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**The Impacts of the Employer Branding Experience on Affective
Commitment: A Multiple Case-Study**

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Master in Management

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BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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Mahatma Gandhi once said “live as if you were to die tomorrow and learn as if you were to live forever”. This year has been challenging in many ways, but the opportunity that I had to learn from hard-work and constantly exceed my own boundaries has brought me to the conclusion of this important stage in my personal and academic lives.

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Resumo

Num ambiente empresarial cada vez mais competitivo, interconectado e transparente, as marcas devem oferecer experiências memoráveis aos seus trabalhadores, caso queiram diferenciar-se e construir uma posição competitiva sólida. Neste sentido, reconhecer a importância do compromisso dos trabalhadores para com a sua marca empregadora, bem como fornecer um ambiente no qual os mesmos optam por ficar, através do desenvolvimento de experiências de trabalho mais positivas, é crucial.

Desta forma, o presente estudo centra-se, por um lado, em compreender a forma como as iniciativas internas relacionadas com a gestão da marca do empregador estão a ser desenvolvidas, implementadas e avaliadas em cinco das empresas mais reconhecidas em Portugal.

Por outro lado, visa validar um modelo de experiência com a marca do empregador, onde a experiência do trabalhador é conceptualizada de acordo com as dimensões sensorial, intelectual e emocional. Nesse sentido, o modelo enfatiza a experiência com a marca do empregador como antecedente do nível sentido de compromisso afetivo dos trabalhadores em relação à sua marca empregadora.

Os principais resultados alcançados permitem concluir que, para a primeira parte do estudo, as cinco empresas em análise reconhecem a importância de utilizar uma estratégia interna relacionada com a marca do empregador, ainda que esta seja maioritariamente diluída nas práticas de envolvimento das suas pessoas. Para além disso, embora seja uma prática comum nestas empresas, em geral, as organizações não possuem uma forma concreta de avaliar o impacto da marca do empregador no nível de compromisso dos trabalhadores.

Quanto à validação do modelo de experiência com a marca empregadora, os principais resultados mostram que este foi parcialmente validado para a amostra que compõe as empresas estudadas. O compromisso afetivo para com a marca empregadora foi explicado simultaneamente pelas experiências sensorial, intelectual e emocional em apenas uma das organizações estudadas, enquanto nas outras quatro esse construto foi explicado por apenas duas das três dimensões da experiência. Além disso, a experiência sensorial foi considerada uma dimensão explicativa do compromisso afetivo para com a marca empregadora nas cinco empresas analisadas.

Palavras-Chave: Marca do empregador; Trabalhadores; Compromisso afetivo; Experiência sensorial; Experiência intelectual; Experiência emocional.

JEL Classification System: J24 – Human Capital; Skills; Occupational Choice; Labour Productivity;
J28 – Safety; Job Satisfaction; Related Public Policy.

Abstract

In an ever more competitive, interconnected and transparent business environment, brands must offer memorable experiences to their employees, if they wish to differentiate themselves and build a solid competitive position. Therefore, recognising the importance of employees' commitment to their employer brand, as well as providing an environment in which they choose to stay, through the development of positive work experiences, is crucial.

In this sense, the present study focuses, in one hand, on comprehending the way in which internal employer branding initiatives are being currently developed, implemented and evaluated in five of the most recognised companies in Portugal.

On the other hand, it aims to validate an employer brand experience model, where the employee experience is conceptualized according to sensory, intellectual and emotional dimensions. In this sense, the model stresses the employer branding experience as an antecedent of the felt level of employees' affective commitment towards their employer brand.

The main results achieved allow to conclude that, for the first part of the study, the five companies under analysis recognize the importance of using an internal employer branding strategy, even though this strategy is mainly diluted within their people engagement practices. Although being a common practice in these companies, they do not have a concrete way to evaluate the impact of employer branding on employees' level of commitment.

As for the validation of the employer branding experience model, the main results show that it was partially validated for the sample composing the studied companies. The affective commitment to the employer brand was found to be explained by simultaneously the sensory, intellectual and emotional experiences in only one of the studied organizations, while on the other four this construct was explained by only two of the three experience dimensions. Furthermore, the sensory experience was found to be an explicative dimension of the affective commitment towards the employer brand across the five considered companies.

Keywords: Employer branding; Employees; Affective commitment, Sensory experience; Intellectual experience; Emotional experience.

JEL Classification System: J24 – Human Capital; Skills; Occupational Choice; Labour Productivity;
J28 – Safety; Job Satisfaction; Related Public Policy.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACEB – Affective Commitment to the Employer Brand

ACS – Affective Commitment Scale

CCS – Continuance Commitment Scale

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

EB – Employer Branding

EDP – Energias de Portugal

EVP – Employer Value Proposition

HR – Human Resources

IT – Information Technologies

MLRM – Multiple Linear Regression Model

NCS – Normative Commitment Scale

RBV – Resource-based View

SIT – Social Identity Theory

TCM – Three-Component Model

T&D – Training and Development

WLB – Work-life Balance

Introduction

In the context of an extremely competitive business environment, it is defended by many authors that there is a possibility that, in the future, competition for the best employees will be as fierce as competition for customers.

In this sense, the Human Resource function acquires a more strategic position and employer branding has become a top priority for organizations in their quest to win the “war of talent” (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010; Martin *et al.*, 2005; Maurya & Agarwal, 2019; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017). Companies with strong employer brands can potentially reduce the cost of employee acquisition, improve employees’ relations, increase retention and even offer lower salaries for comparable staff to firms with weaker employer brands (Berthon *et al.*, 2005).

In the last few years, branding has been extended to other domains within the organizational context, and it is no longer limited to the relationship between the company and its external stakeholders. Instead, it is embedded within the employment relationship, where cultural and social processes take place and brand symbolism is viewed, not only in its ability to attract customers and investors, but also to foster employees’ commitment (Russel & Brannan, 2016).

