

# CSR & Diversity as Online Signals to Attract Prospective Employees

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*Although the impact of online medium to attract prospective employees is well documented in literature, very little is known about the relevant information, disseminated on organizational websites. The present paper tries to fill this gap through a content analysis of websites of top 10 global organizations (Dow Jones list) and top 10 Indian organizations (ET-500 list). Fuzzy analytical hierarchy process (AHP) is further used to identify the top four parameters highlighted by the organizations on their websites. It was found that organizations disseminated mainly about their history, reputation, organizational culture and CSR. Interestingly websites of Indian organizations lagged significantly on disseminating global opportunities and diversity and inclusion information. In the domain of talent acquisition the study gives valuable insights on improvement of their organizational websites*

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## Introduction

Talented employees are important constituents of human capital. In recent times research on human capital has witnessed an augmented attention in the field of management. It is well established that the human capital of any organization enhances the knowledge repositories and performance of the organizations. Further, it can also help in attaining competitive advantage to the organizations (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi & Mohammed, 2007; Barney & Wright, 1998). Although significant contributions are made by talented employees in an organization but there lies a distinct challenge before the organizations in attracting talented employees because of better mobility options (Schuler, Jackson & Tarique, 2011). Hence, owing to the competence and contribution of the human capital, organizations

have started adopting various innovative strategies to attract them globally (Collings & Cascio, 2019; Quinn, Rynes & Bretz, 2002). It is not an exaggeration that organizations have indulged into war of talent to attract and influence job choices of these prospective employees (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Elving et al., 2013; McKinsey, 1998). In order to win the battle employers have started projecting positive information in the labor market (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). This information acts as a signal to the prospective employees (Spence, 1978).

**Prominent organizations not only disseminate relevant information on their websites, social media platforms but also have interactive online interface to interact with prospective employees.**

In the entire game of perception management for attracting talent, organizations are not only exhausting word of mouth, print media but also online media (Jonsen, Point, Kelan & Grieble, 2019). The entire process gives an opportunity to the job seekers to evaluate the employers and choose the one which fits their requirements. In recent times the escalating relevance of internet has led organizations to formulate and implement different online strategies in order to attract prospective employees. Lee (2005), Doherty (2010), Elving et al. (2013), Ladkin & Buhalis (2016) have validated that prominent organizations not only disseminate relevant information on their websites, social media platforms but

also have interactive online interface to interact with prospective employees.

The extant literature review suggests that organizations are using online platforms for transmitting positive information to be employer of choice. However, there remains a scarcity of literature which dialogs about the broad themes and types of information disseminated via internet by the organizations for attracting the prospective employees (Jonsen, Point, Kelan & Grieble, 2019). Moreover, there are very few studies which have compared the online information disseminated by organizations globally (Jonsen, Point, Kelan & Grieble, 2019).

In this study the authors try to fill the above-mentioned gaps using Fuzzy analytical hierarchy process (AHP) and content analysis of online information disseminated by top 20 organizations of the world. The content analysis identified the major themes disseminated by the organizations on their websites and Fuzzy analytical hierarchy process (AHP) identified the top four parameters highlighted by the organizations on their websites in order to attract prospective employees. In the following sections a detailed literature review, research methodology, result analysis of the study along with discussion and implication section are presented.

## **Literature Review**

Organizational environment is becoming increasingly dynamic and complex. These complexities have resulted into new challenges for the organizations

at the global level. One major challenge which has emerged before the organizations is attraction and retention of talented employees (Cascio & Boudreau, 2016; Schuler, Jackson & Tarique, 2011). Attraction and retention of talented employees become more critical given the shortage of talent globally. In order to be employer of choice, organizations started disseminating valuable information not only through print media but also on websites and other online platforms.

Organization's website serves as a major channel to organize all the important signals at one place and also serves the purpose of increasing their familiarity, brand attractiveness with the job seekers (Doherty, 2010). There are studies which suggest that online signals disseminated by the organizations influence job seeker's perception. In a study conducted by Gregory et al (2013) it was found that more than 50 percent of the prospective applicants originate through online platforms. Thus, it has cost saving implications too for the organizations. Hence, given the advantage of the online medium almost all major organizations including government sector and private sector are capitalizing it for influencing the job seekers.

