

**THE IMPACT OF ONLINE TESTIMONIALS ON JOB
SEEKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL
ATTRACTIVENESS**

Maria Madalena de Almeida Ribeiro Anglin de Castro

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of

Master in Human Resources Management

Supervisor:

Alzira Duarte, Assistant, ISCTE Business School, Human Resources and Organisational
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Resumo

O mundo está em constante mudança e o grande desafio está em acompanhar essa evolução.

Vivemos num mundo onde as fronteiras se extinguem e as distâncias se encurtam. Para enfrentar os desafios da globalização, as empresas precisam de ferramentas que lhes permitam trabalhar mais depressa, com agilidade e simplificação, e que lhe garantam no mercado uma vantagem competitiva, considerando essencial o investimento no seu capital humano.

Este estudo foi orientado no sentido de identificar as perspetivas dos potenciais candidatos face às estratégias de atratividade que as empresas utilizam, particularmente os testemunhos online.

Num primeiro momento foi feito um estudo qualitativo, dirigido às empresas, com o objetivo de identificar os canais de divulgação utilizados, as motivações que as levaram a adotar a metodologia dos testemunhos online e a forma como os implementaram com vista à definição de estratégias a aplicar no futuro.

Foi também objetivo deste trabalho, avaliar de que forma os websites das empresas influenciam a imagem que os potenciais candidatos criam da mesma, analisar o impacto que os testemunhos online têm na perceção dos candidatos sobre a empresa, estudar o grau de credibilidade dos testemunhos online e perceber de que forma esta ferramenta contribui para a eficácia da mensagem que a empresa quer veicular.

Dos resultados obtidos conclui-se que apesar das empresas estarem a apostar cada vez mais nesta abordagem, os potenciais candidatos demonstram ainda algumas reservas embora não recusem a sua importância.

Códigos JEL: O15 – Recursos Humanos; Desenvolvimento Pessoal; O33 – Mudança Tecnológica: Escolhas e consequências; Processos de difusão.

Palavras Chave: Recrutamento Online; Testemunhos Online; Atratividade do Website

Abstract

The world is constantly changing and the great challenge is to keep up with this evolution.

We live in a world where boundaries are being extinguished and distances becoming shorter. To meet the new challenges of globalization, companies need tools that allow them to work faster, with agility and simplicity, in order to guarantee a competitive advantage in the labor market, always being essential the investment in their human capital.

This study was conducted to identify the perspective of potential candidates regarding the attractiveness strategies adopted by companies, particularly the online testimonials.

In a first moment a qualitative study was addressed to companies, with the aim of identifying which are their disclosure channels, the reasons that led them to adopt the strategy of online testimonials and how they managed their implementation, with a view to defining strategies to be applied in the future.

It was also a goal of this study to evaluate how the corporate websites influence the image that potential candidates create about the company, to analyze the impact of online testimonials on the potential candidates' perceptions about the company, to study the degree of credibility associated with online testimonials and to understand how this tool contributes to the effectiveness of the message that the company wants to convey.

From the results it is concluded that although companies are increasingly investing on this approach, potential applicants still show some reservations towards it, though not refusing its importance.

JEL Code: O15 – Human Resources; Human Development; O33 – Technological Change; Choices and Consequences; Diffusion Processes

Keywords: Online recruiting; Online testimonials; Website attractiveness

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1. Introduction

Over the past years, the world has witnessed an increasing globalization, where boundaries are gradually disappearing and distances becoming shorter.

It is undeniable that this universal phenomenon has changed our lives in many levels. One of the most visibly affected was undoubtedly the technological sector. Several authors have approached the relation between technology – more specifically information and communication technologies (ICT) – and globalization, and also the effects they have on each other. In fact, literature tends to be unanimous in telling that information and technology promotes globalization (Madon, 1997; James 2001, 2002; Pieterse, 2002).

Technological developments brought us innovative tools that enable new forms of communicating. Consequently, the nature of communication was profoundly transformed in today's societies and the interactional field was strongly affected. From the most traditional ways, including radio and television, into a vast interactive network, its use has already reshaped the communications patterns for countless individuals and organizations¹ around the world (Slevin, 2000).

The technological evolution has also positioned internet in a predominant and privileged place (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009). Its field of action has becoming more and more wide and its impacts have introduced profound changes on people's behaviors. Internet new functionalities allowed individuals to broader their experiences beyond their immediate social surroundings and social habits began naturally to meet new boundaries (Slevin, 2000).

For instance, getting information from newspapers, journals or magazines has never been so easy. Nowadays it is possible to acquire the same information in a more instantaneous and faster way. Also several daily activities such as shopping and travel have been affected as people started to take advantage of new technologies' functionalities to managing it (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009). Internet has thus become one of the most popular tools for searching all kinds of information and for reach more and more people.

¹ The concepts "organization" and "company" are considered synonyms, for the purposes of this dissertation.

Thus, for better understanding the transformations taking place in modern societies, it is crucial for us to recognize the central role such media achieved so we can be more aware of its implications (Slevin, 2000).

All these impacts had important repercussions and not only the personal life has been deeply affected but also organizations have constantly to adapt their strategies if they want their practices to be the updated and sophisticated. It is a real challenge for organizations, and for human resources departments, once new discovers are always emerging and they must be aligned with it in order to guarantee their competitive advantage in the labor market.

Additionally, if organizations actually give an increasing acceptance and importance to the innovative practices so they can ensure a privileged place in the labor market, also applicants² must be well informed about how they should position themselves in the recruitment process. It is a virtuous cycle and it takes two actors to be aware of the innovation that characterizes the current business environment and, when done successfully, it is a win-win process.

Due to the new features internet gave to recruitment methods, job seekers have now more and more access to a variety of options and are able to critically compare employers and therefore support their decision of choosing them (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2007). This gives companies an increased demand. If they want to attract and retain the most talented applicants, they have no choice but to participate in the “war for talent”.

Attracting potential candidates by captivating them with the right online message is thus crucial as, more and more, they have at their disposal several tools that enable them to be more conscious about their career choices and professional decisions and how they should put themselves on job market (Smith & Rupp, 2004). Therefore, with the increasingly wider labor market and number of job offers, the concept of employer branding become more powerful in the context of the new recruitment practices (Wright, 2011).

² The concepts “applicant”, “job seeker” and “potential candidate” are considered synonyms, for the purposes of this dissertation.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Technological Developments

Even though we can easily find the most varied signs of changes caused by the Internet in our daily lives, it may not be as clear to us quantify its impacts on organizations. However, it is already known that the use of information technologies became a present reality in corporate environments, being introduced in all its forms, from private to public, from local to global, old and new. Having at their disposal several new tools, organizations attempt to adopt strategies by integrating information technologies and taking advantage of them to better organize their activities (Slevin, 2000).

The rapid growth and acceptance of the internet was certainly the major trend of the last years that mostly influenced and reshaped the recruitment and selection practices (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

The internet usage has undergone a massive growth in the late 1990's and early 2000's (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009). The following figure shows the internet usage' evolution over a period of ten years (1997-2007) in two perspectives: the solid-line represents the "Business Use for Recruiting" and the dotted line refers to the "Individual Internet usage".

From the graph's analysis, it is clear that the adoption rate of online recruiting tools reached its maximum values between 1998 and 2003. Reynolds and Weiner (2009) estimated that, by 2002, about 90% were already using the internet for recruitment purposes and more than 70% integrate in their practices specific features that enable candidates to communicate between each other, and searching for job openings.

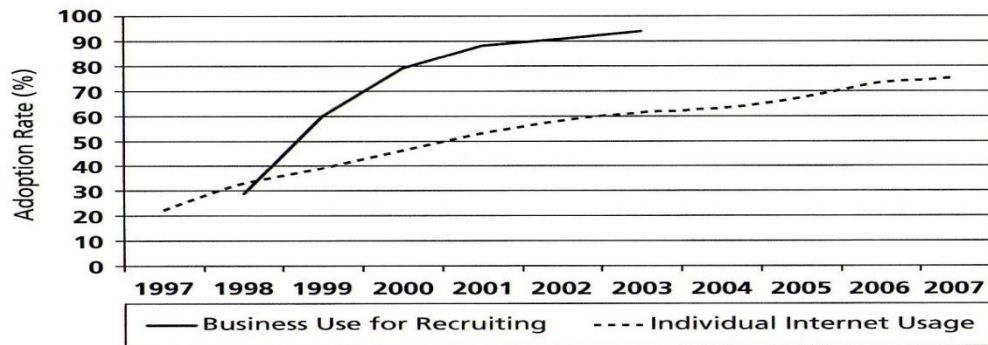


Figure 1 - Internet adoption percentage rates, for business (1998-2003) and individuals (1997-2007) Sources: iLogos, 2003; U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 2002; Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2007. (Reynolds & Weinor, 2009: 9)

They also concluded through the surveys they did to organizations that, at the same time, 35% of them had an online application form as their primary method for applying for jobs and this percentage has been increasing following the technological evolution.

However, there were soon important differences within the access and the use of the internet that deserved researchers' attention. These differences – concerning the race, gender and age – have yet been decreasing over time (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009), probably due to the extension internet achieved, which has promoting an increasingly access to all people.

Another issue has to do with the reasons behind each individual choice to use the web. Surprisingly, job search has ranked high on the list. Accordingly to a study developed in the USA, concerning the demographic differences, minorities did not have the same access but, when having the opportunity to use the internet, they used it for job search (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

Reynolds and Weiner (2009) have already clarified the internet adoption percentage rates between 1997 and 2007 (when internet became more popular). In 2010, the Nielson Company revealed also that, for a year (December 2008 to December 2009), the time spent on social media websites has increased in 82%. Still, further statistics about the use of social media for jobseeking were reported by Wright (2011). Based on the employment search engine “simply hired”, he found that in UK more than a half of job seekers use the internet for searching for employment.

Still, a survey carried out by Potentialpark (2011) included answers of over 30,000 graduates, students and early career professionals worldwide. This survey was made in Europe and the results showed that close to 100% of the participants demonstrate interest in interacting with employers via online. Also the youngest reported to be increasingly using online features for both better search for jobs and consolidate their “professional online presence” (Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier & Cox, 2013). All these facts demonstrate the large presence and a strong willingness of today’s job seekers to interact with companies via online.

Internet has indeed achieved an unquestionable importance in every ways. As the authors say, as a consequence of internet’s major growth, it is currently the core tool for people searching and finding jobs, as it has become the main accepted and recognized way for doing it (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009). The impact it had on the way potential candidates look for a job was such powerful that the habits have dramatically changed.

Nowadays, the searching for information is much easier and faster, contrasting with the past when job seekers had to resort to newspapers or contact people so they could be aware of suitable job opportunities. Job seekers have now at their disposal a lot of available job openings in the internet. The same goes for the way organizations recruit and select them for work (Van Rooy, Alonso, & Fairchild, 2003; Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2007). Internet technologies have facilitated in a large-scale the process of exchanging information between employees and organizations (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

Therefore, the use of internet as a recruitment tool throws up some opportunities and challenges for employers. Internet potentially offers speed, efficiency and the ability to target and attract specific, particularly apposite candidates in the recruitment process. It can provide a useful additional source of information on potential job candidates, especially since some data (at both personal and professional levels) may not be generated for the purpose of recruitment, and therefore may provide candid supplementary information on the applicant. For candidates it potentially offers multiple sources of information about the employer and the possibility of contact with existing employees to gain a more realistic job preview.

2.2 The Human Resources Challenge

The impact that the information technologies (IT) had on organizations was of such a dimension that naturally it had major repercussions on the way the human resources were managed. It has allowed the increasing of human resources management' potential, not only because of the computerization of the administrative processes but also due to the decentralization of the human resources functions. Owing to the automatization of human resources practices, monitoring all the company's employees has started to be much easier and precise. The IT turned out to be a precious help in decision-makings, such as discussing wage deals, understanding if there are training needs or even if there are recruitment needs (Cabrera & Bonache, 2002).

Organizations, executives, managers and HR professionals face now important challenges during this time of major technological changes. The priority must be to understand how they can make the most of the innovated technological tools to reshape the processes and systems, in order to support the organizational staffing and, thereafter, add value to organizations.

The "pressure" to join these new methods is specially felt by HR professionals, once all the HR functions and practices have been re-directed to engage the new technology features (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009). It is very important for HR professionals to be aware of the benefits of these innovative procedures, so they can persuade the broader organization to invest in them.

Yet, it should be noted that, when a company undergoes major changes, it is always a complex process usually leading to an internal restructuring with strong implication on the organizational system. Not being an easy process, organizations need to have a solid structure and a well-defined strategy to sustain it, once technology advancements by itself aren't enough. Therefore, before diving into this change, organizations should carefully measure the benefits behind its drivers (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

Each company has a particular identity and the best way of how to invest in technology tools and make the most use of them may differ from company to company. Certain measures can fit in the organizational culture of a company and may not serve to another. Thus, for this process to succeed it is crucial to know well the organization. All

organizations are distinguished for having a specific culture and the role of the HR managers is to do a diagnosis gathering all the organizational needs so they can properly adjust the available technological tools to face those gaps (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

Having it settled, it is part of the HR role building the bridge between those new technological developments and the way organization makes use of it. They must play a key role in challenging and pushing the organization forward (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

Fortunately, there is an understandable acceptance by HR executives and staffing managers in adhering to that, since it represents more effective practices at a lower cost, wherein the rapid evolution of internet-based technologies facilitated and accelerated the staffing process. Recruitment and selection were among the first human resources functions that rapidly took advantage of the internet, placing it as a core element of the organizational processes. HR professionals have, then, to assume new technology responsibilities alongside with other related practices such as the accountability for recruitment, hiring and integrating new employees (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

A new vision emerges defending the reduction of costs and the spent time in the recruitment processes by attenuating the bureaucracy inherent to the most traditional methods. Several traditional features started to remake their operational processes and become more technology-driven (Reynolds & Weiner, 2009).

2.2.1 Electronic Human Resources Management (e-HRM)

The concept of Electronic Human Resources Management (e-HRM) has emerged throughout this process of technological development and it is defined by Strohmeier (2007; p.20) as “the (planning, implementation and) application of information technology for both networking and supporting at least two individual or collective actors in their shared performing of HR activities”. From the e-HRM earliest times, the new management practices rapidly began to gain notoriety among HR Managers due to the several benefits associated with it. According to Lengnick-Hall and Moritz (2003) and Strohmeier (2009), e-HRM improves all HR’s activities by defining strategic roles and providing sustainable competitive advantage, all in less time, money and better quality.

According to Bondarouk and Ruël (2009), the use of corporate websites to “e-recruit” has placed “talent acquisition services” as the second most common e-HRM strategic application. It is such a crucial element that, at the time of 2005, it was already used by almost all companies and it also represented a huge monetary investment (Lee, 2005; van Birgelen, Wetzels & van Dolen, 2008).

Earlier research based on a survey to a leading US employers (Cober & Brown, 2006) found that over 50% of all new hires originated from the internet and that the greatest number of those came from the corporation’s own web site (e.g., Anderson, 2003; Cober, Brown, Keeping & Levy, 2004; Lievens & Harris, 2003). These numbers show how important is to organizations to have accomplished corporate websites so they can be managed as a successful recruitment tool.

The use of corporate websites for recruitment purposes are, therefore, a strong example of a practice that emerged with the technological evolution and that had major impacts in the human resources practices. In this way, for the purposes of this study, the focus will be precisely on one of the human resources expertise areas: the recruitment.

2.2.2 The Recruitment Process

Individuals and organizations make part of a continuous process of attraction between each other. In the same way individuals are interested in organizations, seeking information and asking questions about them, also organizations aim to attract potential candidates, looking for information about them so they can decide if they should be admitted or not. To this complex process we might call the recruitment and selection process (Pires, 1993).

The attraction of potential candidates is implicit in the process of recruitment and not in the selection phase. Whilst recruitment covers the entire process running from the decision to fill an available position until the searching for all the candidates potentially suitable for performing a required function, the selection process consists in the decision on which of the recruitment process’ finalists are better to fill the vacancy, for gathering all the conditions to be part of the organization.

Recruitment is defined as a set of activities conducted by organizations with the primary purpose of identifying a considerable group of potential candidates, informing them about job and organization attributes, and persuading them to join the organization. It consists in attracting new employees with the appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and aptitudes, and retaining them to the company at least in a short term (Taylor & Collins, 2000). It is an important part of human resource management as it performs the essential function of drawing an important resource – human capital – into the organization (Barber, 1998; Taylor & Collins, 2000; Breugh & Starke, 2000).

In short, it is through the process of recruitment that organizations determine the quantity and the type of candidates they want to attract (Ivancevich, 2013). Those practices that aim to attract potential candidates can be manifested in several ways and various methods may be adopted. For instance, potential candidates and job seekers may be attracted through newspapers' advertisements, employment agencies, employment forums, employee referrals, outplacement companies, head-hunting, university campus, informal methods (personal approach), via internet (online recruitment). The practices should be properly applied for each organization, in other words, which might be suitable for one situation or function may not be for another (Cunha, Marques, Cabral-Cardoso, Rego, Pina e Cunha & Gomes, 2010).

The organizational culture of a company is particularly important when deciding whether a candidate should be selected or not. Beyond the required technical skills, it is very important for the candidate to be well integrated and share the organization's values, beliefs and attitudes. Catanzaro, Moore and Marshall (2010) reinforces that a candidate must identify himself with the organizational context for which he is applying for. Fortunately, nowadays organizations are integrating this whole organizational perspective by searching for the right people to work in the organization rather than just looking for the right people to fill a job position, ignoring their fit in the organizational context, which used to mostly happen within the traditional methods (Domingues, 2003).

2.2.3 Online Recruitment

Recruitment has emerged in a competitive labor market environment, in a context of great employees' mobility, and became a critical human resource function for organizations (Allen, Scotter & Otondo, 2004). There was a need to rethink the way recruitment methods were being applied, taking into account the technological advancements, with the purpose of optimizing the practices carried out so far. It was out of this need that the online recruitment emerged, inaugurating a new era. Since it is relatively recent, organizations are yet improving their processes and online recruitment still has much room to grow and to mature its methods. Nevertheless, it is possible to find already several signs of their success, which leads us to think that organizations that opt for innovation are increasingly more likely to dominate the market.