In this regard, it is possible to understand that the Human Resource and Marketing Management disciplines have been converging towards the development of employer branding as an attraction and retention tool for talent management, with inferred positive impacts on the creation of certain policies that foster commitment, retention and a positive employer brand experience, that ultimately lead to positive organizational outcomes.

Here, employer branding acquires significant importance, as the employer faces the challenge of transforming the culture, work environment and the employee experience itself into a valuable brand, one that should meet employees’ expectations.

Ambler and Barrow (1996) were two of the first authors to outline the term employer branding, defining it as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company.”

However, even though employer branding is a very studied theme within the existing literature, the same does not apply to the employee experience with the brand, which has only gained expression in the last few years. According to Johnson (2019), the employee experience can be defined as “the cumulative sum of all the moments throughout the employees’ lifecycle that affects their perspectives and perceptions regarding their employer”.

Since most of the released work has been focusing on the way in which the brand is communicated to external parties, there are not many insights that address the impacts of employer branding in fostering employees’ affective commitment towards the employer brand.

Having this in mind, studying employer branding and, more particularly, the way in which internal employer branding initiatives are being developed, implemented and evaluated in five of the most recognized companies in the industry in which they operate, in Portugal, is one of the main objectives of the present study.

The choice of the five studied companies is related to their projection in the Portuguese market, being highly representative of the sectors in which they operate, and due to the sector dispersion. In this sense, they are associated to high levels of brand awareness not only between potential candidates, but also among current employees.

Furthermore, the present investigation aims to understand whether these companies' employees' levels of affective commitment to their employer brand is explained through the employer branding experience. In order to explore these relationships, the Organizational Commitment tool developed by Allen and Meyer (1996) and the Affective Commitment to the Employer Brand Scale (ACEB) of Fernandez-Lores et al. (2015) will be applied.

In this sense, the structure of this project begins with a literature review concerning the fundamental concepts underlying the reality to be analysed. Afterwards, the methodology is presented, resorting to a multiple case study. Here, the description of the different data collection and treatment techniques that were carried out will be explained.

Subsequently, the diagnosis and characterization of the chosen organizations to conduct the multiple case study will be performed. In order to understand what is already being implemented in this field, a comparative study on the current employer branding practices will be performed across the five considered organizations.

In the subsequent chapter, the analysis of the conducted organizational commitment and affective commitment surveys will be carried out, in coordination with the results' discussion, which leads to broader lines of conclusions, as well as to future research guidelines.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

1.1. Human Resources and Marketing Management: A Fine Line

In a market that is increasingly competitive and demanding, it is important that managers begin to understand the value of the most important asset in any organization: its employees.

However, the needed talent that organizations seek to attract and retain is having more and more options in what concerns the choice of the best place to work (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010). In this context, Human Resource Management has been occupying a central role in nowadays' organizational structures, with the need to innovate and come up with new strategies to retain valuable talent inside the company, as a source of competitive advantage. In this sense, to guarantee that employees deliver adequate services to customers, employers must focus on new ways to engage them (Boukis, Gounaris & Lings, 2017; Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019).

Until recent years, only external parties of a company were considered as customers of a brand's offer. However, the focus is being shifted to "internal customers" (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Ewing *et al.*, 2002; Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015), since they are the audience of a valuable internal product: employment.

That way, most employer branding efforts have been focusing on promoting the firm's brand to potential customers and candidates. However, these studies fail to address how employer branding should also be developed to reach companies' existing employees (De Stobbeleir *et al.*, 2016; Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019; Vaijayanthi *et al.*, 2011).

In this sense, the interaction between Human Resource and Marketing Management begins, as it becomes relevant to understand the impact that internal marketing strategies have on the development of positive organizational outcomes, such as commitment towards the employer brand. According to Martin *et al.* (2005), despite the historically weak links between the Marketing and the HR functions, there is a growing realisation that aligning the external corporate image of organizations with internal employee identity and commitment provides a key opportunity for HR to earn greater voice in business.

1.2. Internal Marketing

Kotler and Keller (2015) define marketing management as "the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through the creation, delivery, and communication of superior customer value". Other authors have also defined it as the "set of methods and means available to an organization that allow it to promote, among its target, favourable behaviours towards the achievement of its own objectives" (Lindon, 2011).

The focus of marketing efforts can be both internal and external. Beyond the traditional focus on how to create a desirable positioning to a company's products in the minds of consumers, the literature

has been focusing a lot on employer branding as a tool to attract potential employees, in the form of external marketing.

Even though this is a very current topic, it is important to stress the impacts of this strategy on current employees, with the concepts of internal marketing and internal branding emerging as two of the main interfaces between the Marketing and the HR Management literatures.

Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) stress that “external marketing of the employer brand establishes the firm as an employer of choice and thereby enables it to attract the best possible workers.” However, once recruits have been attracted by the brand, they develop a set of assumptions about the company’s employment proposition that they will carry into the company, thereby supporting its values and enhancing their commitment towards it. In this sense, while external marketing enables the organization to attract talented workforce, internal marketing helps in motivating and retaining employees who further act as brand advocates of their respective firms (Van Hoyer, 2008).

As mentioned by Berthon et al. (2005), “an organization's personnel are the first market of any company” and jobs must be considered, in this sense, as the internal product to be traded between employee and employer (Ewing *et al.*, 2002).

According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991), quoted by Berthon et al. (2005), “job products must attract, develop and motivate employees, thereby satisfying the needs and wants of these internal customers, while addressing the overall objectives of the organization”. In this sense, current employees represent the internal public that a company must consider when communicating corporate identity, since it is widely believed that a favourable reputation in the eyes of employees can be a major factor contributing to productivity (Gray & Balmer, 1998).

Companies can invest in powerful internal marketing initiatives, in order to build and sustain a positive environment to its employees. While Kotler (1994) defines internal marketing as “the task of successfully hiring, training and motivating able employees to serve the customer well”, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) propose that it helps the company to create a workforce that is difficult for other firms to imitate, by systematically exposing the workers to the value proposition of the employer brand, which will mould the organizational culture around the corporate goals.

