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FEDULOVA Iryna,

Doctor of Sciences (Economics), Professor,
Professor of the Department of Management
State University of Trade and Economics
19, Kyoto St., Kyiv, 02156, Ukraine

ORCID: 0000-0002-8802-137X

i.fedulova@knu.edu.ua

DZHULAI Maryna,

PhD (Economics),
Chief Executive Officer HR-agency "UGEN"
49G, Degtyarivska St., Kyiv, 03113, Ukraine

ORCID: 0000-0001-7297-5892

maryna.dzhulai@gmail.com

**THE EMPLOYER'S BRAND
FOR GENERATION Z**

Building an employer's brand is a strategic objective for modern companies, as it allows them to attract talented employees who are motivated to achieve the company's goals. This helps to improve corporate culture and enhance the company's business reputation. In a world where competition for qualified personnel is growing and job requirements are evolving, a strong employer's brand is becoming a key competitive advantage. The research is based on the use of methods such as theoretical generalization, comparison and ranking, and statistical analysis. The content of the employer's brand value proposition for Generation Z is determined. The components of the employer's brand value proposition among the representatives of generation Z are ranked. The components of the value proposition of the employer's brand of the researched enterprises in the retail sector are ranked in terms of their degree of development. The degree of compliance of the components of the employer's brand value proposition with the expectations of the representatives of generation Z at the researched enterprises is determined. Proposals aimed at shaping the development of the employer's brand for the researched enterprises are developed. The hypotheses about the expediency of ranking the components of the employer's brand value proposition to determine their importance for representatives of generation Z are formulated and empirically tested; ranking the components of the employer's brand value

ФЕДУЛОВА Ірина,

д. е. н., професор, професор кафедри менеджменту
Державного торговельно-економічного
університету
вул. Кіото, 19, м. Київ, 02156, Україна

ORCID: 0000-0002-8802-137X

i.fedulova@knu.edu.ua

ДЖУЛАЙ Марина,

доктор філософії з економіки,
головний виконавчий директор HR-агенції "UGEN"
вул. Дегтярівська, 49Г, м. Київ, 03113, Україна

ORCID: 0000-0001-7297-5892

maryna.dzhulai@gmail.com

**БРЕНД РОБОТОДАВЦЯ
ДЛЯ ПОКОЛІННЯ Z**

Формування бренду роботодавця належить до стратегічного завдання сучасних компаній, оскільки дає змогу залучати талановитих працівників, здатних вмотивовано реалізувати цілі підприємства. Це дозволяє покращувати корпоративну культуру та підвищувати ділову репутацію компанії. У світі, де конкуренція за кваліфіковані кадри зростає, а вимоги до робочих місць еволюціонують, сильний бренд роботодавця стає ключовою конкурентною перевагою. Дослідження ґрунтується на використанні сукупності методів: теоретичного узагальнення, порівняння та ранжирування, статистичного аналізу. Визначено зміст ціннісної пропозиції бренду роботодавця для покоління Z. Проведено ранжирування складових ціннісної пропозиції бренду роботодавця серед представників покоління Z. Здійснено ранжирування складових ціннісної пропозиції бренду роботодавця досліджуваних підприємств у сфері ритейл з погляду ступеня їх розвитку. Окреслено ступінь відповідності складових ціннісної пропозиції бренду роботодавця очікуванням представників покоління Z на досліджуваних підприємствах. Розроблено пропозиції, спрямовані на формування та розвиток бренду роботодавця для досліджуваних підприємств. Сформульовано та емпірично перевірено гіпотези щодо доцільності ранжирування складових ціннісної пропозиції бренду роботодавця для визначення їх значущості для представників покоління Z; ранжирування



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proposition in terms of the level of their development in the researched enterprises; Spearman's rank correlation coefficient allows to determine the level of compliance of the employer's brand of the researched enterprises with the requirements of the representatives of generation Z and to propose proposals for its further development.

Keywords: value proposition, brand, employer brand, brand assessment, generation Z, employment.

