

**NURSING RECRUITMENT: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED
EMPLOYER IMAGE AND NURSING EMPLOYEES' RECOMMENDATIONS**

Greet Van Hoyer, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Personnel Management,
Work and Organizational Psychology, Ghent University.

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Correspondence to Greet Van Hoyer, Department of Personnel Management, Work and
Organizational Psychology, Ghent University, Henri Dunantlaan 2, 9000 Ghent, Belgium.

Phone: +32/9/264.91.39, Fax: +32/9/264.64.94, E-mail: greet.vanhoye@ugent.be

ABSTRACT

Aim

This paper is a report of a study examining the relationship between nursing employees' perceptions of instrumental and symbolic dimensions of employer image on the one hand, and their intentions to recommend their organization as an employer and their willingness to testify in their organization's recruitment materials on the other.

Background

Previous research suggests that word-of-mouth recommendations by current nursing employees can enhance healthcare organizations' attractiveness as an employer for potential applicants. However, it is not known what motivates employees to provide positive word-of-mouth comments and to endorse their employer in recruitment testimonials.

Method

The instrumental-symbolic framework was applied to identify relevant dimensions of perceived employer image that might relate to employee recommendations. A questionnaire was administered in 2006 to 106 nurses and nursing aides from four non-profit nursing homes in Belgium. The response rate was 55%.

Results

Overall, nursing employees were more willing to recommend their nursing home to others than to testify in recruitment materials. Both instrumental and symbolic employer image dimensions predicted nursing employees' recommendation intentions. Conversely, willingness to testify was only predicted by symbolic image dimensions. Specifically, the more nursing employees perceived that their nursing home offers task diversity, offers the possibility to help people, and is prestigious, the more they intended to recommend their organization to others. The more they perceived their nursing home as competent, the higher

were their recommendation intentions and their willingness to testify in recruitment communication.

Conclusion

To increase nursing employees' willingness to recommend their employer to potential applicants, organizations should enhance their perceived employer image.

Keywords

Nursing, nursing homes, recruitment, employer image, word-of-mouth recommendations, testimonial, questionnaire survey, instrumental-symbolic framework

SUMMARY

What is already known about this topic

- Many countries are experiencing shortages of qualified nursing staff, so that healthcare organizations are forced to intensify their recruitment efforts.
- Word-of-mouth recommendations by current employees increase an organization's attractiveness for potential applicants and thus contribute to effective recruitment.
- The instrumental-symbolic framework can be used to measure an organization's perceived image as an employer, which relates to applicant attraction and employee identification.

What this paper adds

- A positive employer image increases nursing employees' willingness to recommend their employer to others and to testify in their employer's recruitment communications.
- Nursing employees are more willing to endorse nursing homes perceived as competent and prestigious, and as offering task diversity and the opportunity to help people.
- A measure, based on the instrumental-symbolic framework, assessing a nursing home's perceived image as an employer.

INTRODUCTION

In today's economic environment, human capital is one of the most valuable assets an organization can have and recruitment serves the important function of bringing the necessary talent into the organization (Barber 1998). As recruitment influences the quantity and quality of the applicant pool, it has implications for all other human resources practices, such as the utility of selection (see Murphy 1986). Demographic trends such as a smaller supply of younger workers and retirements among baby boomers indicate that recruitment will be even more important in the future (Saks 2005).

This is especially true for the healthcare industry, as the growing demand for healthcare services contrasts sharply with the diminishing supply of healthcare professionals such as nurses and nursing aides (Brodie et al. 2005, Ross et al. 2005, Alameddine et al. 2006). In fact, many countries are experiencing shortages of qualified nursing staff; for example, in the United States of America, a 6% nursing shortage in 2000 is projected to expand to 12% by 2010 and even to 20% by 2020 (Crow & Hartman 2005). In Belgium, where the study reported in this paper was conducted, nurse and nursing aide vacancies are categorized as "hard to fill" by the Public Employment Service, indicating that in 2006 on average it took longer than 48 days to fill nursing vacancies, while more than 15% of these vacancies were never filled at all (Public Employment Service 2007).

In response to these worldwide nursing shortages, healthcare organizations are increasing their recruitment efforts to attract their future workforce (Wells & McElwee 2000, Culley & Genders 2003, Andrews et al. 2005, Stordeur et al. 2007). Previous research on nursing recruitment suggests that the word-of-mouth behaviour of nursing employees (Van Hoye & Lievens 2007a) and the employer image of healthcare organizations (Arnold et al. 2003) might play a key role in explaining recruitment success.