Ambler and Barrow (1996) defend that internal marketing contributes to employee retention by using the brand to reinforce the concept of quality employment and contributing to the employees’ willingness to stay with the company. Other authors argue that “the final goal of internal marketing is to develop a workforce committed to the goals of the organization” (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016), generating brand loyalty and organizational productivity (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

In this sense, it is possible to assume that internal marketing helps to expose employees to the most rooted characteristics, goals, strategies, values and traits of a company, contributing to the development of a widespread culture that reflects its processes and ways of doing business (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

1.3. Branding and Internal Branding

Branding, on the other hand, regards the process of giving meaning to a specific company, product or service, by creating and shaping a brand in the consumers' minds (Kotler & Keller, 2015). A brand can assume different meaning levels: (1) it has the power to bring certain brand attributes to the consumers' minds; (2) it carries out certain functional and emotional benefits; (3) it communicates the company's values; (4) it represents the company's culture; (5) it projects a certain personality; and (6) it suggests the type of consumer who may be a user of the product (Kotler, 1994).

Barrow and Mosley (2005) conceptualize the idea of a brand and its link to emotions as the associations or attributes related to the brand that are embodied in the form of thoughts and perceptions evoked in the minds of the ones that experience it, generating emotional and sensorial responses that reside in the people's minds. Therefore, it can be assumed that without internal branding initiatives that create a positive experience for employees, external branding loses its purpose (Mandhanya & Shah, 2010).

In this sense, it becomes relevant to explore the concept of internal branding, which aims to develop a workforce that is committed to a set of values and organizational goals defined by the company (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Internal branding, according to Bergstrom et al. (2002), refers to three things: communicating the brand effectively to the employees; convincing them of its relevance and worth; and successfully linking every job in the organization to deliver the brand essence".

For Hoppe (2018), internal branding involves communicating the corporate brand's values and investing on the education of employees to fulfil the brand promise, and its goal is "to strengthen the corporate brand, namely by facilitating brand-supportive behaviours from employees".

Internal branding forms an important aspect of the employer branding framework, with research suggesting that internal branding shapes perceptions of organizational identity and culture, thereby facilitating better employee outcomes (Backhaus, 2016) and the enhancement of the overall employment experience. Maurya and Agarwal (2019) further add that the level of stability of organizational members and the company's culture itself depends a lot on the implemented internal employer branding activities, which must be focused on aligning employees' social, economic and functional expectations with the organization's strategy and objectives.

In this sense, internal-oriented employer branding initiatives focus on the existing employees, that is, those who are experiencing the brand and will act as its ambassadors via positive word-of-mouth, ultimately improving the employer brand (Bhasin *et al.*, 2019; Tanwar & Prasad, 2017).

1.4. Employer Brand Equity and Brand Personality

The marketing literature has been highlighting the concept of brand equity as "the set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to a firm's customers" (Aaker, 1991).

Keller (1993) introduced the notion of customer-based brand equity, which relates to the effects of brand knowledge and recognition on the customers' response to the brand's marketing efforts.

Transferring this topic to the employer branding field, it is possible to state that brand equity can be applied on the research regarding the effects of brand knowledge on a company's potential and existing employees.

In this sense, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) introduced the term "employer brand equity" to refer to the desired outcomes of employer branding activities that should function as a driving force to encourage existing employees to stay with and support the company.

Just as a traditional brand, an employer brand has both personality and positioning (Berthon *et al.*, 2005). Aaker (1996), in the conceptualization of her model to describe the profile and traits of a brand, recognizes the existence of five key dimensions of brand personality.

The author uses human traits to refer to the brand aspects, such as in what concerns traits of: (1) sincerity, assuming that the brand is authentic, honest and genuine; (2) excitement, meaning that the brand is daring, spirited, imaginative and up-to-date; (3) competence, signifying that the brand is reliable, intelligent and successful; (4) sophistication, meaning that the brand is upper-class and charming; and (5) ruggedness, assuming that the brand is tough and strong.

The author believes that "the personality traits associated with a brand, such as those associated with an individual, tend to be relatively enduring and distinct" and that they "come to be associated with a brand in a direct way by the people associated to it, such as the brand's user imagery, which is defined as the set of human characteristics associated with the typical user of a brand, the company's employees or CEO".

The comprehension of brand personality becomes relevant in the context of the present study, since it is argued that "an employer brand possesses a personality and an image in the mind of the labour market, which can create tight bonds between the brand and its workforce (Ewing *et al.*, 2002). Also, authors such as Dutton and Dukerich (1991) and Reiche (2008), recognise that if people identify with the personality emphasized by the brand and integrate it into their own self-concept, they become aligned with it, being more willing to stay with the organization and potentially work harder and smarter.

1.5. Employer Branding

One of the central concepts within the present research is employer branding, which has been associated to the application of branding principles to Human Resource Management (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The emergence of this topic has been associated to the idea that human capital brings value to companies and, by investing in the development of relevant skills among employees, they will be able to experience performance enhancement (Ahmad *et al.*, 2020; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

This approach has been relying on the resource-based view (RBV), first introduced by Barney (1991), which states that the characteristics of a company's resources, such as in what concerns its value,

rareness, immutability and substitutability, can contribute to the development of sustainable competitive advantage. Bhasin et al. (2019) further add that while it is easier for competitors to imitate technology, what competitors cannot imitate is talent and, in this sense, talented and committed employees become as important to the company's success as its own clients.

It is important to notice, however, that employer branding is a relatively recent topic in both the academic and the business worlds, being first introduced to a management audience by Simon Barrow at the 1990 CIPD Conference (Velooso, 2018). However, the research on this topic by many authors has been leading to its recognition as a relevant matter in organizations, with growing awareness that it plays a central role in attracting and retaining the best talent.

Here, the author refers to employer branding as representing “all the benefits offered by a company that together create a unique employer enthusiasm in the minds of job applicants and employees, and that makes them willing to join or stay with the company”.