складових ціннісної пропозиції бренду роботодавця з погляду рівня їх розвитку на досліджуваних підприємствах; того, що коефіцієнт рангової кореляції Спірмена дозволяє визначити рівень відповідності бренду роботодавця досліджуваних підприємств вимогам до нього представників покоління Z і запропонувати пропозиції його подальшого розвитку.

Ключові слова: ціннісна пропозиція, бренд, бренд роботодавця, оцінка бренду, покоління Z, працевлаштування.

JEL Classification: M51, M54, M31.

Introduction

The level of the Ukrainian economy development in wartime is characterized by factors that cause competition in the labor market for young and talented specialists: a decline in GDP, inflationary processes in the economy, demographic changes determined by migration and the involvement of a significant number of men in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Deloitte, as a scientist, noted in his research that 32% of the modern population is representatives of Generation Z (Deloitte, 2021). According to a study by Dell Technologies (2020), the share of representatives of Generation Z in the total number of employees is 20%. It is, firstly, the largest among the working-age population, and secondly, the most productive and important for the development of the Ukrainian economy. Therefore, for employers to form an effective employer's brand (EB) and increase its competitiveness in the labor market, it is important to identify the factors of attractiveness from the side of representatives of generation Z.

Competition for highly qualified specialists is growing in the labor market, so companies are interested in standing out among competitors in order to attract the best specialists, and a strong EB helps them in these processes. The content and level of EB development is determined by the value proposition (VP), which identifies the perception of the company as a prestigious place to work according to certain characteristics.

The value proposition is usually considered a set of associations and tangible and intangible offers that a company employee receives (Pawar & Charak, 2015).

For the most part, the VP is aimed at retaining talents in the company and their further development (Pawar, 2016). Employees have complete and clear information about their future employer, while employers, for their part, must meet the expectations of potential employees and maintain a competitive position (Jha S. & Jha Sh., 2015).

The EB components of the value proposition directly affect the level of employee productivity, loyalty to the employer, increase the value of the

company from the perspective of employees and determine further communication in the company (Nagpal A. & Nagpal G., 2019). The employer's brand value proposition is also focused on internal customers are employees. Employees themselves have an impact on the formation of company values. Satisfaction feedback is obtained through the following tools: anonymous audience surveys, exit interviews with dismissed employees and analysis of labor market trends (Staniec & Kalińska-Kula, 2021). High-quality interaction between the employer and employee is the consistency between the desired and actual level of VP employer brand.

Daniel et al. (2020) classified employee needs according to employer attractiveness factors using the ERG (Existence, Relatedness, and Growth) theory established by Alderfer (1969), which is a further development of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. According to this theory, a person has three basic needs that they strive to satisfy: material existence needs interpersonal relationships with other people, and the search for opportunities for personal development.

HR consulting company Sibson Consulting proposed its own model for forming an employer's brand "Reward of Work" (ROW) (Seemiler & Grace, 2017). According to this model, which lists the best elements and processes for creating an attractive workplace, the employer's VP is determined by the following parameters:

compensation is material remuneration, which includes salary and additional payments;

benefits are cash payments for health insurance, pension provision, and the possibility of leaving the company at the employee's request;

work tasks are the level of satisfaction and involvement of the employee in fulfilling the tasks and goals set;

career is opportunities for professional development and career growth in the company;

involvement is the level of involvement of the employee in the corporate culture and the formation of a favorable atmosphere in the company (Seemiler & Grace, 2017).

The possibility of career development, the realization of personal values, corporate culture, material rewards, social responsibility and workspace are functional factors that form the employer's value proposition (Huang et al., 2012).

During online recruitment, there is also an impact of the components of the VP employer's brand on its attractiveness to potential candidates. However, the study of the EB competitiveness during online recruitment requires attention (Liu, 2020).

In the context of the informatization of society, the reputation of a company is determined by the completeness and content of career pages and pages of search sites, which, in turn, increases the competitiveness of the EB value proposition (Liu et al., 2018).

Despite the significant level of attention to determining the essence, evaluation and formation of the employer brand, further research is required to find tools to substantiate the substantive content of the EB value proposition from the perspective of generation Z.

The aim of the research is to substantiate a methodological approach to evaluating and improving the employer's brand value proposition based on the expectations of generation Z.

