



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

To what extent does Employer Branding affect Employer Attraction in recruitment?

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Final work presented to Universidade Católica Portuguesa in order to obtain the Master's
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Abstract

Employer Branding has been studied and applied in companies at least for the last two decades, being an important term for companies and recruitment teams. This study will address the extent of Employer Branding and how influences the Employer Attraction in recruitment. A multifaceted description of the terms and its implications is proposed, including the various components of Employer Branding like Employer Branding Model, Employer Attraction, Organizational Identity, Image, Culture and Reputation, Employee Loyalty and Productivity and will present how these components related to Employer Branding affect in the Recruitment processes, including the respective components, such as Online Presence, E-recruitment and Techniques triggering to the Relationship between Employer Branding, Attraction and Recruitment.

It is argued that Employer Branding is something Recruitment relies on to make a good hire and companies benefit from. The objective is to discuss to what extent Employer Branding affect Employer Attraction in Recruitment so organizations that make a strategic Employer Branding and communicate clearly, with authenticity and transparency are more efficient, effective and innovative.

The method used is meta-analysis and the results show that a well-developed Employer Branding strategy can enhance an organization's appeal to potential candidates by aligning brand identity with employee expectations. Focusing on the online presence and tailored recruitment approaches amplify employer attractiveness and foster the engagement and loyalty from candidates towards the job and the company. The thesis provides insights of how Employer Branding contribute to hire fitted employees who will help the organizations thrive.

Keywords: “Employer Branding”, “Employer Attraction”, “Organization Attractiveness”, “Recruitment”.

Resumo

O Employer Branding (Marca Empregadora) tem sido estudado e aplicado nas empresas pelo menos nas últimas duas décadas, sendo um termo importante para empresas e equipas de recrutamento. Este estudo abordará a extensão da Marca Empregadora e como influencia a Atração do Empregador no recrutamento. É proposta uma descrição multifacetada dos termos e das suas implicações, incluindo as várias componentes da Marca Empregadora como o Modelo de Marca Empregadora, a Atração pelo Empregador, a Identidade Organizacional, a Imagem, a Cultura e a Reputação, a Lealdade e a Produtividade dos Colaboradores e apresentará como estas componentes relacionadas com o Marca Empregadora afetam nos processos de Recrutamento, incluindo as respetivas componentes, tais como a Presença Online, E-recrutamento e Técnicas de desencadeamento da Relação entre Employer Branding, Atração e Recrutamento.

Argumenta-se que a Marca Empregadora é algo em que o Recrutamento se baseia para fazer uma boa contratação e as empresas se beneficiam. O objetivo é discutir em que medida a Marca Empregadora afeta a Atração do Empregador no Recrutamento para que as organizações que usam da Marca Empregadora de forma estratégica e comunicam de forma clara, com autenticidade e transparência sejam mais eficientes, eficazes e inovadoras.

O método utilizado é a meta-análise e os resultados mostram que uma estratégia de Marca Empregadora bem desenvolvida pode aumentar o apelo de uma organização para potenciais candidatos, alinhando a identidade da marca com as expectativas dos colaboradores. O foco na presença online e nas abordagens de recrutamento personalizadas amplificam a atratividade do empregador e promovem o envolvimento e a lealdade dos candidatos para com o emprego e a empresa. A tese fornece informações de como a Marca

Empregadora contribui para contratar funcionários adequados que ajudarão as organizações a se empenharem e prosperar.

Palavras-chave: "Marca Empregadora", "Atração do Empregador",
"Atratividade da Organização", "Recrutamento".

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Introduction

The competitive and complex nature of the job market intensified by technological growth and global events, namely, the COVID-19 pandemic, has demanded an adaptation from companies regarding their strategies for attracting professionals. In a context where employees, particularly those with high talent, actively explore new opportunities and choose their employers (Almeida, 2009), traditional practices of recruitment are no longer suitable. Employer branding, as highlighted by Gilliver (2009), identifies an organization in the marketplace and makes it unique. The term is often used to describe how organizations promote a clear view of what makes the firm different and desirable as an employer, within and outside the company, creating desire and maintaining loyalty (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). For this reason, exploring Employer Branding as a tool to attract candidates to work in an organization and its deep impact on organizational performance has accumulated significant research attention over time, being considered as a vital strategy for organizations that aspire to become employers of choice, attracting the top talent and more aligned employees to the company.

Employer branding emerges as a long-term strategy to manage the perceptions of employees and stakeholders, targeting two specific audiences for any organization: current employees (internal audience) ensuring their commitment and alignment with the organizational strategy, as previously explored, and prospective employees (external audience) (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

In this scenario, the primary goal of this thesis is to comprehensively analyze the facets of employer branding and their potential to attract talent, more precisely answer the question: “To what extent does Employer Branding affect Employer Attraction in recruitment?”. This question is particularly important to organization since pinpoints effective strategies and the

specific factors companies should contemplate when creating or developing employer branding strategies.

This study employs qualitative meta-analysis to delve deeper into theoretical foundations, and merge knowledge and empirical evidence generated by researchers on the specific topic under analysis. The results are presented and discussed, and then limitations and implications are presented, which were perceived during the process. Finally, the conclusions highlight employer branding as an asset for organization.

Section 1

Literature Review

Employer Branding

In recent years, the importance of a consistent employer brand has become more accentuated for the positive impact on talent attraction and retention within organizations. An effective employer brand contributes to the process of recruitment, to the commitment increase from employees, and to improve retention (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). A strong employer brand offers advantages for both prospective and current employees. On one hand, employer branding supports the attraction of the best talent, while reducing employee acquisition costs (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). On the other hand, employer branding enhances the conditions to encourage prolonged association with the organization, promoting employee loyalty (Davies, 2008).

Even though companies put effort into product brands and corporate brands, branding can also be used in the scope of human resources management. The use of branding principles in human resources has been called employer branding (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004). The concept of employer branding can be explained from a marketing and human resources perspective. Studies in marketing argue that strategies and activities a company undertakes to successfully recruit, train, and motivate employees will promote excellent customer service (Kotler, 1994). By investing in bringing the right individuals, providing training, and creating a work environment that fosters employee satisfaction and engagement, a company can ensure that its employees become strong advocates for the brand and consistently meet the needs and expectations of the customers. This is called internal marketing, and one component of internal marketing is employer branding and specifically

employer attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005). The employees who advocate the brand will amplify the internal brand externally, formatting the image of that company. In this context, built on brand marketing, employer branding is integrated to Human Resources Management as an approach to promoting the company, both internally and externally, a transparent view of what makes that place wanted and sought to be a place to work (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). For that, employer branding is inherently multidisciplinary.