In the perspective of Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), employer branding represents “an organization's efforts to promote, both inside and outside the company, a clear vision of what makes it different and desirable as an employer.”

On the other hand, for Llyod (2002), employer branding has been portrayed as “the organization's endeavours to demonstrate to the current and prospective employees that it is an alluring workplace”, since it shows the company's identity and reflects the assumption of the organization's value as an employer.

Mandhanya and Shah (2010) define employer branding as a targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a firm, conveying the company's value proposition and reflecting its culture, systems, attitudes and employees' relationships.

For Tanwar and Prasad (2017), the employer brand constitutes “a set of tangible and intangible benefits offered by the organization to attract potential and retain existing employees”.

More recently, Tumasjan et al. (2020) refer to the concept of employer branding as “an approach in which the HR processes revolve around the creation, development, and protection of employer brand equity in an ongoing interaction with potential and incumbent employees to achieve sustainable competitive advantages in the labour market”.

So far, employer branding research has adopted three different lenses when studying the phenomenon (Maxwell & Knox, 2010): the external perspective, that focuses on the perceptions of outsiders; the internal perspective, highlighted on the perceptions of employees; and the construed external perspective, translated on employees' perceptions of the perceptions of outsiders.

Focusing on the internal perspective, Maurya and Agarwal (2019) mention that the overall objective of internal employer branding is related to the core values and beliefs towards the creation of an employee-friendly work environment and the development of a culture that is strong enough to bond the entire organization. According to the same authors, this can be achieved by fostering a communication

strategy, primarily focused on employees, which translates the company's values, association benefits, and other differentiating factors for mutual growth and development.

In this sense, similar to consumer marketing, the concept of employer branding has been emerging towards the delivery of emotional benefits to achieve employee commitment and foster feelings of loyalty and trust (Ahmad & Daud, 2016; Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009; Maurya & Agarwal, 2019), leading to desirable behaviours, such as in what concerns propensity for further development and desire to stay in the company.

Therefore, the intangible potential of internal employer branding is strategically supported in talent acquisition, retention and organizational attractiveness initiatives among the companies' stakeholders (Maurya & Agarwal, 2019). Thus, organizations that invest considerable time and money on developing their employer brand, experience high growth rates, high levels of employee commitment and are less impacted by people issues.

Researchers are of the view that the investments in employer branding are not just for attraction and retention of qualified workers, but it is a strategic process that impacts employees' attitudes and behaviours (Bahsin *et al.*, 2019). In this sense, the employer brand makes a promise to its current and potential employees regarding the experience that they will encounter in the organization, just as corporate brands make a promise to their customers about their products and services (Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019).

Accordingly, and as advanced in the three-dimensional conceptualization by Ambler and Barrow (1996), the employer brand, like any other product's brand, has the ability to offer employees monetary and material rewards (economic benefits), development and useful activities (functional benefits), and feelings of belongingness, direction and purpose (psychological benefits).

1.5.1. An Employer Branding Model

According to Aaker (1997), brand associations are “the thoughts and ideas that a brand's name evokes in the minds of consumers” and they determine the brand's image. In its turn, the concept of brand image is related to the product-related and the non-product related attributes, as well as the functional and symbolic benefits that come from using the brand's product or service, both incorporated in the brand associations that reside in the customers' minds (Keller, 1993).

The employer brand image can be defined in terms of functional benefits, such as in what concerns elements of employment that are desirable in objective terms, such as the salary and benefits. The symbolic benefits relate to aspects concerning the company's prestige and reputation, as well as the feelings of social approval it evokes (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Sharma, 2019).

In this sense, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) developed a framework that connects multiple concepts considered relevant to understand the employer branding dynamics (Figure 1.1). According to the model, potential employees develop an employer brand image that derives from the brand associations

that are an outcome of the company’s employer branding, ultimately impacting the overall employer attractiveness in the labour market.

When considering current employees, the downside of the model needs to be considered. Here, the concept of employer brand loyalty appears, representing “the commitment that employees make to their employer” (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004), and that is shaped by behavioural elements of the organizational culture, as well as attitudinal elements of the organizational identity.

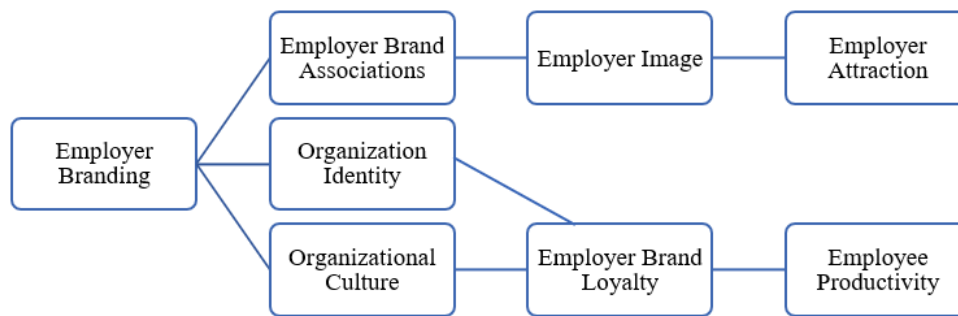


Figure 1.1: Employer Branding Structure

Source: Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004: 5

Schein (1985) defines organizational culture as “the basic assumptions and values learned by the members of the organization, passed on to newcomers, and evidenced in the ways in which people behave in the workplace”. Concerning organizational identity, Albert and Whetten (1985) define it as “what is central, enduring and distinctive about an organization”. In the model, both organizational culture and identity are influenced by employer branding.

The framework goes further, adding that employer brand loyalty is related to organizational commitment. Similar to what happens with a loyal consumer of a brand, who repeatedly purchases the same product or service, in employer branding terms, this means that the employee feels attached to the employer brand and wishes to remain in the company, even under times of crisis.