Some studies have also tried to examine the impact of social media presence of organizations on shaping the perception of job seekers. It was found that their perception changed after an exposure to the organization's website. In the same vein Backhaus, Stone and Heiner (2002), Du, Bhattacharya & Sen (2010), Yadav, Dash, Chakraborty & Kumar (2018) etc. emphasized the importance of displaying

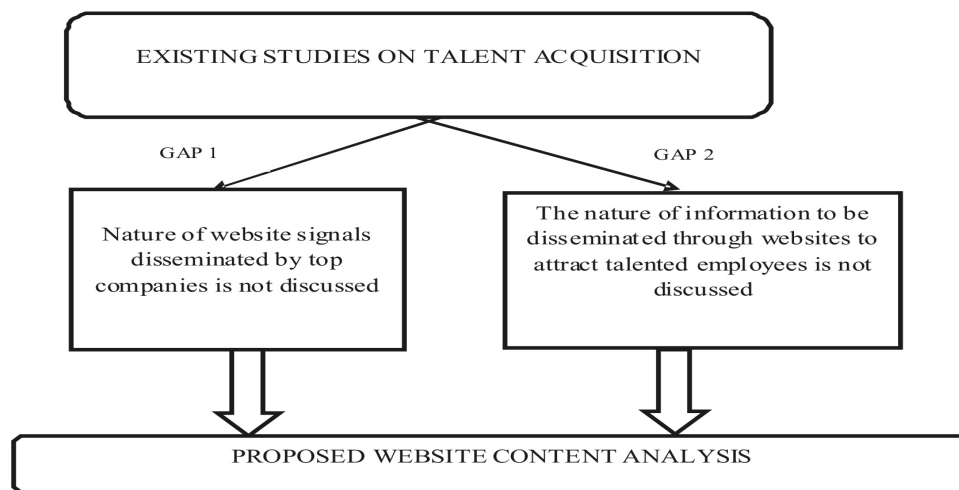
**Organizational websites serve as an important tool for employer branding and impression management.**

Corporate Social Responsibility activities (Rendtorff, 2018) on organizational websites in order to create a positive impact on potential employees. Thus, in order to increase familiarity about the organizations and to influence prospective employees organizations use their websites. Organizational websites serve as an important tool for employer branding and impression management (Winter, Saunders, and Hart, 2003; Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). Hence prospective employees exhaustively search organizational websites in order to make more informed choices about their job.

### **Limitations in Existing Studies**

The limitations in existing studies are illustrated in fig. 1 and later discussed. Despite the importance of the online platforms in disseminating organizational information which ultimately helps in attracting and recruiting prospective employees, there remains a dearth of literature which talks about the nature of information or signals disseminated by the top organizations in the world (Jonsen, Point, Kelan & Griebel, 2019). Further, there are very few studies which have compared the nature of information disseminated by local organizations and global organizations. Hence, there emerges an opportunity to conduct a research exploring types of information disseminated through online platforms by organizations

Fig. 1 Research Gap



in order to attract and recruit prospective employees. Thus, in this study we try to fill the existing gap with the help of content analysis of websites of top 20 organizations. The techniques used in the proposed method are discussed below:

**Fuzzy-Analytical Hierarchy Process**

Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process [F-AHP] is applicable when there are mul-

iple factors that are uncertain to quantify. Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process [F-AHP] (Singh & Prasher, 2019) integrates the fuzzy concept to Analytic Hierarchy Process [AHP] (Windy & Saaty,1980). AHP makes the pair-wise comparison of the factors using crisp notation. In Fuzzy-AHP, the pair-wise comparisons of both criteria and the alternatives are carried out through the fuzzy triangular scale devised by Windy and Saaty (1980):

**Table 1 Fuzzy Linguistic Terms with Defined Triangular Scales**

Saaty Scale	Definition	Fuzzy Triangular Scale
1	Equally important	(1,1,1)
3	Weakly Important	(2,3,4)
5	Fairly important	(4,5,6)
7	Strongly important	(6,7,8)
9	Absolutely important	(9,9,9)

Source: Saaty (1980)

Table 1 depicts the Saaty scale scores from 1 to 9 and the corresponding fuzzy equivalent in the form of:(lo,m,u) ; lo being the lower bound of the fuzzy scale and u being the upper bound and the median

value is captured by the variable m. When the importance of a factor compared to another factor is assigned, for instance, a Saaty scale value of 1 indicates that factor i is highly un-important while 7 indi-

cates that the factor is of strong significance. The alternatives and criteria are compared based on this scale for drawing conclusions regarding which factors are more influential.

The methodology undertaken for computing criteria weights is as follows:

**Step 1:** Data pertaining to the relative importance of factors that impact the employee churn is collected through online surveys and questionnaires.

**Step 2:** The responses collected in the form of scores from 1-9 are converted to fuzzy notations of the form: (l,m,h) mentioned above for assigning the criteria.