Although it has suffered an abysmal growth over the past years, according to Parry & Wilson, at the time of 2009, the online recruitment was still a topic sparsely discussed among researches.

The mission of the online recruitment has not distanced itself from the traditional recruitment. However, the great difference is in the way it is exercised, since internet provided a host of features that had not been explored in the most conventional recruitment methods.

In order to obtain competitive advantage and organizational excellence it is required for online recruitment to make use of the information technology (IT) and to develop processes able to understand and respond quickly to customer and market needs (Araújo & Ramos, 2002).

For Thomas and Ray (2000), online recruitment is a process that has at its disposal several tools and resources that can be used and organized in different combinations. Data bases, specialized websites containing job offers, chat rooms, discussion forums and company's own websites are some of the main used techniques. Some organizations give a step ahead and include a specific space for recruitment purposes in their own webpage. However, it is important that these systems are properly used by companies. Technology has a lot to offer, but only for the ones who know how to manage it in the best possible way.

As mentioned earlier, the internet growth had major consequences in organizations and in the way recruitment processes are conducted nowadays. These consequences led the human resources departments to figure out how to better adequate the technological advancements with the human resources practices. Employers must now position themselves, actively and strategically, by defining an appropriate e-recruitment program so they can better find suitable candidates and improve their hiring decisions. In this way they are saving time and money (Smith & Rupp, 2004).

It is possible to say that “e-recruitment” is the joint result of the internet development and the recruitment practices. Employers are somehow using the internet as a tool to complement the conventional recruitment methods (Smith & Rupp, 2004)

The quality of the recruitment services is either better when taking advantage of the advanced computer settings. As the authors say, the new automated methods, in contrast to the traditional ones (paper and massive manuals), are less time consuming – which increases the productivity by shorten the period of time of vacant positions –; help on reducing recruitment costs, once publishing a job add online is cheaper than posting it in newspapers; and also promote employee turnover (Smith & Rupp, 2004), .

Furthermore, e-recruitment offers the possibility of substantially reaching more and diversified people, over a much wider geographical area than the traditional recruitment methods. However, albeit in a significantly smaller dimension, there are still differences in the internet access rates, which raise important questions for human resources practitioners about the viability of online hiring tools. Reynolds and Weiner (2009) drew attention to the constant challenge that the human resources departments are required to deal with, in order to avoid those differences and cover as many suitable job applicants as possible.

Although it is usual to find research that value more the innovativeness of e-recruitment in contrast with the outdated traditional recruitment methods, there are still authors as Wright (2011) insisting that, besides all the e-recruitment advantages, the great asset for organizations is to operate with the complementarily of both traditional and technology-based recruiting methods.

2.3 Employer branding

The concept of employer branding is based on the premise that human capital is an extremely valuable asset to organizations. Thus, by investing in human capital, the organization performance is likely to be enhanced. For that reason, as recruitment serves the main purpose of attracting the best talent, the human capital theory is closely related to employer branding.

Therefore, the practice of employer branding brings together the process of attracting the best talent for a specific job offer (human capital theory) combined with the necessity of gathering the right equipment and technological resources for the company, with the main purpose of obtaining competitive advantage (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Cappelli (2001) explains that the online hiring process is composed by three different steps: attracting, sorting, and contacting candidates. Organizations should attract potential candidates through publicity, adds and benefits.

The author reinforces the importance of companies' recruiting practices to be updated and innovative, in contrast to old systems viewed as largely outdated among the human resources departments. Therefore, recruiters should be: agile in their movements, present a different approach from the usual and lastly, be flexible (Cappelli, 2001).

The solution he proposed to address this situation involves organizing the companies' system in order to behave as a market. In other words, a strong restructuring is needed to adopt a new vision based on a marketing perspective, which means that the potential candidates should be approached as potential clients: carefully identified and targeted, attracted to the company and its brand, and then sold to the job. According to Cappelli (2001) the companies that opt to incorporate this strategy in their recruitment policies are more likely to succeed by attracting and retaining the best talent.

Therefore, it is expected that investing in the attracting phase, by making the best use of online recruitment innovativeness, will add great value to the company. In this sense, it is easy to understand why the attracting phase has such an important role in the whole recruitment process. This phase corresponds to the initial part, where the first contact between job seekers and organizations happens and it is crucial to define the quality of the applicants' pool that contains the future employees that will make part of the

organization's workforce (Cober, Brown, Keeping & Levy, 2004). It is also where the first consistent organizational image is formed by job seekers, which will naturally influence their future perceptions about the company. Cable and Yu (2006, p. 828) define image "as an audience's beliefs about the traits that are central, distinctive, and relatively enduring about the company".

In this stage, the organizational image begin to presocialize job seekers in terms of what to expect from the company and what would be expected of them if they join it as employees (Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey & Edwards, 2000) and it matters once it helps them to differentiate a firm from its competitors and encourage them to develop feelings of attachment to certain firm instead of others (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Scott & Lane, 2000).

The consumer-based brand equity theory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993) took scholars to access if organizations' ability to create an unique and favourable corporate image brand would somehow determine their recruitment success (Bernerth, Field, Giles, Short & Walker, 2011). According to Wilden, Gudergan and Lings (2010), this theory defends that organizations with favourable brand images have a positive influence on potential applicants' willingness to apply for it and encourages current employees to stay in the company (Wallace, Lings, Cameron & Sheldon, 2014). For a better understanding, job seekers are treated as the "consumers" and the organization as the "brand" (Keller, 1993).

Through the organizational image, organizations send signals to society about their employees (Dutton, Dukerich & Harquail, 1994). If job seekers feel identified with those messages, pursuing and joining a particular organization becomes a concrete, public expression of a job seeker's own traits (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Popovich & Wanous, 1982). Due to the processes of self-selection and presocialization, organizational images develop a certain type of workforce (Cable & Judge, 1996; Judge & Bretz, 1992; Schneider, 1987).

Regarding this topic, there is a theory – named signalling theory – that has already been approached from several authors (e.g. Spence, 1973, 1974; Rynes & Miller, 1983; Wallace et al., 2014). This theory explores the mental representations job seekers develop about a firm, based on the inferences they draw about the available information. It happens whenever individuals have limited knowledge about an organization and capture

the information they see and use it as signals to form their own organizational image. As it will be further evident, this signalling theory will take a central role in this dissertation.

Moreover, the information shared by a company may have a decisive impact on job seekers' attraction towards hiring organizations (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991; Turban, 2001; Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998).

According to Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis (2008), the application of the signalling theory in the recruitment context suggests that internet, particularly corporate websites, play a crucial role in the process of creation of job seekers' organizational impressions, once its characteristics serve as cues for them to base their inferences about the organization (especially when the information about the organization is scarce). Furthermore, applicants extrapolate these cues and believe they are representative of the whole organization (Rynes et al., 1991).

Although, despite there being an evidence of similarity between job seekers' perceptions of website' characteristics and the formation of their own organizational images, there are some variables that should be taken into account when analysing this correlation. One variable refers to the familiarity – the signalling theory suggests that the less familiarity with the hiring company, the greater the effect of recruitment websites on applicants' organizational images (Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis, 2008).

Recent recruitment research has made substantial progress in conceptualizing and determining organizations' images in the earliest stages of recruitment. However, the issue of how organizations manage their images during recruitment has received less attention. The main question that firms aim to answer is: Which investments in recruitment media are more effective to approach job seekers' image with the firms' projected image?

The topics on how to allocate resources among different communication media and how and whether job seekers' image beliefs can be modified are key theoretical implications for this study. Job seekers' beliefs are formed early and are perceived as very difficult to change. For that reason, firms should have incentives to manage them in order to avoid mismatches between job seekers' image beliefs and the firm projected image, and also be cautious once they should only transmit substantiated ideas, otherwise job seekers'

will doubt about the truthfulness of that information which will negatively impact on company's credibility.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) developed a framework regarding the concept of Employer Branding that helps firms managing the organizational image they want to convey to potential candidates and how to avoid those mismatches and, therefore, improve their ability to attract and retain talented employees. First of all, it is important for organizations to identify which are the factors that mostly influence the applicants' decision process in order to define their strategy for better attract the future employees who will best fit in the organization (Wallace et al., 2014).

The marketing and branding practices adopted by organizations are increasingly decisive elements for potential employees to make the differentiation between organizations (Collins & Stevens, 2002) and are crucial concepts for making organizations attractive from the employees' perspective (Wallace et al., 2014).

The ultimate goal of employer branding is to enable organizations to transmit to potential employees the benefits of working there (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). This goal is accomplished through a branding process where some activities are developed in order to create a unique image in the applicants' mind and influence their beliefs and perceptions about it (Wallace et al., 2014; Business Dictionary, 2013; Collins & Stevens, 2002).

Wallace et al. (2014) state that organizations with a strong employer brand are perceived as being more valued and attractive than the ones that have lower employer brand value. The initial evaluation that potential applicants make of competing jobs and firms' attributes depends on the perceptions they have of them. These perceptions, in most cases, are transmitted through word of mouth, personal experiences or marketing strategies (Wallace et al., 2014).

Employer branding can be defined as "the package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; p.186). It does not operate in isolation. Instead, it is translated into practices that are cut-across the whole business and that also involve the current employees, who turn to be essential for spreading a good organizational image. Thus, the process of attraction should guarantee that the projected brand matches the

reality of the organization, once it represents a promise that is made by the company to potential candidates.

Regarding this employer brand' promise, there is still a concept that arises that has to do with a psychological contract that is made between the company and employees (Foster, Punjaisri & Cheng, 2010). Through this contract, potential employees develop a multifaceted image of the employer (Keller, 1993) and perceive the functional, economic and psychological benefits intrinsic in the brand message, compare them with their own needs and corporate image perceptions and realize if they actually fit in the organization (Foster et al., 2010). In order to generate a realistic preview of the psychological contract between employees and the organization, brand messages provided by organizations – about their work, culture, values and identity – need to be as accurate and real as possible, in order to avoid potential employees' mistrust towards the company, which would certainly cause negative impacts (Schein, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

According to Ambler and Barrow (1996), the primary purpose of this framework about employer branding was to facilitate the HRM role, helping in the definition of priorities and, therefore, increasing productivity and improving the recruitment process, retention of current and future employees and promote a solid commitment (Barrow & Mosley, 2006).

The concept of employer branding as part of the HRM field involves a process that may be divided into three stages, as it was described by Backhaus and Tikoo (2004). First of all, a firm develops a value proposition that is created and spread crosswise the organizations' culture and identity. Secondly, it is through their organizational projected image that organizations are able to manage the value they offer to the current and potential employees; and in third place, the value that is transferred to potential or targeted employees is also captured and accepted by the current employees, who play an active role in this process (Wallace et al., 2014).

In order to provide a better understanding of this topic and its influence on organizations context, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) designed a model that explains the effects of employer branding.

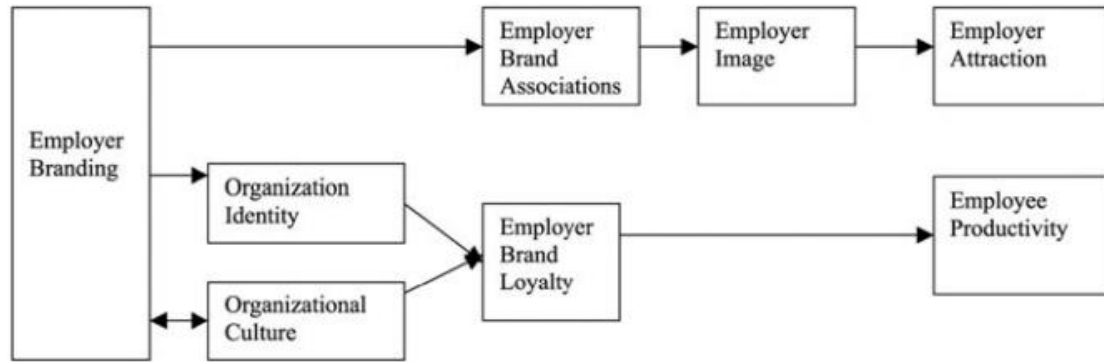


Figure 2 - Effects of employer branding. (Backhaus & Tikko, 2004: 505)

The reason why organizations keep investing in taking advantage of employer branding is largely supported by the numerous advantages associated with it, which will be further explained.

Van Dam (2006) stresses that organizations use the employer branding for reaching their final goal in the recruitment process: project the right message and have a strong and positive image among their current and future employees.

According to Kucherov and Zavylola (2012), when organizations are capable of achieving that strong appealed brand, they are most likely to have a positive and highly recognized employer image; to make potential employees believe in their brand' promises; to have valuable economic and symbolic features from the potential employees' perspective; to be positively differentiated from the other organizations; and finally to develop a solid strategy and establish activities for being well-positioned in the labor market (Wallace et al., 2014). Results have shown that successful employer branding increases substantially the quality and quantity of job applicants (Collins & Han, 2004).

Still under the HR field, economical impacts that employer branding could have in organizations have been already experienced. Namely, the recruitment costs decrease through a better communication with potential employees. Employer branding also promotes employee engagement and strengthens the corporate culture (Barrow & Mosley, 2006; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

There are three different concepts derived from employer branding that matter to highlight: brand clarity, brand consistency and brand credibility: “Brand clarity refers to employer information that is unambiguous and instantly recognizable; brand consistency refers to the employer’s image being reinforced across all information sources; and brand credibility refers to recruits’ confidence that an organization’s employment promise can be delivered” (Wallace et al., 2014; p. 22). These three sources will influence the organizational image that potential employees will form and, consequently, determine the success of the organizational implemented measures to attract them.

Wallace et al., (2014) add that the information that is related through firsthand experiences usually is seen as being the most credible, and the information based on word of mouth from impartial sources is accepted as more credible compared with information generated and controlled by the company. Furthermore, the value of the company as an employer is strongly determined by what candidates think about it (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

If the recruitment messages are not consistent with the policies advocated by the company – particularly concerning the protection of candidates – the credibility of its brand will certainly be negatively affected.

Consistency and ambiguity of the information received by potential candidates about the company represent two key variables in determining the company's branding gains (Fernández-Barcala & González-Díaz, 2006). If potential employees perceive that information to be ambiguous or contradictory, their reliability on organizations’ promises decrease, which make them less attractive from their perspective (Wallace et al., 2014).

From a different perspective, but not dissociated from employer branding, “employee branding” also plays an important role around the attractiveness’ issues, as the organizational identity and culture is transmitted by current employees, once it is reflected in their attitudes and work behavior (Wallace et al., 2014). In other words, if the employees of an organization experience, in their daily working routines, the values and culture of their company, it is expected that the desired brand image of the organization will be successfully conveyed, once it becomes more real and concrete for potential candidates.

If the employee branding process is well executed, it brings together a role of positive tangible impacts for the organization's human resources functions, which can lead to a great-value toward the organization's competitive advantage. These positive outcomes may be translated, for instance, in the improvement of employee satisfaction and retention (Miles & Mangold, 2005). Therefore, this could also have significant good effects on the organizational reputation both internally (for the current employees who develop feelings of belonging to the company) and externally (for future employees who develop the desire organizational brand image).

Miles and Mangold (2005) propose the following model, where they systematize a conceptualization of the employer branding process.

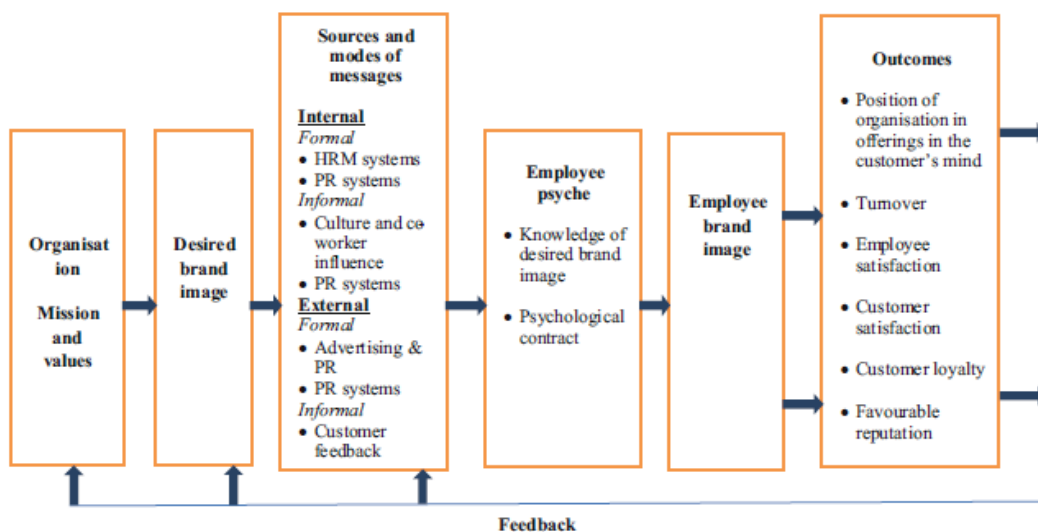


Figure 3 - A conceptualization of the employer branding process (Miles & Mangold, 2005: 537)

According to Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005), a company can benefit from five principles regarding the employer image, which are believed to be the ones potential employees most value: interest value, social value, economic value, development value and application value.

Interest value is based on the premise that the organization promotes a good working environment, invests in innovative procedures and policies and creates respectable products and services through its workers' skills.

Social value has to do with the organization's ability to provide a pleasant working atmosphere to potential employees, valuing teamwork and interpersonal relationships.

Economic value refers to potential employees' perceptions about the organization's attractive remuneration, employment stability and job opportunities.

Development value is based on the employees' achievements, and on how they perceive organizations to recognize them and create opportunities to launch employees to future employment challenges, by establishing measures to promote their careers.

Lastly, application value refers to the perception potential employees have that will be possible for them to apply their acquired skills, competences and knowledge on their job and that organizations also promote the opportunity for them to participate in training, coaching and mentoring sessions.

These are essential insights for organizations to help them guiding their strategy towards the attraction of potential employees (Wallace at al., 2014).

The perceptions potential candidates have about these benefits may strongly influence their willingness to apply for a company. Moreover, organizations should take into account that the weight potential candidates give to the companies' attributes differs from candidate to candidate, so it is important for companies to know which attributes should be enhanced taking into account the target that the company intends to drive. It is natural that each age group values different organizational characteristics, since they are in different stages of life and it is likely that motivations are not the same.