The authors complete the framework by establishing a relationship between strong employer brand loyalty and the existence of employee productivity. Therefore, the model conceptualizes that it is possible for companies to improve their productivity by attracting the best candidates during recruitment processes and by promoting the commitment of existing employees, leading to higher levels of retention.

1.5.2. A Social Identity Perspective

One theory that has been highly applied in the theme of employer branding and its relationship with current employees is the Social Identity Theory (Bussin & Mouton, 2019; Hoppe, 2018; Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019; Maxwell & Knox, 2010).

Hatch and Schultz (2002) argue that organizational identity broadly refers to what members perceive, feel and think about their organizations. As such, organizational identity can be described as a common and shared collective understanding of the distinctive values and characteristics of an organization. In this regard, it is important to distinguish between perceived organizational identity and interpreted external image (Dutton *et al.*, 1994; Lievens *et al.*, 2007).

The first construct relates to the perceived image that the organizational members have regarding the company they work for, involving what they perceive as differentiating in their organization, as a place to work. The second involves the members' assessment of others' perceptions regarding the organization's image, suggesting that employees value how outsiders think of their employer and make inferences about how their employer is perceived by the outside world, which may shape their own behaviours (De Stobbeleir *et al.*, 2016).

In this sense, Social Identity Theory could be applied to the study of organizations, since the organization is seen as a social group, organizational identity is similar to group identity, and that organizational identification occurs when an individual incorporated that identity within his/her own self-concept.

Using the SIT perspective, it is possible to understand that organizational identity is also conceptually identical to employer brand image, and the strength of employees' identification with the company has been found to increase when they perceive its identity to be attractive and unique (Dutton *et al.*, 1994).

In this sense, SIT provides confirmation that both internal and external perspectives matter for explaining certain organizational outcomes, shaping how employees perceive different workplaces (De Stobbeleir *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, it is possible to assume that employer branding increases organizations' attractiveness and retention, as current and potential employees pursue membership in places that improve their self-concept (Bussin & Mouton, 2019).

1.5.3. Employer Value Proposition

The employer value proposition (EVP) is associated to employer branding and, according to Minchington (2013), it can be defined as the "set of offers and associations provided by the organization in exchange for the capabilities, experience, and skills that an employee brings". It should be unique, attractive, and relevant in order to be effective in the task of attracting and retaining talent.

Berthon *et al.* (2005) are of the view that a desirable employer differentiates itself from other employers by providing its employees with economic, development, social, application and interest benefits.

According to these authors, social value encompasses the work environment and relationship with superiors and colleagues. Interest value includes the employer's ability to develop an exciting workplace by promoting innovation and creativity. In its turn, economic value covers job security and

compensation packages. The development value refers to recognition and growth opportunities and, finally, the application value relates to the opportunity to teach others and use what has been learned.

According to the literature, these offers represent a firm's employer value proposition, which is believed to "capture the essence of what a company wants to stand for in the candidates' and employees' minds". It adds more than reputation to a company and helps in creating organization identity, equity and it constitutes a valuable corporate asset (Bhasin *et al.*, 2019).

Priyadarshi (2011) supported that the employer brand image is a significant contributor in determining employee satisfaction, commitment and turnover levels. The EVP's composition will be, therefore, determinant for the development of a more positive or negative perceived employer brand image.

Santos et al. (2019) state that some variables can be associated to the value proposition, namely: (1) a well-defined recruitment plan, in line with the company's culture; (2) attractive rewards and benefits; (3) employment feedback; (4) employment brand; and (5) corporate brand.

The increased relevance of this topic is undeniable, since employers need to provide differentiation from competing employer brands by offering a unique employee value proposition" (Barrow & Mosley, 2005). The development of a valuable EVP is what ultimately enables a company to achieve its goals, since it allows to reduce employee's turnover intentions (Santos *et al.*, 2019) and, therefore, it must be aligned with the company's vision, objectives, strategies and values.

In this regard, there is no linear model or formula that can be applied to every company, and each value proposition must follow and be shaped by the organizational culture, which varies from company to company (Santos *et al.*, 2019).

One perspective into this subject is the employer value proposition model developed by Dabirian et al. (2017). This model combines the work of Ambler and Barrow (1996), which contemplates the importance of dimensions such as the functional, psychological, and economic benefits, with the social, interest, application, development, and economic values presented by Berthon et al. (2005). However, Dabirian et al. (2017) go further by adding the management and work-life balance value propositions, based on their research concerning what employees seem to care and value the most on crowdsourced employer branding sites, nowadays (Figure 1.2).

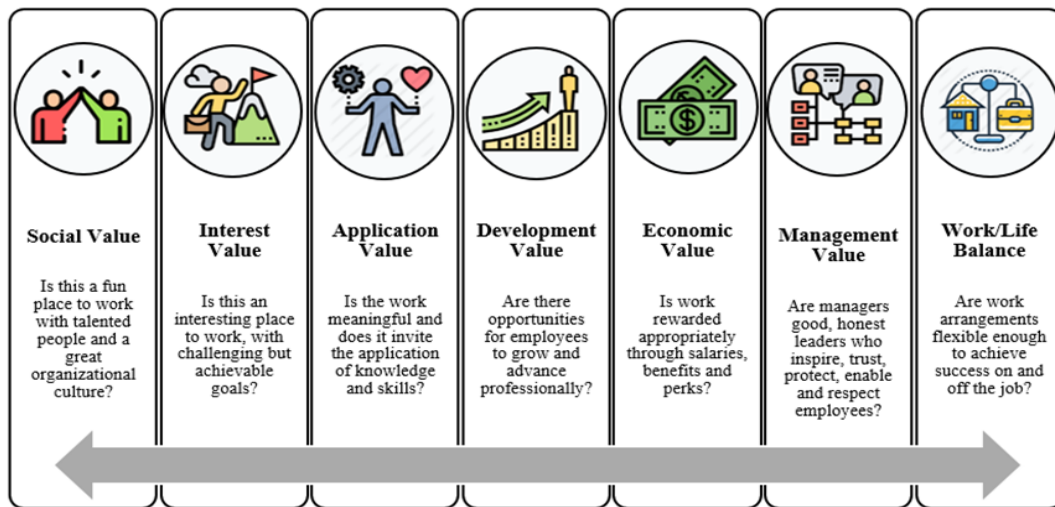


Figure 1.2: Employer Branding Value Propositions

Based on Dabirian, Kietzmann & Diba, 2017: 4

According to these authors, the social value relates to feelings of enjoyment that employees gain from a positive work atmosphere, with co-workers who are fun and that share similar values, as well as an existing team approach to problem solving and a people-focused organizational culture.