To enhance organizational attractiveness, recruitment typically involves a particular message about the organization as an employer that is communicated to a target group of potential applicants through a specific channel or source (Barber 1998). Although job seekers receive employment information through all sorts of recruitment sources such as advertising or websites, word-of-mouth seems to have a particularly beneficial impact on organizational attraction (Zottoli & Wanous 2000, Collins & Stevens 2002, Van Hove & Lievens 2007b). Hence, organizations have been advised to stimulate their employees' word-of-mouth recommendations (Collins & Han 2004, Van Hove & Lievens 2005). However, previous research has left organizations with few clues about how to achieve this, as the focus has been on the consequences of employees' word-of-mouth comments, largely ignoring their antecedents (Shinnar et al. 2004). Therefore, we do not yet know what motivates employees to provide positive word-of-mouth comments and to endorse their employers in recruitment testimonials.

Previous research has demonstrated that perceived employer image relates to an organization's attractiveness as an employer and to employees' level of identification with their employer (Arnold et al. 2003, Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2007).

BACKGROUND

Word-of-mouth comments as a recruitment source

Word-of-mouth comments as a recruitment source can be defined as an interpersonal communication, independent of the organization's recruitment activities, about an organization as an employer or about specific jobs (Cable et al. 2000, Van Hove & Lievens 2005). Examples include conversations with friends and advice from independent experts. As a company-independent recruitment source, organizations cannot directly control word-of-mouth comments, but can only try to influence them indirectly through its antecedents (Cable & Turban 2001). In contrast, company-dependent sources such as recruitment advertising can

be directly controlled by organizations to communicate a positive message to potential applicants.

Employee referrals represent a particular type of word-of-mouth comment (Shinnar et al. 2004). Whereas everyone can be a source of word-of-mouth information, employee referrals are restricted to information provided by an employee of the recruiting organization (Zottoli & Wanous 2000). Moreover, employee referrals typically contain mainly positive information as the organization is recommended to potential applicants. Conversely, other types of word-of-mouth comment can contain positive as well as negative information (Herr et al. 1991, Cable & Turban 2001).

Only a few researchers have examined the effects of word-of-mouth comments on potential applicants' attraction to organizations as an employer. Collins and Stevens (2002) observed a strong effect of these comments on application intentions and decisions. Van Hove and Lievens (2007b) demonstrated that negative word-of-mouth comments had an even larger impact on organizational attractiveness than positive word-of-mouth comments. Furthermore, Van Hove and Lievens (2005) found that such positive comments enhanced potential applicants' perceptions of organizational attractiveness after being exposed to negative publicity. From an organizational perspective, Collins and Han (2004) demonstrated that employee endorsements were positively associated with applicant quantity and applicant quality. Finally, with respect to nursing recruitment, Van Hove and Lievens (2007a) found that nurses were more attracted to a hospital as a potential employer when they were exposed to word-of-mouth comments than when they visited the hospital's recruitment website. Together, these findings suggest that employees' word-of-mouth recommendations have a strong impact on potential applicants' attraction to organizations. These studies further show that this effect of word-of-mouth comments on organizational attraction can mainly be explained by its credibility as a company-independent source (Van Hove & Lievens 2005,

2007a, 2007b). Compared to company-dependent sources such as recruitment advertising, word-of-mouth comments are perceived as providing more credible information because they do not have the explicit purpose to promote the organization (Cable & Turban 2001).

Considerably more studies have examined the effects of recruitment sources on post-hire outcomes (Zottoli & Wanous 2000). The main finding has been that employees recruited through informal sources such as employee referrals are more satisfied, perform better, and are less likely to quit than employees recruited through formal sources such as newspaper advertisements and employment agencies (Breaugh & Starke 2000, Zottoli & Wanous 2000, Saks 2005). A number of studies suggest that these positive effects of informal recruitment sources can be explained by the realistic information they provide (Williams et al. 1993, Saks 1994, Werbel & Landau 1996, Griffeth et al. 1997, Zottoli & Wanous 2000, Moser 2005). Employee referrals provide more accurate and specific information about what the job entails than more formal sources (see Ullman 1966). Not only does the more realistic information allow applicants to apply for jobs that better fit their interests and skills, but it also tempers their expectations and avoids disappointment upon hiring (Breaugh & Starke 2000).