Keller (1993) developed a research that gave important contributes regarding the organizational attractiveness from the potential employee' perspective. His theory approach the evaluation potential employees make about organizational features, which could be organized into four categories: functional or instrumental, experimental and symbolic. The perceptions that potential candidates have about the company's attractiveness are based on the assessment they make of those features. The value assigned to the features represents, therefore, the value of the employer as a brand.

Functional or instrumental brand benefits correspond to tangible attributes, whilst experiential and symbolic to intangible attributes.

Tangible attributes consist of objective characteristics or specific motivations (in the recruitment context) such as payments, remuneration, benefits and compensation, work conditions, training and development, promotion opportunities, geographic location and job security (Cable & Graham, 2000; Lievens, Van Hoye & Schreurs, 2005).

In opposition, intangible attributes are more subjective, once they are more related to emotions, and evaluate the effect of the brand on potential employees' sensory satisfaction, contributing to a more abstract description of the organization (Bernerth, Field, Giles, Short & Walker, 2011). Within the experiential benefits are, for instance, social activities, team accomplishments, job diversity, work environment and travel opportunities (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Lievens et al. 2005). The symbolic values represent "the more intrinsic benefits of employment with an organization that satisfies an individual's need for social approval, personal expression and self-esteem" (Wallace et al., 2014; p. 26).

Moreover, Lievens (2007); Lievens and Highhouse (2003); Lievens et al., (2005); and Slaughter and Greguras (2009) claim that symbolic brand attributes contribute in a particular way for the formation of job seekers' organizational attractiveness perceptions, far beyond what is explained by instrumental attributes (Bernerth, Field, Giles, Short & Walker, 2011) and oftentimes job seekers also resort to symbolic traits as a mechanism to distinguish and evaluate organizations" (Cable & Turban, 2001; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

However, there is yet scarce literature regarding how organizations can manage their symbolic brand image during recruitment due to its subjectivity, even existing general agreement among recruitment researchers concerning the importance of job seekers' symbolic organizational inferences (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007; Lievens, 2007; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005; Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, & Mohr, 2004).

Nevertheless, Cable and Yu's (2006) are among the main authors who gave relevant contributes in this field, namely by demonstrating that organizations still have space to improve the match between the images they want to convey and the ones developed by

potential employees. To sustain their study, the authors based it on the theory of persuasive communication and media richness and came to the conclusion that the more is the perceived credibility and richness of the Media – as a tool to communicate organizational information – the more is the probability of job seekers' develop positive image beliefs (Bernerth, Field, Giles, Short & Walker, 2011).

Credibility is an essential concept when foreseeing how an information source affects the audience. This concept has already been carried out by several authors, who strove to realize what was its effect, particularly regarding the study of marketing communication and advertisement, where the outcomes were expected to help understand how to better sell a product or a service (Eisend, 2004; Pornpitakpan, 2004). Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1953; p.21) describe credibility as a concept that “refers to a person’s perception of the truth of a piece of information. It serves as a means for the receiver of the information to rate the source or transmitter of the communication in relation to the information. This rating correlates with the willingness of the receiver to attribute truth and substance to the information”. Naturally, the study of the credibility source assumes that there is a communication between at least two parties with the intention of influencing the other, once it implies a relation between a sender and a receiver who evaluates the trustworthiness of the message (Eisend, 2004).

Additionally, Hovland et al. (1953) points out the concepts of expertise and trustworthiness as being the main dimensions of the source credibility. By “expertise” the author “refers to the extent to which a speaker is perceived to be capable of making correct assertions”, whilst “trustworthiness refers to the degree to which an audience perceives the assertions made by a communicator to be ones that the speaker considers valid” (Pornpitakpan, 2004; p. 244). Empirical insights revealed that a source high in expertise appears to lead to more positive attitudes than a low in expertise one (Braunsberger, 1996). Also, other studies have confirmed that the perceived trustworthiness of the source affects the process of persuasion (Pornpitakpan, 2004).

The impact of the source credibility is, thus, strongly associated with the persuasion research (McGuire, 1978; O’keefe, 1990; Perloff, 1993). McGuire (1978) developed his investigation on attitude change and persuasion to discover how to effectively persuade consumers. He identified five components comprised by persuasive communication – source, message, channel, receiver and destination variables. Furthermore, three aspects

could characterize these five components and they are: credibility, attractiveness and power.

The framework developed by O'keefe (1990) and Perloff (1993) organizes its theory by separating independent from dependent variables. As independent variables the authors take into account the characteristics of the source, the message and the transmitter. By dependent variables, they assume the attitude formation or attitude change (Eisend, 2004).

As some authors suggest, people tend to be more persuaded when there isn't the intention of persuading behind the message. When receivers have the perception that a certain message has the specific purpose of convincing them, they see it as being less reliable and therefore do not believe in the truthfulness of that message, which makes its purpose of persuading unsuccessful (Hass & Grady, 1975; Kiesler & Kiesler, 1964).

However, on the other hand, there are authors such as Hovland & Mandell (1952) who seemed to show that the low perception of source trustworthiness does not necessarily reduce the power of persuasion. Hass (1981) also suggested that are another related concepts, in addition to the trustworthiness source, such as disinterestedness, sincerity, persuasive intent, objectivity, and biases that may not be related to the persuasiveness of the message.

For McGinnies and Ward (1980) the concept of source trustworthiness seems to be more impactful than the concept of expertise when evaluating the source, once a reliable communicator tends to be more influential when compared with an untrustworthy one, regardless being or not expert.

Nevertheless, these are not the only factors affecting the credibility source. Variables such as involvement or commitment also moderate its impact and, curiously, sometimes it can happen that a source perceived as having only moderate credibility is more persuasive than a highly credible one (Sternthal, Dholakia & Leavitt, 1978).

Given this, research in several topics have approached if a source perceived as having high credibility is more effective when compared with a low credible one, or simply does not have differences in the audience's changing beliefs, attitudes or behaviors. Some results have shown that when a message is perceived by the receiver has being high in credibility, he is more likely to be persuaded since his attitude is early more receptive to the message (Horai, Naccari, & Fatoullah, 1974; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Johnson &

Izzett, 1969; Johnson, Torvicia, & Poprick, 1968; Kelman & Hovland, 1953; Lirtzman & Shuv-Ami, 1986; Maddux & Rogers, 1980; Miller & Baseheart, 1969; Powell, 1965; Ross, 1973; Schulman & Worrall, 1970; Warren, 1969; Watts & McGuire, 1964; Whittaker & Meade, 1968). In this way, when it comes to attraction of potential candidates, it is apparently easier when the source is seen as more credible, once its feedback is usually evaluated more favourably (Freeman, 1957; Pornitakpan, 2004; Albright & Levy, 1995).

In fact, the concept and ideas associated with the credibility source emerged a long time ago and its meaning has not changed throughout the ages. However, society has suffered major transformations and the great effort has been realizing to what extent the credibility source is having different impacts on people's perceptions and behaviors (Eisend, 2004).

Another concept that is pointed out to influence the organizational image perception is named Media Richness Theory. It is about communicating equivocal messages and is considered one of the most relevant for understanding recruitment purposes. The term rich media refers to communication channels that permit timely feedback (e.g. real-time exchange of messages), the ability to convey multiple language cues (e.g. words, face expressions, body posture), the tailoring of messages to personal circumstances (e.g. customized to the needs of a recipient), and language variety (e.g. written text, charts and graphs, verbal expression (Huber & Daft, 1987).

In general, oral and synchronous media (e.g. face-to-face interactions, telephone) are believed to be richer than written and asynchronous media (e.g. mail, web pages) (Markus, 1994).

In a recruitment context, these criteria suggest that face-to-face interactions with company representatives (such as career fair interactions) should be perceived by applicants as more rich than the viewing of static messages (such as brochures and reading information on a company's web site or browsing an electronic bulletin board) (Cable & Yu, 2006). However this theory does not take into account the credibility of the sources.

Allen et al. (2004) were among the few authors who had applied this theory to the recruitment literature. They meant to find how a group of undergraduate students responded to an organization's recruitment message received through different media (face-to-face interaction, video, audiotape, and text) and the study's results revealed that

the type of the media has impact on the way potential employees evaluate the company and therefore affect their perceptions of it (Cable & Yu, 2006).

Thereby, from all the possible ways of innovating the recruitment systems, investing in corporate websites is becoming increasingly important once they could be crucial tools for achieving and attracting potential candidates. By the year of 2003, the use of company web pages to attract prospective job applicants had already experienced an enormous growth (Williamson, Lepak & King, 2003).

Research on the influence corporate websites have on job seekers during recruitment processes concluded that websites can influence job seekers' organizational attractiveness perceptions and their image of the organization as employer (Braddy, Meade & Kroustalis, 2008). According to these authors there are certain variables that may have strong impact on job seekers perceptions. For instance, web site usability' perceptions may be an important insight for job seekers, once they may assume the way the organizational web site is designed as a representative characteristic of the organization.

2.4 Online Testimonials³

It is during this growth that emerge the concept of online testimonials. Online testimonials are an example of company dependent recruitment sources, which are organization's recruitment activities that can be directly controlled by the organization to transmit positive messages to potential candidates (Van Hoyer & Lievens, 2007) and oftentimes appear in companies' own websites. It consists in a process of content management in which organizations follow specific strategies with the purpose of attracting the applicants they want.

In a recruitment context, online testimonials are nothing but the sharing of individuals who work in a company and give insights (usually positive) about their professional and personal experience, with the explicit purpose of presenting the company and attracting new employees. These testimonials reflect the culture of the organization and its values

³ The concepts "online testimonial" and "employee testimonial" are considered synonyms, for the purposes of this dissertation.

once they are intrinsic in current employees and conveyed through their experiences' sharing. In their testimonials, employees also empower the advantages of working there (Maagaard, 2014).

Throughout her analysis of online testimonials, Maagaard (2014) makes several references that lead to stress the persuasive power that testimonials may have through their style and content.

2.5 Research Questions

Based on the literature review, the aim of this work is to deepen some of the topics that were already addressed by different authors.

Following the technological evolution, some recruitment practices have suffered significant transformations. Organizations have now demanding challenges to keep up with this evolution. This investigation aims to give a special focus on corporate websites and employee testimonials.

According to Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis (2008), there is theory – signalling theory – that suggests that corporate websites may have a crucial role in the process of job seekers creation of organizational impressions. In this way, for this investigation it is intended to know in which way corporate websites influence the image job seekers develop about the company.

Following the work of Maagaard (2014) employee testimonials could be important tools for attracting and persuading job seekers to join the organization. Still, once this is a relatively recent topic, the literature about it is yet quite scarce. In this way, the other major goal of this study is to analyse the impact online testimonials have on job seekers' perceptions about the organizations.

Finally, based on the work of Wallace, Lings, Cameron & Sheldon (2014), the credibility is a key concept that may affect the success of the message that is being transmitted and, therefore, affect the image of the company as an employer. In this way, the last goal of

this study is to assess in which extent job seekers believe that the online testimonials are credible sources.

3. Methodology

This project consists of an exploratory study that aims to analyze the impact of online testimonials (current employees' appreciation and/or sharing of their own experiences in the company) on job seekers. It was adopted an own initiative methodology and two different approaches are used:

- A) A qualitative study addressed to employers was conducted through semi structured interviews (content analysis);
- B) A quantitative study was addressed to potential candidates through the application of questionnaires (statistical analysis).

3.1. Study A) Employers' perceptions of online testimonials as a recruitment tool

The main goal of this study was to understand how the companies manage the whole process regarding the implementation of employee testimonials, namely: which are their motivations, the reasons behind the use of testimonials, and in which criteria HR practitioners rely on, when it comes to choose and select the right employees to give the testimonials.

3.1.1. Participants

For selecting the companies that could eventually come to participate in the study, the only criterion was having online testimonials in their corporate website. After some research to identify and approach several companies that use online testimonials, this qualitative study was addressed to two renowned Portuguese companies – from the energy and food sector –. Both the interviews were held to HR professionals.

3.1.2 Instruments

For the qualitative study, a semi-structured interview was conducted for each of the two companies and consisted of eleven open questions so that respondents could talk widely about their organizational experiences, especially the process that involves the use of online testimonials (see Annex A).

3.1.3. Procedure

To start this study, a first search was made on corporate websites to do a prior identification of the companies that use online testimonials on their websites, as a strategy for attracting potential employees (see the list in annex B). After identifying and contacting them, only two (Portuguese) companies have expressed their willingness to collaborate in this research.

After contacting the two companies, due to schedule incompatibilities one of them has only shown willingness to reply to the interview by writing down the answers in the guide itself and send it back via email. The other company immediately expressed their availability to schedule a meeting in their offices so they could answer to the interview in person. This second interview has lasted about thirty minutes. For that reason, in this last interview, it was possible to somehow deepen and gather further information about the topics in question.

Nonetheless, both companies have fully collaborated in the qualitative study by responding to all the interview questions despite having preferred – for internal reasons – to stay anonymous during the data analysis.

After all the necessary information being gathered, the following step was the data processing which was done through content analysis.

3.1.3.1. Content Analysis

The analysis of the interviews conducted to the two Portuguese companies was based on the method of Content Analysis (Bardin, 1979; Vala, 1986).

The purpose of the content analysis is to make inferences, based on an explicit logic, about messages whose characteristics were inventoried and systematized (Vala, 1986). The concept of inference is central for us to understand this purpose, once it arises from the passage of description to interpretation. This is what leads the content analysis not to be more merely descriptive but to gain a more interpretative dimension (Bardin, 1979).

Following the steps listed by the author (Vala, 1986) to proceed with the content analysis, it requires, in the first place, the definition of the goals that will hold the investigation. Therefore, four research questions were defined to guide this study A and, consequently, to help drawing the interview guide (for which it is intended to address further). It is aimed to know:

- i) Which are the channels the companies adopted to make its disclosure close to potential candidates;
- ii) Which are the motivations that lead companies to adopt online testimonials in their corporate websites – in contrast to the most traditional methods – as a way of attracting potential candidates;
- iii) How is the practice of online testimonials operationalized;
- iv) From the experience companies have so far with the use of online testimonials, which strategy they intent to follow and in which concrete aspects they plan to invest regarding this practice.

The second moment consisted in the definition of the categories. Through this process, the information becomes logically grouped, ordered and organized, which facilitates the content analysis. Thereafter, for the analysis of results, the interviews' content was allocated in four different tables (as listed in Chapter 4), each for each category, in order to simplify and maximize as far as possible its seizure and interpretation. In this study, the process of categorization was made a posteriori.

Finally, the third phase of this process, following the categories definition, is the analysis of the results of this study A (deeply addressed in the next Chapter 4), based on the alignment between the four research questions (described above), the collected information from the two companies' interviews and the four defined categories. Each category contains the key ideas illustrated with real interview excerpts.

3.2. Study B) The role of corporate websites in job search and the impact of online testimonials on job seekers organizational' perceptions

The great goal of this study “B” was to understand firstly which is the role that corporate websites play in job seekers’ search and in the way they approach to employers; and secondly to access the extent to which job seekers value online testimonials as a company recruitment tool that aims to attract potential candidates.

3.2.1. Participants

This second study consisted of an investigation that was randomly addressed to potential candidates (individuals in the working age) who regularly, or not, access to corporate websites with the purpose of knowing more about the companies to which they may apply for.

In a first stage, it was done a pre-test addressed to 10 individuals, to assess the questionnaires’ viability.

Following this stage, and after the purposes of the questionnaire being validated, 235 questionnaires were submitted until the closing date. However, only 232 of them were accounted for, once 3 of the total were not considered valid: 2 participants were not in the working age – and for that reason did not reflect the desired outcomes –; and 1 was mistakenly repeated.

Consequently, the sample consisted of 232 participants (N= 232, total number of valid questionnaires), of which 165 (71.1%) were female and 67 (28.9%) were male, with a total age ranging from 18 to 64 years old ($M = 27.57$; $SD = 10.091$). As also shown in Table 1, the great majority of the participants has a university education (44.0% bachelor; and 40.1% master degree) and only 15.5% of the total sample (n= 36) reported having a lower level of education (Basic Education – 0.4%; Secondary School – 15.1%).

Regarding the duration of working experience (years), around 75% of total sample referred to be working for less than 5 years. This indicator associated with the average age ($M= 27.57$) suggests that the overall sample is relatively young.

		Number of participants: 232
Age:	n = 232	Mean = 27,57 SD = 10,091
Gender:		
Female	n = 165	(71, 1%)
Male	n = 67	(28, 9%)
Qualifications:		
Basic Education	n = 1	(0, 4%)
Secondary School	n = 35	(15, 1%)
Bachelor	n = 102	(44, 0%)
Masters	n = 93	(40, 1%)
Doctorate	n = 1	(0, 4%)
Years of professional experience:		
Less than 5 years	n = 175	(75, 4%)
5 to 10 years	n = 26	(11, 2%)
10 to 15 years	n = 5	(2, 2%)
15 to 20 years	n = 1	(0, 4%)
20 to 25 years	n = 7	(3, 0%)
25 to 30 years	n = 10	(4, 3%)
More than 30 years	n = 8	(3, 4%)

Table 1 - Characterization of the overall sample

3.2.2. Instruments

The construction of the questionnaire intended to cover two objectives:

- 1) Firstly to validate the importance of the corporate website' role for job seekers, regarding their relationship with recruiting companies;
- 2) Secondly to analyze the impact of online testimonials on job seekers organizational attractiveness.

In this way, the questionnaire is structured in three major parts: the characterization of the respondent (composed by 4 questions); the role played by corporate websites (composed by 6 questions); and the impact of online testimonials (composed by 11 questions).

The questionnaire contains questions of different types (growing degree scales and multiple choices). For some questions, it was used an opinion scale of 5 *Likert* points, ranging from 1 (Nothing Important) and 5 (Very Important); and for others it was used an agreement scale, also of 5 *Likert* points, ranging from 1 (Totally Disagree) and 5 (Totally Agree). The rest of the questions were multiple choices (see Annex C).