The interest value, on the other hand, is related to the degree of interest related to the job, on whether it requires novel and innovative work practices that allow to draw and achieve challenging goals.

The application value relates to the employees' desire to apply their know-how and their skills into a practical setting within their daily tasks, meaning that they can recognize usefulness in what they have learned. The authors argue that a good example of application value can be found in teaching opportunities for employees.

In its turn, the development value captures the degree to which the employer recognizes employees' contributions and provides opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

The economic value mainly relates to compensation and benefits, being associated to quantifiable perks given to employees.

The management value, on the other hand, focuses on the influence of superiors on an employee's decision to stay or leave the company.

At last, the work-life balance dimension concerns the company's capability to provide the employee with more than an employee identity, meaning that the worker recognizes the company's effort to keep a balance between his/her working life and his/her personal identities, without a conflict or stress (Dabirian *et al.*, 2017).

1.5.4. Employer Branding Dimensions

In line with the need to explore which employer branding dimensions are valued by a company's current employees, the considerations developed by Tanwar and Prasad (2017) and Tanwar and Prasad (2016) will be addressed.

In the existing literature, few authors have identified the dimensions of employer branding and, while dimensions such as organizational culture, compensation and reputation are consistently found to impact employer branding, a few dimensions are yet to be explored to gain better insights into the concept.

For Tanwar and Prasad (2016), dimensions such as the work environment, corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, work-life balance (WLB) policies and training and development opportunities (T&D) are antecedent variables that impact the image and perceptions regarding the employer brand (Figure 1.3).

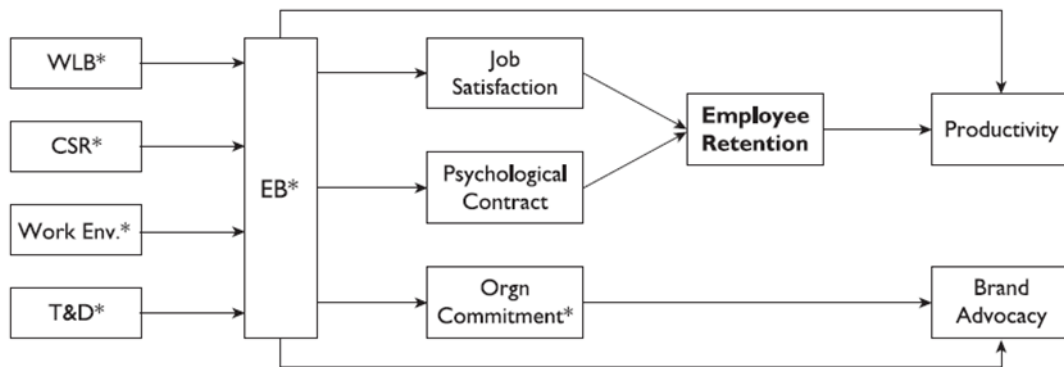


Figure 1.3: Employer Branding Framework

Source: Tanwar & Prasad, 2016: 10

As suggested by Tanwar and Prasad (2016), work environment has the capability to influence the attitude of employees towards the organization and it is one of the most important predictors of job acceptance intention among employees.

In its turn, CSR initiatives are believed to enhance brand image and organizational reputation, helping the company to attract, motivate and retain talented employees (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). In their turn, Maxwell and Knox (2010) state that employees tend to identify more strongly with their organization when its external image is construed as attractive.

The idea that an organization can foster its employer brand image by introducing flexible working hours was presented by Hillebrandt and Ivens (2013), as quoted by Tanwar and Prasad (2016). WLB strategies aim to help an employee coordinate and integrate work and non-work aspects of their lives. There are many authors who believe that these initiatives have the ability to enhance the employer brand, leading to increased employee retention (Barrow & Mosley, 2005; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016).

In what regards T&D opportunities, Berthon et al. (2005) introduced the term “development value” as one of the dimensions of employer branding, which consists of good training opportunities and personal development within the organization. According to McLeod (2007), workplace development opportunities and flexible work arrangements are the potential benefits considered most important by employees when considering an employer.

1.5.5. Employer Branding Process

Employer branding dimensions and specificities vary from company to company, depending on a variety of factors. Even though each organization is unique, many authors understand employer branding as a sequential process. For instance, in the perspective of Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) and Sharif and Sharif (2017), employer branding is a three-step process that can be generalized to most companies (Figure 1.4).

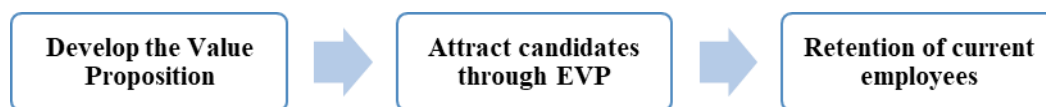


Figure 1.4: Employer Branding Process

Based on Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004

First, an organization develops the EVP, using information about the culture, qualities of current employees, impressions of the product/service quality, and current employment image. This constitutes the organization’s central message and it incorporates values which are to be offered to prospective and current employees (Sharif & Sharif, 2017). If the image is not clear, expectations will not be met, and employees might leave the firm (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

After that, the company uses the developed EVP to attract prospective employees, using external marketing tools, such as website advertising and social media.