**Step 3:** The fuzzy weightages for the factors are allocated and converted to a pair-wise comparison matrix to ascertain the priority.

**Step 4:** The geometric mean of fuzzy values for each factor is calculated by the formula:

$$r_i = (\pi d_{ij}^{1/n}) \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

where; d represents the pair-wise relative importance of one criterion over the other for each of the alternatives and i is from 1 to n.

**Step 5:** The fuzzy weightage for each factor is computed by multiplying with the inverse vector:

$$w_i = r_i * (r_1 * r_2 * r_3 * \dots * r_n)^{-1} \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

= (lw<sub>i</sub>,mw<sub>i</sub>,hw<sub>i</sub>) where: r<sub>1</sub>, r<sub>2</sub> represent the geometric mean calculated above for each criterion.

From the fuzzy weights, first, the crisp average factor criterion is computed by taking the average of the 3 fuzzy weights i.e.,

$$M_i = (lw_i + mw_i + hw_i) / 3 \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

The average factor criterion M<sub>i</sub> is normalized to normalized weight criterion N<sub>i</sub> by the formula:

$$N_i = M_i / \sum M_i \dots \dots \dots (4)$$

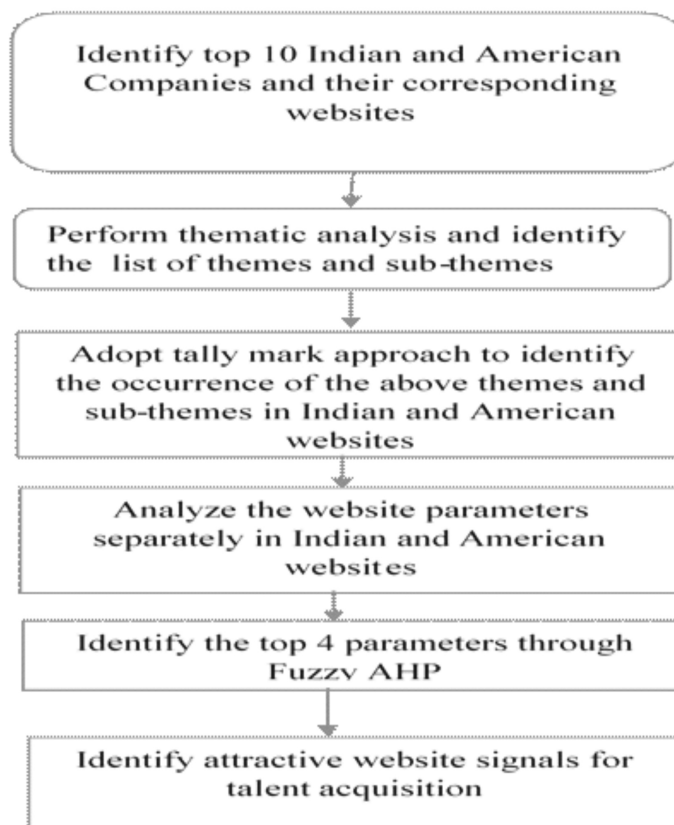
where;  $\sum M_i$  denotes the total of all the average crisp weights for all criteria.

These computations are pre-defined in the R library ‘fuzzyAhp’ and hence R tool is used to simulate the Fuzzy AHP method with comparison matrix as input.

### Rationale for Proposed Approach

Initially, to identify the website signals which can attract prospective employees, the content of the website is to be analyzed for which thematic analysis was adopted. Further, in order to identify the best signals and to prioritize and re-structure the website content to attract talent in an uncertain decision-making environment, fuzzy Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) is deployed computing the weightages of each website signal from the relative importance comparison matrix. This helps in the prioritization of website content in terms of the top 4 website signals to strengthening. The detailed methodology of the study is mentioned in fig.2

Fig. 2 Research Methodology



### Methodology

Authors purposefully selected top 10 organizations of India listed in the Economic Times (ET) 500 list – 2017. Another top 10 organizations of the world were selected from Dow Jones list – 2017. The top 10 Indian organizations according to the ET 500 list were: Indian Oil Corporation, Reliance Industries, State Bank of India, Tata Motors, Rajesh Exports, Bharat Petroleum Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Coal India, and Tata Consultancy Services. The top 10 international organizations from

Dow Jones list were: 3M, American Express, Apple, Boeing, Caterpillar, Chevron, Cisco, Coca-Cola, Disney, and Dow Du Pont.

