

Do images speak louder than words ?

Abstract

In recent years there has been an increasing interest among researchers and practitioners to analyze what makes a firm attractive in the eyes of university students, and if individual differences such as personality traits have an impact on this general affect towards a particular organization. The main goal of the present research is to demonstrate that a recently conceptualized narrow trait of personality named *dispositional resistance to change* (RTC), that is, the inherent tendency of individuals to avoid and oppose changes (Oreg, 2003), can predict organizational attraction of university students to firms that are perceived as innovative or conservative. Three complementary studies were carried out using a total sample of 443 college students from Mexico. In addition to validating the hypotheses, our findings suggest that as the formation of the images of organizations in students' minds is done through social cognitions, simple stimuli such as physical artifacts, when used in an isolated manner, do not have a significant impact on organizational attraction. Based in our findings we could say that for every company that wants to attract a specific undergraduate candidate profile (e.g. the most talented, the most creative, etc.) there are some questions worth asking: What is the image that college students have about our company? What are the traits that they associate it with? Is this image congruent with what the company wants to convey? If not, what actions can we take to change or improve our current image?

Keywords: Dispositional resistance to change; organizational attraction; college recruitment.