In the last step of the process, the focus is put on the retention of current employees. Here, the goal is to endure in efforts to fulfil the brand promise made to the company’s applicants, using internal marketing tools, such as the organization of corporate events that bring employees together. This step is what differentiates the employer branding concept from the ones of corporate or product branding, since employer branding efforts are directed at both internal and external audiences, unlike corporate branding, which is mainly targeted to external audiences (Sharif & Sharif, 2017).

1.5.6. Employer Branding Outcomes

In the previously presented model by Tanwar and Prasad (2016), the authors emphasize employer branding outcomes, such as job satisfaction, the psychological contract, organizational commitment, productivity and brand advocacy (Figure 1.3).

Job satisfaction was considered as a relevant topic, since it allows to predict workers' future behaviours towards the brand (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016) and it is considered as a positive outcome of employer branding. A previous study by Schlager, Bodderas, Maas and Cachelin (2011), and mentioned by Tanwar and Prasad (2016), examined the relationship between employer branding and employee satisfaction, suggesting that a strong employer brand impacts employee satisfaction, which in turn influences customers' experience.

The psychological contract "refers to the relationship between employer and employee and the implied expectations or obligations they have on one another" (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). In the literature, it has been argued that employer branding helps in the formulation of the psychological contract (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Sartain (2005) and Rosethorn (2009) further suggest that internal employer branding can help a company to create sustainable competitive advantage based on employees' loyalty and motivation to remain in the organization.

Another mentioned outcome is improved organizational performance, with Ambler and Barrow (1996) being the first authors to study whether employer branding helps a company to achieve a better level of performance. However, other authors have studied this connection throughout the years and, in their model, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) refer to employer brand loyalty as one of the outcomes of employer branding that contributes to increasing employee productivity.

Brand advocacy was also considered a positive direct outcome of employer branding. According to Keller (1993), "brand advocacy is built when consumers favourably communicate about the brand, which helps in accelerating new product acceptance and adoptions". Literature has suggested that commitment to the organization helps in developing advocacy by convincing potential employees that their organization is a great place to work.

Furthermore, and in line with one of the present study's main concepts, there is the commitment outcome. A strong employer brand has the potential to create a positive image and identity among employees, and the identification with the organization's values further helps in increasing organizational commitment (Ind, 2004), which ultimately contributes to brand advocacy behaviours. Kimpakorn and Tocquer (2009) found that employees' experiences with employer branding plays a crucial role in developing brand commitment and the more they understood organizational culture and values, the higher would be their commitment level.

1.6. Commitment to the Employer Brand

The theme of organizational commitment has been highly developed among the existing literature. However, the relevance of connecting employer branding to commitment lies on the strong evidence that has been presented regarding the recent use of employer branding as a tool to achieve a committed workforce (Bhasin *et al.*, 2019; De Stobbeleir *et al.*, 2016; Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015; Kashyap & Chaudhary, 2019; Sharif & Sharif, 2017; Tumasjan *et al.*, 2020; Vijayanthi *et al.*, 2011).

As mentioned by some of the most relevant authors within the commitment area, employees who are committed to an organization are less likely to leave, more likely to attend regularly, perform effectively, and be good organizational citizens.

A study developed by Pathardikar, Sahu and Maurya (2013), as quoted by Maurya and Agarwal (2019), indicates that employee commitment has a positive impact on the organizations' brand image, by communicating that it is a good place to work and, in this sense, they argue that employer branding and employee commitment have vice-versa impact on each other.

In this sense, if the promises communicated through employer branding are not fulfilled, there may be negative consequences in terms of dissatisfied employees and higher employee turnover (Sharif & Sharif, 2017). In its turn, Mosley (2007) argues that, in order to achieve its objectives, the characteristics and values of the employer brand must be incorporated into the company's leadership and management styles, and that this will help in communicating and translating the values into everyday work practices, leading to commitment.

The prevailing conceptualisation of organizational commitment, however, is the Three-Component Model (TCM) proposed by Allen and Meyer (1990). In the model, commitment is perceived as "a force that binds an individual to a target (social or non-social) and to a course of action of relevance to that target" (Meyer & Maltin, 2010).

Furthermore, they add that commitment has three dimensions: the affective, continuance, and normative, and that it has both cognitive and affective elements (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Here, the relationships that individuals establish with organizations can be studied only when all these types of commitment are considered together.

In one hand, the authors propose that the affective commitment is defined as "identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the organization" (Allen & Meyer, 1990). It reflects a type of commitment based on emotional ties developed towards the organization, primarily via positive work experiences (Jaros, 2007). It describes the degree of the emotional bond between the employee and the employer brand, including enthusiasm with, and attachment to the employer brand. It consists of a strong belief and acceptance of organizational values and goals, a willingness to make extra efforts for the organization, and the desire to remain as a member in the long term (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; ST-Hilaire & de la Robertie, 2018).

In its turn, continuance commitment leads the employees to stay because of the high economic and social costs of leaving, related to their perception that the perks that they possess in their current company would be lost if they left (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

For the normative commitment, it reflects the decision to remain derived from a feeling of moral obligation, reciprocity and loyalty towards the company (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Jaros, 2007; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

Out of the three types of commitment, the affective has been shown to provide the greatest benefit to employers, just as it does for employees (Meyer & Maltin, 2010; Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

Moreover, existing research has consistently demonstrated positive relations between affective commitment and, not only the previously mentioned organizational outcomes, but also employee-related benefits, such as indices of employee well-being, including overall physical well-being, general health, mental health, positive affect, job-related well-being, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Furthermore, literature has been consistent in showing that affective commitment directly influences employee performance compared to the other two types of commitment (Rameshkumar, 2019).

In its turn, negative levels of affective commitment have been proven to be damaging, since they are associated to measures of strain, which is reflected on physical and mental health complaints, such as anxiety and depression, negative affect, burnout, and felt stress, distress, and job-related tension (Meyer & Maltin, 2010).