Employer branding strategically stakeholders' awareness, perceptions, opinions, and beliefs about an organization, while presenting a unique employment proposition (Sullivan, 2004; Ahmad & Daud, 2016). It aims to enhance employees' positive perception of the organization, driving to the recognition of it as a "great place to work," internally and externally (Lloyd, 2002). This approach emphasizes an employer's exclusive features and employment offerings differentiating it from competitors, and attracting top talent (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Therefore, organizations that overlook the significance of employer branding and fail in its strategic implementation are likely to face a disadvantage in the market (Highhouse et al, 2003). To cultivate the employer brand, it is essential to consider the following factors: ensure a comprehensive understanding of employees' needs, understand what attracts highly qualified candidates in organizations, and lastly, systematically create, maintain, and position an attractive organizational identity that is consistent internally and externally from the company (Lievens, 2007).

Employer Branding Model

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) created the "employer branding model", to support the understanding of the dynamics of employer branding and the relationship between

marketing and human resources. The authors also argue that through this relationship (marketing and HR) it is possible for companies to improve their levels of productivity, attracting the best candidates in the recruitment process and promoting the commitment and retention of existing employees in the organization.

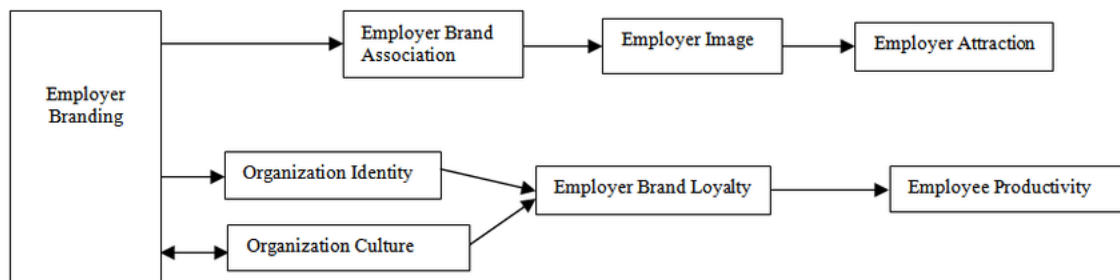


Figure 1: Employer Branding Model. Source: Backaus & Tikoo (2004).

According to Figure 1, employer branding creates two principal assets – brand associations and brand loyalty. Employer brand associations shape the employer image that in turn affects the attractiveness of the organization to potential employees. This process is linked with organization culture, defined as shared values, beliefs, and norms that guide employee behavior (Schein, 2011).

Additionally, employer branding impacts organization identity, which incorporate the cognitive image held by organization members about the organization (Berthon et al., 2005). These factors combined contribute to employer brand loyalty and organizational culture also feeds back to the employer brand. Employer brand loyalty contributes to increasing employee productivity.

As this model englobes the definitions related to employer branding, following will be explored the concepts and influence on the usage of employer branding and the outcome proposed by the model to organizations (productivity),

other links will be explored that are not specifically captured in the figure, focusing on the relation between employer branding, attraction, and expanding to recruitment.

Employer Brand Associations and Image

According to the model, potential employees form an image of the employer brand based on the associations created by the organization's employer branding efforts. Brand associations are the ideas and thoughts one has about a brand name (Aaker, 1991). These associations are the determinants of employer brand image which represents individuals' feelings and beliefs, an emotional response about the organization as an employer entity (Lievens et al., 2007; Supphellen, 2000). As described by Ambler & Barrow (1996), employer it is a combination of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment from an employing company. Functional benefits relate to the useful activities to employees for their development; economic benefits correspond to the material and monetary rewards received from the employer; and psychological benefits are related to emotional attachments.

Backaus and Tikoo (2004) summarize them in two, functional and symbolic. While functional elements include elements of the job itself, objectively desirable, such as salary or flexible benefits, symbolic elements are related to the individual's perception of the organization, such as the prestige or social approval that a candidate feels when starting on an organization. Positive employer brand associations contribute to a favorable employer image. When individuals recognize an organization offering desirable attributes such as career advancement opportunities, a supportive work environment, and competitive benefits, it enhances the overall image of the organization as an attractive employer. Aligning desired employer brand associations with the observed image, make the brand of

the employer stronger and attractive to potential candidates and attracting top talent eager to work for that organization.

Employer Attraction

Employer attraction, refers to the individuals' beliefs regarding an organization, shaping their inclination to seek and recommend it as an employer (Hendriks, 2016). This attractiveness is directly shaped by the employer branding initiatives to communicate the expected benefits that a prospective employee can expect and anticipate upon joining a company (Berthon et al., 2005).

Berthon et al. (2005) proposed a tool to measure employer branding, identifying five dimensions of employer attractiveness: interest, social, economic, development, and application value. Interest value is how an individual is attracted to an employer that provides an exciting work environment, promoting creativity and innovation. Social value assesses the extent to which an individual is attracted to an employer that provides a working environment that is fun, and happy, provides good collegial relationships, and a team atmosphere. The economic value measures attraction to a compensation package, such as above-average salary, job security, and promotional opportunities. Development value involves recognition, confidence, and career-enhancing experiences, while Application value is how an individual is attracted to applying learned skills in a customer-oriented and humanitarian environment. The five-factor measurement is an extension of the three dimensions proposed by Ambler & Barrow (1996), where Interest and Social value capture the "psychological benefits", the Development value and Application value emphasize the "functional benefits". Both frameworks also include an economic dimension,

reflecting the importance of monetary and material rewards in employer attractiveness.

In this way, the employer brand has multiple functions for potential employees, providing orientation, signaling a position as an employer of choice, and acting as a quality indicator for the market. A strong employer brand increases the perceived value, supporting recruitment, retention, differentiation, and influencing preferences in the job market (Berthon et al., 2005).

The initial decisions to apply for a job offer is strongly influenced by generic impressions of the organization's attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007). The relationship between the organization's image and the attraction of high-quality job applicants (the ones that fit perfectly for that company at that moment - are not the same for every firm) (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). An appealing organization image stands out as a competitive advantage, especially in capturing the interest of candidates with the best skills for that company (Cable & Turban, 2001; Lievens, 2007). During recruitment, organizations communicate messages about career advancement, challenges, and unique opportunities, aiming to attract suitable candidates (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). These messages convey the organization's intentions and can be seen as promises to potential recruits. Is defined as the start of the formation of the psychological contract, that are individual beliefs regarding reciprocal obligations between employee and employer (Moroko & Uncles, 2008).