3.2.3 Procedure

In order to guarantee the questionnaire's effectiveness and to ensure, as far as possible, the authenticity and reliability of the collected data, in a first stage a pre-test was addressed to a pilot group of 10 individuals to assess the clarity of the questionnaire's structure and questions, and the relevance of the content, taking into account the goals of the study.

After the questionnaire has been validated in the pre-test, it was released by the snowball method and through social networks (Facebook, email, word of mouth etc.) to a much wider and random universe of individuals, with no predefined selection. Although, the only required criterion to participate in the study was the need for them to be in the working age.

The questionnaire was built using the Google Docs template, since it is an easy-to-use tool and makes the treatment and exchange of data easier. After the pre-test – which marked the initial phase of the study's validation – the questionnaire was published online for a period of approximately one month, started on 25th August 2015 and closed on 24th September 2015.

After the questionnaires have been closed, data was saved and organized in an excel file which, in turn, has been exported to the software programme – IBM SPSS Statistics 22 – where the collected information has been treated through the statistical analysis.

4. Analysis of Results

4.1. Study A) Employers' perceptions of online testimonials as a recruitment tool

After collecting the insights from the companies' interviews and, having into account the four research questions originally defined for this study A (as described in Chapter 3), it is proceeded to the organization of that information, by categorizing the responses in four main areas:

- i) **Strategy** – what was (and still remains) the companies' strategy for attracting potential candidates before choosing the testimonials as a recruitment practice (e.g. which are the means used by the companies to promote their dissemination);
- ii) **Motivations** – which are the reasons behind the two companies' choice to adopt online testimonials in their corporate websites;
- iii) **Operationalization** – what is the path that accompanies the online testimonials implementation (e.g. timings and frequency of implementation; selection criteria for the current employees who will give the testimonials; what is the content of the testimonials that is more valued);
- iv) **Future intentions** – which are their following purposes regarding the practice of online testimonials.

This categories' definition facilitates the extrapolation of the information gathered and organized into results. In other words, as said earlier, it allows making inferences about the received information and therefore giving them an interpretation, which enables us to respond, in some way, to the four questions initially set for this study A.

From the analysis of the tables, it was curious to observe – as a first general finding – that both companies have similar positions regarding the use of online testimonials, as the interviews carried to both of them revealed some commonalities that matter to highlight. The first major and important conclusion is that both consider the attractiveness a key factor in the recruitment process.

- i) Which are the channels the companies adopted to make its disclosure close to potential candidates?

Dimension	Company X	Company Y
Strategy	Disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Corporate websites; ○ Social networks; ○ Universities' online platforms. 	Disclosure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Live ○ Digital

Table 2 – Dimension: Strategy

Both companies X and Y adopt different channels for making their disclosure. However, company X only did mention to online features (e.g. specific recruitment channel in companies' website (where online testimonials are included among other strategies for attracting new employees), social networks and universities' online platforms).

On the other side, company Y explained that they privilege the two ways of disclosure to make the company known, so that the companies' disclosure can be more effective and reach more people: both live presence (jobshops, lectures in universities, seminars...) and through digital ways (corporate website, linkedin, talent city, universities' online platforms). The use of online testimonials is only one among other strategies adopted by the company to attract potential employees. This company showed special interest in keeping a close approach to the academic context and giving the students the possibility of knowing better the organizational reality (*“A empresa cada vez mais faz por ter uma aproximação ao contexto acadêmico. Mais do que acompanhar o desenvolvimento tecnológico, também se preocupam em fazer um acompanhamento presencial junto dos potenciais candidatos. Como? Trazendo estudantes para a organização, marcando presença nas mais variadas vertentes (participação em projetos específicos, programas internos especialmente desenvolvidos para os estudantes, case studies.”*)

- ii) Which are the motivations that lead companies to adopt the use of online testimonials in their corporate websites – in contrast to the most traditional methods – as a way of attracting potential candidates?

Dimension	Company X	Company Y
Motivations	<p>Disclosure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “É uma forma de transmitir aos candidatos, de uma forma direta, o feedback de colaboradores sobre a realidade empresa (ambiente de trabalho, funções, oportunidades, etc.)” <p>Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personificação do “feedback sobre o ambiente de trabalho na empresa; (...) e sobre oportunidades no mundo da empresa” ○ “É uma forma de aumentar o conhecimento sobre a cultura organizacional” 	<p>Attraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “A grande vantagem está no formato inovador de como se dá a conhecer o negócio da empresa (...) mais do que apresentar “em forma de texto”, meramente descritivo e impessoal, é explicado em caso real, o que faz com que seja mais credível”; ○ “É uma estratégia que visa mostrar o negócio de uma melhor forma, não apenas descritiva. Não só é mais real como é mais dinâmica e interativa.” <p>Identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “ (...) os meios tecnológicos e os testemunhos online são canais privilegiados para transparecer para fora o que se faz dentro da empresa.” ○ “Nos testemunhos existe uma pessoa em 1ª mão a partilhar as suas experiências, há uma maior personificação e, conseqüentemente, aumenta a credibilidade porque é mais real” ○ “Dando um exemplo concreto, a empresa ainda é vista como sendo uma empresa tradicionalista quando já não é e torna-se essencial desmistificar isto. Os testemunhos online podem ser essenciais nesta desmistificação” <p>Retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “A grande mais-valia está na captação de melhor talento”

Table 3 - Dimension: Motivations

When asked about the reasons that lead to the use of online testimonials, both companies pointed out similar advantages. The first major reason (that covers all the others) is that

the online testimonials are important tools to attract the best talent and to disseminate the organizational message (under the organizational control).

Furthermore, the following reasons were quite referred by the companies, as valid justifications that support the use of online testimonials, as it can be seen in Table 3:

- Its innovative and dynamic format (in contrast to the most traditional methods). As company Y refers *“a grande vantagem está no formato inovador de como se dá a conhecer o negócio da empresa (...) mais do que apresentar “em forma de texto”, meramente descritivo e impessoal, é explicado em caso real, o que faz com que seja mais credível.”*
- The fact that they consist in giving direct feedback about the company, its culture and values, its employees, the organizational environment, the existing job opportunities and current job positions. Company X reveals that *“é uma forma de transmitir aos candidatos, de uma forma direta, o feedback de colaboradores sobre a realidade empresa (ambiente de trabalho, funções, oportunidades, etc.)”*;
- Online testimonials are perfect tools for achieving a specific target (such as students) as they are a “digital generation”. As company Y stresses *“(...) cada vez mais os estudantes são digitais e tecnológicos e, acompanhando a evolução tecnológica, os meios tecnológicos e os testemunhos online são canais privilegiados de transparecer para fora o que se faz dentro da empresa.”*
- Through online testimonials, it is possible to transmit “real” organizational images by the sharing of current employees’ real experiences in the first person and where the “abstract” turns into concrete situations, which is something both companies truly value (*“nos testemunhos existe uma pessoa em 1ª mão a partilhar as suas experiências, há uma maior personificação e, conseqüentemente, aumenta a credibilidade porque é mais real”*).

Following this last point, the creation of real organizational images helps potential candidates to manage their expectations towards the company and, while being in the decision process of whether or not to apply for it, they can better evaluate either if they actually will be a good fit in the company and also if it corresponds to their original standards (*“a grande mais-valia é passagem do abstrato para o concreto. E os potenciais candidatos sentem-se mais identificados e percebem melhor a empresa ao estarem perante testemunhos em*

primeira mão de casos reais e isto também é muito importante na gestão de expectativas (os candidatos sabem melhor para o que vão”);

- Finally, HR professionals from company Y believe that the company is still seen as traditionalist and, more and more, they feel the need to “battle” against this general perception. Therefore, they pointed out online testimonials to be crucial tools to help changing these “old” beliefs about the company, with the power to reverse the organizational image into a modern company, capable of following the technological advancement, and taking advantage of them that to sustain itself in the job market (*“dando um exemplo concreto, a empresa ainda é vista como sendo uma empresa tradicionalista quando já não é e torna-se essencial desmistificar isto. Os testemunhos online podem ser essenciais nesta desmistificação”*).

iii) How is the practice of online testimonials operationalized?

Dimension	Company X	Company Y
Operationalization	<p>Timings for implementation and frequency of updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning: year of 2010; ○ There is no predefined regularity for the update of testimonials. (<i>“Não atualizamos com uma regularidade definida. Atualizamos quando sentimos necessidade de o fazer.”</i>) <p>Selection criteria (for the current employees who will give the testimonials):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Current function; years of working experience; diversity of working experiences. <p>Type of valued content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working environment; job description; mobility opportunities. 	<p>Timings for implementation and frequency of updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning: from the moment the company opted for digital channels; ○ No predefined regularity for the testimonials update. <p>Selection criteria (for the current employees who will give the testimonials):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity of the testimonials pool: different gender and generations (<i>“O maior critério é que haja uma política de diversidade nos testemunhos, o que por si só já faz transparecer a diversidade de gerações e gêneros que se vive na empresa. Em termos de negócio existe uma cadeia de valor muito abrangente e é essencial dar essa perspectiva de diversidade que tanto caracteriza a empresa – este é o maior critério”</i>). <p>Type of valued content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Professional and personal content, with special focus on the professional side (<i>“São valorizadas ambas as vertentes: pessoal e profissional. O que mais importa realçar é que o fim último dos testemunhos passa por transmitir uma proposta de valor e para isso a “vida social” não deve ser dissociada da vida profissional (...). No entanto, importa explicar efetivamente o que se faz (...) dentro do Grupo, mais do que dar muita importância à vertente pessoal, que facilmente poderá ser interpretada como um “clichê”...”</i>).

Table 4 - Dimension: Operationalization

Regarding the moment of the first employee testimonials' implementation, company X started to use it since 2010. In turn, company Y began its implementation as soon as it started to incorporate the digital channels in the company's activities. None of the two companies use to update the testimonials according to a preset regularity. Instead, company X added that the update of testimonials happens when the company feels the need to do it.

In the process of selecting the current employees to give the online testimonials, company X has into consideration their current function in the company, the years of working experience.

On the other hand, company Y emphasize the importance of choosing employees with different backgrounds and working experiences so that the pool of testimonials is as diverse as possible, representing different contexts in the company, in order to, consequently, embrace the greatest number of people to feel identified with it (*“o maior critério é que haja uma política de diversidade nos testemunhos, o que por si só já faz transparecer a diversidade de gerações e géneros que se vive na empresa. Em termos de negócio existe uma cadeia de valor muito abrangente e é essencial dar essa perspetiva de diversidade que tanto caracteriza a empresa – este é o maior critério”*). This company also worries about adapting the testimonials to the characteristics of the target audience.

Additionally, when asked about which type of content companies believe job seekers most value in testimonials, the company X believes that they appreciate more the sharing of the following information: working environment, job description, mobility opportunities. As it is possible to see, this company favours the sharing of professional information

In turn, the company Y believes job seekers value two types of content in testimonials: professional and personal. However the company gives more importance and greater investment to the disclosure of professional matters (e.g. describing the innovative and diversified projects developed in the company). For them, the “personal side” may be vulnerable in one aspect: it could be easily interpreted as being a cliché and it could impact negatively in job seekers credibility (*“são valorizadas ambas as vertentes: pessoal e profissional. O que mais importa realçar é que o fim último dos testemunhos passa por transmitir uma proposta de valor e para isso a “vida social” não deve ser dissociada da vida profissional (...). No entanto, importa explicar efetivamente o que se faz, os projetos*

inovadores e diversificados dentro do Grupo, mais do que dar muita importância à vertente pessoal, que facilmente poderá ser interpretada como um “clichê” o que retira credibilidade aos testemunhos, não significando isto que não seja muito importante.”).

- iv) From the experience companies have so far with the use of online testimonials, which strategy they intent to follow and in which concrete aspects they plan to invest regarding this practice?

Dimension	Company X	Company Y
Future intentions	Disclosure & Attraction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>“Divulgação mais frequente”</i> ○ <i>“Maior visibilidade de testemunhos nas redes sociais”</i> 	Disclosure & Attraction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>“A empresa considera a questão da atratividade tão importante e acredita de tal forma nos meios digitais como meio para chegar aos potenciais candidatos que se encontra neste momento (...) a investir numa nova página “neweb” que será implementada brevemente e que irá contar com diversas formas de divulgação e “promoção” da empresa. Os testemunhos online farão parte integrante e terão um papel fundamental nessas formas de divulgação (...)”</i> ○ <i>“Apostar em mais testemunhos e mais diversificados”</i>

Table 5 - Dimension: Future intentions

Hereupon, the both companies showed to have a positive experience with the use of testimonials so far. Thereafter, for the future, they intend to continue investing in their implementation, particularly by promoting a more frequent dissemination of them; and also giving them an even better and higher visibility, especially by consolidating their presence in social networks (in the case of company X).

Company Y has already outlined two specific strategies for improvement: investing in a larger amount and a greater diversity pool of testimonials; and giving the testimonials a more notoriety. In fact, they find the attractiveness concept of such an importance for the success of recruitment, that they are currently developing a page in their corporate website, which will include various forms of dissemination and promotion of the company, and where the online testimonials will be given a particular importance and prominence (*“a empresa considera a questão da atratividade tão importante e acredita de tal forma nos meios digitais como meio para chegar aos potenciais candidatos que se encontra neste momento numa fase de transição e a investir numa nova página que será implementada brevemente e que irá contar com diversas formas de divulgação e “promoção” da empresa. Os testemunhos online farão parte integrante e terão um papel fundamental nessas formas de divulgação, uma vez que irão para além da página das carreiras, incorporando também uma lógica mais pessoal”*).

4.2. – Study B) The role of corporate websites in job search and the impact of online testimonials on job seekers organizational’ perceptions

After gathering all the interviews information to find the reasons behind employers’ decision of choosing online testimonials as a recruitment strategy, a questionnaire was held to potential employees. With this analysis, it is intended to address the relationship that job seekers establish with two general subjects (the importance of corporate websites and the impact of online testimonials), regarding their approach to companies.

As a starting point a psychometric and a factor analysis was performed for each one of the variables consisted of agreement scales, as it is ahead described (see Annex E).

Factor Analysis

In order to validate if the questionnaire was correctly designed to cover its main goals, a factor analysis with *varimax* rotation was conducted to the eight study variables – that use the agreement scale – included in the questionnaire.

From this analysis, only one variable “Influence of job seekers’ familiarity with the company in their perception of organizational attractiveness” was not included in any of the two extracted components, due to its low saturation level (0,002; 0,468), respectively for each of the components (see Annex E). Although, as it will be seen further in the discussion of results, this variable was taken into account for this work, once it is believed that, even if indirectly, it may affect the role corporate websites represent for job seekers.

This factor analysis has demonstrated the existence of 2 principal components with an explained variance of 57.675%. The first component corresponds to the “*Online Testimonials*” and it explains about 33% of the total variance. The second component corresponds to the “*Corporate Website*” and it has an explanatory variance of about 25%. (see Table 6).

Furthermore, given to these results, the two components of analysis will be taken into consideration, once all the included variables present an adequate saturation level (>5), which also ensures the quality of the measures.

To assess the questionnaire reliability, it was measured the Cronbach's alpha of the two extracted components under analysis. Firstly, in order to verify if there was any variable of which the alpha value could vary the component's alpha, a statistical analysis was performed (using the SPSS) and no variables were found to vary the alpha of both components (see Annex E).

Therefore, the first component "*Online Testimonials*" presented an alpha of 0,819 and the second "*Corporate Website*" had an alpha of 0,685 (which the rounded value equals 0,7), and, in this way, it is possible to assume that the two components are reliable for the purposes of this analysis and may be considered valid.

Factor Analysis

Items	Component 1 (OT)	Component 2 (CW)
3.6. Influence of online testimonials on job seekers' evaluation of a company	,870	
3.5. Influence of online testimonials on the valuation of a company	,822	
3.8. Credibility of online testimonials in job seekers' perspective	,779	
3.7. Linkage between the sharing of the current employees' experiences and the potential candidates expectations about the company	,699	
3.3. Influence of corporate websites' attractiveness in the creation of job seekers' organizational images		,797
3.2. Job seekers perceptions about corporate websites revealing the companies culture		,768
3.1. Influence of websites' functionality perception		,660
% Explained variance	32,858	24,817
Cronbach's alpha	,819	,685

Note: Each of the two factors correspond to the following components: (OT) *Online Testimonials*; (CW) *Corporate Websites*

Table 6 - Factor Analysis

Subsequently, each variable of the questionnaire will be separately analysed in order to deepen the analysis (see Annex F).

1. Means used by jobseekers to search and better know companies:

As it is possible to see in the graphic below, when thinking of applying to a company, 90,5% of the total sample in the survey (n=232) pointed out corporate websites as a tool they resort for getting more information about the company. Right behind it, 65,9% referred to contact acquaintances or friends who work in the company as a way for seeking for organizational information.

On the opposite side, among all the eight options of response, a very few percentage of the sample showed to use other ways for better knowing the companies (0.02%) and about 23.5% (the second less voted) consult newspapers and/or professional magazines in their job search.

From these results, it is possible to conclude that corporate websites could play a decisive role in potential applicants' choice of applying or not to a company. Also, as journals/professional magazines are the second less mean for job seekers searching for companies, it leads us to conclude that the most traditional methods are actually falling into disuse.

