*, Springer, Paris, 2006.

undergo rehabilitation and to be able to return to a suitable work⁵⁹. Various studies indicated that employed persons recover about twice as fast as the unemployed. It has also been suggested that the longer a person stays away from the workplace, the less likely it is for them to return to their previous employer⁶⁰. Returning to an adapted workplace during the healing process allows the affected individual to stay in contact both formally and informally with the company, as well as work colleagues and supervisors. This benefit will further contribute to the individual's psychological safety in addition to reducing the fear of job loss and increasing the overall chance of successful rehabilitation⁶¹.

The knowledge of vocational rehabilitation is also relevant for the employment of people with disabilities and vice versa⁶². Thus, the effects on companies through an engagement in vocational rehabilitation as well as the employment of people with disabilities, observed at least over a longer period, seem to be identical⁶³. Nonetheless, it should be noted that from the organisational management perspective, the impacts of vocational rehabilitation on the employment of people with disabilities have hardly been examined⁶⁴. Research has suggested various positive impacts on the company, including increased employee loyalty and motivation, work ethics, fewer illnesses and accidents by sensitisation, innovations, productivity, inclusive

⁵⁹ B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355.

⁶⁰ N. Doucette, "Modified work program: why bother?", in *Proceedings of the SPE International Conference on Health, Safety, and Environment in Oil and Gas Exploration and Production*, 2004, vol. 29-31, p. 1-5; F. Pilet, *Vocational rehabilitation*, Springer, Paris, 2006.

⁶¹ N. Doucette, "Modified work program: why bother?", in *Proceedings of the SPE International Conference on Health, Safety, and Environment in Oil and Gas Exploration and Production*, 2004, vol. 29-31, p. 1-5.

⁶² K. Seino, A. Nomoto, T. Takezawa, H. Boeltzig-Brown, "The diversity management for employment of the persons with disabilities: Evidence of vocational rehabilitation in the United States and Japan", in B. Christiansen and H.C. Chandan (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Human Factors in Contemporary Workforce Development*, Pennsylvania IGI Global, Hershey, 2017, p. 333-356.

⁶³ B. Miethlich, "Comparing the impact of vocational rehabilitation and the employment of persons with disabilities on companies: Analysis of existing research", in *Proceedings of the 10th International Scientific Conference for Ph.D. students of EU countries: CER Comparative European Research*, London, UK, 2018, p. 43-47.

⁶⁴ B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355; K. Seino, A. Nomoto, T. Takezawa, H. Boeltzig-Brown, "The diversity management for employment of the persons with disabilities: Evidence of vocational rehabilitation in the United States and Japan", in B. Christiansen and H.C. Chandan (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Human Factors in Contemporary Workforce Development*, Pennsylvania IGI Global, Hershey, 2017, p. 333-356.

work culture and company image, as well as improved customer loyalty and satisfaction⁶⁵. Personnel costs can also be reduced by offering subsidies from social security or tax benefits for participation in vocational rehabilitation⁶⁶. Above all, vocational rehabilitation is an essential element of a company's social responsibility towards employees and, hence, the wider society through the production of shared values for both⁶⁷. Due to the growing awareness of sustainability and social responsibility among consumers, companies can gain real competitive advantages through CSR activities, such as product differentiation and increasing customer loyalty⁶⁸. A commitment for vocational rehabilitation also promotes the company's positive employer branding, highlights the visibility of disability-friendly values in the workplace⁶⁹ and demonstrates the company's openness to diversity and social inclusion⁷⁰. Hence, it can be deduced that these aspects are essential and can significantly strengthen the employer brand⁷¹.

⁶⁵ S. Lindsay, E. Cagliostro, M. Albarico, N. Mortaji, L. Karon, "A systematic review of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities", in *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 2018, vol. 28, no. 4, p. 634-655.

⁶⁶ S. Csillag, Z. Gyori, R Matolay, "Two worlds apart? Corporate social responsibility and employment of people with disabilities", in: R. Tench, B. Jones and W. Sun (Eds.), in *The Critical State of Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe (Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability)*, 2018, vol. 12, p. 57-81.

⁶⁷ J. Papula, Z. Papulova, J. Papula, *Konkurenčné stratégie: tradičné prístupy vs. nové pohľady a techniky*, Wolters Kluwer, Bratislava, 2014; B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355

⁶⁸ X. Chen, R. Huang, Z. Yang, L. Dube, "CSR types and the moderating role of corporate competence", in *European Journal of Marketing*, 2018, vol. 52, no. 7/8, p. 1358-1386.

⁶⁹ M.J. Millington, D.M. Miller, K.K. Asner-Self, D. Linkowski, "The business perspective on employers, disability and vocational rehabilitation", in *E. Szymanski and R. Parker (Eds.), Work and disability*, TX: PRO-ED, Austin, 2003, p. 317-342.

⁷⁰ Y. Kuznetsova, B. Yalcin, "Inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream employment: is it really all about the money? A case study of four large companies in Norway and Sweden", in *Disability & Society*, 2017, vol. 32, no. 2, p. 233-253.