Employees are more likely to be committed and satisfied with their job when the employer fulfills its requirements, these promises (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Conversely, if an employer fails to deliver its employer brand promise or acts inconsistently, the performance of the new employee is likely to be negatively affected, leading to increased staff turnover as the psychological contract is perceived to be violated or broken (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The employer brand presents information that contributes to formation of a psychological contract between the employer and the employee, but the accuracy of the

information portrayed in the employer brand reduces employee perceptions of violation of the psychological contract. Rynes et al., (1991) suggest that candidates receive limited information in the recruitment and selection process, but it is in this moment that the psychological contract is created, whereas stronger is the establishment of the contract, is more likely to the employee being committed to that contract and have a successful journey in the company.

Organization Identity and Culture, Employer Brand Loyalty, and Employee Productivity

Organizational culture, defined as the collective beliefs and values held by its members, forms the foundation of the organization's identity. A central, distinct, and firm culture makes an organization unique and irreplaceable (Dutton et al., 1994; Kotler & Keller, 2012). Organizational identity is the cognitive image held by organization members about that organization, it is what the company means as a group (Albert & Whetten, 1985). This identity acts as a contributor to employer brand commitment as workers identify with the company culture. Higher identification with the organization culture leads to increased organizational commitment (Dutton et al., 1994). Employer Branding is an important tool to strengthen organizational identification among employees, which expectedly will generate commitment.

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) added that the commitment the employee has to their employer is loyalty, the employee engages in a sense of belonging and commitment to the organization. The authors compared brand loyalty to organizational loyalty as a customer loyal to a brand is less likely to switch to another brand, especially when that brand makes a change or is weakened by the competitive actions of other brands. Is the positive exchange relationship

that results from the establishment of trust between the product and the consumer (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Employer brand loyalty, as conceptualized in the Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) model, is compared to organizational commitment, and propose that a brand loyal employee is not just likely to remain in the organization that are perceived positively, but also even when conditions might warrant them to consider other employers.

Finally, the last element of the model, suggests that productivity is the outcome of loyal employees, who help in increasing organizational productivity affirmed Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) as satisfied employees tend to have higher performance levels. Conversely, high turnover can prove to be detrimental to the organization's productivity, thus the importance of the loyalty (employees who stay in the company) and reduces the productivity by disrupting the input–throughput–output process of the organization which in turn leads to reduced organizational efficiency. Finding that there is a strong negative relationship between productivity and turnover rate among employees (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Thus, by retaining valuable workforce, productivity can be increased.

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) suggests retention is related to productivity, but to the employee to be retained and committed, the recruitment should be effective. Employer branding has a growing significance in Human Resources, specifically in recruitment and retention (Lievens, 2007). According to the model, a positive employer image attracts top talent and enhances employee loyalty, as employees are more likely to remain in the organizations that are recognized as upstanding. A strong organizational identity and culture foster a sense of belonging and commitment among employees, leading to increased loyalty and productivity. Employees who identify with the organization's values and feel aligned with its culture are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and productive in their roles.

Section 2

Method

Meta-analysis is a research technique that combines results across studies to understand overall trends and differences in their outcomes. This approach has the goal to gather, examine and synthesize the results of scientific research within a specific timeframe (Levitt, 2018). It builds upon narrative reviews by employing transparent search strategies, clear problem statements, specific questions, critiques of existing work, and the generation of new knowledge. The present study focuses on the articles published from 2017 to 2023 to answer the following question: “To what extent does Employer Branding affect Employer Attraction in Recruitment?” using meta-analysis. This topic is academically and practically relevant, given its studies and discussion in organizations during the years. Employer branding aims at increasing employer attractiveness, drawing the attention of potential employees and encouraging current employees to remain loyal to the organization (Jiang & Iles, 2011). From a Recruitment perspective, organizations emphasize to maintain a positive image to attract not only to stakeholders but to prospective employees, making this topic crucial to Human Resources in general, since an organization depends in human capital to thrive.

A qualitative meta-analysis can be valuable tool for addressing the complexity and heterogeneity of qualitative data, nevertheless the method has limitations and challenges associated with this technique, particularly the inherent subjectivity and its risk of bias associated with qualitative research in general. This study employs meta-analysis to ensure rigor and reliability by adhering to guidelines that include (APA, 2020, p. 98):

- 1) Data adequacy.

- 2) Evidence-supported data.
- 3) Insightful and meaningful contributions.
- 4) Contextualized conclusions.
- 5) Adequate presentation of results.
- 6) Consistency in analysis.
- 7) Detailed documentation of analytical procedures.

The quality and fidelity of the qualitative meta-analysis depend largely on following a protocol that includes formulating the research question, defining keywords and/or key expressions, selecting appropriate databases where the research will take place alongside with the reason to be selected, establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria, justifying the choice of each of the appropriately, and finally, documenting the steps and decisions taken to select the articles.

Formulation of the research question, definition of key words and key expression, and selection of databases

The research question “To what extent does Employer Branding affect Employer Attraction in Recruitment?” guided the selection of keywords and key expressions: “Employer Branding”, “Employer Attraction”, “Organization Attractiveness”, “Recruitment”. Articles from 2017 to 2023 were selected based on relevance to these keywords and key expressions, enriching the analysis and suggesting suggestions for future studies.

A comprehensive search strategy was developed to identify scholarly articles from reputable academic databases. The databases selected for conducting the search were Ebsco Discovery Service (EDS), Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus. To incorporate all keywords and key phrases into a single search term, the conjunctions "OR" and "AND" were used, the first to link content regarding the theme, and the last, to combine different themes. The equation used was: (“Employer Branding” AND (“Employer Attraction” OR “Organization Attractiveness” OR “Recruitment”)) ensuring broad search coverage for the theme.

Definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria

The selection of the articles to be analyzed, follow the inclusion and exclusion criteria, took the inclusion of the timeframe from articles published from 2017 to 2023, to capture recent research developments. Also was included the studies published in Portuguese, English and Spanish. Regarding exclusion criteria, to enhance the quality of the qualitative meta-analysis, the articles published in non-academic journals, sources related to conferences and other academic events, as well as those not subjected to peer review, were excluded.

Selection of articles

Considering the definition of key expression, the data bases, inclusion and exclusion criteria, the research conducted in the 3 databases gathered a total of 2,101 articles.