On the basis of these findings, organizations have been advised to stimulate their employees' word-of-mouth recommendations (e.g., Collins & Stevens 2002) and even to imitate positive word-of-mouth comments by having employees testify about their work experiences in recruitment advertisements and websites (e.g., Van Hove & Lievens 2005). However, given the lack of previous research on the antecedents of word-of-mouth comments (Shinnar et al. 2004), it is not clear how healthcare organizations can influence these employee recommendations. Therefore, in the present study it was investigated whether nursing employees' perceptions of their organization's image as an employer can help to explain their recommendation intentions and their willingness to testify in their employer's recruitment communication.

Perceived employer image

An organization's perceived image as an employer is defined as what people believe is distinctive, central, and enduring about the organization as an employer (Dutton et al. 1994, Arnold et al. 2003). Various organizational images exist, as different populations (e.g. applicants, employees, shareholders) are likely to have a different view on what constitutes the organization (Dukerich et al. 2002). Recently, Lievens et al. (2007) introduced the instrumental-symbolic framework as a common framework for studying perceived employer image in various populations. According to this framework, organizational images consist of both instrumental and symbolic dimensions. The notion that people associate both instrumental functions and symbolic meanings with objects is in line with a long tradition in social psychology (see Katz 1960, Shavitt 1990). Instrumental image dimensions describe the organization in terms of objective, concrete, and factual attributes that an organization either has or does not have (Lievens & Highhouse 2003). Examples are pay, advancement opportunities, and working with customers. However, organizational images are also determined by the symbolic meanings that people associate with the organization (Lievens & Highhouse 2003). These symbolic image dimensions describe the organization in terms of subjective, abstract, and intangible traits. In other words, symbolic meanings accrue from how people perceive the organization and make inferences about it rather than what they think an organization actually involves (Lievens et al. 2007). Sincerity, competence, and prestige are examples of symbolic image dimensions.

Previous researchers have applied the instrumental-symbolic framework to measure the employer image perceived by potential applicants, actual applicants, and current employees (Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2005, Lievens et al. 2007). The findings of these studies can be summarized as follows. First, instrumental and symbolic image dimensions are associated with potential and actual applicants' attraction to the

organization as an employer and with employees' identification with the organization.

Second, symbolic meanings account for incremental variance over and above instrumental dimensions in predicting these outcomes. Third, organizations are better differentiated from each other on the basis of symbolic dimensions than on the basis of instrumental attributes.

In line with social identity theory, previous research has demonstrated that employees' perceptions of employer image largely determine their level of identification with the organization (Dutton et al. 1994, Dukerich et al. 2002, Lievens et al. 2007). The more employees define themselves in terms of organizational membership, the more their attitudes and behaviour are governed by this membership (van Dick 2004). Employees who identify with the organization can enhance their self-concepts by helping to enhance the organization (van Dick et al. 2005). Therefore, perceived employer image should also be related to employee recommendations, which allow employees to enhance their organization's recruitment efforts (Dutton & Dukerich 1991). In support of these theoretical assumptions, Dukerich et al. (2002) found that physicians' perceptions of their healthcare organization's image were positively associated with their tendency to engage in cooperative and organizational citizenship behaviours (e.g., speak well of their healthcare system to other physicians and to patients). Given that employees' word-of-mouth comments closely relate to these organizational citizenship behaviours (Podsakoff et al. 2000), perceived employer image is also expected to predict employee endorsements of their organization as an employer.

THE STUDY

Aim

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between nursing employees' perceptions of instrumental and symbolic dimensions of employer image on the one hand and

their intentions to recommend their organization as an employer and their willingness to testify in their organization's recruitment materials on the other.

Design

The instrumental-symbolic framework was used as the theoretical basis of the study. Independent variables (perceived instrumental and symbolic employer image dimensions), dependent variables (recommendation intentions and willingness to testify), and control variables were measured through a quantitative survey.

Participants

The nursing staff of four Belgian non-profit nursing homes was asked to participate in this study. A research assistant visited every department of each nursing home in 2006 to introduce the study and distribute the questionnaires. Of the 205 distributed questionnaires, 112 were returned, yielding a response rate of 55%. Six cases were removed from further analyses because of a large number of missing data. Of the 106 remaining participants, 60% were nurses and 40% were nursing aides. As is typical for this population, the majority of the sample (92%) was female. The nursing employees ranged in age from 19 to 61 years ($M = 40.82$, $SD = 10.32$). Their average tenure with the nursing home was 13 years ($SD = 10.76$), varying between 1 and 35 years.

