

EXPLORING PRECURSORS OF VALUE DELIVERY ON ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES THROUGH LEADERSHIP BRANDING AWARENESS

George Bogdan DRĂGAN

"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați
59-61 Nicolae Bălcescu Street, 800001 Galați, RO
dragangeorgebogdan@yahoo.com

Gianita BLEOJU

"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați
59-61 Nicolae Bălcescu Street, 800001 Galați, RO
gianita.b@gmail.com

Alexandru CAPATINA

"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați
59-61 Nicolae Bălcescu Street, 800001 Galați, RO
alexcapatina@gmail.com

Abstract. *A collaborative approach to capitalize on organizational capabilities makes sense of leadership branding awareness by coordinating their deployment through the processes of fitting organizational landscape to the targeted outcome. The common fault of strategic leadership misalignment resides on the scarce propensity to pooling capabilities. This study highlights the twofold role of leadership branding: firstly, on retaining capabilities critical to success and secondly, on influencing the course of action toward sharpening delivery on capabilities. The current research explores underestimated relationships of leadership context dependency, through recognition and mapping skills to amplify the value delivery. The methodological anchor of leadership brand assessment, applied on a representative pool of knowledge intensive companies from Romanian software industry, outlines the precursors of value delivery and a balanced configuration of choices to capitalize on capabilities.*

Keywords: *leadership branding; value delivery; foresight capability; client experience; company image.*

Introduction

Leadership brand is one of the most effective drivers for endowing human capital with a distinct set of talents that are uniquely geared to fulfill stakeholders' expectations. A company with a leadership brand inspires faith that employees and managers will consistently deliver value on the firm's promises (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007).

This paper aims to design and test a pattern matching approach to value delivery and leadership branding awareness outlines client experience legacy and organizational reputation within target market as preliminary requirements envisioning a subset of leadership mapping skills. The pattern matching theoretical and observed constructs mirrors discovering knowledge process approach through initial requirement envisioning test driving development, to calibrate the precursors of organizational propensity behavior toward value delivery on behalf of leadership branding awareness scoring.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. After highlighting the relevant theory for this study purposes, we outline the research framework and methodological toolkit. Then, the findings are discussed by means of relevant methods and reveal their implications on both theoretical and practical sides.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

Leadership brand occurs when “leaders are clear about which results are most important, develop a general consistency about how they will achieve these results, and build attributes that align with the achievement of these results” (Intagliata et al., 2000, p.14).

Leadership branding leverages strong needs of achievements in terms of sales, profit and market share by means of high tolerance of ambiguity and self-confidence of the management team (Ahmad et al., 2012). The process of building leadership branding involves specific activities, such as development of competencies, job rotation, learning, and development, nurturing of high potential employees, talent identification through talent matrix, talent pipeline development (Bhatnagar, 2008); in order to make the whole process dynamic and responsive, the capability to enhance organizational value delivery becomes compulsory.

According to Ulrich and Smallwood (2007), leadership branding is the key enabler of bridging the gaps between the corporate culture and the outside organizational brand perception by the relevant stakeholders; it has also valuable benefits in developing future leaders and strengthening the whole organization.

In our attempt to understand the role of leadership branding as an antecedent of the specific outcome of client experience, it is necessary to define its role in value delivery. Leadership branding enhances value delivery by creating sustainable organizational brand differentiation, not only through the development of a consistently positive service attitude (client experience) but also through emotional values (Mosley, 2007).

Leadership branding acts as a promise between an organization and its potential and existing clients; the promise is strongly associated with the value delivery and the entire organization has to be committed in this way (Foster et al., 2010). Organizations endowed with leadership branding are able to develop long term relationships with their clients, based on high confidence, being convinced that

their needs and expectations will be addressed in an appropriate way (Martin & Burke, 2012).

Exploring significant return on experience over conflicting evidence of leadership branding knowledge base, two approaches prove pertinent to leverage the pluralism of the study outcome, underlining two challenges to be addressed by interpretive research design.

The first pertinent shift, suggested by the community of expertise, recognizes Petriglieri (2017, p.3) pertinent emphasize over leadership branding challenge: "A key shift occurs, when a high potential realizes that his or her role is not to deliver more than others, but to deliver more with others".