Search (searched on 26/04/2024)	Database number		
	WOS	EDS	Scopus
Research: (“Employer Branding” AND (“Employer Attraction” OR “Organization Attractiveness” OR “Recruitment”).	1458	338	305
	Total= 2101		

Table 1: Number of articles found in the first search.

Subsequently, the articles obtained through the databases were analyzed and filtered until the final sample of the qualitative meta-analysis was reached. This process involves numerous steps that have been schematized in figure 1, according to the PRISMA Diagram (Moher et al., 2009).

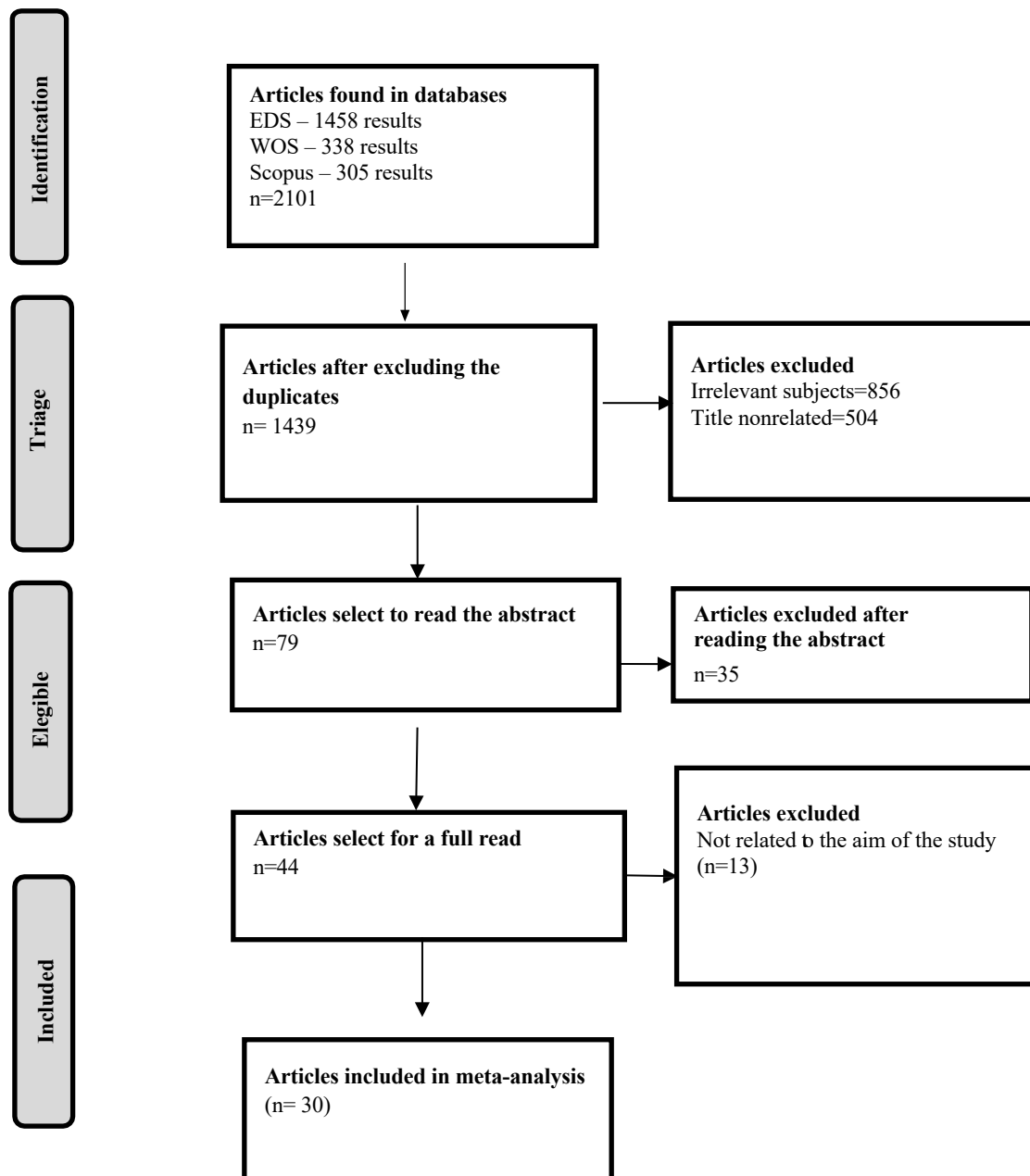


Figure 2: Study selection process based on the PRISMA diagram

The PRISMA Diagram allows us to synthesize the entire process related to the bibliographic research, until the sample of the qualitative meta-analysis is found. As described in the diagram, from the 2101 articles found in the first search. In the screening phase, duplicate articles were excluded, leaving 1439 articles. To exclude articles with subjects not relevant to the study in question, a screening was carried out by title, leaving 79 articles. Then, the

abstracts were read, excluding 13 whose theme was not directly related to the theme of the present work. In the end, after analyzing all the remaining articles, it was possible to obtain a total of 30 articles, thus composing the sample of this qualitative meta-analysis.

Content analysis

To analyze the articles, the content analysis technique was chosen. This approach involves a set of methods for analyzing communications using systematic and objective procedures to describe the content of messages. Content analysis allows for a critical understanding of texts, covering both explicit and implicit content and revealing their apparent and underlying meanings (Franco, 2020). According to Bardin (1977), content analysis should follow a process divided into three essential steps: (1) pre-analysis, (2) material exploration, and (3) result processing, in the first phase, the information is meticulously organized, with the main ideas systematically identified and analyzed. This first stage is crucial for establishing a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis.

During the exploration phase, various categories are defined that reflect the themes and sub-themes present in each of the analyzed articles. This stage involves an in-depth and detailed reading of the texts, where each category is carefully identified and classified. Defining these categories is essential for structuring the analysis and ensuring all relevant aspects of the texts are considered (Bardin, 1997). Finally, the last stage consists of result processing, inference, and interpretation, the collected data are thoroughly examined. The most important results and conclusions of each article are highlighted and interpreted. This interpretation process allows for extracting valuable insights and understanding the deeper meaning of the analyzed texts (Bardin, 1997).

Considering all steps of content analysis, table 2 summarizes the topics and sub-topics and the articles in which these elements were found. This table serves as visual guide that facilitates understanding the main issues addressed in the analyzed texts. The detailed discussion of these topics and sub-topics follows in the next section, offering a comprehensive and critical view of the content.