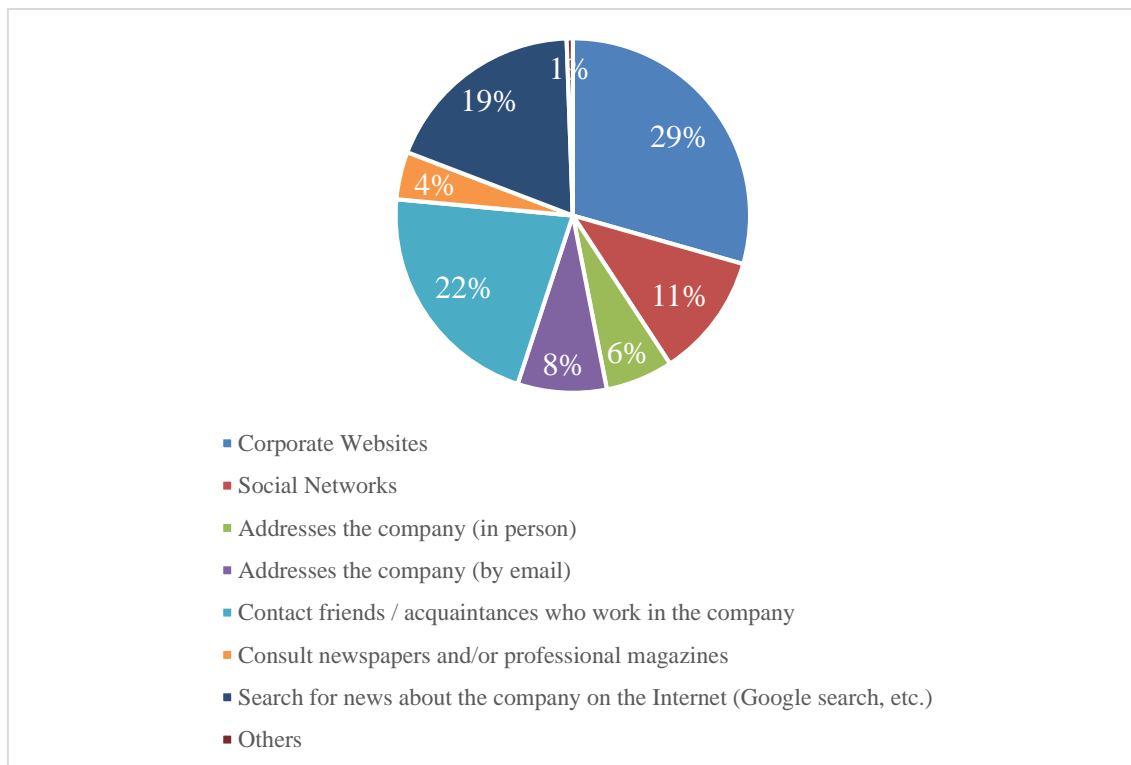


Figure 4 - Means used by jobseekers to search for companies

2. Importance of corporate websites in jobseekers search for companies

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1-nothing important; 5-very important) results indicate that corporate websites are very important tools for potential candidates ($M= 4.25$; $SD= 0.804$). From the total of the survey's sample, the majority (44.7%) gave the maximum value to the importance that the role of corporate websites plays in their search and about 82.3% ($n=191$) gave the two highest levels of importance.

From the total sample of females ($n=165$), about 45% ($n=74$) give the highest importance to corporate websites as a way for searching for companies. As well as females, also about 45% ($n=30$) from the total sample of male ($n=67$), give the maximum value to the importance of corporate websites as recruitment tools.

On the other hand, from the total sample there is no one to consider that the role of corporate websites is not important at all.

Still, there are some interesting differences regarding the qualifications of the sample. The ones that have higher qualifications (Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate) show to value more the importance of corporate websites in their search for companies, since the largest number of respondents of each degree gave it the maximum value of the scale. On the other hand, from the total of the sample that have Secondary School as their qualification ($N=35$), the largest number of responses (about 38.9%) focuses on the level 4 of the scale, as well as the only person who have Basic Education.

Therefore, results to this question stress the importance corporate websites have for potential candidates during their search for gathering companies' insights, especially for the ones that have higher qualifications.

Curiously, there are almost no differences between females and males regarding the importance that they attribute to corporate websites.

3.

3.1. Influence of websites' functionality perception

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the vast majority of the sample (37.5%) consider that the poor functionality' perceptions of corporate websites strongly affects their willingness to continue to explore it ($M= 3.97$; $SD= 0.963$).

However, from the total male sample ($n=67$), the majority (35.8%) show agreement, but do not totally agree, with the statement that the poor functionality of the site is a key barrier to further explore it.

Also, from the total sample, there were no records of respondents that totally disagree with the statement.

There are no significant differences among the five qualification levels of the sample regarding this topic, once the largest number of respondents of each level gave the maximum value of the scale, except the respondents from the Secondary School that were more concentrated in the value 4.

As a result, we can conclude that the poor construction/ functionality of corporate websites may have a significant negative weight in the willingness and interest of potential employees to continue exploring the website to get more information about the company.

3.2. Job seekers perceptions about corporate websites revealing the companies culture

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the great majority (36.6%) of the total sample ($n=232$) agree – but do not totally agree – with the statement that the corporate website's structure, updating state and type of content reflect the culture of the company ($M= 3.77$; $SD= 1.008$). The results are the same for both females (36.4% from the total female sample); and males (37.3% from the total male sample).

There are no significant differences among the five qualification levels of the sample. Although, from the total of respondents who have a master's degree (N=93) the major number of respondents (33,3%) indicate the maximum value of agreement with the statement “*A construção, o estado de atualização e a natureza dos conteúdos do website revelam por si só a cultura da empresa*”. However, from the total of the sample that have bachelor as a qualification (N=102), the largest number of responses (39.2%) reveals that they agree but do not totally agree with the statement.

The great majority of the sample believes that the companies' concern and the care about their own websites (website development, update frequency, nature of the content) may, somehow, reveal their organizational culture.

3.3. Influence of corporate websites' attractiveness in the creation of job seekers' organizational images

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the majority (44.0% of the total sample) consider that the corporate website's attractiveness influence the images that job seekers create about the company ($M= 4. 246$; $SD= 1.776$).

From the total of female sample, the majority (44.2%) totally agree with the statement that the corporate website level of attractiveness influence the organizational images they form about the company.

On the other hand, from the total of the male sample, the majority (52.2%) shows a high level of agreement with the statement but only 35.8% totally agree with it.

The vast majority of respondents, from all levels of qualification, agree or totally agree with the statement that their perceptions about the corporate website's attractiveness influence the creation of their organizational images.

These results lead us to conclude that job seekers perceptions about the attractiveness of corporate websites show to have an overall influence on the organizational images they create about the company. Once more, this fact stresses the importance for the companies to not neglect the importance of their website and to be maintained and preserved in the best way as possible.

Still, it is quite interesting to observe the differences between females and males regarding this topic. Although both of them consider that the attractiveness of the corporate website has an influence in the way they look for companies, results indicate that, for women, the corporate website' attractiveness has a higher influence on the creation of their organizational images, when compared with men.

3.4. Influence of job seekers' familiarity with the company in their perception of organizational attractiveness

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the vast majority (43.1%) of the total sample (n=232) agree – but do not totally agree – with the statement that ($M= 3.879$; $SD= 0.9412$). The results are identical for both females (39.4% from the total female sample); and males (52.2% from the total male sample), and there are also almost no differences among the five qualification levels. In all of them (except the one person with Basic Education), the largest number of respondents show to agree but not totally agree with the statement.

These results suggest that the extent to which job seekers are familiar with the company influences their attractiveness perceptions towards it. In this way, it is possible to assume that the stronger the “weight” of the company name, the greater will be the attractiveness attributed to it by job seekers.

3.5. Influence of online testimonials on the valuation of a company

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the vast majority (39.7%) of the total sample (n=232) did not agree neither disagree when asked if they value the organizations that opted to use online testimonials in their corporate websites ($M= 3.147$; $SD= 1.0257$).

Regarding this topic, there are no important differences of gender that matter to highlight, once all the answers converged to the same direction and the some goes to the differences between the sample's qualification values.

Based on the sample results, it is possible to conclude that the online testimonials do not have yet a significant relevance on the way job seekers value companies. Nonetheless, also job seekers do not underestimate the online testimonials, once they do not affect negatively the value they attribute to companies.

3.6. Influence of online testimonials on job seekers' evaluation of a company

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the great majority (34.5%) of the total sample (n=232) did not agree neither disagree when asked if they think online testimonials may have a decisive influence on their evaluation of a company ($M= 2.871$; $SD= 1.0406$).

Once more, there is not discrepancy of the results for both genders (female and male). Despite the values, all responses converge in the same direction. The same goes to the differences among the qualification values. Once the vast majority of the sample have a bachelor or a master's degree as their qualification levels (N=195), it matters to highlight their behaviors in comparison with the other levels, which have a much smaller dimension. However, in this matter, the largest number of responses of both bachelor and masters are concentrated in the middle of the scale (values 2, 3 and 4).

In general, responses to this question are similar to the last one and reveal that this sample has a neutral position regarding the influence that online testimonials have on job seekers. In this way, these findings suggest that online testimonials are not decisive elements in job seekers' evaluation of companies, valid for both women and men.

3.7. Linkage between the sharing of the current employees' experiences and the potential candidates expectations about the company

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the majority of the total sample (44.8%) reveals that they look for online testimonials to find if the experiences shared by the current employees who give the testimonials reflect the sample's expectations and perceptions about the company (the aspects they most value in a company) ($M= 3.754$; $SD= 0.9420$).

Both the majority of female (43.0%) and male (49.3%) indicate the level 4 for illustrating their level of agreement with this statement. Also the great majority of the three qualification levels (Secondary School, Bachelor and Masters) pointed out the value 4 of the scale, except the one person that have Basic Education and the other who has a Doctorate, who attribute both the value 5 from the scale. However, as they are only to persons of the overall sample, their representativeness is naturally compromised.

From these results, it is possible to assume that when job seekers visualize online testimonials in corporate websites, they seek to find if the content of testimonials reflects the characteristics they (job seekers) most value in a company.

3.8. Credibility of online testimonials in job seekers' perspective

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= do not believe; 5= believe), the majority of the total sample' responses (41.8%) are concentrated in the level 3 of the scale, which reveals that respondents partially believe in the credibility of online testimonials ($M= 3.086$; $SD= 1.0028$)

Regarding the gender behavior in this question, the great majority is clearly concentrated in the middle of the scale (both for female and male), although it is interesting to observe that, when analyzing the scale's extremes, about 10% of the total female sample indicate to strongly believe in the credibility of online testimonials (against 4.5% of the total male sample); and 9.0% of the total male sample refer to not believe at all in the credibility of online testimonials (against 4.2% of the total female sample).

These results may indicate that women are more likely to believe in the credibility of testimonials than men.

Regarding the qualification levels of the sample, there are no differences that matter to highlight, since the majority of responses converge in the middle of the scale (value 3) for each of the three levels: Secondary Schools, Bachelor and Master's degree.

Additional insights regarding job seekers' credibility towards online testimonials

From the overall sample, there were eleven respondents that added their personal observations regarding the credibility attached to online testimonials.

From these eleven respondents, four of them stressed that companies only put positive testimonials and would never include negative ones. This factor means that, from the sample perspective, the company may manipulate the testimonials and it makes that in most times their credibility is compromised.

Other two respondents think that the testimonials are misleading publicity and they are false (although he/she believes that most people will believe them anyway).

Another interesting opinion is that, if on one hand testimonials increase the attractiveness of the company, on the other hand it can give the impression that the company needs in fact to convey the appearance of a good workplace to combat the bad reputation that may have. However, when the employee that gives the testimonial is a referential person from the company, it might increase the testimonial credibility.

Lastly, two respondents believe that the web information is very relevant but only in a first approach. Therefore, more information (through other information sources) is needed to complement the testimonials, in order to the company's knowledge be more reliable.

4. Advantages of online testimonials compared with other more traditional forms of organizational disclosure

The “customization of the message” has been pointed out by the sample of the survey as the most recognized advantage associated with the online testimonials (when compared with the most traditional methods), with a total of 130 responses (56.0% of the total sample has mentioned it, regardless being or not the only considered). Following this, the second advantage most stressed by the sample was the “reduced costs”, with a total of 113 responses (48.7% of the total). The credibility factor was the third most referred advantage, with a total of 90 responses (38.8% of the total sample). Finally, the advantage that gathered fewer supporters was the innovative format, with a total of 47 registrations (about 20.3% of the total sample).

From these results, it is possible to extrapolate that the great asset associated with the online testimonials is in the customization of the message that is transmitted to potential candidates. On the other hand, surprisingly, the “innovative format” is ranked in the bottom of the list. These may be crucial insights for companies to better manage the practice of online testimonials.

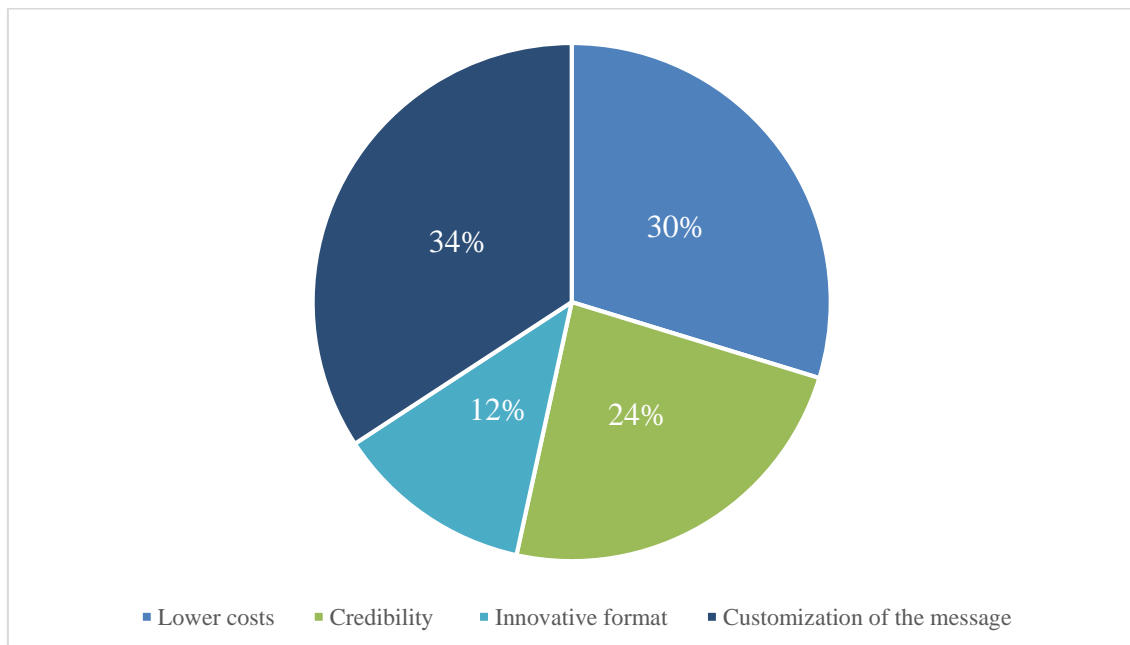


Figure 5 - Advantages of online testimonials compared with other more traditional forms of organizational disclosure

5. Influence of online testimonials on corporate websites' credibility

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 5= strongly agree), the great majority (37.1%) of the total sample (n=232) did not agree neither disagree when asked if they think online testimonials may have a decisive influence on their evaluation of a company ($M= 3.272$; $SD= 0.9933$).

There are no significant differences between the sample' gender in this topic. The high concentration of both responses are in levels 3 (37.0% from the total of the female sample; 37.3% from the total of the male sample) and 4 (35.2% from the total of the female sample; 28.4% from the total of the male sample). Also, there are no significant differences among the different qualification levels that matter to highlight, once the majority of all levels converge in the values 3 and 4 of the scale.

Therefore, it is possible to assume that the great majority of the sample do not consider that online testimonials add value to the credibility attributed to corporate websites, but they also do not consider that online testimonials have a negative impact in the corporate websites' credibility.

6. Most valued aspects in online testimonial

When asked about what they most value in online testimonials (if its content or its graphical appearance; or both in the same way), the majority of the total sample (49.6%) mentioned they equally value both the content and the graphical appearance (n=115). Although, there are 40.9% of the sample that refer to value more the content of the testimonials (n=95); and only 9.5% indicate to prefer the graphical appearance (n=22).

Despite the different values, there are no differences between women and man regarding their preferences in this topic.

From the results, it is possible to assume that both the content and the graphical appearance of the online testimonials are equally valued by job seekers. However, it matters to highlight that, for the sample who has valued one over the other, there are

significantly more respondents that show to value more the content instead of the graphical appearance.

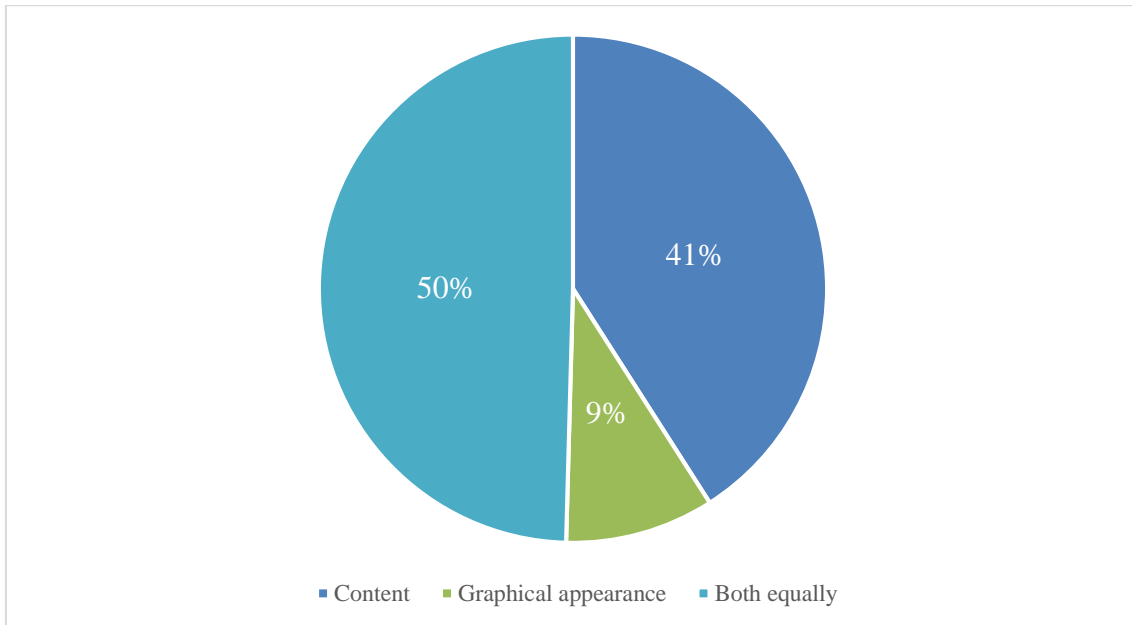


Figure 6 - Most valued aspects in online testimonial

6.1. Level of importance of online testimonials' content

The majority of the sample reveal that the content of online testimonials is highly valued, from which – on a scale from 1 to 5 (1= nothing; 5= very), 40.9% of the answers from the total sample are concentrated in the level 4; and 30.2% indicate the highest level ($M= 3.918$; $SD= 0.9522$).