In the content analysis the following process was adopted. Firstly, the website of all the organizations was read several times to generate sub themes. Secondly, information which represented similar activities or functions were grouped together to form a broad theme. Once the exhaustive list of themes was generated, tally mark approach was used to indicate the presence of those sub-themes and themes

in different organizations. The steps followed in the content analysis process were as prescribed in Hsieh & Shanon (2005) (see Table 2).

**Table 2 Steps Followed in the Content Analysis Process**

Type of content analysis	Study starts with	Timing of defining codes	Sources of codes
Conventional	Observation	During data analysis	From data

Source: Hsieh & Shanon (2005).

The overall parameters were analyzed for both the Indian and US based companies to capture which website parameters were given more importance by the companies. Subsequently, multi-criteria technique Fuzzy Analytical Hierarchy Process (FAHP) was applied to identify the top 4 criteria in terms of weightages. On the basis of this analysis, top 4 criteria were identified and were analyzed for both Indian and US companies. The overall Indian and US website content analysis was compared by aggregating the company-wise features captured for both India and US and comparing which criteria were given more emphasis by each country.

## Results & Discussions

The content analysis of the websites of the top 20 organizations revealed the major themes of online information disseminated by Indian and global organizations. These broad themes are: (a) introduction of the organization; (b) reputation of the organization; (c) culture of the organization; (d) growth opportunities; (e) work life balance; (f) diversity and inclusion; (g) employee welfare schemes; (h) job vacancies; and (i) CSR activities.

The exhaustive list on introduction about the organization included information like vision and mission statement and logo of the organization. The range of products or services offered by the organizations. The geographical location of these organizations along with the leadership heads across the globe. Some of the other information related to the organization was video link about the organization, social media link, organogram, compliance, history, press media coverage and history of the organization. Reputation of the organization were generally communicated through disseminating information like presence of the organization nationally or internationally and prestigious awards won by the organization.

**Exhaustive list on the culture of the organization included words like winning, meritorious, participative and engaging. Motivation, loyalty, commitment of the workforce were also used.**

Exhaustive list on the culture of the organization included words like winning, meritorious, participative and engaging. Motivation, loyalty, commitment of the workforce were also used. Innovation (Pauget & Dammak, 2018), responsive-

ness, agile, growth oriented and learning organization were also highlighted to depict the culture of the organization. Few of the organizations also used quotes from the management to communicate the culture of the organization. Growth opportunities was emphasized using words like career growth, job rotation, global opportunities, rewards, training and development of employees, industry-academia partnership and employee resource network.

Work-life balance was another feature which organizations disseminated on their websites using words like flexible working hours, time swapping, job swapping, work from home, in house sports and events and flexible leave policies. Diversity and inclusion were also emphasized by the organization on the website stating as equal opportunity employer. Job advertisement and other components related to jobs like job description, details, structure, selection process, compensation, job environment, campus-corporate relationship, option to submit resume, job alerts and results of past recruitments were published.

Employee welfare measures were also accentuated by the organizations on their websites. It included schemes like medical facilities, financial assistances, housing facilities, study leave, insurance, disability benefits, retirement programs, travel allowances, housing and employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs). Further, organizations did disseminate information on the social front like news about their corporate social responsibilities (CSR) activities.

### **Variations between Indian & US Organizations**

It was interesting to note that top 10 Indian organizations (listed in ET 500) and top 10 global organizations (listed in Dow Jones) varied drastically on certain domains while disseminating information on their websites. As mentioned earlier information on nine different domains were disseminated by all the organizations. In the domain “about the organization” it was found that almost every organization communicated about vision and mission statement, products and services, location etc. However, it was interesting to note that only 30% of Indian organizations shared their organograms on their websites whereas no global organization shared its organogram. While comparing the video segment only 30 % of Indian organization shared videos on their websites to communicate their organizational glory whereas 50% of the global organizations did that.

**Only 30% of Indian organizations shared their organograms on their websites whereas no global organization shared its organogram.**

On the reputation segment all Indian and global organizations mentioned their awards and recognitions. There was no significant difference between Indian and global organizations in this regard. While comparing the culture of Indian and global organizations through the website analyses it was found that only 10% of Indian organization used words like agile whereas 20% of the global or-

organizations used that very word to define their culture. 20% of Indian organizations mentioned responsive word to describe their culture in comparison to 40% of the global organizations. 30% of the Indian organizations used quotes from senior management to define their culture whereas only 10% global organizations used it for the same.

On the segment of growth opportunities only 20% Indian organizations talked about global opportunities whereas 70% of the global organizations used it aggressively. Employee resource networks are an important pillar in the growth of an employee, on this front only 10% Indian organization highlighted this information on their websites whereas 60% global organizations promoted it on their websites.