In the process of research, several hypotheses were put forward:

the *first* is the choice of companies for employment by representatives of generation Z is influenced by the EB value proposition, which is formed by each employer and broadcast on the labor market during personnel selection. To do this, it is necessary to assess the level of significance of the components of the VP employer's brand for representatives of generation Z;

the *second* is retail enterprises form their own EB to attract the younger generation and evaluate it in terms of the level of development of the VP components;

the *third* is to determine how much the current state of the employer's brand corresponds to the desired views of generation Z on it; it is advisable to determine the level of compliance of the BR with the requirements of representatives of generation Z with the justification of proposals for its further development.

The following methods were used in writing the article: theoretical generalization is to determine the components of the VP of the EB for generation Z; comparison and ranking are to determine the priorities of the components of the CP for generation Z and to determine their level of development at enterprises in the retail sector; graphical methods – to illustrate the results of the analysis; statistical analysis – to determine the EB compliance of the studied enterprises with the requirements of generation Z.

The materials for the research were the results of a survey of 1341 students on determining the VP priority of the EB. The audience of respondents includes 776 students without work experience and 565 students or graduates with work experience from 1 to 5 years.

The main part of the article considers the following issues: the first section is devoted to the professional and behavioral characteristics of generations X, Y, and Z, and also indicates the VP essence of the EB for generation Z; in the second, based on the results of a survey of students, the significance of the VP components of EB for generation Z is determined; the third section formulates methodological approaches to justify the directions for creating a desired employer's brand for generation Z.

1. The employer's brand value proposition from the perspective of generation Z

The Employer's brand Value Proposition (EVP) has a set of elements that create a unique and valuable offer for employees, helping to attract, motivate and retain talent. For graduates of educational institutions, it should be aimed at developing the professional and leadership qualities of future

candidates and the opportunity to grow in the company. Due to the specifics of generation Z, careful attention is required in the choice of communication methods at different stages of recruitment: brand awareness, initial assessment, interview, job offer and adaptation period (Jouany, 2024). *Table 1* shows the main characteristics of each of the three generations present in the labor market that are important for the formation and EB development.

Table 1

Comparative characteristics of generations X, Y and Z

Characteristic	Generation X	Generation Y (Millennials)	Generation Z
Year of birth	1965–1980	1981–1996	1997–2012
Technological literacy	Witnessed the advent of computers and the Internet	Grew up with the development of the Internet	Digital generation
Education	Importance of education, but more practical approach	Great emphasis on higher education	the Desire for Practical Knowledge
Social awareness	Growing attention to social issues	Highly involved in social issues	Inclusion and social justice
Flexibility	Balance between stability and adaptability	Adapt easily to change	Expecting flexibility in work
Work-Life Balance	Striving for stability and security	Highly value work-life balance	Desire for stability and well-being
Work Benefits	Stability, work ethic, career growth	Flexible schedule, development, feedback	Modern technologies, career opportunities

Source: compiled by (Daniel et al., 2020; Dzhulai et al.; 2022; Джогола, 2023; Jouany, 2024; Löffler & Giebe, 2021; Blu Ivy Group, 2021; Gomez et al., 2021; Jones, 2020; Anwar & Salo; 2024, Jana et al., 2023; Grgurić et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2022).

According to Table 1, it is possible to identify common and distinctive features of generations Y and Z, which will be useful when developing HR strategies, marketing campaigns or when studying consumer behavior patterns.

For generation Z, EB is a set of characteristics and activities aimed at creating a positive image of the company among users, taking into account the behavioral, psychological, economic and social views of their employees.

Generation Z replaces generation Y (Millennials), which today makes up the largest share of the world's population. As generation Z enters the labor market, the impact of their entry is predicted to be rapid and profound, extending to the workplace, consumption, technology, politics and culture. This generation is radically different from Millennials and has a unique perspective on careers and how to define success in life and work (Gomez et al., 2021).

In *Table 2* the main professional and behavioral characteristics of generations X, Y, and Z and the trends in the global economy are provided in which they were formed.