⁷¹ Y. Kuznetsova, "An inclusive corporate culture: Examining the visible and invisible levels of disability inclusiveness in two large enterprises", in *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 2015, vol 18, no. 3, p. 179-190; S. Csillag, Z. Gyori, "Is there a place for me? - employment of people with disabilities as part of CSR strategy", in *Proceedings of the Strategica Conference: Opportunities and Risks in the Contemporary Business Environment*, 2016, vol. 4, p. 860-872; Y. Kuznetsova, B. Yalcin, "Inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream employment: is it really all about the money? A case study of four large companies in Norway and Sweden", in *Disability & Society*, 2017, vol. 32, no. 2, p. 233-253; S. Csillag, Z. Gyori, R Matolay, "Two worlds apart? Corporate social responsibility and employment of people with disabilities", in: R. Tench, B. Jones and W. Sun (Eds.), in *The Critical State of Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe (Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability)*, 2018, vol. 12, p. 57-81.

Despite the limited source of literature on this topic, it is agreed that the implementation of vocational rehabilitation as a CSR strategy in companies should transcend legal obligations. However, a mere commitment is insufficient; companies must explicitly address the relevant issues in their CSR strategies in order to guarantee the successful implementation of vocational rehabilitation (e.g. process and responsibilities, priority and the commitment of top management)⁷². This can be achieved, for example, through the following measures, separately or combined: return-to-work policies; proactive initiation or coordination of the rehabilitation process; a specialist unit for vocational rehabilitation or disability management within the company; enabling adjustments to the workplace; job content and working hours; incentives for the corresponding commitment of participating employees and superiors; accessible or barrier-free premises; online services and application processes; the institutionalisation of sheltered workplaces and access for external persons in need for vocational rehabilitation to the company's internal sheltered workplaces; internships; vocational training; and entry-level positions⁷³. Seing et al.⁷⁴ noted that companies often face a dilemma between assuming social responsibility and achieving their operational goals with regard to vocational rehabilitation. Its implementation also places a high demand on the supervisor's leadership and communication skills. More specifically, supervisors must take the role of sensitising employees to the situation of the affected person, and ensure communication and cooperation between all parties involved (e.g. Disability Management and Human Resources)⁷⁵.

The company's involvement in vocational rehabilitation can be considered as an indicator of a socially responsible and caring employer⁷⁶. It also causes the increase in employees' psychological safety and trust in the company which will consequently contribute to a greater commitment and engagement, better resilience, less absenteeism, fewer work-related burnout cases, lower turnover and lower recruiting and retraining costs. These effects

⁷² B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355

⁷³ B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355.

⁷⁴ I. Seing, E. MacEachen, K. Ekberg, C. Ståhl, "Return to work or job transition? employer dilemmas in taking social responsibility for return to work in local workplace practice", in *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 2019, vol. 37, no. 19, p. 1760-1769.

⁷⁵ M. Lefever, S. Decuman, F. Perl, L. Braeckman, D. Van de Velde, "The efficacy and efficiency of disability management in job-retention and job-reintegration: A systematic review, in *Work*, 2018, vol. 59, no. 4, p. 501-534.

⁷⁶ B. Miethlich, L. Šlahor, "Employment of persons with disabilities as a corporate social responsibility initiative: Necessity and variants of implementation", in *Proceedings of the 6th CBU International Conference*, 2018, vol. 6, p. 350-355

further improve the organisation's efficiency⁷⁷, as well as the corporate culture and working atmosphere in general⁷⁸. Moreover, a positive reaction to illnesses, accidents or disabilities at work can significantly diminish the fear of job loss⁷⁹ and enhance the affected individual's job satisfaction as well as that of the involved employees and colleagues⁸⁰. Several studies in Europe revealed that working conditions and job security have an increasingly significant influence on the incidence of illness in addition to long-term and permanent disabilities⁸¹. Hence, companies can achieve a sustained competitive advantage⁸² by strengthening employee loyalty and tapping previously untapped labour potentials⁸³ based on the developed understanding of the needs and concerns of employees with disabilities⁸⁴.

⁷⁷ J.C. Cullen, B.A. Silverstein, M.P. Foley, "Linking biomechanical workload and organizational practices to burnout and satisfaction", in *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 2008, vol. 23, no. 1-2, p. 63-71; V. Kalargyrou, *People with disabilities: A new model of productive labor*. Available at https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=hospman_facpub; S. Lindsay, E. Cagliostro, M. Albarico, N. Mortaji, L. Karon, "A systematic review of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities", in *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 2018, vol. 28, no. 4, p. 634-655;

⁷⁸ J.C. Cullen, B.A. Silverstein, M.P. Foley, "Linking biomechanical workload and organizational practices to burnout and satisfaction", in *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 2008, vol. 23, no. 1-2, p. 63-71; S. Csillag, Z. Gyori, R Matolay, "Two worlds apart? Corporate social responsibility and employment of people with disabilities", in: R. Tench, B. Jones and W. Sun (Eds.), in *The Critical State of Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe (Critical Studies on Corporate Responsibility, Governance and Sustainability)*, 2018, vol. 12, p. 57-81.