The second significant shift is signaled by Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2017), which requires restructured frames of pertinent sources of tensions: using talent vs. proving talent, image vs. authenticity and postponement of meaningful work vs. the present losing value.

Examining literature tensions deriving from returns on experience on value delivery and leadership branding approaches, the study builds upon the need of moderation over organizational pooling capabilities, discovers new dimensions of the research problem and purposefully pursues toward achieving new matches of theory and reality.

Minding the gap between retaining capabilities critical to success and delivering results, the research framework emphasizes significant and clear contribution, making sense of hypothesis construct to support new findings and redirection of data collection.

Based on the literature mentioned above, the first hypothesis (H1) is addressed: Client experience legacy positively moderates leadership unipersonal development plan and enhances value delivery.

The relationships between leadership branding and corporate reputation attract attention within business research communities in many research articles. However, in terms of assessing corporate reputation, few studies focus on the construct: leadership branding.

The leaders have the key responsibility to create leadership brands that translate clients' expectations into employee behaviors, which will finally drive to client experience legacy (Moore, 2008).

Leadership branding needs to be addressed in relation to the interplay between vision and value delivery and requires ongoing dialogue between top management and external stakeholders (Balmer & Gray, 2003), based on responsive attitudes regarding the effective management of the organizational reputation within the target market. Moreover, leadership branding should induce behaviors such as articulating a unifying brand vision, acting as an appropriate role model by living the brand values (Morhart et al., 2009), offering stakeholders the possibility to

interpret their roles as brand representatives in order to increase reputation within the target market.

Leadership branding is also considered as a lever for generating organizational brand commitment, being mediated by four context factors (culture fit, structure fit, employee know-how and disposable resources), perceived as building blocks of internal brand management with high impact on organizational reputation (Burmamann & Zeplin, 2005).

The perspective on leadership branding recognizes the stakeholders' implications by proposing a holistic approach whereby external and internal approaches of the organizational brand are viewed synergistically within an integrated reputation-driven strategy (Aydon Simmons, 2009).

The second hypothesis (H2) is also built upon the relevant literature previously approached: Leadership branding awareness positively moderates organizational reputation within target market and enhances value delivery.

Few authors have closely investigated the link between leadership branding and value delivery, and, when they have conducted such research, the approach has been mainly focused on the impact of leadership branding on firm's performances. This paper looks more closely at how the leadership branding and value delivery are interrelated, by analyzing the practices of 80 Romanian IT companies that have been involved in this research. The paper also considers how leadership branding enables the efforts of these organizations to build their reputation and improve their clients' experiences.

Methodological toolkit deployment

In its attempt to bridge leadership branding capability score and leadership branding awareness score, this study's conceptual architecture advances the leadership branding assessment and foresights on organizational profiling rooted on leadership branding awareness adjusted score; primarily, it exposes precursors of value delivery moderated by leadership branding assessment score and secondly, it outlines pilot tests to leverage a balanced configuration of choices to capitalize on capabilities.

Drawing upon construct validity literature (Bagozzi et al., 1991) and (O'Leary-Kelly & Vokurka, 1998), the current evolving case matches theory and reality, exposing some blurred boundaries on foresighted organizational capabilities, on behalf of the leadership branding knowledge base, through upgrading new findings to unexplored causal associations. Recognizing scarce propensity to pooling capabilities as a true challenge for the strategic decision, leadership branding should be explored to provide solutions to overcome these misalignments.

Making sense of construct validation is a three step process outlined in Figure 1.

Value delivery on organizational capabilities can be conceptualized as a subset of leadership mapping skills. Leadership branding awareness can be conceptualized as an organizational process purposefully channeled to capitalize upon client experience legacy.