Table 2 - *Identification of the themes and subthemes of the articles included in the systematic literature review*

Themes	Subthemes	Definitions	Exemplifying excerpts
Employer Image	Reputation and Organizational Image	Organizational reputation and image are the perceptions of stakeholders about the company's integrity, reliability, and visual identity, directly impacting its attractiveness and performance (Rodrigues et al., 2023)	"The reputation of an organization is built by stakeholders, such as customers, proprietors, personnel, and others. A good reputation is considered to be an important long-term asset that delivers many benefits to the organization, including ease of attracting and retaining professional personnel and elevating customer perceptions of the organization's goods and services" (Sawsan, 2020, p. 4319)
	Employer Branding	The impact of affective organizational commitment on the perception of employer branding strategies is relevant, as the relationship between these variables demonstrated a positive and significant association. (Alves et al., 2020)	"Employer branding is a concept denoting perception of current and prospective employees toward an organisation as a great place to work" (Paul & Tresita, 2017, p. 861).

Attraction in Recruitment	Digital Presence in Recruitment	<p>These strategies can include building a strong employer brand, using social media and digital platforms to spread the word about opportunities, offering competitive benefits, and developing diversity and inclusion programs. (Lee et. al, 2020).</p>	<p>"This generation is more internet savvy than previous cohorts and they are more likely to leverage the potential of online recruitment" (Banerjee & Gupta, 2019, p. 17).</p>
		<p>Attraction and recruitment actions using technology resources will be referred to in this study as 'e-recruitment' and include how organizations and their agents use technology to develop relationships with potential candidates, generate enrollee stock, retain viable enrollees and encourage desired candidates to join that organization (Pellae, 2021)</p>	<p>"The use of the concept of gamification in the recruitment process is mainly focused on capturing potential employees as known by the company, because this type of recruitment model can build high-quality employees and reduce costs caused by employee turnover" (Saleh et al., 2020, p. 964).</p>
	Personalization of Recruitment Techniques	<p>Effective recruitment techniques refer to practices and methods applied to identify, attract, and select the best candidates for available vacancies in an organization (Barbaros, 2020)</p>	<p>"Recruiters need to take into consideration every aspect like psychological factor like satisfaction at workplace, economic benefits, growth opportunity as each of them plays a pivotal role." (Kumari et al., 2020, p. 96).</p>

Employer Branding, Employee Attraction and Recruitment	Relationship between Employer Branding and Job Retention	<p>The relationship between employer brand and job attraction refers to an organization's ability to project an attractive and distinctive image that differentiates it from its competitors in the job market, positively influencing the decision of talented candidates to apply and accept job offers. (Purusottama & Ardianto, 2019)</p>	<p>"Investments in both internal and external activities directed at employees are justified, as they positively impact the employer's image and perceived attractiveness." (Kalińska-Kula & Staniec, 2021, p. 598).</p>
	Relationship Between Employer Branding and Employee Attraction in Recruitment	<p>The relationship between employer branding and employee attraction in recruitment refers to the impact of the employer's positive brand perception on the organization's ability to attract qualified candidates. (Eger et al., 2018)</p>	<p>"Employer branding, seen as the process of building employer identity, is based on two main assets - loyalty to the particular brand and association with the brand. These factors influence both the culture of the organization and the external company's image as an employer" (Kalinska-Kula e Staniec, 2021, p. 588).</p>

Table 2: Identification of the themes and sub-themes of the articles included in the qualitative meta-analysis. Source: Author's elaboration.

Section 3

Presentation and Discussion of Results

The aim of this study is to answer the research question: “In what extent does the Employer Branding affect the attraction in recruitment?”. To reach the goal, a systematic literature review methodology was employed. As previously mentioned, at the end of the research process, 30 articles were selected for reading and the analysis after applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

In recent years, research has focused on recurring themes related to employer branding and its influence on attracting candidates. Although there have been significant improvements in employer branding strategies, driven by both technological advances and management initiatives, there are still reasons to continue discussing the impact of employer branding on recruitment.

The employer branding strategies that have effectively influenced candidate attraction and were considered in this study are related to building a positive reputation and effectively communicating organizational values. Table 3 summarizes the categorization process that guided the content analysis mentioned earlier, providing relevant examples of the analyzed excerpts.

Table 3 - Categorization process of the articles included in the systematic literature review and presentation of exemplifying excerpts

Themes	Subthemes	Articles
Employer Image	Reputation and Organizational Image	Social responsibility and green practices in organizational performance: Corporate image as mediating mechanism
		Customer Relationship Management and its Impact on Enhancing the Organizational Reputation of Jordanian Insurance Companies
		Project Management Maturity and Organizational Reputation: A Case Study of Public Sector Organizations
		The relationship between, employer branding and corporate social responsibility Organizational reputation and its role in organizational indulgence: An Analytical study of a sample of the teachers of the University of Warith Al-Anbiya
Employer Image	Employer Branding	Employer Branding Application in companies A Study on Strategy of Employer Branding and its impact on Talent management in IT industries
		Attraction in Recruitment
New Challenges in Recruitment and Selection - Attraction of the Y Generation		
Talent Attraction through Online Recruitment Websites: Application of Web 2.0 Technologies		
Recruiter political skill and organization reputation effects on job applicant attraction in the recruitment process		
Gamification for Recruitment: A New tool attract Talent Using AI to Enhance Recruitment Effect		

		Exploring Mechanisms of Recruitment and Recruitment Cooperation in Respondent Driven Sampling
		Gender diversity in recruitment: Influence of gender trouble on applicant attraction and evaluation
Attraction in Recruitment	Personalization of Recruitment Techniques	Benefits and Disadvantages of Recruitment in the Employment of Ukraine
		The Connection of Employer Branding to Recruitment: A Critique
		The Impact of Innovative Human Resources Management on Organizational Performance: A Systematic Review
		<hr/>
		Employer Branding as a Tool to Facilitate Employee Retention
	Relationship between Employer Branding and Job Attraction	Strategic Talent Management: The Impact of Employer Branding on the Affective Commitment of Employees
		Role of Employer Branding Dimensions on Employee Retention: Evidence from Educational Sector
		Employer Branding and Organizational Attractiveness Current Employees Perspective
<hr/>		
Employer Branding, Employee Attraction and Recruitment		Does employer Branding beat head hunting? The potential of company culture to increase employer attractiveness
	Relationship Between Employer Branding and Employee Attraction in Recruitment	Study of Early Recruitment Activities and Employer Brand Knowledge and Its Effect on Organization Attractiveness and Firm Performance
		Employer Branding and its Role in Effective Recruitment
		The Dimension of Employer Branding: Attracting Talented Employees to Leverage Organizational Competitiveness
		Employer Branding on social media and Recruitment websites: Symbolic Traits of an ideal employer
		Employee Recruitment Ands Its Relationship with employee satisfaction: Verifying the mediating role of the employer brand

Brand orientation, employer branding and internal branding: Do they effect on recruitment during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Table 3: Categorization of the articles included in the qualitative meta-analysis and presentation of exemplifying excerpts. Source: Author elaboration.