On the opposite, only 1.7% of the sample referred they do not value at all and 6.0% give little value to the content of online testimonials.

6.2. Level of importance of online testimonials' graphical appearance

On a scale from 1 to 5 (1= nothing; 5= very), the majority of the sample refers that the graphical appearance of online testimonials is quite valued ($M= 3.534$; $SD= 0.9437$), from which the great number of responses are concentrated in levels 3 (34.5% of the answers from the total sample) and 4 (36.2% of the answers from the total sample).

Regarding the gender differences on this topic, from the total female sample, the majority (38.2%) are concentrated in level 4. In turn, from the total male sample, the majority of responses (40.3%) are reflected in level 3.

Based on the results, it is possible to infer that the sample values the online testimonials' graphical appearance. Additionally, although not in a very different scale, it is interesting to observe that women tend to give more importance to the graphical aspects than men.

7. Type of content most valued in online testimonials

When asked about which dimensions should be highlighted in the content of online testimonials (personal and/or professional sharing), the great majority of the total sample (72.0%) mentioned they equally highlight the importance of both dimensions in the content ($n=167$). Although, there are 19.0% of the sample that shows to prefer the sharing of professional experiences in the content of the testimonials ($n=44$); and 9.1% indicate to value more the sharing of personal experiences ($n=21$).

Despite the different values, there are no differences between women and man regarding their preferences in this topic.

From the sample results, it is possible to assume that job seekers would like to see both dimensions (personal and professional sharing) portrayed in the online testimonials' content. However, it matters to highlight that, for the sample who has valued one over the other, there are more respondents that show to value more the sharing of professional experiences (e.g. description of the function performed by the employee in the company) instead of the personal sharing (e.g. personal vision that the employee has about his experience in the company).

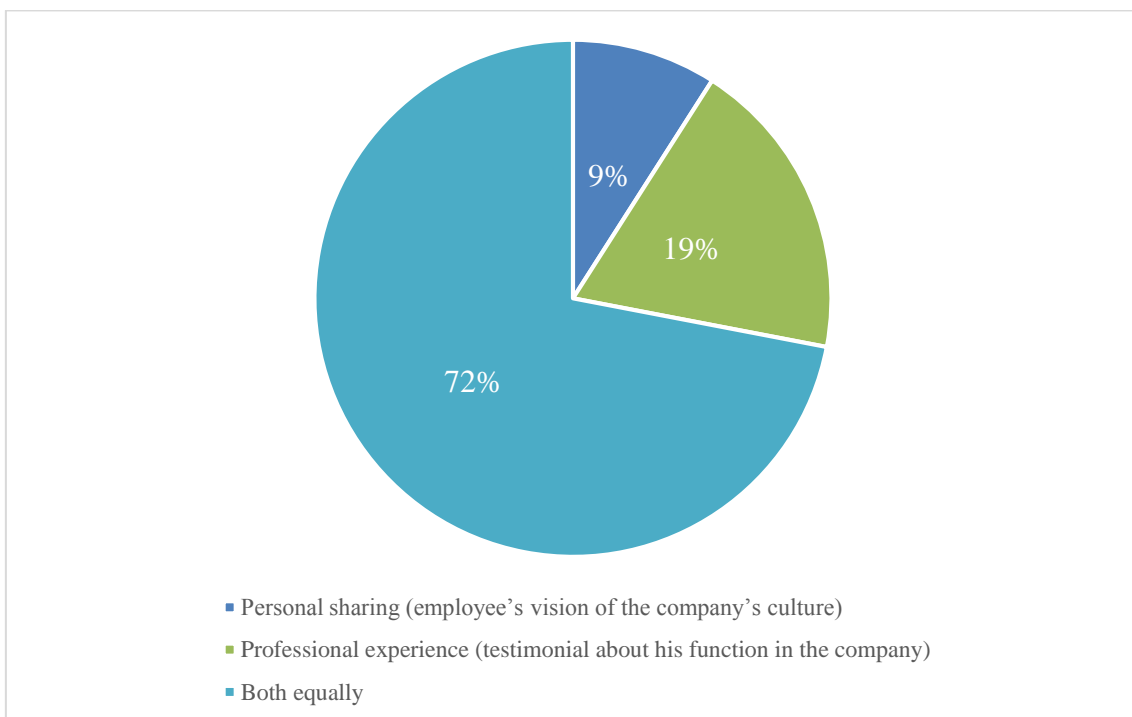


Figure 7 - Type of content most valued in online testimonials

4. Discussion of Results

Derived from the analysis of each variable of the questionnaire, it is now possible to gather all the necessary conditions to meet the three research questions defined in the beginning of this investigation.

- i) In which way corporate websites influence the image job seekers develop about the company:

According to Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis (2008), more and more corporate websites play a central role for organizations and may strongly impact in the process of job seekers creation of organizational impressions. It is now intended to see, based on these study results, in which way corporate websites influence the image job seekers develop about the company.

As a starting point, it was necessary to understand in which position corporate websites are found to be within the job seekers' preferences, as a mean to seek for companies and better know them. Based on the survey's responses, it is possible to conclude that, from all the ways of companies' disclosure, corporate websites are, in fact, the means that job seekers most look for to approach and learn more about the companies to which they may apply for.

From all the participants of the sample, about 82.3% referred that corporate websites play a very important role in their search for companies. Also, there was no one from the sample reporting that corporate websites are not important at all in their search, which leads us to believe that corporate websites actually affect virtually all job seekers. Despite of this result being unanimous, it was interesting to note that there are some differences, even if slightly, regarding the qualification level of the sample. The ones that have higher qualifications (Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate) show to value more the importance of corporate websites in their search for companies than the respondents with lower qualifications. However, it is necessary to have some caveat in data interpretation, since there are substantial differences in the educational qualifications of respondents and almost all of them have a bachelor or a master degree .

One factor that has proved to be helpful for better understanding the impact that corporate websites have on job seekers is the investment organizations make of them. As corporate

websites are the ways that job seekers most resort in a first approach to companies, we can assume that they may represent for job seekers the “face” of those companies. Following this, and based on the survey’s results, job seekers naturally consider that the “care” that companies have with their own websites (how it is designed, its updating state and the type of content) in some way reveal their organizational culture.

Therefore, the degree of attractiveness that job seekers attach to corporate websites has, in fact, influence in the process of creation of their organizational images once – as Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991 suggest – its characteristics serve as cues for them to base their inferences about the organization.

This fact reinforces the importance of companies to not neglect their own websites and also reveals that, when properly managed, corporate websites are very likely to perform crucial tools that strongly benefit organizations. Otherwise, it may even damage the companies’ reputation.

According to the survey’s results, the great majority of the sample reveals that the poor construction/ functionality of the corporate website is a decisive barrier to continue exploring it, which may result in job seekers’ lack of interest towards the company and, consequently, may be very critical for companies, especially during the recruitment process.

Additionally, it was interesting to verify that, despite both women and man consider that the corporate website’s attractiveness influence the organizational images they create, female show to give a higher importance to the effect that the attractiveness of corporate websites has on their image perceptions about the company.

Still regarding this topic, there is a factor that, in parallel, may condition the influence that corporate websites has on job seekers and that is their familiarity with the company. Results from the survey suggest that the level of familiarity they have has impact in their attractiveness towards the company, which leads us to conclude that this constraint may vary the corporate website’s effect on job seekers’ perceptions of organizational attractiveness.

The literature of Braddy, Meade and Kroustalis (2008) sustain this finding by defending that participants’ familiarity with recruiting organizations may moderate the effects of website characteristics on several dimensions of organizational image, such that effects

of corporate websites may be weaker for more familiar organizations. These findings suggest that organizations can manage job seekers' organizational image perceptions through strategic recruitment website design. However, such attempts may always be tempered by job seekers' familiarity with the organization. This research based on the social cognition theory demonstrates that recruitment website characteristics indeed influence the development and modification of organizational image perceptions.

Finally, it is proved that the role of corporate websites – as tools for disseminating information about the company and attracting potential candidates – is becoming increasingly important. Fortunately, based on the two interviews that were conducted to the two companies (during the study “A” of this investigation), everything points towards the fact that companies are, actually, increasingly aware of their corporate website's implications and, therefore, increasingly concerned about investing and making the most of them in order to improve their image and attract the best talent to the company.

- ii) The impact online testimonials have on job seekers' perceptions about the organizations:

Regardless there is still little literature on this subject, it is possible to find already some information that stresses the persuasive dimension associated with the online testimonials (Maagaard, 2014). Furthermore, another major goal of this investigation is to deepen this matter of study by analyzing the impact online testimonials may have on job seekers' perceptions about the organizations.

The first great conclusion we can draw from the questionnaire responses is that the practice of online testimonials has still considerable room to grow. This statement is based on the appreciation that job seekers show to attach to online testimonials.

From the questionnaires' responses it was possible to conclude that online testimonials do not have yet a significant relevance on the way job seekers value companies. Likewise, they do not have expression as decisive elements on the evaluation job seekers make about the company, as well as they add no special value to the credibility job seekers attach to corporate websites.

However, despite these results, it matters to refer that job seekers also do not underestimate the online testimonials and also do not consider that they have a negative impact in the way they look for companies or for corporate website's credibility.

These findings, coupled with the responses we had from the two interviews addressed to the companies, lead us to conclude that the implementation of online testimonials is still a recent practice and is yet under a process of development. For this reason, we can assume that the indefiniteness of the responses given by the sample to the survey is due to the fact that the online testimonials have not reached yet their state of maturity.

Another aspect that was considered to be relevant regarding this topic was to measure the importance job seekers give to both the content and the graphical appearance of online testimonials, and whether they value one over the other. The results have shown that half of the sample equally values both content and the graphical appearance. However, when analyzed separately, there is a significant difference between the respondent that most value the content (40.9%) and the ones that most value the graphical appearance (9.5%).

Once more, it is interesting to highlight that, when asked in which extent they value the graphical appearance of online testimonials, there were slight differences between female and male. Women tend to value more the graphical appearance of testimonials in comparison with men.

Regarding the type of content that is most valued in testimonials, from the questionnaires' results the sample shows that they would like to see reflected in testimonials both dimensions: personal and professional sharing. Although, when analysed independently, the professional experience is more valued in testimonials than the personal sharing. In this parameter, the vision of the two interviewed companies converges with the perspective of the survey's sample: both value more the transmission of professional experience.

It was also asked to respondents to report, in their opinion, what are the benefits of online testimonials when compared to other more traditional tools of disclosure. The personalization of the message was pointed as the main advantage, whereas the innovative format was the least valued. Regarding the personalization of the message, it is interesting to observe that the sample is fully in line with the interviewed companies' perspective, which have shown to most value the personalization of the message as well, once their

final goal is to transmit, through testimonials, their organizational context as real as possible.

However, surprisingly, the second conclusion about the innovative format does not meet the vision of the two interviewed companies, which give special importance to this last aspect.

- iii) In which extent job seekers believe that the online testimonials are credible sources:

Beyond these issues, there is a dimension – the credibility – that has been approached by several authors, such as Wallace, Lings, Cameron & Sheldon (2014), who defend it is a key concept that may affect the success of the transmitted message. In this way, it is now intended to assess in which extent job seekers believe that the online testimonials are credible sources, once it is believed that the credibility concept has a considerable weight in the job seekers' evaluation of online testimonials.

The analysis of the credibility of online testimonials from the job seekers perspective was essentially based on the optional comments added by the survey sample, from which we can highlight the following observations:

- Across the overall comments, the respondents show to be sceptics about the testimonials, once they believe that the company will always manipulate them and negative content will never be transmitted. Therefore, this leads to the conclusion that the testimonials authenticity may easily be put into question.
Still regarding this topic, it might be important to note that when companies were asked about if the testimonials emerged in spontaneously way, no response was obtained;
- It was also noted that sometimes job seekers feel the need of complementing the information received from the web with personal contact (who is seen to be more credible).

Despite some aspects regarding the practice of online testimonials being, somehow, inconclusive and the fact that the testimonials are not yet in a state of maturity, it does not affect the position of the companies towards this practice, who still strongly believe in its

power, as a recruitment tool, to transmit the message of the company and attract potential candidates. Therefore, companies intend to continue investing in the testimonials improvement as well as in their power of "persuasion" on potential candidates.

5. Conclusion

The technological developments have had an increasing impact on the way companies manage their projected image. With the growing emergence of new technological tools, organizations are encouraged to meet new challenges in order to ensure their competitiveness gains.

It is true that the impact has been over time increasingly visible but it is also known that organizations still have much room to improve their practices, particularly regarding the use of online testimonials (depth over this investigation). Through the obtained results based on the perspective of potential candidates (who made part of the sample of this study) it was possible to conclude that although the return has only been partially achieved by potential candidates, it is believed that there is place for this practice to be well succeed in the future. Also companies demonstrate willingness and interest to continue to invest in this field.

Therefore, results from the two studies conducted in the present investigation gave special contributes, not only to understand how companies are dealing with the attractiveness issue – how they are reacting with the adoption of new tools (specifically the online testimonials) and how they intend to place themselves in the market from now on – , but also to clarify the perspective of job seekers regarding these matters – specifically the weight they attach to corporate websites as means of disseminating the organizational message, the importance they (job seekers) attach to online testimonials while companies' strategies of attractiveness, and the impact that the testimonials have in their creation of organizational images.

The first major conclusion from the analysis of the two interviews addressed to the companies is that the attractiveness issue is perceived as being a key factor for the company's success and has a particular relevance during the recruitment process.

It also may be concluded that both companies already strongly invest in several means of disclosure but the investment in the technological tools have been suffering an increasing adhesion, even though the more traditional means continue to be important (namely forms of face disclosure). Additionally, the biggest advantage is in taking profit of two possible ways of disclosure: live and digital.

The reasons that support the companies' adoption of online testimonials are essentially that they are increasingly important tools for attracting the best talent and spreading the organizational image and also because they are privileged channels for reaching the digital generation (such as students).

According to the companies perspective, the strengths of the testimonials are in their innovative format; directly feedback about the company (its culture, values, organizational environment, existing job opportunities and current job positions); capacity of transmitting real organizational images, making the most abstract in the most concrete; and finally, in the personalization of the message (personal stamp). It was also referred that the online testimonials are excellent ways of conveying the image of a modern company, capable of following the technological evolution.

Regarding the process of implementation of the testimonials, there is a major concern for companies in selecting different people, with different backgrounds, roles and experiences in the organization. They value both the sharing of personal and professional matters in testimonials – once for them the great asset is on conveying the idea of complementarity between the employees' personal and professional life – although they attach more importance to the sharing of professional content.

As future intentions, it is unanimous to the two companies that they want to continue investing more and more in the application of online testimonials (both in quantity and diversity) and in giving them more visibility.

On the job seekers side, corporate websites are at the top of the list among their searched means for approaching and knowing the companies better. The website's role as a tool for disseminating the organizational messages has been increasingly recognized by them.

Corporate websites were, then, found to be crucial tools that may strongly influence job seekers' perceptions about the companies. Also the care that companies dedicate to their websites may also influence the perceptions job seekers create about them. For instance, if a corporate website is perceived as not being functional, a potential candidate may not recognize value to the company, and therefore, negative perceptions were already created.

Furthermore, the attractiveness level that job seekers attach to corporate websites influence their organizational images perceptions, as far as websites characteristics serve

as cues for them to base their inferences about the company (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991).

In this way, it turns to be evident that companies that know how to manage their websites in the best way may have significant advantages as well as the companies that have a poorly managed website may have major disadvantages.

Additionally, from the questionnaire's analysis, there are concepts – such as the familiarity job seekers have with a company – that may vary the effect corporate websites have on job seekers' organizational attractiveness perceptions and that matter to be deepen explored in future research.

Regarding the job seekers perceptions about the online testimonials, there are some conclusions that can be draw, based on the questionnaire's analysis. The first major conclusion is that online testimonials have not yet achieved the desired outcomes on job seekers. This assertion is supported by the relatively inconclusive answers that job seekers gave to some questions of the questionnaire regarding this topic.

Therefore, online testimonials showed to have no significant relevance on the way job seekers value companies. However, even if this is true, it is also a fact that online testimonials do not appear to have a negative impact on the way job seekers evaluate companies.

In any case, it is possible to already verify that job seekers recognize some advantages in the online testimonials comparing with other attraction tools. The major advantage is attached to the personalization of the message.

It was also concluded that job seekers value more the content of the testimonials rather than the graphical appearance and the big majority of the sample showed to value equally both the personal and professional sharing, regarding the type of content of the testimonials.

Concerning this topic, there is also a concept that proved to have a considerable weigh in the appreciation of the online testimonials and that is the credibility. From the analysis, this seems to be a sensitive issue, once in some cases job seekers show to be quite skeptical about the veracity of the testimonials, especially because they think that they are under the companies' control and that companies would never share negative

information about themselves. In this way, it would also be interesting to deepen the effect of the credibility source on the online testimonials' valuation in future research.

Limitations

Although the results of this study have led to relevant findings (due to the innovative nature of the subject), it has also faced some limitations that should be emphasized:

First of all, the age of the sample has shown to be a limitation, once the great majority is in between 22 and 25 years, which did not allow comparing differences of behaviors between ages.

The diversity of the sample has also shown to be a constraint in this study as it was particularly unbalanced (there were much more female than male).

The great majority of the sample had a bachelor or a master degree. This is considered a constraint for the present dissertation, once it has limited the analysis regarding the comparisons between respondents of different educational qualifications.

There was a certain difficulty in finding literature regarding the online testimonials, once it is relatively recent. In this way, the little literature available regarding this topic constitutes a limitation of the study.

Finally, during the searching for companies, I found some difficulties in having an overall receptivity of companies to collaborate in this investigation.

Future research

Based on these limitations, I suggest some clues for further research in this area, all of them having into consideration a more diversified sample, in the following dimensions:

Firstly, it should be interesting to analyse this study in a crossing generation perspective, i.e, having a more diversified sample regarding the ages, so it would be possible to identify contrasts between generations.

It should be also interesting to do the same analysis with a more balanced sample regarding the different educational qualifications, so it would be possible to observe if there were contrasts between individuals with lower and higher educational levels.