Table 2

Professional, behavioral characteristics of generations X, Y and Z and the trends of the global economy in which they were formed

Characteristics	Generation X	Generation Y (Millennials)	Generation Z
Professional	Stability, work ethic, career growth	Flexible schedule, development, feedback	Modern technology, career opportunities, multitasking, rapid learning
Behavioral	Loyalty to employer, independence and entrepreneurship	Strive for development, social awareness, multitasking	Social awareness, inclusivity, short attention span, digital socialization
Global economic trends	Stability orientation, traditional business	Startup growth, digital transformation	Globalization, rapid technological progress, development of the digital economy

Source: compiled by (Daniel et al., 2020; Dzhulai et al.; 2022; Джогола, 2023; Jouany, 2024; Löffler & Giebe, 2021; Blu Ivy Group, 2021; Gomez et al., 2021; Jones, 2020; Anwar & Salo; 2024, Jana et al., 2023; Grgurić et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2022).

The generalization of opinions reflected in *Tables 1–2* allows us to identify the main characteristics of representatives of generation Z in the labor market. Their age is up to 30 years. Professional indicators are: involvement in digital technologies, high technological awareness and ability to use new technologies, preference for choosing a remote or hybrid work mode, desire for rapid career growth and development, ability to quickly master new skills and knowledge, preference for working in a startup or small agencies, preference for an individual rather than a collective work format, priority for financial well-being, ability to work on several tasks simultaneously. Behavioral indicators include: interest in social justice and environmental issues, appreciation of diversity and inclusion in society and at work, preference for online communication over face-to-face meetings, preference for quick information retrieval, which affects attention span, tendency to choose opinion leaders among famous people on social networks, use of social media for communication and interaction with others, preference for acquiring new skills and knowledge through online learning, tendency to online shopping, volunteering and community activities, fast pace of life. Among the main trends in the global economy that have influenced the formation of the generation Z mentality are: the growth of a globally integrated economy, the modern development of digital technologies, the increasing importance of intellectual work and information technologies, the rapid development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, etc., lack of experience of life under communism, the growing importance of health and well-being at work and in life in general, the russian-ukrainian war, the leading positions of the USA and China in the global economy.

The current employer value proposition for graduates needs to be revised, taking into account the specifics of the Gen Z mentality and new approaches to HR management (Liu, 2020). In our opinion, the employer value proposition for Gen Z is a system of support, recognition, and corporate

values aimed at achieving the highest level of professional development of employees and candidates, taking into account their professional, behavioral, economic, and social needs.

2. The importance of employer’s brand value proposition components for generation Z

To determine the priority of the components of the value proposition for representatives of generation Z, an assessment of their level of significance was carried out. The student audience is young people born in 1995–2005 and, accordingly, is generation Z. A survey of students of Ukrainian universities and student organizations was conducted in the Telegram channels and Instagram pages of student councils. Each of the 1,341 surveyed students determined the priority of the employer’s brand value proposition for their own place of employment. The survey proposed to evaluate the components of the employer’s brand value proposition using a 4-point rating system. *Figure 1* shows the results of the survey.