Measures

Items were answered on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*. All items are shown in Table 1.

Perceived employer image.

Measures of employer image from previous research (Aaker 1997, Dukerich et al. 2002, Arnold et al. 2003, Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2005, Lievens et al. 2007) were adapted for this study on the basis of focus groups with 10 nursing employees, representing all four participating nursing homes. Participants were asked a variety of

questions designed to elicit their perceptions of what is distinctive, central, and enduring about their organization, such as “Why did you choose to work for the nursing home?” and “How is the nursing home different from other nursing homes?” (cf. Dukerich et al. 2002). Participants' answers were sorted into categories representing instrumental and symbolic employer image dimensions used in previous research. If answers could not be placed in these existing categories, a new category was created.

Five *instrumental* image dimensions emerged: teamwork, advancement, pay, task diversity, and helping people. With the exception of helping people, which is typical for the healthcare industry, all of these dimensions have already been applied in previous research on the instrumental employer image of financial and military organizations (Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2005, Lievens et al. 2007). All scales consisted of three items, except for pay that was measured by two items. Table 2 shows that the internal consistency reliabilities of the scales were satisfactory.

Similarly, four *symbolic* image dimensions were identified: sincerity, innovativeness, competence, and prestige. These dimensions are based on Aaker's (1997) taxonomy of symbolic brand traits and have already been applied in previous research on the symbolic employer image of financial and military organizations (Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2005, Lievens et al. 2007). All scales consisted of three items and had satisfactory internal consistency reliabilities (see Table 2).

Dependent variables.

On the basis of previous research (Smither et al. 1993, Bauer et al. 2001), three items were developed for measuring nursing employees' *recommendation intentions*, which was defined as the extent to which they intended to recommend their nursing home as an employer to others. Three items adapted from Posthuma and Campion (2005) were used to measure nursing employees' *willingness to testify*, which was defined as the extent to which

they would be willing to testify about their work in recruitment materials if their nursing home requested them to do so. Table 2 shows that the internal consistency reliabilities of both scales were satisfactory.

Control variables.

Participants were asked to give their gender, age, tenure (years of employment with their nursing home), and occupation.

Ethical considerations

The ethics committee of the university in which the study was based stipulates that, for anonymous survey research without interventions, review by the committee is only necessary if the university's ethics guidelines cannot be followed or if there is doubt about the ethical acceptability of the study. Given that these guidelines were adhered to in the current study, it was not submitted to the ethics committee.

Specifically, the study was approved by management and staff representatives of the nursing homes. A research assistant visited all departments to explain the study objectives and to answer any questions. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. All participants signed a consent form allowing their responses to be used for research purposes. To guarantee anonymity, consent forms and questionnaires were collected in two separate boxes.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 15.0 for Windows. Means, standard deviations, and Pearson bivariate correlations of all variables were calculated as descriptive statistics. To examine the relationship between perceived employer image dimensions and the dependent variables, two multiple regression analyses were conducted.

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among all variables are presented in Table 2. Overall, nursing employees were more willing to recommend their nursing home as

an employer to others than to testify in recruitment materials, $t(105) = 6.18, p \leq .01$. In reply to a follow-up question about how they would prefer to testify about their work experiences, 41% indicated that they would rather not testify, 40% would testify anonymously, and 19% would testify with their name and picture next to their testimony. All instrumental and symbolic dimensions of perceived employer image were positively associated with nursing employees' recommendation intentions. Three out of five instrumental image dimensions (i.e., advancement, pay, and task diversity) and all symbolic image dimensions were positively related to nursing employees' willingness to testify in their nursing home's recruitment materials. The longer nursing employees were employed with their nursing home, the less they intended to recommend their employer to others.

Next, two multiple regression analyses were conducted, with recommendation intentions and willingness to testify as respective dependent variables. Given the relatively small sample size, in each analysis only the control and independent variables that were statistically significantly correlated with the dependent variable were entered as predictors. All the predictors were entered simultaneously.