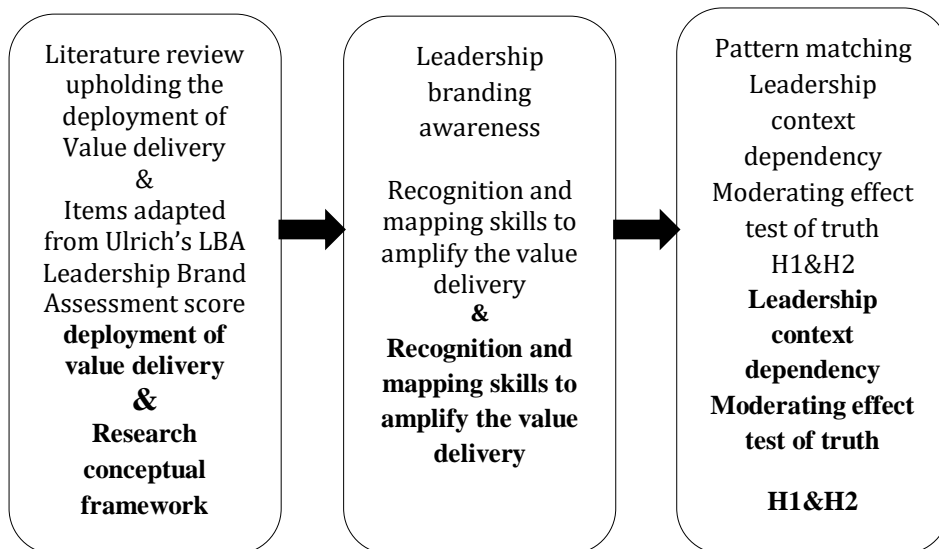


Figure 1. Research milestones

Exploring underestimated relationship of leadership context dependency requires a new framework (Figure 2) to fit evidence to theory and outlines a subset of leadership mapping skills to submit to a measurement model validity test.

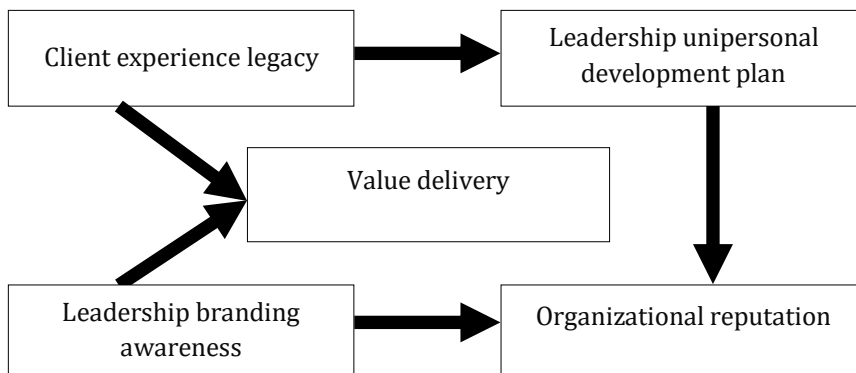


Figure 2. Research framework

Data has been collected by means of a questionnaire, providing respondents the possibility to emphasize their perceptions regarding value delivery on behalf of leadership branding awareness regarding 10 Likert scale-based items.

In order to achieve the potential to deliver more value with the stakeholders, companies constantly have to inform them about the commitment to leadership branding. Assuming a branding leadership mission is an essential part of enhancing organizational identity and supports an organizational process for the development of future generations of leaders. Leaders' meaningful work should leverage the improvement of the company's results and encourage initiatives to translate valuable personal interaction experiences into customer-relevant knowledge.

Monitoring the image of the company on the target market consolidates organizational identity, by operationalizing the branding leadership mission through a set of specific actions, in order to counterbalance client's perspective in acquiring knowledge through unipersonal leadership development plans. To avoid losing multiplied client interactions, which strengthens leadership development, the companies must deploy experiential learning programs and align them to client perspective.

The convenience sample was represented by 80 Romanian IT companies, whose managers agreed to take part in the survey and filled out the online questionnaire. Even if it is a convenience sample, we consider it purposefully targeted, as we have been tested various research design frameworks related to Strategic Intelligence.

Calculating Cronbach's Alpha has become common practice in business research when multiple-item measures of a concept or construct are employed. In this research, Cronbach's Alpha (0,853) reveals a high level of internal consistency for the 10 item scale (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,853	,854	10

A debate is rising over using or not the average inter-item correlation as a measure of reliability between respondents; nevertheless, is quite obvious that the responders rate the same stimuli in the same way or even more problematic if the trend of higher a lower score for the same stimuli was followed. The correlation between a particular item and the sum of the rest of the items outlines that the best item appears to be the fifth, with an item-total correlation of $r = 0,627$. The item with the lowest item-total correlation is the sixth ($r = .408$). Analyzing Cronbach's Alpha "if item deleted" column, we observe that none of the values is greater than the current alpha of the whole scale: 0,853, so any item we don't need to be removed (Table 2).