Work-life balance was another domain which was available on the websites of the organizations. However, flexible working hours was highlighted by only 10% of the Indian organizations whereas 40% of the global organization promoted flexible working hours apart from other work-life elements like leave policies, fitness center at the workplace etc. It was surprising to observe that only 10% Indian organization talked about diversity and inclusion on their websites. However, 40% of the global organizations promoted that on their websites.

Organizational job-related advertisements were published by organizations; however, only 10% Indian organizations had option for job alerts on their websites and only 30% had submit resume options. Whereas 100% global organizations had

the option of job alerts and submit resume option. Indian organizations and global organizations were on an equalizer of 10% each for publicizing premiere institution focus for recruitment.

Organizations highlighted welfare schemes offered for employees on their websites. Only 10% of the Indian organizations discussed about the study leave facility and insurance facility. Whereas, 10% of global organizations published study leave facility and 30% highlighted the insurance facility. Indian organizations did not mention about the availability of ESOP's on their websites. However, 20% of the global organizations highlighted ESOPs option on their websites. On CSR front 90% of the Indian and global organizations highlighted their CSR activities.

**90% of the Indian and global organizations highlighted their CSR activities.**

The overall analysis of website parameters revealed the following insights:

The parameters are analyzed for ET500 listed companies and it can be inferred that the Indian companies emphasize on the parameters "About Organization" followed by "Culture depicted by the use of words" and "Welfare Measures". Thus, Indian companies emphasize on culture and welfare measures.

Similarly, parameters are analyzed for the US-based Dow Jones based companies below in Fig. 4:

Fig. 3 Analysis of Parameters for the ET500 Listed Companies

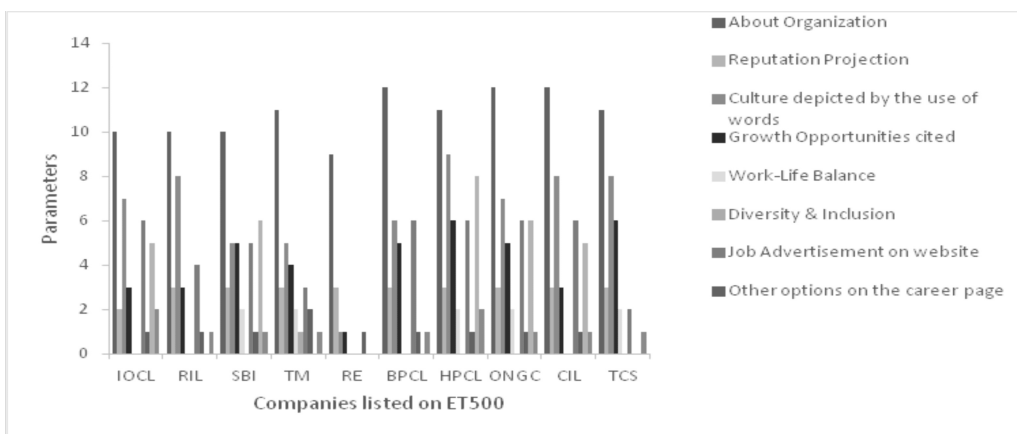
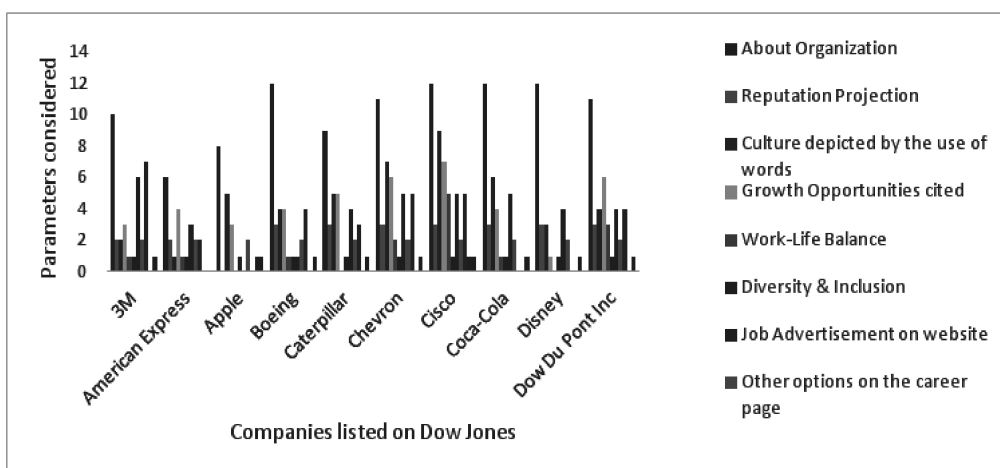


Fig. 4 Analysis of Parameters for the Dow Jones Listed Companies



The parameters are analyzed for Dow Jones listed companies and it can be inferred that the US companies emphasize on the parameters “About Organization” followed by “Culture depicted by the use of words” and “Reputation Projection”. This implies that US based companies emphasize on culture and how they showcase their reputation.