As shown in Table 3, tenure was no longer a statistically significant predictor of nursing employees' recommendation intentions, when the employer image dimensions were taken into account. With respect to the instrumental employer image, the more nursing employees perceived that their nursing home offers task diversity, the more they intended to recommend their nursing home as an employer to others ($\beta = .24, p \leq .05$). Furthermore, helping people was marginally statistically significant as a positive predictor of recommendation intentions ($\beta = .16, p \leq .10$). With regard to the symbolic employer image, competence ($\beta = .23, p \leq .05$) and prestige ($\beta = .24, p \leq .05$) emerged as positive predictors. Thus, the more nursing employees perceived their nursing home as competent and prestigious, the more they intended to recommend their nursing home as an employer to

others. Together, the model explained 49% of the variance in nursing employees' recommendation intentions, $F(10, 95) = 10.92, p \leq .01$.

Table 4 shows that none of the instrumental image dimensions statistically significantly predicted nursing employees' willingness to testify in their nursing home's recruitment materials. However, the more nursing employees perceived their nursing home as competent, the more they were willing to testify about their work experiences ($\beta = .27, p \leq .05$). Together, the model explained 13% of the variance in nursing employees' willingness to testify, $F(7, 98) = 3.30, p \leq .01$.

DISCUSSION

The results suggest that a positively-perceived employer image increases nursing employees' willingness to recommend their employer to others and to testify in their employer's recruitment materials. This is in line with previous research indicating that employees' perceptions of their healthcare organization's image are related to organizational citizenship behaviours (Dukerich et al. 2002). According to Dutton et al. (1994), the more attractive the organization's perceived image is, the more employees identify with the organization and the more organizational citizenship behaviours they exhibit. The current study suggests that this can be generalized to employee endorsements as a particular kind of organizational citizenship behaviour (Podsakoff et al. 2000). Moreover, the finding that perceived employer image is associated with employees' willingness to participate in their organization's recruitment supports the notion that organizational images represent a psychological and social reality that may have important consequences for organizations (Dutton & Dukerich 1991).

Furthermore, the positive relationship between employer image and employee endorsements corroborates previous recruitment research demonstrating that a positive employer image increases potential and actual applicants' attraction to organizations

(Gatewood et al. 1993, Highhouse et al. 1999, Arnold et al. 2003, Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2005, Lievens et al. 2007). Together, these findings imply that recruiting healthcare organizations should not only focus on creating positive employer image perceptions in applicant populations, but should also foster a favourable perceived employer image among current employees. This is in line with recent models of corporate image management that stress the importance for organizations to maintain a generally consistent image among relevant stakeholder groups (Balmer & Greyser 2002, Gray & Balmer 1998).

Next, in terms of the instrumental-symbolic framework, both instrumental (i.e., task diversity and, to a lesser extent, helping people) and symbolic (i.e., competence and prestige) employer image dimensions predicted nursing employees' intentions to recommend their nursing home as an employer. This attests to the value of applying the instrumental-symbolic framework as a common framework for studying organizational images in various populations (Lievens et al. 2007). These findings extend previous research that found a relationship between instrumental and symbolic image dimensions and the organization's attractiveness as an employer for potential and actual applicants (Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2005, Lievens et al. 2007).

Conversely, nursing employees' willingness to testify about their work experiences in their employer's recruitment materials was only predicted by symbolic employer image dimensions (i.e., competence). This might be explained by a difference between the two kinds of employee endorsements. It seems plausible that publicly endorsing one's employer in recruitment advertising represents a higher degree of organizational citizenship behaviour and is therefore more closely related to organizational identification than informally recommending the organization to others (Dukerich et al. 2002). This is also indicated by the finding that overall nursing employees were less willing to testify in recruitment materials than to recommend their employer. Along these lines, Lievens et al. (2007) also found that

the symbolic image dimension competence was the only significant predictor of military employees' identification with the army. Together, these findings might indicate that organizational identification relates more to the pride and respect an employee feels for being a member of the organization than to material exchange (van Dick 2004). They also demonstrate the legitimacy of recent calls to broaden more traditional conceptualizations of organizational image to include symbolic trait inferences (Lievens & Highhouse 2003).

In terms of directions for future research, more antecedents of employee endorsements should be investigated. In this respect, research on organizational citizenship behaviour has identified four major categories of antecedents: employee characteristics (e.g., job satisfaction), task characteristics (e.g., task feedback), organizational characteristics (e.g., perceived organizational support), and leadership (e.g., transformational leadership behaviours) (Podsakoff et al 2000). Future researchers should examine if these antecedents generalize to employee endorsements as a particular kind of organizational citizenship behaviour (LePine et al. 2002). Whereas the antecedents of organizational citizenship behaviour are likely to increase employees' intrinsic motivation to spread positive word-of-mouth comments, some healthcare organizations provide monetary incentives to enhance employees' extrinsic motivation to endorse their employer (Shinnar et al. 2004). Therefore, a particularly interesting avenue for further research would be to evaluate the effectiveness of these employee referral programmes and to compare them to other interventions aimed at increasing employees' intrinsic motivation.