Table 2. Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Item1	32,32	31,058	,613	,428	,835
Item2	32,49	31,924	,539	,337	,841
Item3	32,61	31,329	,610	,441	,835
Item4	32,81	30,357	,595	,413	,836
Item5	32,41	30,549	,627	,446	,833
Item6	32,19	33,015	,408	,232	,852
Item7	32,38	31,528	,564	,364	,839
Item8	32,48	32,025	,540	,347	,841
Item9	32,70	31,808	,564	,374	,839
Item10	32,40	31,559	,509	,348	,844

Since this study advances a purposefully adapted tool for collecting data, consistent with the research outcome and mirroring at best the above conceptual architecture the validity of measures, as a compulsory part of construct validity assessment, common method bias must be excluded.

To report if variations in responses are attributable to the instrument, rather than observing responses attempts to uncover, Harman's single Factor test is returning on 43,458 <50% (Table 3).

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.346	43.458	43.458	4.346	43.458	43.458
2	.961	9.609	53.067			
3	.877	8.773	61.840			
4	.814	8.140	69.980			
5	.683	6.835	76.815			
6	.535	5.346	82.161			
7	.507	5.072	87.233			
8	.483	4.832	92.065			
9	.430	4.295	96.360			
10	.364	3.640	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A set of data reflecting multiple scores for each reaction to stimuli, calls for Inter-rater Reliability statistical test to explore the degree of agreement of responders on their ratings. The test is indented to report that variability in scores is due to variation in the sample and not to variation in reactions.

Table 4 reports Cronbach's Alpha Intra class Correlation Coefficient (0,853), which reflects a high correlation considering 10 items.

Table 4. Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.368	.286	.465	6.814	79	711	.000
Average Measures	.853	.800	.897	6.814	79	711	.000

As the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC) is close to 1, a high similarity between values from the same group can be observed.

Findings

In order to test the two hypotheses, we performed chi-square tests, followed by statistical analyses based on Pearson's R Spearman Correlation coefficient.

The first hypothesis advances the moderating effects of client experience legacy on leadership unipersonal development plan and value delivery, as well.

Table 5. Chi-Square Tests - H1 test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24,958	12	,015
Likelihood Ratio	27,397	12	,007
Linear-by-Linear Association	20,398	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	80		

In the case of H1, the value associated with the Asymptotic significance (0,015) is inferior to the level of significance (0,05) and the Pearson Chi-Square value (24,958) is superior to the Chi-Square value reflected by Chi Square Distribution Table for Degrees of Freedom (21.026), in the context of 12 degrees of freedom (Table 5), the first hypothesis (H1) is supported, so we can state that the *client experience legacy* positively moderates *leadership unipersonal development plan* and enhances *value delivery*.

Table 6. Symmetric Measures - H1 test

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	,508	,074	5,211	,000
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	,506	,079	5,179	,000
N of Valid Cases		80			

Pearson correlation coefficient (0,508) indicates a positive association between the variables, while Spearman's correlation (0,506) proves that the relationship between these variables is monotonic (Table 6).

The second hypothesis advances the moderating effects of leadership branding awareness on organizational reputation within target market and enhances value delivery.

Table 7. Chi-Square Tests - H2 test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23,018	12	,028
Likelihood Ratio	24,935	12	,015
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,563	1	,002
N of Valid Cases	80		

In the case of H2, the value associated with the Asymptotic significance (0,028) is inferior to the level of significance (0,05), while the Pearson Chi-Square value (23,018) is superior to the Chi-Square value reflected by Chi Square Distribution Table for Degrees of Freedom (21.026), in the context of 12 degrees of freedom (Table 7). Thus, the second hypothesis (H2) is also supported, proving the *leadership branding awareness* positively moderates *organizational reputation* within target market and enhances *value delivery*.

Table 8. Symmetric Measures - H2 test

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error	Approx. T	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	,348	,103	3,278	,002
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	,327	,107	3,051	,003
N of Valid Cases		80			

Second hypothesis validation is reinforced by the proof of a positive association between the variables (Pearson correlation coefficient (0,348)) and a monotonic relationship (Spearman's correlation (0,327)) – as it can be seen in Table 8.