Thirdly, it would be important to have a more balanced sample, so the conclusions could be richer in terms of gender differences.

Finally, it would be also interesting to have a more diversified sample regarding the geographical space, in order to assess if there are differences between the most rural and city dwellers means.

As it was possible to observe throughout this work, the technological advancements brought a whole new world of opportunities for companies to improve their practices and the online testimonials are part of that world. Despite having not yet reach their state of maturity, it is evident that it is a subject that has still much room to grow and, on a note of hope, that promises important developments in the attraction field, as there is a mutual advantage for job seekers and companies in using this tool. Companies will more and more invest in this kind of practices and, in a few years, we will be here assisting at the increasing impact it will have on job seekers' perceptions of organizational attractiveness.

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Annexes

Annex A – Interview Guide

Sou aluna do ISCTE-IUL e estou neste momento a realizar a minha tese de mestrado na área da Gestão dos Recursos Humanos.

O tema da tese está relacionado com o recrutamento online e pretende aferir o impacto que a atratividade dos testemunhos online tem nos potenciais candidatos.

Venho por este meio pedir a vossa colaboração para que, com o vosso importante contributo, consiga alcançar os objetivos desejados.

1. Quais os meios de divulgação que a empresa utiliza para se dar a conhecer?
2. Porque razões a empresa optou pela utilização de testemunhos online no website da empresa, como estratégia de recrutamento para atrair potenciais candidatos?
3. Quais as vantagens que atribuem à utilização dos testemunhos online comparativamente com outras estratégias de atratividade utilizadas no recrutamento?
4. Além dos testemunhos online, que outros instrumentos utilizam atualmente para atrair potenciais candidatos?
5. Em que momento a empresa sentiu necessidade de implementar os testemunhos online nos seus websites?
6. Com que regularidade atualizam os testemunhos?
7. Que conteúdos (e.g. descrição de funções, *work-life balance*) entendem que os potenciais candidatos mais valorizam nos testemunhos online?
8. Quando a empresa utiliza os testemunhos online para atrair potenciais candidatos, os testemunhos são espontâneos?
9. Quais os critérios (e.g. por função, por idade) utilizados pela empresa para escolher os colaboradores que dão o testemunho?
10. Em termos económicos, quais os custos efetivos e ganhos comparativos com outras estratégias de atratividade?
11. Para a empresa, que implicações práticas têm os testemunhos online junto dos potenciais candidatos?
12. Na vossa opinião, que aspetos podem ser melhorados?

Annex B – Research of companies that use online testimonials in their websites

Food Industry:

Danone

COMMUNICATION

JOB **PEOPLE**

Communication teams shape the reputation of the company and its brands in a sustainable manner among stakeholders: employees, consumers, opinion leaders... They provide actions with meaning, reinforce Danone's credibility and bring employees together around the Group's culture, thus creating value over the mid-term. Acting as adviser, Communication helps define key messages and identify relevant communication channels.

EXTERNAL & INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MANAGER

Lúcia T. External & Internal Communication Manager
Generalist Business

I've already spent 9 years in Danone, enjoying wonderful experiences, new projects and challenges all the time with amazing people around me. I'm really fortunate to see myself "have learnt and grown so much in a really special place". At first in Human Resources where I've crossed different areas: recruitment, employer branding and internal communication. I've then joined Corporate Communication. I chose this function because I consider it to be a strategic area, a key driver both for employees and external stakeholders. I love this healthy mix made of internal and external communication as well as the connection with the Group and colleagues from other Business Units. Lots of passion, excellence in execution and a touch of dream. That's how I got there.



Nestlé

Ana Fagulha



ANA FAGULHA - Human Resources Generalist

Entrei na Nestlé há um ano, através de um estágio curricular. Recordo-me de procurar na altura uma empresa dinâmica, open mind e que, acima de tudo, compreendesse a motivação e as fragilidades de um recém-licenciado. Mas "There's more to life at Nestlé"! Todos os dias tenho à minha espera uma equipa extraordinária, preparada para me integrar e para contribuir para o meu crescimento pessoal e profissional.

Com a mesma energia com que me desejam "Bom dia com (Mokambo e) Recursos Humanos", os meus colegas apostam na minha formação e satisfação no trabalho.

É, de facto, uma empresa forte em chocolate, mas igualmente forte na gestão de pessoas! Mesmo nas pausas com KIT KAT, as expectativas e a motivação dos seus Colaboradores estão em primeiro lugar. Por tudo isto, acredito que a Nestlé faz o alinhamento perfeito entre as necessidades e ambições da empresa e o desejo por parte dos colaboradores em chegarem mais longe. What else?

Sumol + Compal

testemunhos

"Em 2009 temos um novo desafio pela frente! A criação de uma grande equipa e o nosso profissionalismo são fundamentais para que possamos olhar o futuro com optimismo!"

Luís Marques

Director de Mercados de Exportação

"Entrei na Compal em Dezembro de 1997 como assistente de gestor de produto. Trabalhar numa empresa nacional de produtos de grande consumo, onde a inovação é o "mote" e onde todo o trabalho de construção da marca passa pelas nossas mãos, revelou-se uma oportunidade ímpar para adquirir as bases no início da minha formação. Após 4 anos no Marketing recebi o convite para ir para área comercial e aí a oportunidade para conhecer o outro lado – os Clientes, onde depois de ter gerido várias contas da RAM e Cash&Carry entre 2001 e 2004, assumo a responsabilidade de gestão da actividade comercial do Canal Cash&Carry e dos Distribuidores nas Regiões Autónomas. Em 2009 temos um novo desafio pela frente! A criação de uma grande equipa e o nosso profissionalismo são fundamentais para que possamos olhar o futuro com optimismo!"

Energy Sector:

EDP

Testemunhos

Tenho oportunidade de desenvolver o meu carreira numa empresa de topo, dinâmica e inovadora, com equipas internacionais, e que atua como uma grande equipa que colabora e incrementa na todo o velar individual.

Nuno Miguel Têmpao
Engenheiro das Máquinas, Portugal

For me, a job offer to work at EDP represents an opportunity to not only join one of the most talented teams in the renewable energy sector, but also to play a role in shaping how people around the world think about alternatives to traditional power generation.

Tim Harrell
Computer Science, USA

É uma aprendizagem contínua num contexto de grande diversidade de temas, geográfica e pessoal.

Rita Almeida Inês
Economista, Portugal

Working for EDP is for me great adventure. Diversified and challenging tasks, international environment and interesting people - all this enriches my personality, creates opportunities for broadening the knowledge and developing my skills and leaves no place for being bored.

Azucena Kufal
Finance and Marketing, Management and Marketing, Ireland

Ser EDP é investir no futuro, fazendo o melhor no presente.

Feliciana Marques
Area Técnica, Brazil

Trabajar en una empresa como EDP me hace creer que se puede contribuir al desarrollo del mundo, que las cosas se vuelven posibles cuando se sabe investigar, descubrir y aplicar. EDP es como un hogar tanto para los que quieren aprender, como para los que están dispuestos a enseñar y a compartir sus experiencias. De este modo el trabajo en EDP se transforma en un código de conocimiento y práctica que consigue abrir puertas y solucionar problemas.

Adriana Brancu
Engineer, Romania

My enthusiasm for staying green has become stronger since working with EDP. I like that we not only help produce clean energy, we also practice conservation techniques at work! I am very fortunate to work in such a wonderful atmosphere!

Sarah Olson
HR, USA

Galp

Testemunhos dos nossos colaboradores



Jorge Manuel Gonçalves - Responsável Distribuição

O programa de trainees da Galp Energia abriu-me as portas a um mundo que, pela sua multiplicidade e dimensão, é único no panorama empresarial Português. Uma experiência enriquecedora, repleta de desafios e oportunidades!



Sonia Ramos - Gestor de Mercado Grandes Clientes

O desempenho de diferentes funções em áreas diversas na Galp Energia, desde a Planificação, planeamento operacional à área operacional, permitiram-me acumular conhecimentos e experiências fundamentais para o exercício de funções de maior responsabilidade que hoje exerço na área de negociação. Considero que na Galp Energia os bons desempenhos são reconhecidos e conduzem a novas e enriquecedoras oportunidades de desenvolvimento e de crescimento pessoal e profissional.



Hugo Pereira - Diretor Unidade Biocombustíveis

A Galp Energia oferece hoje um conjunto de oportunidades e desafios impar em Portugal. A corrente internacionalização do Grupo, a diversificação das atividades em todo o setor de Energia, assim como o impacto das suas ações na vida de todos nós, é sem dúvida um atrativo único para o desenvolvimento de carreiras de um futuro gestor.



Sandra Aparicio - Gestor Área Ambiente

Iniciei o meu percurso profissional como Trainee na Galp Energia em 1998, a experiência tem sido bastante gratificante. A Galp Energia representa a oportunidade de consolidar a minha formação técnica-científica, permiti-me alcançar novas áreas de competências e estruturar um percurso profissional ambicioso e desafiante. O vasto universo de atividades da Galp Energia, e seu forte compromisso na formação e desenvolvimento dos seus Colaboradores, proporciona as oportunidades necessárias a um excelente desempenho e ao sucesso, a nível profissional e pessoal.



Paula Mendes - Gestor de Área Eletroprodutora e distribuidoras regionais

A minha experiência na Galp Energia tem sido muito enriquecedora. Entrei para a ainda GDP em 1999, vinda de uma multinacional americana, com a percepção de que seria um grande desafio e uma oportunidade de crescimento pessoal e profissional. Em 2002 fui desafiada a integrar a área comercial desta empresa, deixando para trás dez anos de gestão na vertente financeira, ou seja, abandonei a minha zona de conforto. Hoje na Comercialização Portugal, na Unidade de Negócio do Gás Natural, vejo que tomei a decisão certa. Faço parte de uma equipa dinâmica, motivada, onde imparo o bom ambiente de trabalho e a preocupação genuína na gestão eficaz de colaboradores, tendo sempre com foco a criação de valor.

REN

PROGRAMA VIVA

Em 2012 deu-se continuidade ao programa de acolhimento e integração da REN – Programa VIVA. Este está estruturado de forma a apoiar e facilitar a rápida e adequada integração de novos colaboradores, sendo também um programa aberto a antigos colaboradores.

Iniciado em 2010, o Programa VIVA tem sido recebido com entusiasmo e satisfação ao longo destas cinco sessões. O balanço tem sido verdadeiramente positivo e encorajador, uma vez que a participação e o interesse revelados pelos novos e antigos colaboradores comprovam e espelham a importância desta iniciativa, também reforçada pela elevada satisfação global dos participantes e colaboração total dos oradores.

"Para os novos colaboradores, o Programa VIVA é um momento de acolhimento e integração, e para os antigos colaboradores, assim como também para os novos, é uma oportunidade de conhecerem melhor o Grupo o que fazemos e como o fazemos, esclarecendo cada procedimento e cada processo. Para além disso, esta iniciativa é também um momento de convívio que permite que colaboradores de áreas completamente distintas se conheçam, o que, eventualmente, de outra forma não seria possível".

Testemunho de Vanessa Pereira (Responsável de Formação e Desenvolvimento)

Retail Sector:

Sonae



ANA CRISTINA SANTOS

- ▶ **Human Resources Technician**
- ▶ **Human Resources (Sonaecom)**

In 1998, I officially started my career with Optimus. The telecommunication area was an enigma for me. However, the willingness to embrace this challenge was enormous.

[more](#)



CARLOS MARQUES

- ▶ **Senior Consultant II**
- ▶ **Product and Services Mark (WeDo Technologies)**

When I was invited to join the Sonaecom team, Bizdirect at the time, one of the things which seemed more attractive to me was the opportunity of training with a large number of institutions with whom Sonaecom had established partnerships.

[more](#)

Annex C – Questionnaire

Sou aluna do Mestrado de Gestão de Recursos Humanos do ISCTE-IUL e estou neste momento a realizar a minha dissertação sobre o impacto que os testemunhos online (apreciação ou partilha de experiências dos próprios colaboradores da empresa) têm nos potenciais candidatos. O estudo incide sobre a população que se encontra no mercado de trabalho e que acede aos websites corporativos com o intuito de conhecer melhor as empresas às quais se poderá candidatar.

O preenchimento do questionário demora cerca de 5 minutos, sendo necessária a resposta a todas as questões. Qualquer resposta é anónima e confidencial, destinando-se exclusivamente aos propósitos desta investigação.

Muito obrigada por toda a colaboração e pelo tempo dispensado!

***Obrigatório**

Sexo *

- Feminino
- Masculino

Idade *

Habilitações Literárias *

- Ensino Básico
- Ensino Secundário
- Licenciatura
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento
- Outra

Quantos anos tem de experiência profissional? *

- Menos de 5 anos
- 5 a 10 anos
- 10 a 15 anos
- 15 a 20 anos
- 20 a 25 anos
- 25 a 30 anos
- Mais de 30 anos

1. Quando se candidata a uma empresa, quais os meios que utiliza para a conhecer melhor? Assinale os principais. *

- Website da empresa
- Redes Sociais
- Dirige-se à empresa (presencialmente)
- Dirige-se à empresa (por email)
- Contacta amigos/ conhecidos que trabalham na empresa
- Consulta jornais/ revistas de cariz profissional
- Procura notícias sobre a empresa na internet (pesquisa google, etc.)
- Outros:

2. Numa escala de 1 a 5 (1-Nada importante, 5-Muito importante), qual a importância do papel que os websites das empresas desempenham na sua pesquisa? *

1 2 3 4 5

Nada importante Muito importante

3. Numa escala de 1 a 5 (1-Discordo Totalmente, 5-Cocordo Totalmente), qual a sua concordância face às seguintes afirmações. *

3.1. A má funcionalidade de um website é uma barreira decisiva para continuar a explorá-lo.	1	2	3	4	5
3.2. A construção, o estado de atualização e a natureza dos conteúdos do website revelam por si só a cultura da empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
3.3. A atratividade do website influencia a imagem que crio da empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
3.4. O “peso” do nome da empresa interfere no grau de atratividade que lhe atribuo.	1	2	3	4	5
3.5. Valorizo as empresas que utilizam testemunhos online nos seus websites.	1	2	3	4	5
3.6. Os testemunhos online podem condicionar decisivamente a minha avaliação da empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
3.7. Procuro perceber nos testemunhos online se as experiências relatadas vão de encontro às características que mais privilegio numa empresa.	1	2	3	4	5
3.8. Os testemunhos online são credíveis.	1	2	3	4	5

Ocorre-lhe algum comentário relativamente à credibilidade dos testemunhos online?

4. Na sua opinião, quais as motivações das empresas para optarem pelos testemunhos online para se apresentarem junto dos potenciais candidatos Assinale os principais. *

- Custos reduzidos
- Credibilidade
- Formato inovador
- Personalização da mensagem

5. Numa escala de 1 a 5 (1-Nada importante; 5-Muito importante), em que medida considera que os testemunhos online são importantes para aumentar a credibilidade dos websites das empresas? *

1 2 3 4 5

Nada importante Muito importante

6. O que mais valoriza nos testemunhos online? Selecione a opção principal.*

- Conteúdo
- Aspeto gráfico (atratividade do formato e caracterização do colaborador que dá o testemunho: idade, experiência, cargo, nível hierárquico, escola onde se formou, etc.)
- Ambos igualmente

Numa escala de 1 a 5 (1-Nada importante; 5-Muito importante), qual o grau de importância que atribui às seguintes dimensões: *

6.1. Conteúdo dos testemunhos online	1	2	3	4	5
6.2. Aspeto gráfico dos testemunhos online	1	2	3	4	5

7. Na sua opinião, qual das seguintes dimensões deveria ser destacada nos testemunhos online? Selecione a opção principal. *

- Partilha pessoal (visão que o emissor tem da cultura da empresa)
- Experiência profissional (testemunho sobre a função que exerce)
- Ambas igualmente

Annex D – Sample characterization**Tabela Age vs Gender**

			Gender		Total
			Feminine	Male	
Age	18	Contagem	4	3	7
		% do Total	1,7%	1,3%	3,0%
	19	Contagem	3	1	4
		% do Total	1,3%	0,4%	1,7%
	20	Contagem	6	3	9
		% do Total	2,6%	1,3%	3,9%
	21	Contagem	7	2	9
		% do Total	3,0%	0,9%	3,9%
	22	Contagem	23	7	30
		% do Total	9,9%	3,0%	12,9%
	23	Contagem	16	8	24
		% do Total	6,9%	3,4%	10,3%
24	Contagem	34	15	49	
	% do Total	14,7%	6,5%	21,1%	
25	Contagem	23	3	26	
	% do Total	9,9%	1,3%	11,2%	
26	Contagem	7	6	13	
	% do Total	3,0%	2,6%	5,6%	
27	Contagem	4	3	7	
	% do Total	1,7%	1,3%	3,0%	
28	Contagem	6	2	8	
	% do Total	2,6%	0,9%	3,4%	
29	Contagem	5	0	5	

	% do Total	2,2%	0,0%	2,2%
30	Contagem	3	2	5
	% do Total	1,3%	0,9%	2,2%
31	Contagem	1	1	2
	% do Total	0,4%	0,4%	0,9%
32	Contagem	2	1	3
	% do Total	0,9%	0,4%	1,3%
33	Contagem	2	0	2
	% do Total	0,9%	0,0%	0,9%
35	Contagem	2	0	2
	% do Total	0,9%	0,0%	0,9%
41	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
42	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
48	Contagem	1	3	4
	% do Total	0,4%	1,3%	1,7%
50	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
51	Contagem	1	1	2
	% do Total	0,4%	0,4%	0,9%
52	Contagem	2	0	2
	% do Total	0,9%	0,0%	0,9%
53	Contagem	1	1	2
	% do Total	0,4%	0,4%	0,9%
54	Contagem	1	1	2

	% do Total	0,4%	0,4%	0,9%
55	Contagem	2	1	3
	% do Total	0,9%	0,4%	1,3%
57	Contagem	0	3	3
	% do Total	0,0%	1,3%	1,3%
59	Contagem	2	0	2
	% do Total	0,9%	0,0%	0,9%
60	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
61	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
63	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
64	Contagem	1	0	1
	% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Total	Contagem	165	67	232
	% do Total	71,1%	28,9%	100,0%

Tabela Years of professional experience vs Gender

			Gender		Total
			Feminino	Masculino	
Years of professional experience	10 a 15 anos	Contagem	4	1	5
		% do Total	1,7%	0,4%	2,2%
	15 a 20 anos	Contagem	1	0	1
		% do Total	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
	20 a 25 anos	Contagem	6	1	7
		% do Total	2,6%	0,4%	3,0%
	25 a 30 anos	Contagem	6	4	10
		% do Total	2,6%	1,7%	4,3%
	5 a 10 anos	Contagem	21	5	26
		% do Total	9,1%	2,2%	11,2%
	Mais de 30 anos	Contagem	4	4	8
		% do Total	1,7%	1,7%	3,4%
	Menos de 5 anos	Contagem	123	52	175
		% do Total	53,0%	22,4%	75,4%
Total	Contagem	165	67	232	
	% do Total	71,1%	28,9%	100,0%	

Annex E – Factorial Analysis

	N=232			
	Median	SD	Min	Max
Influence of websites' functionality perception	4,0	0,962	2,0	5,0
Job seekers perceptions about corporate websites revealing the companies culture	4,0	1,008	1,0	5,0
Influence of corporate websites' attractiveness in the creation of job seekers' organizational images	4,0	0,776	1,0	5,0
Influence of job seekers' familiarity with the company in their perception of organizational attractiveness	4,0	0,941	1,0	5,0
Influence of online testimonials on the valuation of a company	3,0	1,026	1,0	5,0
Influence of online testimonials on job seekers' evaluation of a company	3,0	1,041	1,0	5,0
Linkage between the sharing of the current employees' experiences and the potential candidates expectations about the company	4,0	0,942	1,0	5,0
Credibility of online testimonials in job seekers' perspective	3,0	1,003	1,0	5,0

Variância total explicada

Componente	Valores próprios iniciais			Somadas de extração de carregamentos ao quadrado			Somadas rotativas de carregamentos ao quadrado		
	Total	% de variância	% cumulativa	Total	% de variância	% cumulativa	Total	% de variância	% cumulativa
1	3,070	38,374	38,374	3,070	38,374	38,374	2,629	32,858	32,858
2	1,544	19,302	57,675	1,544	19,302	57,675	1,985	24,817	57,675
3	,944	11,796	69,471						
4	,595	7,438	76,908						
5	,539	6,741	83,649						
6	,522	6,529	90,178						
7	,498	6,220	96,398						
8	,288	3,602	100,000						

Método de Extração: Análise de Componente Principal.