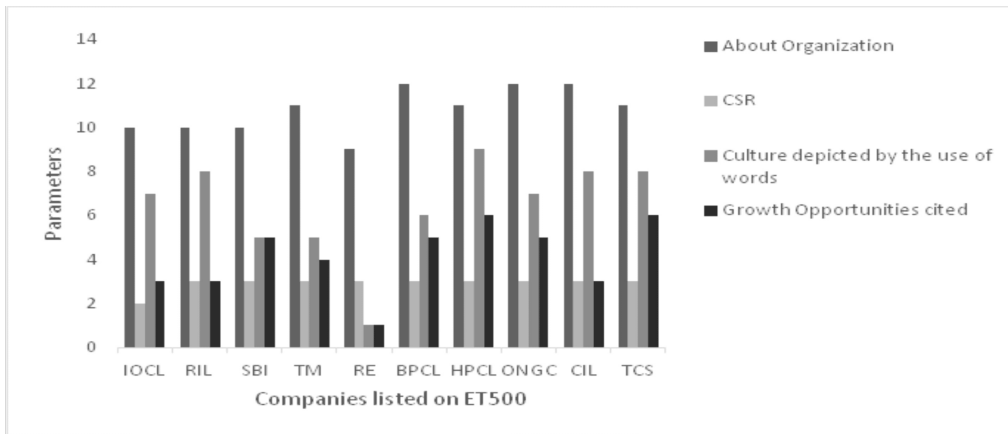
Subsequently, the weights are computed by Fuzzy AHP as in Table 3.

Table 3 Criteria Weights Computed by Fuzzy AHP

Criteria	Weights
About Organization	0.209
Reputation Projection	0.169
Culture depicted by the use of words	0.022
Growth Opportunities cited	0.128
Work-Life Balance	0.072
Diversity & Inclusion	0.060
Job Advertisement on website	0.054
Other options on the career page	0.122
Welfare Measures	0.059
Perks	0.104

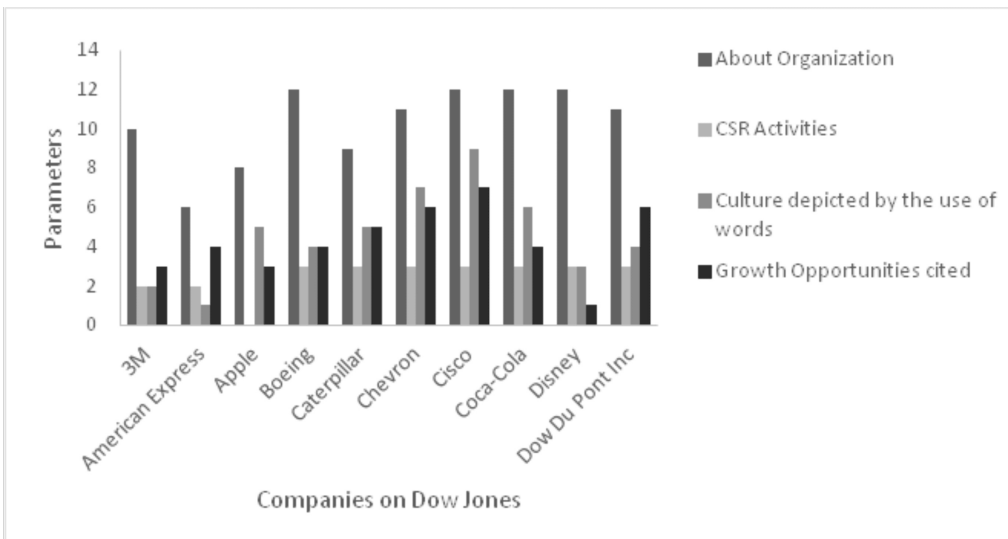
It can be inferred that the parameters “About Organization”, “Reputation Projection”, “Culture depicted by the use of words” and “Growth Opportunities cited” are the top 4 parameters emphasized upon in developing the website content. Further, these top 4 parameters are analyzed for ET500 and Dow Jones companies as in Figures 5 and 6:

**Fig. 5 Analysis of Top 4 Parameters for the ET500 Listed Companies**



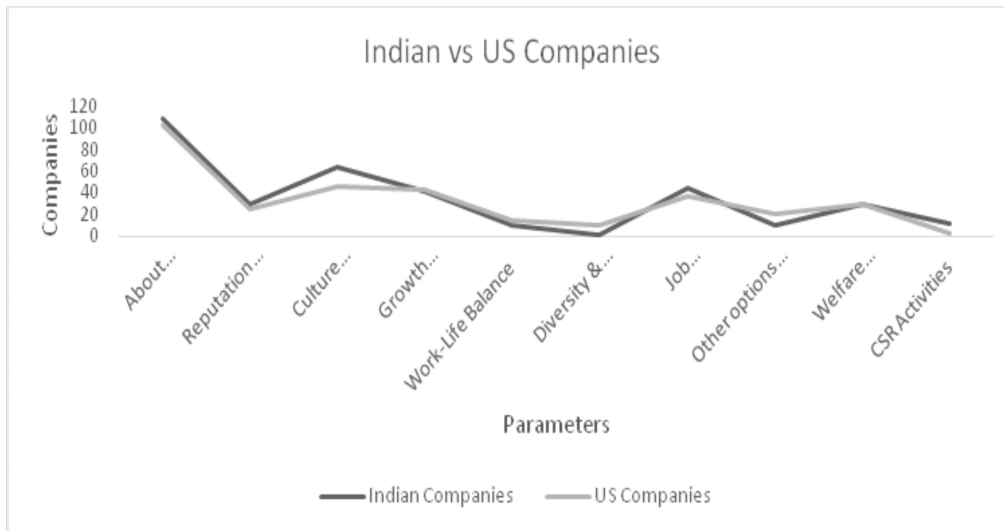
It is observed that while BPCL, ONGC and CIL focus on content about the organization in their websites, HPCL depicts in more detail about the organizational culture (Bazin, 2015). HPCL and TCS are found to cite more about the growth opportunities which helps in attracting interested viewers.

**Fig. 6 Analysis of Top 4 Parameters for the Dow Jones listed Companies**



It is observed that while Boeing, Cisco and Disney focus on content about the organization in their websites, Cisco depicts in more detail about the organizational culture. Cisco and Dow Du Pont are found to cite more about the growth opportunities which helps in attracting interested viewers.

**Fig. 7 Indian vs US Companies' Comparison of Parameters**



Further, the Indian and US companies aggregated are compared and it is found that while Indian websites focus on content about the organization, reputation, organizational culture, job advertisement and perks, US based companies highlight details regarding growth opportunities, work-life balance and diversity thus lending an employee friendly appeal to the websites and thereby attracting more interested viewers.

Hence, based on the kind of information shared by the organizations on their websites, we conceptualize the attraction model utilized by organizations to attract the prospective employees (Fig. 8). The proposed model depicts the role of signals sent by the organizations on their websites as an impression manage-

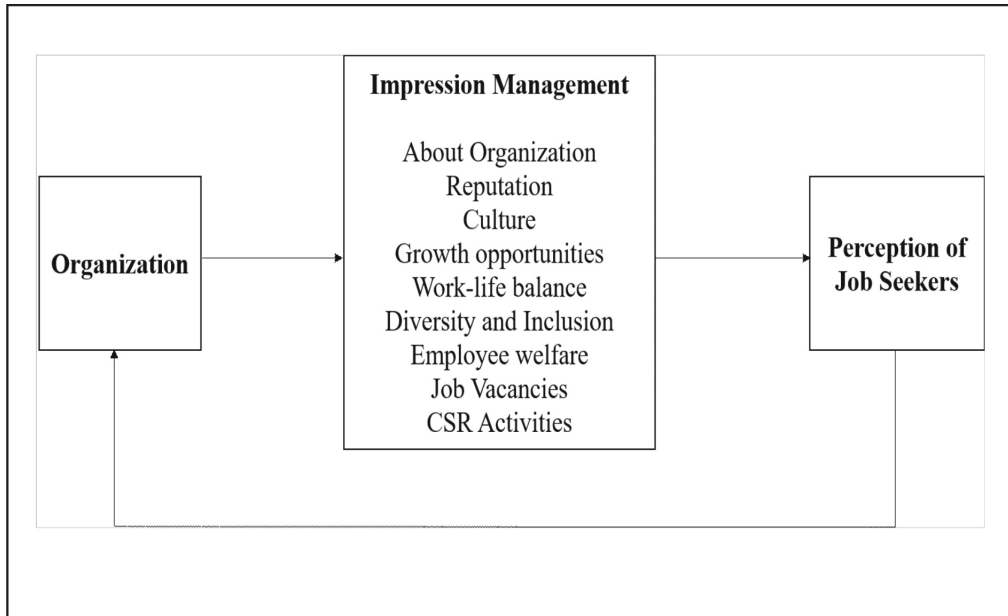
ment or employer branding tools. These tools alter the perceptions of the job seekers and ultimately influence their job choice decisions.