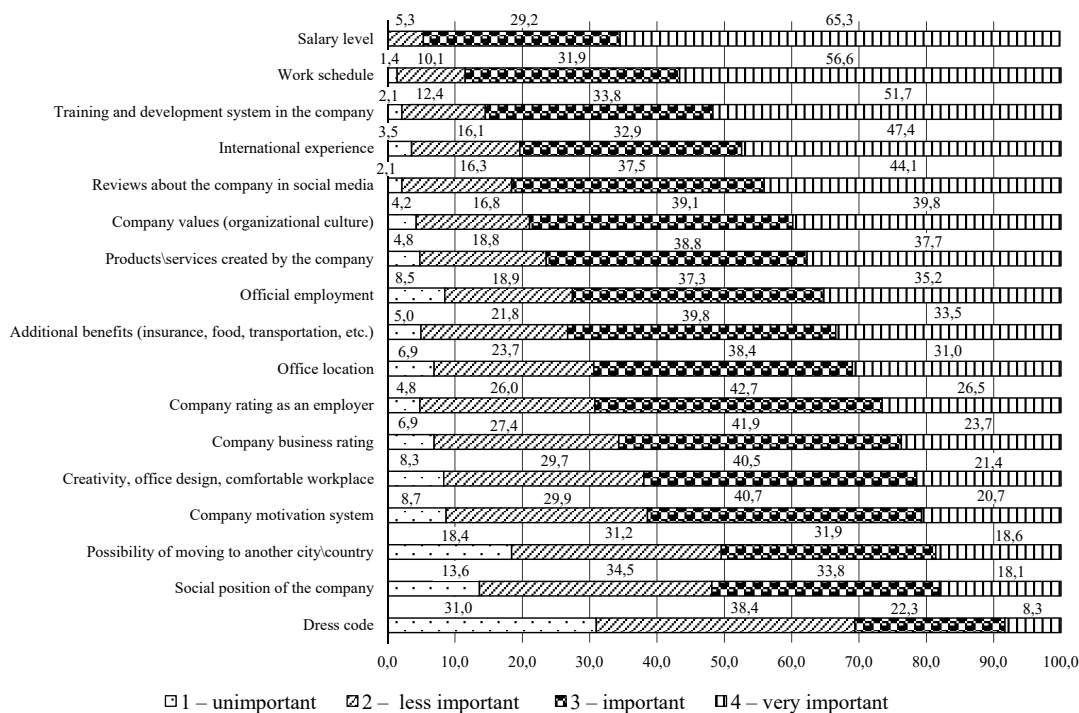


Figure 1. Survey results on the importance of employer’s brand value proposition components for generation Z

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of an expert survey.

The average score (AS) was determined as a weighted average score according to the formula:

$$AS = 1 \cdot b_1 + 2 \cdot b_2 + 3 \cdot b_3 + 4 \cdot b_4, \tag{1}$$

where: b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 are the proportion of respondents who scored 1, 2, 3 and 4 points, respectively.

The results of the calculations are shown in *Figure 2*.

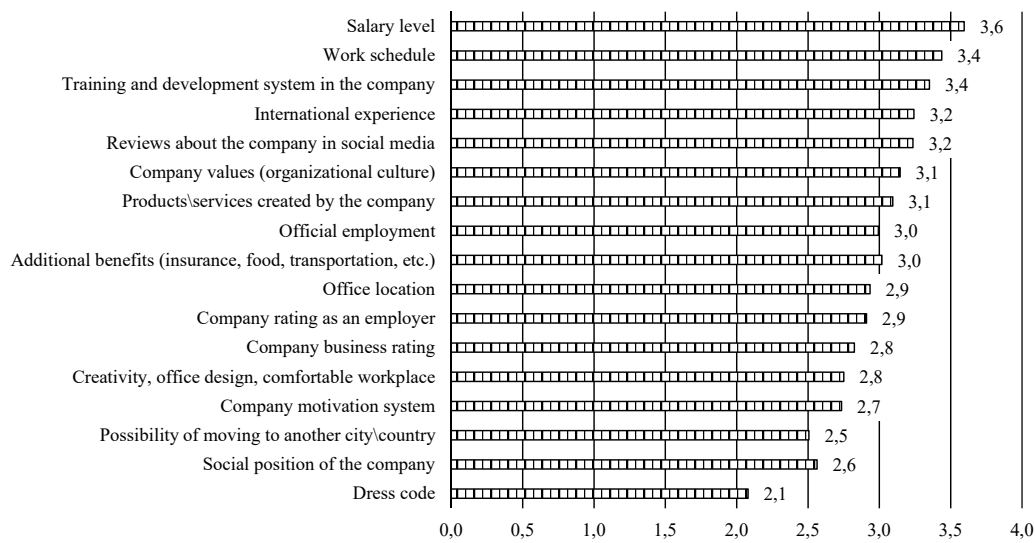


Figure 2. The average score of the results of assessing the importance of the components of the employer's brand value proposition for generation Z

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of an expert survey.

For generation Z, the top 5 most significant VP components of the EB include: salary level, work schedule, training and development system in the company, international experience, reviews about the company in social media; accordingly, the least significant were determined to be: dress code, social position of the company, the possibility of moving to another location, the motivation system in the company and creativity/office design and a comfortable workplace.