The reported results call for checking against the original leadership brand assessment grid (Ulrich and Smallwood, 2007), applied in similar contexts, which this study is building upon to complementarily discovering new insights of leadership branding capability.

Conclusions

In our quest to explore the precursors of value delivery on organizational capabilities through leadership branding awareness, we examined a sample of 80 respondents (Romanian IT managers), with vast experience in this dynamic and

complex domain. The results that we gathered clearly show that leadership branding awareness is the new black in IT development.

Findings of this study reveal the fact that for the majority of the managers working in IT, the activity of monitoring company image on the targeted market is a really important component in the process of consolidating organizational identity. Respondents confirmed our expectations that in their companies' mission, a strategic place is being held by leadership branding who is being operationalized throughout the entire organization and beyond its borders.

The main focus for IT managers regarding leadership branding is closing the gap between leaders from different generations, which is correlated with integrating clients' perspective in developing new knowledge for organizational leaders. A very important step in this process is integrating client interaction into leadership experiential knowledge acquisition and also trying to align organizational vision to clients' point of view.

The majority of respondents states that they encourage organizational leaders to incorporate their personal and relevant experiences into knowledge for their clients, in order to use that acquired branding as leverage to gain added value for the company.

The authors commit to examining the context of IT executive's enacted leadership behavior, by capturing direct knowledge about the moderating role of leadership branding awareness upon the organizational validity of value delivery.

The present study has several limitations. First of all, it's just a pilot survey, with a limited number of respondents, grouped in a convenience sample. Another limitation regards the impossibility to perform advanced statistics analyses due to the small sample.

Further research will figure out how leadership branding capability features a context-specific balanced organizational process artefact of leveraging leadership brand' maturity spectrum from awareness – moderated to consolidated of assessing organizational capability on behalf of value delivering criteria.

References

- Ahmad, F.S., Omar, R., Rasid, S.Z.A., & Amin, M. (2012). Leadership Branding for Sustainable Customer Engagement. *International Journal of Social and Human Sciences*, 6(2), 217-224.
- Aydon Simmons, J. (2009). "Both sides now": aligning external and internal branding for a socially responsible era. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 27(5), 681-697.
- Bagozzi, R.P., Youjae, Y., & Phillips, L. W. (1991). Assessing construct validity in organizational research. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36(3), 421-458.
- Balmer, J.M., & Gray, E.R. (2003). Corporate brands: what are they? What of them?. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37(7-8), 972-997.

- Bhatnagar, J. (2008). Managing capabilities for talent engagement and pipeline development. *Industrial and commercial training*, 40(1), 19-28.
- Burmann, C., & Zeplin, S. (2005). Building brand commitment: A behavioural approach to internal brand management. *Journal of Brand Management*, 12(4), 279-300.
- Foster, C., Punjaisri, K., & Cheng, R. (2010). Exploring the relationship between corporate, internal and employer branding. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 19(6), 401-409.
- Intagliata, J., Ulrich, D., & Smallwood, N. (2000). Leveraging leadership competencies to produce leadership brand: Creating distinctiveness by focusing on strategy and results. *People and Strategy*, 23(3), 12-23.
- Martin, M.G., & Burke, R.J. (Eds.). (2012). *Corporate Reputation: Managing Opportunities and Threats*. Gower Publishing.
- Moore, M. L. (2008). Leadership brand: Developing customer-focused leaders to drive performance and build lasting value. *People & Strategy*, 31(2), 53-54.
- Morhart, F.M., Herzog, W., & Tomczak, T. (2009). Brand-specific leadership: Turning employees into brand champions. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(5), 122-142.
- Mosley, R.W. (2007). Customer experience, organisational culture and the employer brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 15(2), 123-134.
- O'Leary-Kelly, S.W., & Vokurka, R. J. (1998). The empirical assessment of construct validity. *Journal of Operations Management*, 16(4), 387-405.
- Petriglieri, J., & Petriglieri, G. (2017). The talent curse why high potentials struggle and how they can grow through it. *Harvard Business Review*, 95(3), 88-94.
- Petriglieri, J. (2017). *How to Survive Being Labeled a Star*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/ideacast/2017/05/how-to-survive-being-labeled-a-star.html>.
- Ulrich, D., & Smallwood, N. (2007). Building a leadership brand. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(7-8), 92.