The results are valid and reliable as the contents are readily available on the websites of these organizations. The results shall remain valid and can be reproduced until the content of websites is changed by the organizations themselves.

**Discussion**

The objective of this study was to uncover and compare online signals disseminated by top Indian and global organizations in order to attract and influence prospective employees. The study highlighted that organizations use 9 broad

Fig. 8 Process of Impression Management by Organization



themes as a signal namely (a) introduction of the organization; (b) reputation of the organization; (c) culture of the organization; (d) growth opportunities; (e) work life balance; (f) diversity and inclusion; (g) employee welfare schemes; (h) job vacancies; and i) CSR activities. Although, literature does mention about the use of online channels for influencing job seekers' decisions, very few studies have explored the critical signals disseminated online in order to influence job seekers (Nolan et al, 2013).

Adding to the existing research we compare websites of top 20 companies across the world to explore various signals disseminated by them. It was interesting to note that the Indian companies and global companies varied significantly on various domains. For example, Indian

companies did not have video links about the organization in comparison to the global organizations. It can have implications for managers to use video links on their organizational websites as video cues are more impactful (Dobrian et al., 2011). Organizations can utilize our suggestions and will be benefitted in making more impactful impression on the job seekers.

Further, Indian organizations used quotes by leaders of management to depict about the culture of the organization whereas global organizations lagged on this parameter. It is a well proven fact that prospective employees get motivated by the quotes or speeches of great leaders. Hence, websites of global organizations can also use motivational quotes by top leaders to influence these prospective employees.

**Indian organizations do not disclose global opportunities on their websites as compared to the global organizations.**

Our study also revealed that Indian organizations do not disclose global opportunities on their websites as compared to the global organizations. Also, information about employee resource network groups are absent on the websites of Indian organizations. These findings generate implications for managers. Given the importance of employee resource networks (Yokoyama, 2016) and global opportunities in an individual's career, managers should highlight information related to employee resource networks and global opportunities present at the workplace.

**Job alerts and submit resume options are important medium to interact with prospective employees.**

Websites of Indian companies also lacked information about diversity and inclusion. Brands of an organization get more strengthened when it is legitimately promoting diversity and inclusion at workplace (Jonsen, Point, Kelan & Grieble, 2019). Hence, managers must revisit on their diversity inclusion agenda to be an employer of choice. Otherwise there is high probability to lose the war of talent with global companies. It was surprising to notice that websites were not having job alert and resume submit option. Job alerts and submit resume options are important medium to interact with prospec-

ive employees. Hence, we also reinforce that managers should include job alert and submit resume options on their organizational websites.

Almost all Indian and global companies had highlighted their CSR activities on their websites. It can be because of two reasons: (a) Impact of CSR activities on attracting job seekers has been tested worldwide (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Maheshwari & Yadav, 2015; Freeman; 2018). In India, CSR spending has become a mandate after 2013 (The Companies Act, 2013).

### Implications & Limitations

These findings have important implications for researchers. Scholars can study and compare the organizational signals sector-wise across the world. Further, scholars can also analyze the most impactful online medium and signals globally. This study can be further complemented with longitudinal and experimental studies. This study extends the current importance of the organization's signal and job seeker's perception in the talent acquisition. It may serve as a base to extend the research further on the organizational signals. Some of the future research areas can be a study of the organizational signals and differentiating between strong and weak signals based on a field survey of job seeker's perception. Another area of further research can be a wider sample content analysis of organizational signals on the websites and the required number of clicks to reach each of the signals. The number of clicks required to reach a particular signal might

make it a weak signal as the website surfer may not stay on the website to dig deep and may switch to another website. Hence the information on the home page of the website may serve as strong signals. This may help to analyze the placement of these signals at the varied length of clicks. The study will be of importance to managers and practitioners for identifying the important signals for attracting potential employees. This study may help them give a comprehensive view and a ready tool to reflect and improvise their websites for better placements of signals.

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