If we compare the survey results with the general trends in the formation of generation Z (Table 2), we can note that such a behavioral characteristic as social awareness among Ukrainian youth does not have a high level of significance in the overall VP rating of the EB components. This to some extent reflects the level of development of society. Many young Ukrainians face economic uncertainty, which forces them to concentrate on the material aspects of work that guarantee a stable income and the opportunity for development. In addition, in the early stages of their careers, young people may prioritize their own development, training and career prospects, considering them more important than the company's social responsibility. Flexible working hours and the ability to combine work with personal interests and training are important to young people, which can push social responsibility issues to the background. Due to cases of companies not meeting their stated standards of responsibility, young people may be skeptical of such initiatives and prefer more practical aspects of work. Also, corporate social responsibility may not be sufficiently covered or promoted among young people, so other aspects of work may be more meaningful to them.

3. Creating a desirable employer’s brand image for generation Z

The rating of the components of the employer’s brand in this research was carried out in terms of their development at the enterprise. The level of development of these components reflects how effectively the company forms and maintains its image as an attractive employer for employees using certain characteristics.

These components were previously defined and assessed for each company studied in the retail sector. The categories of assessments of the components of the employer’s brand were previously defined, according to which the characteristics of the best and worst message about their condition were described. The assessment of the level of development of the components of the employer’s brand was carried out by leading specialists of the studied enterprises.

Figure 3 shows the result of determining the rank of value propositions by the state of their development at the studied enterprises. For identical values (rank of connections or number of duplicates), a rank was assigned that corresponds to the average value of their positions in ascending order.

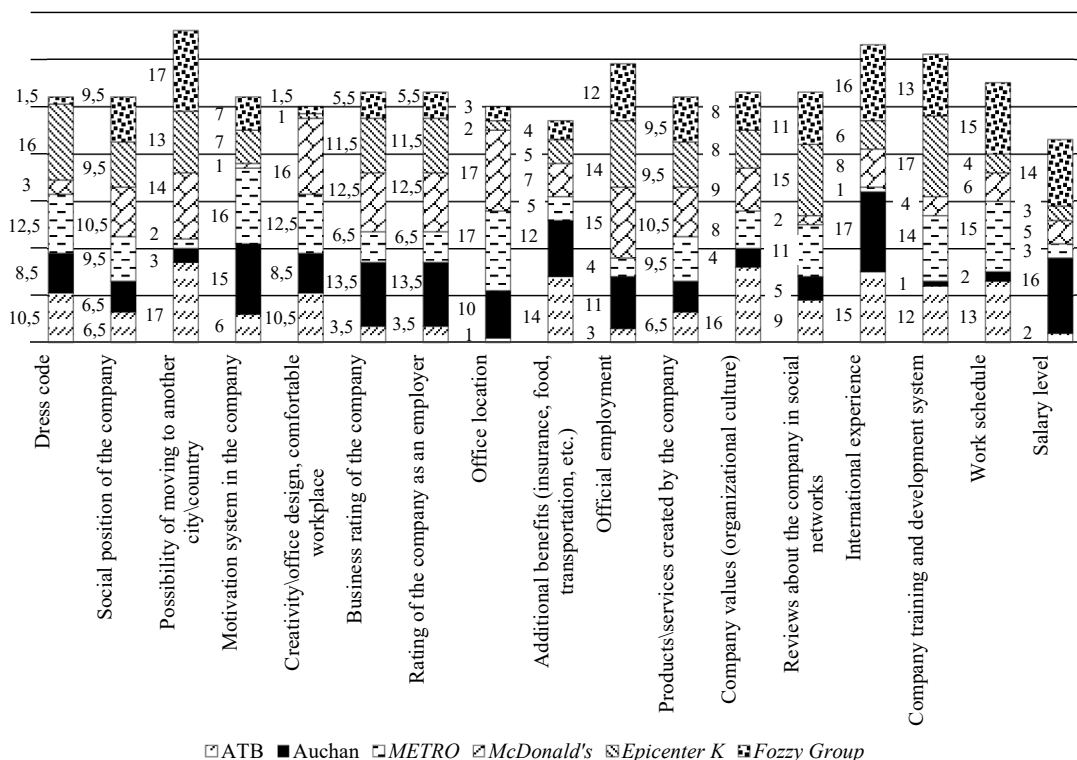


Figure 3. Ranks of components of the employer’s brand value proposition by the state of their development at enterprises

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of expert assessment.