These exemplary excerpts provide an insight into the text selection process carried out in the articles used in the systematic literature review. The analysis of the excerpts allowed not only an understanding of what has been published recently in this field, but also of the changes in the interest of researchers in specific aspects of employer branding and its influence on recruitment. The presentation and discussion of the results were therefore based on a comparative view of the literature, to highlight the most recent changes.

Employer Image

The Employer Image may act as a vital part to the determine an organization outcome, as a positive image can call the interest of prospects and retain high-quality employees, reducing turnover rates, improving morale and motivation, leading to a better productivity and performance, further enhancing organization success (Rodrigues et al., 2023). The image is directly related to the reputation the organization create and how is perceived by others.

Organizational Reputation and Organizational Image

Organizational reputation can be defined as a set of perception and judgments accumulated by stakeholders over time, based on the organization's actions and

behaviors. This concept is seen as one of a company's most valuable intangible assets, as it directly influences the trust and loyalty from employees and prospective candidates.

Reputation is a collective assessment of the organization's attractiveness, based on direct and indirect experiences one has with the company (Sawsan, 2020). On the other hand, organizational image refers to the immediate impression and perception the public has regarding the organization at a given period. These are interconnected concepts and fundamental to the sustainability and success of organizations as both concepts influence customers and stakeholders (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

According to Sawsan (2020), to improve and maintain organizational reputation, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has a pivotal role. Companies that implement CRM practices and foster an open communication tend to have a better reputation, which translates into higher customer satisfaction and loyalty, important for the Employer Branding and attractiveness as well. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is another critical component, because socially responsible practices, such as supporting community projects and reducing carbon emissions for examples, can have the image improved, leading to a higher trust that is deposited in these such practices (Rodrigues et al., 2023). The image acts as mediator between social responsibility and organizational performance, reinforcing the importance of a positive image to achieve company's strategic goals (Mahdi and Alyasari, 2021). Sawsan, 2020 defines CSR as an implicit social contract that extend beyond compliance, encompassing actions that meet the continuous changing social expectations. The commitment to stakeholders and to the society is essential for building and conserving a strong organizational reputation (Irfan et al., 2020; Sawsan, 2020).

The act of introducing new products, services or features, the called innovation, also contributes to a positive perception the public has over the organization. Quality of the service impact directly customer satisfaction, which circle back influencing the organization

reputation (Sawsan, 2020). Social media plays a similar role, as it became a powerful tool in shaping organizational perception. Having a more direct and interactive communication, and being more active and with a positive presence, the social media can bolster the organization's image and reputation. The contrary is also true, lack of control over the content and having negative interactions can deeply ruin the image and reputation, causing the opposite effect (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

An organization's image is how the public, like customer or providers perceive it and how employees and prospect employees view it. Employer Image is an extension of Organization Image, more focused on the relationship between company and employer. A positive Employer Image strengthen the reputation contributing for a solid employer brand (Rodrigues et al., 2023). Employer Image directly communicate how feels like to be part of the organization (Kalinska-Kula and Staniec, 2021). Therefore, organizations must direct their branding efforts to both current and potential employees.

Employer Branding

Employer Branding refers to the reputation the company has as a desirable place to work and the value as an employer. The Employer Branding involves promoting a positive and attractive image of the organization to potential candidates by highlighting the value proposition, benefits, culture, values, work environment and development opportunities that are offered by the company. A strong employer brand can differentiate a company from the competitors in the labor market and substantially increase the ability to attract and retain skilled talent (Banerjee & Gupta 2019). The efforts of Employer Branding should be integrated into the business strategies, to reflect consistent and high-quality communication.

Attraction in Recruitment

Attraction in recruitment is a key element in human resources strategies, directly impacting the construction of an effective hires of people who are aligned with the organizational goal. The ability to attract qualified, fitted and motivated candidates immediately determine success in filling vacancies and influences the long-term performance and achievement of the person in the organization. Effective recruitment strategies consider the technical qualifications of the candidates and the cultural compatibility for the potential growth in the company. In today's competitive job market, companies have no choice other than be attractive and captivate to top talent. To be attractive and secure the best talent, the employer brand needs to be strong, fostering further organizational success (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019).

Several strategies are employed to optimize the recruitment from traditional methods, like advertisement on job platforms and recruitment agencies, to modern technological approaches and innovative practices, depending on what the organization need and what is the market conditions (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019; Pellaes, 2021). The traditional methods have the potential to achieve many candidates, especially if using various job boards, but the effectiveness can be compromised. On the other hand, employee referrals are widely recognized for being effective as candidates referred by current employees tend to perform better and being more satisfied with the job, since is easier to identify qualified and aligned candidates to the organization culture, plus, reducing time and cost for the recruitment process as the person who was referred, usually skips the screening part informally (Liu et al., 2021). The analysis of recruitment channels must consider the specificity of the vacancies and the skills required. Recruitment through headhunters, for example, is more effective for senior management and specialized positions, while posting ads on online platforms is better

suited for operational or technical positions. Choosing the right channel can significantly influence the quality of hires and employee retention. Internal recruitment is another important strategy. Promoting existing employees to higher positions motivates them by valuing their work, and fosters a culture of internal development and growth, plus reducing training costs (Liu et al., 2021).

Digital Presence in Recruitment

The use of internet and technology to recruit has become a growing trend, especially in large organizations, utilizing online job boards, search engines, company websites and online advertising to streamline the recruitment process. The phenomenon for searching and hiring talent via internet is called electronic recruitment, as known as e-recruitment (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019). E-recruitment increase the efficiency of the recruitment process, therefore reduce costs (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019; Pellaes, 2021).