Important practical implications follow from this study. Unlike advertising, word-of-mouth comments are a company-independent recruitment source that cannot be controlled directly by the organization (Cable & Turban 2001). Therefore, healthcare organizations wanting to stimulate employees' positive word-of-mouth comments have to do this indirectly through influencing their antecedents. The findings of the current study suggest that

enhancing nursing employees' perceptions of employer image is an effective means to increase their willingness to recommend their organization as an employer and to testify in their employer's recruitment communications. Specifically, improving nursing employees' perceptions of task diversity, the opportunity to help people, and prestige seems to stimulate positive word-of-mouth comments, whereas enhancing the perceived competence of the organization is likely to encourage both types of employee endorsements. Given the current recruitment crisis in the healthcare industry (Wells & McElwee 2000) and the positive consequences of using word-of-mouth comments as a recruitment source (Zottoli & Wanous 2000), the benefits of such efforts are potentially large. While these specific findings might generalize to nursing homes and other organizations in the healthcare industry, organizations in other industries may need to identify the critical instrumental and symbolic dimensions of their own employer image. To this end, a procedure similar to the one followed in this study could be adopted. Whereas certain image dimensions (e.g., competence, cf. Lievens & Highhouse 2003, Lievens et al. 2007) are likely to be of importance across diverse settings, others might be more context-specific (e.g., helping people). Lastly, to manage their image as an employer in various populations optimally, organizations need to measure their initial perceived employer image and have to evaluate if their interventions have the desired effects on image perceptions. To carry out these image audits, healthcare organizations could use or adapt the measure developed in the current study on the basis of the instrumental-symbolic framework (see Table 1).

Study limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, self-reports gathered by a single survey were used. Therefore, common method variance may affect the results. However, Mael and Ashforth (1995) asserted that self-reports represent an adequate approach for organizational image research because the focus is on individuals' *perceptions* of reality. In addition, the

different results across the image dimensions and dependent variables show that more is happening here than just common method variance.

Second, besides the control variables, no other possible antecedents of employees' word-of-mouth comments were investigated, such as procedural justice perceptions (Posthuma & Campion 2005). Therefore, the results do not allow us to conclude if perceived employer image explains employee endorsements beyond other possibly relevant factors.

Third, the relatively small sample size reduces the power of the analyses conducted. Therefore, only variables that were statistically significantly correlated with the dependent variables were entered as predictors in the regression analyses. Nonetheless, the sample size of 106 participants approaches the median sample size of personnel selection studies (113) reported by Salgado (1998) and allowed the detection of at least some statistically significant relationships.

A last limitation relates to the generalizability of the results. Nurses and nursing aides in Belgian non-profit nursing homes participated in the study. It might be that this specific context affected some of the observed relationships. Therefore, future researchers should examine the generalizability of these findings in other settings, populations, and countries. Although the conclusions with respect to instrumental and symbolic employer image are likely to generalize to other contexts, the specific image dimensions predicting employees' word-of-mouth comments might differ.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that a positive employer image can increase nursing employees' willingness to recommend their employer to potential applicants and to testify in their employer's recruitment communication. Hence, healthcare organizations should enhance their perceived employer image to stimulate nursing employees' willingness to actively participate in their organization's recruitment efforts.