⁷⁹ M.J. Millington, D.M. Miller, K.K. Asner-Self, D. Linkowski, "The business perspective on employers, disability and vocational rehabilitation", in E. Szymanski and R. Parker (Eds.), *Work and disability*, TX: PRO-ED, Austin, 2003, p. 317-342; N. Doucette, "Modified work program: why bother?", in *Proceedings of the SPE International Conference on Health, Safety, and Environment in Oil and Gas Exploration and Production*, 2004, vol. 29-31, p. 1-5; J.C. Cullen, B.A. Silverstein, M.P. Foley, "Linking biomechanical workload and organizational practices to burnout and satisfaction", in *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 2008, vol. 23, no. 1-2, p. 63-71.

⁸⁰ M.J. Millington, D.M. Miller, K.K. Asner-Self, D. Linkowski, "The business perspective on employers, disability and vocational rehabilitation", in E. Szymanski and R. Parker (Eds.), *Work and disability*, TX: PRO-ED, Austin, 2003, p. 317-342; S. Wagner, H. Harder, L. Scott, N. Buys, I. Yu, T. Geisen, C. Randall, K. Lo, D. Tang, A. Fraess-Phillips, B. Hassler, C. Howe, "Canadian employee perspectives on disability management", in *International Journal of Disability Management*, vol. 12, no. E3, p. 1-9

⁸¹ F. Pilet, *Vocational rehabilitation*, Springer, Paris, 2006.

⁸² V. Kalargyrou, *People with disabilities: A new model of productive labor*. Available at https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=hospman_facpub; B. Miethlich, A.G. Oldenburg, "The employment of persons with disabilities as a strategic asset: A resource-based-view using the Value-Rarity-Imitability-Organization (VRIO) framework", in *Journal of Eastern Europe Research in Business and Economics*, 2019, vol. 2019, article 667087.

⁸³ S. Lindsay, E. Cagliostro, M. Albarico, N. Mortaji, L. Karon, "A systematic review of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities", in *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 2018, vol. 28, no. 4, p. 634-655; G.N. Mukhamadiyeva, A.K. Kussainova, G.T. Baisalova, N. Apakhayev,

As an essential aspect of CSR, vocational rehabilitation provides various added values for the company and the wider society. Its positive impacts on the company may include the improvement of corporate culture and working atmosphere, and the development skills among managers and employees, which can then be transformed into competitive advantages.

Conclusions

The results have analytically shown that the integration of vocational rehabilitation into the employer branding strategies can generate real added values as impacts of vocational rehabilitation are, congruent with the objectives of employer branding in many respects. Companies can make better use of different skills and resources through the resulting interaction, convergence and accumulation. More specifically, research suggests that vocational rehabilitation can both preserve and regain human resources. Both the internal and external implementation as well as effects of vocational rehabilitation also significantly lead to the success of the activity in and of itself. Findings further revealed that it can strengthen and complement the management competencies of the superiors and the company's values and culture. The company is also perceived as a caring employer, subsequently contributing to employee motivation, mental health and resilience.

Moreover, vocational rehabilitation can provide a leveraging effect on employer branding. The development of existing resources, as well as the multiplication of the values, can be achieved without having to spend additional resources. As part of the employer branding strategy, vocational rehabilitation shows in an exemplary way that synergies, interactions and leveraging effects are created by the combination of different strategic activities in the company. The involvement of the employees in this CSR activity also means that the employees benefit by developing their competencies, further enabling the company to better utilise its resources. Furthermore, it allows the caring employer identity and image to be conveyed internally and externally in

Z.A. Khamzina, Y.A. Buribayev, "Labour law of the modern Kazakhstan", in *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, 2017, vol. 20, no. 1, p. 1-7.

⁸⁴ K. Seino, A. Nomoto, T. Takezawa, H. Boeltzig-Brown, "*The diversity management for employment of the persons with disabilities: Evidence of vocational rehabilitation in the United States and Japan*", in B. Christiansen and H.C. Chandan (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Human Factors in Contemporary Workforce Development*, Pennsylvania IGI Global, Hershey, 2017, p. 333-356; S. Lindsay, E. Cagliostro, M. Albarico, N. Mortaji, L. Karon, "A systematic review of the benefits of hiring people with disabilities", in *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, 2018, vol. 28, no. 4, p. 634-655; B. Miethlich, A.G. Oldenburg, "How social inclusion promotes sales: An analysis of the example of employing people with disabilities", *Journal of Marketing Research and Case Studies*, vol. 2019, p. 1-15.

an effective and authentic way which will then significantly increase the attractiveness perceived by qualified employees and talents.

Vocational rehabilitation as a part of employer branding does not lose its impact.; every vocational rehabilitation is unique and brings about different challenges. It can be said that the organisation is kept in motion through the constant gap between ambitions and resources caused by vocational rehabilitation. Although vocational rehabilitation is an essential element of CSR, there is a lack of knowledge about 'best' approaches to its implementation in organisations, as well as regarding the impact on employer branding. Hence, further research should be conducted more comprehensively.