An important aspect of e-recruitment is providing detailed information about the position, including detailed description of the routine, requirements, what is offered, information about the company, the organizational culture, benefits, location, further details about the selection process. This transparency allows candidates to better assess and check their fit with the organization, increasing the likelihood to attract more qualified individuals (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019; Pellaes, 2021). E-recruitment is considered as a cost-effective solution versus traditional recruitment as print advertisement, walk-in interviews or campus placement is much more expensive. Also, through e-recruitment, employee testimonials are viewed by applicants more reliable and believable, which is much easier for companies to show

and candidates to reach out with the use of technology. Such testimonials can enhance the perceived credibility of online job advertisements (Banerjee & Gupta, 2019).

With the higher exposure in digital platforms, what is displayed are easily seen and scrutinized, therefore it is important to be strategic and transparent in the communication and require a series of practices, forms of monitoring and performance metrics to ensure positive and attractive image for candidates. The advent of digital communication technologies and how proliferative social media are business are more visible than ever was, being essential to maintain an online presence that reflects the company values and culture in an authentic and positive way (Banerjee & Gupta, 2019).

Additionally, the use of technologies like TikTok, podcasts and blogs can enhance employer brand perception and improve the quality and credibility of job postings, further increasing the organization's appeal and a well-designed corporate career websites and quality content to attract candidates is also required as recruitment strategy. The use of technology in corporate career websites is still very important for the recruitment process, since is more informative (Lawong et al. 2019).

Currently, innovative approach is being needed to engage candidates to hiring processes. By incorporating game elements, like job simulations, interactive challenges and reward systems, companies can attract candidates who appreciate a more dynamic and engaging application process, turning the application itself more appealing and stating the company as a forward-thinking and modern company (Saleh et al., 2020). Technology in general, is an important part in recruitment attraction strategies. Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming recruitment, by automating tasks such as resume screening and behavioral analysis of large volumes of data, identifying patterns that help predict candidate performance (Liu et al, 2021). AI increases the efficiency of the recruitment process but also improves accuracy in candidate screening.

The digitalization of the recruitment process has also brought significant changes. Today, companies can use online platforms to manage the entire recruitment process, from job posting to final hiring. Platforms such as LinkedIn, for example, allow for greater visibility and reach, as well as facilitate interaction with candidates. Digitalization also allows virtual interviews to be conducted, saving time and resources for both parties involved. Recruitment through social networks is another growing trend. Social media not only increases the reach of vacancies, but also allows companies to reach passive candidates, those who are not actively looking for a job but who could be attracted by an interesting opportunity. In addition, social networks allow a better understanding of the candidates' profile through their online activities and engagement (Lee et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). The perceived benefits of investing in digital recruitment include scalability, reach, speed of the process, ease for the candidate, while maintaining detailed application records and finally helping organization remain competitive and react promptly to market trends.

Personalization of Recruitment Techniques

For the recruitment to be successful, it is required an equilibrium between technology and traditional practices to guarantee an inclusive and effective process. Organizations should be adaptable, responding quickly and smoothly to changes to keep up to candidates' preferences and market demand (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019). Communication, more than being important for the reputation and image, is especially important when targeting different generations as prospective joiners to the company. According to Emma-Denisa (2017) younger generations, like Millennials, value work-life balance, continuous development opportunities, and a supportive work

environment. Millennials expect recruitment processes to offer constant feedback. Learning possibilities are more appealing to this demographic, contrasting with traditional methods perceived as rigid and impersonal. Generation Z (born after 2000) demand for a more creative approach from recruiters (Micik & Mičudová, (2018). They are younger professionals who values more leadership, mentoring and coaching programs, as well as opportunities for ongoing development.

The effectiveness of the recruitment process can be rated through some key performance indicators like quality of the hires, time to fill a vacancy and the satisfaction and integration of the new hire. These indicators facilitate the identification of improvement areas and to adjust recruitment strategies where needed. It is important to keep the recruitment systematic, involving a detailed analysis of the company need, of a clear definition of the competencies required and a structures screening and selection process. Implementing a well-defined recruitment policy and taking advantage of the technology is crucial to attract and retain qualified talent (Lee et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). According to Saleh et al. (2020), personalizing the recruitment process is also an effective strategy, tailoring the communication and recruitment approach according to preferences and expectations of the candidates. For example, millennials may value more flexibility and professional development opportunities, while more experienced professionals may prioritize stability, safety and financial benefits. The communication and message for the different clusters are more effective when personalized, creating a positive experience for the candidate.

Implementing psychometric tests and behavioral assessment to the recruitment process can also increase accuracy in candidate selection, helping assess traits like cognitive aptitudes, personality and behavioral competencies, providing a more complete view of the candidate besides the curriculum and the interview, important to the allocation of the

candidate in the more fitted position, enhancing satisfaction and reducing turnover (Saleh et al., 2020).

The use of diversified channels to reach potential candidates, gamification, artificial intelligence and a balanced approach between internal and external recruitment are practices with great potential to significantly increase the effectiveness of the recruitment process and to contribute to long-term organizational success. Integrating strategy, technology and personalization to a transparent communication leads the organization to be attractive and wanted by candidates, a key element for competitiveness and sustainable growth in the current business picture reflecting positively to the company's image as an employer of choice (Kashive & Khanna, 2017).

Digitalization lifts the process and allows organizations to reach a broader audience, optimizing costs and time. Other tools like psychometric tests and structured interviews, improves candidate evaluation and the selection of individuals capable of performing their role effectively, contributing to the organization's long-term success (Barbaros, 2020). According to Dawsari & Mukhtar (2022), there are competency models to strength the alignment between candidate's skills and the organization needs, creating a continuous dialogue between the candidate and the company, shaping the employment relationship from the start and ensuring expectations are clear and realistic between parts, preventing, among other strategies, to turnover due to poorly defined job descriptions.

Recruitment efficacy is dependent to the completion of the recruitment and integration cycle, where the person who were hired are actively contributing directly to the company's growth and sustainability. Recruitment is a tool to achieve this result, done with strategic planning, appropriate technology, implementation of the correct method and technique and tailored for the current needs to ensure match between candidate and organization (Barbaros, 2020).

Employer Branding, Employee Attraction, and Recruitment

Employer branding covers various dimensions: work environment, benefits, image, company reputation, corporate vision, and corporate social responsibility (Purusottama & Ardianto, 2019). These dimensions are key for attracting, retaining and keep engaged qualified candidates and employees who are motivated and aligned with the company's values and objectives, contributing to the organizational performance (Paul & Kanthimathi, 2017).