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Table 1

Overview of Study Measures

<i>Instrumental image dimensions</i>	
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursing home offers the possibility to work together with different people. • The nursing home offers the possibility to feel part of a group and enjoy a group atmosphere.
Advancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursing home offers the possibility to work in team. • The nursing home offers prospects for promotion. • The nursing home offers opportunities for advancement.
Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursing home offers the possibility to build a career. • The nursing home offers the possibility to make a lot of money. • In general, the wages in the nursing home are high.
Task diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursing home offers the possibility to choose from a diversity of jobs. • Working in the nursing home offers a lot of variety. • The nursing home offers a wide range of jobs.
Helping people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursing home offers the possibility to help people in need. • The nursing home offers the possibility to take care of others. • The nursing home offers the possibility to make myself useful for other people.
<i>Symbolic image dimensions</i>	
Sincerity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I perceive the nursing home as honest. • I perceive the nursing home as sincere.
Innovativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I perceive the nursing home as down-to-earth. • I perceive the nursing home as trendy. • I perceive the nursing home as up-to-date.
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I perceive the nursing home as contemporary. • I perceive the nursing home as corporate. • I perceive the nursing home as successful.
Prestige	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I perceive the nursing home as a leader. • I perceive the nursing home as well respected. • I perceive the nursing home as having high status. • I perceive the nursing home as highly regarded.
<i>Dependent variables</i>	
Recommendation intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would recommend the nursing home as an employer to others. • On the basis of my experiences with the nursing home, I would encourage others to apply here.
Willingness to testify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would recommend the nursing home to a friend looking for a job. • At the request of the nursing home, I would testify about my work in a newspaper article. • At the request of the nursing home, I would testify about my work in a recruitment advertisement in the newspaper. • At the request of the nursing home, I would testify about my work on a recruitment website.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Reliabilities, and Correlations of Study Variables (N = 106)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Control variables																	
1. Gender ^a	.92	.28	-														
2. Age	40.82	10.31	.03	-													
3. Tenure	12.72	10.76	.13	.59	-												
4. Occupation ^b	.60	.49	-.18	.22	.23	-											
Instrumental image dimensions																	
5. Teamwork	4.28	.73	.07	-.08	-.19	-.01	(.91)										
6. Advancement	2.85	.94	.06	-.09	-.25	-.05	.33	(.93)									
7. Pay	2.67	.83	.02	-.16	-.13	-.02	.21	.32	(.81)								
8. Task diversity	3.04	.81	.07	-.26	-.34	-.18	.44	.51	.39	(.70)							
9. Helping people	4.24	.75	-.01	-.11	-.08	-.05	.47	.05	.30	.23	(.92)						
Symbolic image dimensions																	
10. Sincerity	3.57	.82	-.01	-.18	-.16	-.22	.16	.19	.22	.32	.29	(.80)					
11. Innovativeness	3.29	.91	-.002	-.03	-.11	-.14	.37	.21	.20	.31	.39	.43	(.83)				
12. Competence	3.55	.77	.04	-.26	-.27	-.15	.29	.37	.33	.54	.21	.51	.54	(.83)			
13. Prestige	3.22	.79	.07	-.16	-.27	-.26	.34	.43	.40	.66	.30	.54	.36	.50	(.81)		
Dependent variables																	
14. Recommendation intentions	3.56	.95	.001	-.13	-.31	-.12	.33	.41	.44	.62	.34	.34	.32	.54	.60	(.96)	
15. Willingness to testify	2.91	1.09	-.10	.02	-.12	-.04	.15	.27	.19	.22	.17	.30	.26	.39	.29	.45	(.96)

Note. Alpha reliabilities are shown in parentheses along the diagonal.

^a0 = male, 1 = female. ^b0 = nursing aide, 1 = nurse.

Correlations in italics are statistically significant at $p \leq .05$, **correlations in bold** are statistically significant at $p \leq .01$.

Table 3

Multiple Regression of Recommendation Intentions on Perceived Employer Image (N = 106)

Variable	β	t	p
Control variable			
Tenure	-.08	-1.05	.30
Instrumental image dimensions			
Teamwork	-.04	-.40	.69
Advancement	.07	.80	.43
Pay	.13	1.61	.11
Task diversity	.24	2.14	.04
Helping people	.16	1.86	.07
Symbolic image dimensions			
Sincerity	-.06	-.70	.49
Innovativeness	-.04	-.40	.70
Competence	.23	2.28	.03
Prestige	.24	2.20	.03

Note. $R^2 = .54$ and adjusted $R^2 = .49$.

Table 4

Multiple Regression of Willingness to Testify on Perceived Employer Image (N = 106)

Variable	β	t	p
Instrumental image dimensions			
Advancement	.16	1.45	.15
Pay	.04	.36	.72
Task diversity	-.12	-.86	.39
Symbolic image dimensions			
Sincerity	.10	.83	.41
Innovativeness	.03	.28	.78
Competence	.27	2.09	.04
Prestige	.09	.63	.53

Note. $R^2 = .19$ and adjusted $R^2 = .13$.