Matriz de componente rotativa^a

	Componente	
	1	2
Influence of online testimonials on job seekers' evaluation of a company	,870	,078
Influence of online testimonials on the valuation of a company	,822	,129
Credibility of online testimonials in job seekers' perspective	,779	-,017

Linkage between the sharing of the current employees' experiences and the potential candidates expectations about the company	,699	,289
Influence of corporate websites' attractiveness in the creation of job seekers' organizational images	,067	,797
Job seekers perceptions about corporate websites revealing the companies culture	,107	,768
Influence of websites' functionality perception	,294	,660
Influence of job seekers' familiarity with the company in their perception of organizational attractiveness	-,002	,468

Método de Extração: Análise de Componente Principal.

Método de Rotação: Varimax com Normalização de Kaiser.^a

a. Rotação convergida em 3 iterações.

Confiabilidade -1st Component (Online Testimonials)**Estatísticas de confiabilidade**

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,819	4

Estatísticas de item-total

	Média de escala se o item for excluído	Variância de escala se o item for excluído	Correlação de item total corrigida	Alfa de Cronbach se o item for excluído
Influence of online testimonials on the valuation of a company	9,711	5,973	,680	,753
Influence of online testimonials on job seekers' evaluation of a company	9,987	5,701	,735	,725
Linkage between the sharing of the current employees' experiences and the potential candidates expectations about the company	9,103	6,760	,569	,803
Credibility of online testimonials in job seekers' perspective	9,772	6,463	,582	,799

Confiabilidade - 2nd Component (Corporate Websites)**Estatísticas de confiabilidade**

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,685	3

Estatísticas de item-total

	Média de escala se o item for excluído	Variância de escala se o item for excluído	Correlação de item total corrigida	Alfa de Cronbach se o item for excluído
Influence of websites' functionality perception	8,017	2,337	,483	,615
Job seekers perceptions about corporate websites revealing the companies culture	8,220	2,068	,551	,523
Influence of corporate websites' attractiveness in the creation of job seekers' organizational images	7,746	2,822	,483	,623

Annex F – Outputs

- **Means used by jobseekers to search and better know companies**

	Frequência	%
Corporate Websites	210	29,4%
Social Networks	81	11,3%
Addresses the company (in person)	44	6,2%
Addresses the company (by email)	58	8,1%
Contact friends / acquaintances who work in the company	153	21,4%
Consult newspapers and/or professional magazines	31	4,3%
Search for news about the company on the Internet (Google search, etc.)	133	18,6%
Others	4	0,6%
Total	714	100,0%

- **Importance of corporate websites in jobseekers search for companies**

		2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	3	21	67	74	165
	%	1,3%	9,1%	28,9%	31,9%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	3	14	20	30	67
	%	1,3%	6,0%	8,6%	12,9%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	6	35	87	104	232
	%	2,6%	15,1%	37,5%	44,8%	100,0%

		2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	2	9	14	10	35
	%	0,9%	3,9%	6,0%	4,3%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	1	20	38	43	102
	%	0,4%	8,6%	16,4%	18,5%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	3	6	34	50	93
	%	1,3%	2,6%	14,7%	21,6%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	6	35	87	104	232
	%	2,6%	15,1%	37,5%	44,8%	100,0%

- **Influence of websites' functionality perception**

		2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	8	45	45	67	165
	%	3,4%	19,4%	19,4%	28,9%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	9	14	24	20	67
	%	3,9%	6,0%	10,3%	8,6%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	17	59	69	87	232
	%	7,3%	25,4%	29,7%	37,5%	100,0%

		2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	5	8	13	9	35
	%	2,2%	3,4%	5,6%	3,9%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	9	26	30	37	102
	%	3,9%	11,2%	12,9%	15,9%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	3	25	26	39	93
	%	1,3%	10,8%	11,2%	16,8%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	17	59	69	87	232
	%	7,3%	25,4%	29,7%	37,5%	100,0%

- **Job seekers perceptions about corporate websites revealing the companies culture**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	2	11	46	60	46	165
	%	0,9%	4,7%	19,8%	25,9%	19,8%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	3	9	14	25	16	67
	%	1,3%	3,9%	6,0%	10,8%	6,9%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	5	20	60	85	62	232
	%	2,2%	8,6%	25,9%	36,6%	26,7%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	0	3	9	16	7	35
	%	0,0%	1,3%	3,9%	6,9%	3,0%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	4	12	24	40	22	102
	%	1,7%	5,2%	10,3%	17,2%	9,5%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	1	5	27	29	31	93
	%	0,4%	2,2%	11,6%	12,5%	13,4%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	5	20	60	85	62	232
	%	2,2%	8,6%	25,9%	36,6%	26,7%	100,0%

- **Influence of corporate websites' attractiveness in the creation of job seekers' organizational images**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	0	5	20	67	73	165
	%	0,0%	2,2%	8,6%	28,9%	31,5%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	1	0	7	35	24	67
	%	0,4%	0,0%	3,0%	15,1%	10,3%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	1	5	27	102	97	232
	%	0,4%	2,2%	11,6%	44,0%	41,8%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	1	0	7	13	14	35
	%	0,4%	0,0%	3,0%	5,6%	6,0%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	0	3	13	44	42	102
	%	0,0%	1,3%	5,6%	19,0%	18,1%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	0	2	7	44	40	93
	%	0,0%	0,9%	3,0%	19,0%	17,2%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	1	5	27	102	97	232
	%	0,4%	2,2%	11,6%	44,0%	41,8%	100,0%

- **Influence of job seekers' familiarity with the company in their perception of organizational attractiveness**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	4	9	42	65	45	165
	%	1,7%	3,9%	18,1%	28,0%	19,4%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	1	3	10	35	18	67
	%	0,4%	1,3%	4,3%	15,1%	7,8%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	5	12	52	100	63	232
	%	2,2%	5,2%	22,4%	43,1%	27,2%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	3	3	8	15	6	35
	%	1,3%	1,3%	3,4%	6,5%	2,6%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	0	5	25	47	25	102
	%	0,0%	2,2%	10,8%	20,3%	10,8%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	2	4	19	37	31	93
	%	0,9%	1,7%	8,2%	15,9%	13,4%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	5	12	52	100	63	232
	%	2,2%	5,2%	22,4%	43,1%	27,2%	100,0%

- **Influence of online testimonials on the valuation of a company**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	3	10	14	5	3	35
	%	1,3%	4,3%	6,0%	2,2%	1,3%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	5	18	44	25	10	102
	%	2,2%	7,8%	19,0%	10,8%	4,3%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	3	21	34	24	11	93
	%	1,3%	9,1%	14,7%	10,3%	4,7%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	11	49	92	55	25	232
	%	4,7%	21,1%	39,7%	23,7%	10,8%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	3	10	14	5	3	35
	%	1,3%	4,3%	6,0%	2,2%	1,3%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	5	18	44	25	10	102
	%	2,2%	7,8%	19,0%	10,8%	4,3%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	3	21	34	24	11	93
	%	1,3%	9,1%	14,7%	10,3%	4,7%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	11	49	92	55	25	232
	%	4,7%	21,1%	39,7%	23,7%	10,8%	100,0%

- **Influence of online testimonials on job seekers' evaluation of a company**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	13	50	54	39	9	165
	%	5,6%	21,6%	23,3%	16,8%	3,9%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	9	14	26	15	3	67
	%	3,9%	6,0%	11,2%	6,5%	1,3%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	22	64	80	54	12	232
	%	9,5%	27,6%	34,5%	23,3%	5,2%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	2	9	15	7	2	35
	%	0,9%	3,9%	6,5%	3,0%	0,9%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	6	31	36	24	5	102
	%	2,6%	13,4%	15,5%	10,3%	2,2%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	14	24	29	22	4	93
	%	6,0%	10,3%	12,5%	9,5%	1,7%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	22	64	80	54	12	232
	%	9,5%	27,6%	34,5%	23,3%	5,2%	100,0%

- **Linkage between the sharing of the current employees' experiences and the potential candidates expectations about the company**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	3	9	44	71	38	165
	%	1,3%	3,9%	19,0%	30,6%	16,4%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	2	8	13	33	11	67
	%	0,9%	3,4%	5,6%	14,2%	4,7%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	5	17	57	104	49	232
	%	2,2%	7,3%	24,6%	44,8%	21,1%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	1	1	13	17	3	35
	%	0,4%	0,4%	5,6%	7,3%	1,3%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	2	7	24	48	21	102
	%	0,9%	3,0%	10,3%	20,7%	9,1%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	2	9	20	39	23	93
	%	0,9%	3,9%	8,6%	16,8%	9,9%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	5	17	57	104	49	232
	%	2,2%	7,3%	24,6%	44,8%	21,1%	100,0%

- **Credibility of online testimonials in job seekers' perspective**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	7	32	71	38	17	165
	%	3,0%	13,8%	30,6%	16,4%	7,3%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	6	16	26	16	3	67
	%	2,6%	6,9%	11,2%	6,9%	1,3%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	13	48	97	54	20	232
	%	5,6%	20,7%	41,8%	23,3%	8,6%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	1	10	14	8	2	35
	%	0,4%	4,3%	6,0%	3,4%	0,9%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	7	20	41	26	8	102
	%	3,0%	8,6%	17,7%	11,2%	3,4%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	5	18	42	19	9	93
	%	2,2%	7,8%	18,1%	8,2%	3,9%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	13	48	97	54	20	232
	%	5,6%	20,7%	41,8%	23,3%	8,6%	100,0%

- **Advantages of online testimonials compared with other more traditional forms of organizational disclosure**

	Frequência	%
Lower costs	113	29,7%
Credibility	90	23,7%
Innovative format	47	12,4%
Customization of the message	130	34,2%
Total	380	100,0%

- Influence of online testimonials on corporate websites' credibility**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	7	19	61	58	20	165
	%	3,0%	8,2%	26,3%	25,0%	8,6%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	4	17	25	19	2	67
	%	1,7%	7,3%	10,8%	8,2%	0,9%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	11	36	86	77	22	232
	%	4,7%	15,5%	37,1%	33,2%	9,5%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	1	0	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	2	7	11	12	3	35
	%	0,9%	3,0%	4,7%	5,2%	1,3%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	5	15	41	32	9	102
	%	2,2%	6,5%	17,7%	13,8%	3,9%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	4	14	33	33	9	93
	%	1,7%	6,0%	14,2%	14,2%	3,9%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	11	36	86	77	22	232
	%	4,7%	15,5%	37,1%	33,2%	9,5%	100,0%

- **Most valued aspects in online testimonial**

	Frequência	%
Content	95	40,9%
Graphical appearance	22	9,5%
Both equally	115	49,6%
Total	232	100,0%

- **Level of importance of online testimonials' content**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	2	7	37	67	52	165
	%	0,9%	3,0%	15,9%	28,9%	22,4%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	2	7	12	28	18	67
	%	0,9%	3,0%	5,2%	12,1%	7,8%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	4	14	49	95	70	232
	%	1,7%	6,0%	21,1%	40,9%	30,2%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	0	0	13	13	9	35
	%	0,0%	0,0%	5,6%	5,6%	3,9%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	1	9	16	44	32	102
	%	0,4%	3,9%	6,9%	19,0%	13,8%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	3	5	20	38	27	93
	%	1,3%	2,2%	8,6%	16,4%	11,6%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	4	14	49	95	70	232
	%	1,7%	6,0%	21,1%	40,9%	30,2%	100,0%

- **Level of importance of online testimonials' graphical appearance**

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Feminino	Contagem	1	18	53	63	30	165
	%	0,4%	7,8%	22,8%	27,2%	12,9%	71,1%
Masculino	Contagem	2	10	27	21	7	67
	%	0,9%	4,3%	11,6%	9,1%	3,0%	28,9%
Total	Contagem	3	28	80	84	37	232
	%	1,3%	12,1%	34,5%	36,2%	15,9%	100,0%

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Doutoramento	Contagem	0	0	0	1	0	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,0%	0,4%
Ensino Básico	Contagem	0	0	0	0	1	1
	%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,4%	0,4%
Ensino Secundário	Contagem	0	3	12	13	7	35
	%	0,0%	1,3%	5,2%	5,6%	3,0%	15,1%
Licenciatura	Contagem	1	14	36	33	18	102
	%	0,4%	6,0%	15,5%	14,2%	7,8%	44,0%
Mestrado	Contagem	2	11	32	37	11	93
	%	0,9%	4,7%	13,8%	15,9%	4,7%	40,1%
Total	Contagem	3	28	80	84	37	232
	%	1,3%	12,1%	34,5%	36,2%	15,9%	100,0%

- **Type of content most valued in online testimonials**

	Frequência	%
Personal sharing (employee's vision of the company's culture)	21	9,0%
Professional experience (testimonial about his function in the company)	44	19,0%
Both equally	167	72,0%
Total	232	100,0%

Annex G – Online Testimonials’ Credibility (Facultative Comments)

1. Só acho que uma empresa não colocaria testemunhos "menos positivos" daí não achar que estes sejam relevantes e preferir dirigir-me a um conhecido que seja funcionário da(s) empresa(s) do meu interesse.
2. Acho que os testemunhos online podem ser valorizados, mas são também uma ferramenta que pode ser facilmente manipulada pelas empresas. Em nenhum site de empresa, a mesma coloca maus testemunhos ou sequer medianos, o que dá sempre a ideia de manipulação positiva dessas mensagens.
3. Um testemunho de uma experiência profissional no site de determinada empresa em que trabalhamos pode parecer uma espécie de "publicidade enganosa" sendo que também me parece que não se encontrarão más experiências ou experiências menos nesses testemunhos.
4. Trabalhando eu na área da publicidade, tenho uma visão das coisas mais profunda, os testemunhos são, na sua maioria, falsos. Se estiver errado nesta opinião, tenho a certeza que mesmo não sendo, poderiam ser à vontade, pois a maioria do público acreditava, tal e qual como muitas outras coisas que aparecem.
5. Nunca será publicado um mau testemunho.
6. As empresas não têm muito a ganhar no que diz respeito aos testemunhos de colaboradores no website. Se por um lado pode aumentar a atratividade da empresa (uma vez que os colaboradores de todas as empresas parecem adorar lá trabalhar), por outro lado pode passar a imagem de que a empresa realmente precisa dessa aparência de bom local de trabalho para combater a má reputação que possa ter. Claro está que existe uma seleção natural dos colaboradores para passarem a boa imagem da empresa, bem como alguma pressão em fazer parecer que a empresa, em alguns casos, não pareça assim tão má. Não são muitas as pessoas que têm coragem de dizer a verdade acerca do que pensam do local de

trabalho. Por fim, quando se trata de alguma figura de peso dentro e fora da empresa (ainda tendo em conta de que se tem a ganhar se a imagem passada for boa) a mensagem é um pouco mais credível.

7. Os testemunhos, por razões óbvias, nunca farão críticas à empresa. Isso é um fator que nem sempre me faz acreditar na total veracidade dos testemunhos.
8. Acrescenta uma maior credibilidade aos testemunhos quando podemos encontrar tanto positivos como negativos. Todos os pontos de vista são importantes não só os bons mas também os maus. Uma empresa não tem só pontos positivos. É importante saber com o que contar e ponderar.
9. Acredito que sejam verdadeiros mas que apenas sejam escolhidos os positivos.
10. As informações via Web ou Online são bastante relevantes e uteis para uma primeira apreciação. Mas só por si não são suficientes. É indispensável um conhecimento pessoal com a empresa.
11. É necessário confrontar os conteúdos dos testemunhos com outras fontes de recolha de informação sobre a entidade, nomeadamente os seus documentos de prestação de contas, relatórios de atividade e outras informações complementares obtidas junto de operadores do mercado ou autoridades públicas (v.g., reguladores).