The results of this analysis allow companies to see the problematic issues of employer’s brand development that need to be resolved in order to attract representatives of generation Z to work.

To assess how much the level of development of the employer’s brand value propositions of the studied enterprises meets the expectations of representatives of generation Z, it is worth analyzing the degree of correspondence between the ratings of enterprises and the expectations of young people.

To determine the level of similarity, it is advisable to calculate the sum of the deviation modules of the ranks and the Spearman rank correlation coefficient.

The sum of the deviation modules between the desired and actual ranks of the components of the BR CP is calculated by the formula:

$$R_m = \sum_{i=1}^n |E_i - F_i|, \tag{2}$$

where: E_i is the desired ranks of the i -th component of the value proposition; F_i is the actual ranks of the i -th component of the value proposition; and i is the index of the component of the value proposition.

Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (R_s) reflects the closeness of the relationship between two ranked variables, its value should be within $[-1;1]$:

$$R_s = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (E_i - E_{cep})(F_i - F_{cep})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^n (E_i - E_{cep})^2 \sum_{i=1}^n (F_i - F_{cep})^2}}, \tag{3}$$

where: n is the number of indicators that reflect the criterion; E_i is the desired ranks of the i th component of the value proposition; F_i is the actual ranks of the i th component of the value proposition; E_{ser} is the average value of E , F_{ser} is the average value of F , and i is the index of the component of the value proposition.

Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient is a nonparametric measure of the statistical dependence between the ranks of two independent statistical series. Thus, it allows us to assess the degree of connection between the ranks of value propositions identified by students as desirable and those that are actually present in the enterprise according to the results of the analysis. *Table 3* shows the results of the analysis of the connection between the ranks of the EB in terms of their development in the studied enterprises and their significance for generation Z.

Table 3

Assessment of the relevance of employer’s brand rankings of the studied enterprises to their importance for generation Z

Components of the BR CPU	ATB	Auchan	METRO	McDonald’s	Epicenter K	Fozzy Group
Sum of the deviation modulus from the desired estimate of generation Z (R_m)	73	83	94	75	101	96
Sum of squares of rank deviations	533.5	828.5	929.5	493	980	1072.5
Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (R_s)	0.43106	-0.02486	-0.09944	0.46663	-0.14419	-0.31491

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of an expert survey.

MARKETING

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient estimate (see *Table 3*) indicates a positive average relationship between the ranks of the generation Z CEOs and the ATB and McDonald's enterprises. Thus, the expectations of generation Z regarding the EB CEOs are most consistent with the actual state of these enterprises. At other enterprises, the Spearman correlation coefficient is not statistically significant, which indicates a discrepancy between the EB CEOs and the desired image of a potential employer among representatives of generation Z. An important component of brand management is the formation of a desired employer image. To determine the deviation between the existing ranking of value propositions for each enterprise and the desired one from the point of view of representatives of generation Z, it is necessary to compare the actual ranks with the ideal or desired ones. The deviation can be calculated as the difference between these ranks for each CEO at the enterprise. If these differences are summed up, the overall level of discrepancy can be estimated. But it is also important to analyze which components of the EB CEOs require special attention. In *Table 4* it is represented these deviations for the studied enterprises for individual VP components of the EB.