Reputation attracts talent who are drawn to companies perceived as prestigious and ethical and companies that demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental responsibility are perceived more positively by candidates (Citta et al., 2020). This statement reassures the importance of an integrative approach between employer branding with organizational culture and corporate values to create a good value proposition for the prospective talent.

Relationship between Employer Branding and Employee Retention

Internal employer branding strategies strongly influence employer attractiveness and employer image, becoming precious for strategic human resources management (Kalinska-Kula & Staniec, 2021). A strong employer brand prevents employee turnover, increase engagement and improve overall company's performance when is done with the coordination across departments in the organization like Human Resources, Marketing and Communications, where all interactions are consistent and reinforce the employer brand message (Eger et al, 2018).

Authenticity and transparency in communication boost a strong and respected employer brand, promoting a sense of trust and consideration that differentiate the company in a particularly competitive job market (Kummrow, 2023; Hadi & Ahmed, 2018). Companies with a dynamic and creative work and an authentic organizational culture are attractive elements turning a company as wanted by candidates (Paul & Kanthimathi, 2017). This is especially important for IT companies that faces unique challenges in attracting and retaining talent due to rapid technological evolution and high demand for specialized skills. A robust employer brand highlighting opportunities for professional growth, innovation and a collaborative work environment, gains a remarkable advantage in attracting talent (Priya & Raman, 2021). Employees who identify with the company's values and culture are more likely to stay and contribute positively to the company's success (Priya & Raman, 2021; Kalinska-Kula & Staniec, 2021).

Employer Branding is linked to the concept of cultural fit, where the compatibility between the values of the employee and the organization can determine the success of work relationship. While cultural fit is a strong predictor of job satisfaction and retention, employer branding is a recruitment tool and a retention strategy (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018). Compensation and benefits, while important and considered, are not the primary drivers of talent attraction, because factors more intangible like organizational culture and career development opportunities pressure more in the candidate's decision (Citta et al., 2020).

Relationship Between Employer Branding and Employee Attraction in Recruitment

In recruitment, Employer Branding plays a crucial role in influencing candidate's decision to apply and accept a job offer. Job seekers are more likely to apply to companies who are recognized and perceived positively. Moreover, a clear communication regarding

values, culture, and a value proposition attracts candidates who are aligned with their own personal goal to the organization goals (Eger et al, 2018). This approach is positive to attract candidates more fitted to the hiring process, easing the hiring process and maximizing the hirings quality. A well-stablished employer branding fosters transparency and provides clear expectation about the process, company culture, and role expectations, improving candidates' experience and making applicants feeling more valued and respected throughout the recruitment journey, essential to candidates seeking for a well-stablished hiring process (Slavkovi et al., 2018).

According to Hadi & Ahmed (2018) there is a need to measure and evaluate continuously the effectiveness of the employer branding strategy, with climate surveys and feedback, tools that can provide valuable information regarding the employer brand perception and how to improve. Developing a favorable employer brand requires HR professionals to identify what factors are important to attract recruits (Eger et at, 2018).

Section 4p

Conclusion

Based on a qualitative meta-analysis, the present aimed to address the following research question: "To what extent does Employer Branding affect Employer Attraction in recruitment?". Employer Branding is shown to be important for organizational success, positioning it favorably in a competitive job market. Highhouse et al. (2003) affirmed that organizations that overlook the significance of employer branding and fail in its strategic implementation are likely to face a disadvantage in the market. Thus, strategizing recruitment while benefiting from a strong employer brand can be essential in today's competitive times. The literature (e.g. Backhaus & Tikoo, Berthon et al., Ambler & Barrow and Lievens, 2007) is consistent in giving due importance to consider Employer Branding to attract and retain trained professionals aligned with the company's values and culture.

Employer Branding serves multiple functions (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Minchington, 2010; Lievens, 2007): in recruitment, by including increasing visibility, attracting high-quality and fitted candidates and promoting a strong and cohesive Employer Value Proposition that echo with prospective employees, and by promoting the person-organization fit, meaning the alignment between individual identity and values with the organization identity and values, reinforcing the retention and commitment.

A well-structured and well communicated Employer Branding, with transparency and authenticity, is a tool to connect with prospective applicants. The rise of digital and social media recruiting put light on the value of the Employer Branding in recruitment strategies (Gupta & Banerjee, 2019). The Employer Branding also echo in the costs of the recruitment process. By cultivating a positive brand image that is appealing to prospective candidates, organizations promote employee referrals as well as the interest of candidates to apply for a job with no need of large advertisement expenditures (Chiavenato, 2010). In the

modern recruitment, professional of the area should be able create strategies that better align with job seekers' preferences (Kumari et al., 2020).

The results, highlight the importance of Employer Branding as a long-term, strategic investment that boosts organizational attractiveness and aids in hiring. A strong brand image adds to the company's appeal (Priya & Raman, 2021). To connect with a varied workforce, effective Employer Branding requires a multifaceted approach that considers psychological happiness, working circumstances, financial benefits, and career prospects (Kumari et al., 2020). Younger candidates can be drawn in by creative techniques like gamification (Saleh et al., 2020), which makes the hiring process more dynamic and less repetitive. To effectively reach target groups, it is crucial to customize communication, as the COVID-19 pandemic hastened the shift to digital channels (Tabachnik, 2019).

In conclusion, the existing findings showed that employer branding has a substantial influence on employee recruitment, as individual-organization identity fit is crucial to strengthen the employer brand itself, being more appealing and attractive and fostering commitment and job satisfaction. Employer Branding was shown as a strategic tool for long-term results. The existing studies developed a good analysis in Employer Branding long-term impact, Organizational Image and Reputation, Digital Recruitment integration and Employee Value Proposition, but lacked a deepen analysis Employer Branding strategies during crisis like during COVID-19, integration with Human Resources Analytics and Diversity impact in the Employer Branding.

This meta-analysis has some limitations. Ideally, the number of articles should be more extensive, probably because the topics of employer branding, attraction and recruitment are extensive on their own and it was difficult to find articles that listed all the topics proposed by the question. Thus, the content analysis was conditioned by the number of articles included, however, these limitations did not make it impossible to answer the question. One of the most positive aspects of this work was to show the relationship that can

exist between topics relevant to organizations and my own day-to-day life as a recruiter, in addition, the performance of the meta-analysis develops research and information selection skills that will be invaluable for professional practice. This is because it seems extremely important to seek inspiration and reasoning when it comes to proposing or giving insights to other recruitment professionals or managers who want to make good use of recruitment strategies, as the most important capital of any company.

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