Table 4

Deviations between the ranks of the development level of the value proposition components of the studied enterprises and their significance for generation Z

VP components of the EB	ATB	Auchan	METRO	McDonald's	Epicenter K	Fozzy Group
Salary level	0	14	1	3	1	12
Work schedule	10	-1	12	3	1	12
Training and development system in the company	11	0	13	3	16	12
International experience	3	5	-11	-4	-6	4
Motivation system in the company	2.5	-1.5	4.5	-4.5	8.5	4.5
Company values (organizational culture)	7	-5	-1	0	-1	-1
Products/services created by the company	-5.5	-5.5	-2.5	-1.5	-2.5	-2.5
Official employment	-1	7	0	11	10	8
Additional benefits (insurance, meals, transportation, etc.)	0	-2	-9	-7	-9	-10
Office location	-9	0	7	7	-8	-7
Company rating as an employer	-3	7	0	6	5	-1
Company reviews on social media	-3	7	0	6	5	-1
Creativity/office design, comfortable workplace	-6.5	-8.5	-4.5	-1	-16	-15.5
Company business rating	-0.5	8.5	9.5	-5.5	0.5	0.5
Possibility of moving to another city/country	1	-13	-14	-2	-3	1
Company Social Position	-8.5	-8.5	-5.5	-4.5	-5.5	-5.5
Dress Code	-1.5	-3.5	0.5	-9	4	-10.5

Source: compiled by the authors based on the results of an expert survey.

A high positive deviation indicates the need to develop and improve the value proposition in order to bring it into line with the expectations of young people. In the research, we propose to consider value propositions whose deviations from the desired level exceed 5 as requiring revision and development. A negative deviation indicates that the rank of development of this employer's brand value proposition at the enterprise exceeds the expectations of representatives of generation Z. This approach makes it possible to identify problems in the formation of the employer's brand for generation Z and is the basis for analyzing the current state of the employer's brand value proposition.

Therefore, ATB management should pay the most attention to the company's values, the training and development system, as well as the work schedule. As for Auchan, the important positions are the company's business rating, the company's rating as an employer, reviews on various portals, official employment, international experience and salary level. For METRO, it is important to focus on the company's business rating, office location, training and development system, and salary level. McDonald's should pay attention to improving reviews about the company on various platforms, the company's employer rating, office location, and formal employment. Epicenter K needs to improve the value propositions regarding formal employment, the company's image as an employer, and the training and development system. For Fozzy Group, the key elements are formal employment, training and development system, work schedule, and salary level. Although changes in the office location are not mandatory, improving some of these components can help attract young people and increase the attractiveness of the company as an employer.

In view of this, it is advisable to conduct a detailed analysis of what is effective and valuable for employees, what needs to be changed, as well as to identify problems and opportunities for developing the employer brand. At this stage, it is important to thoroughly approach the analysis of value propositions. A report on the main reasons for dismissals indicated by employees and the potential value proposition of the employer can be useful for this. After collecting responses from office employees, insights are sought that will allow identifying unexpected aspects of EB from the perspective of employees and assessing their impact on the entire network.

Based on an analysis of the dynamics of the effectiveness of indicators characterizing EB effectiveness, a report is generated identifying the needs for changes.

Conclusions

Employer branding should be considered in light of the demands of potential job seekers on the labor market. Generation Z as potential employees, attract employers who expect creativity, energy, and the ability to learn and develop with the company. However, to do this, companies need to create specific value propositions that meet the needs of this target audience.

According to the results of the survey, the following value propositions are of the highest importance for generation Z when choosing a place of work and internship: salary level, work schedule, and opportunities for training in the company. The least important are the dress code, the social position of the company, and the possibility of moving to another city or country. This indicates a balance between tangible (salary) and intangible (training opportunities) VPs when choosing an employer.

On the one hand, potential employees need to understand and evaluate the prospects for future employment; on the other hand, employers seek to reduce the cost of time and money to search for the necessary personnel. The openness, flexibility, and dynamism of generation Z make the value proposition of moving to another city or country unimportant for them. The lack of authority also affects the low priority of business rating and company reputation.

To create the desired employer's brand image, the deviations between the existing ranking of value propositions for each enterprise and the desired one from the point of view of representatives of generation Z were determined. This made it possible to identify for each studied enterprise the shortcomings in the development of specific value propositions that are important for generation Z. Understanding these shortcomings and problems in the EB development allows us to substantiate the directions of employer's brand development that are important for potential job seekers among young people. The main directions of future research include: development of the process of forming an employer brand; determination of the impact of the employer's brand on the company's performance.

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