In this sense, it is relevant to mention that, when affective commitment at the individual level is transferred to group and organizational levels, being shared by a group of individuals, it generates a more positive level of affective climate. The affective climate reflects collective emotions that emerge from individual employees' positive feelings and are transferred through sharing and contact among employees (Tumasjan *et al.*, 2020).

Therefore, mechanisms at the individual level may become shared among companies' members by being transmitted through socialization processes at the organizational level (Tumasjan *et al.*, 2020). Tumasjan *et al.* (2020) even assume that a positive affective climate may also positively contribute to firm performance, which is strongly influenced by employee-level behaviours.

1.7. Affective Commitment and the Employer Brand Experience

In line with the previously mentioned concepts, it is relevant to address the importance of the employer brand experiences in the workplace, with authors such as Arnold (2018) stating that improvements to these experiences have been shown to start a chain reaction of improvements in many areas, namely commitment, organizational culture, customer experience, attraction and retention, and performance.

The recent literature on this field reveals that providing employees with meaningful and valuable experiences at work contributes to individual and organizational performance by impacting the company's culture. Morgan (2017) adds that "creating a great cultural environment requires having tools that focus on employees' needs instead of focusing only on business requirements".

The focus, therefore, must be on how to improve these experiences. The development of an organizational culture that enhances the quality of the employee experience must focus on a continuous flow of feedback and information between leadership and workers (Arnold, 2018).

In this sense, the previous concerns on employee commitment alone are becoming outdated, with the idea that this phenomenon is no longer enough condition to retain talent within nowadays' organizations. Even though employee commitment is deeply related to the employer brand experience,

the former is the means to the latter, since “great experiences produce engaged employees” (Ellis, 2018) and that focusing on the employer brand experience acknowledges that an organization’s first customers are its employees (Johnson, 2019). In this sense, adding the employer brand experience to the present study is crucial.

According to Fernandez-Lores et al. (2015), the employer brand experience “includes the numerous stimuli that originate in the workplace where the experience occurs” and it also refers to an employee’s “first thoughts related to the way in which he/she experiences the brand in his/her day-to-day work” (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2009).

In this sense, the use of the Allen and Meyer (1996) Organizational Commitment Model becomes relevant, since it is of generalized use in the context of organizational studies. However, the authors’ scales of ACS, NCS and CCS have been showing some limitations that have been pointed out over the years (Jaros, 2007). In this sense, in their study concerning the issue of affective commitment to the employer brand, Fernandez-Lores et al. (2015) developed the ACEB Scale, as a complementary measurement instrument to the one of Allen and Meyer, to access the strength of workers' affective commitment to their employer brand.

Here, the authors emphasize that it is crucial to distinguish between three constructs when considering the emotional bond between the employees and their employer brand: (1) long-term orientation; (2) enthusiasm with the employer brand; and (3) emotional attachment.

In one hand, the “long-term orientation” refers to the employees’ implicit intention of maintaining his/her bond with the employer by remaining loyal to the brand (Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015).

In its turn, the “enthusiasm with the employer brand” refers to the positive emotions of being energetic, active and not vulnerable to problems or concerns, motivating positive proactive behaviours regarding the employer's brand. This causes employees to tackle the organization's problems, carry out its projects and celebrate its successes as if they were their own (Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015).

The last category, “emotional attachment” reflects the emotional component in the employee-employer relationship, including feelings of affection, sense of belonging, and support towards the employer brand. It can be manifested through the celebration of successes or a confrontation with challenging projects and problems (Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015).

On the other hand, in order to conceptualise affective commitment as a result of the employee experience, Fernandez-Lores et al. (2015) proposed a brand experience model that included three dimensions: sensory; intellectual; and emotional brand experiences, as shown in Figure 1.5.

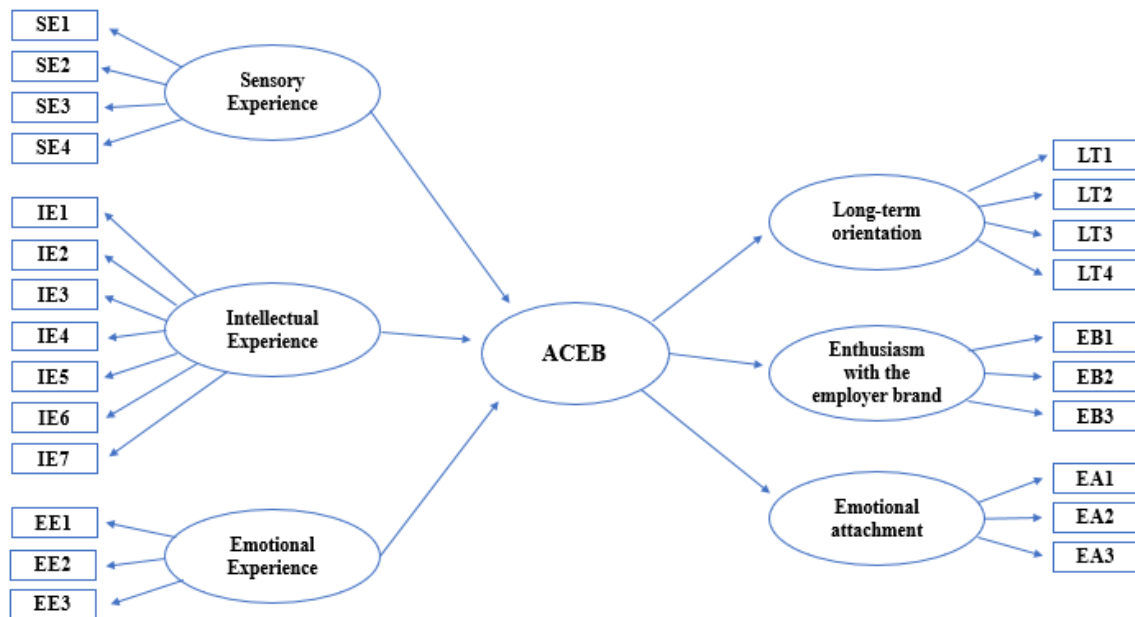


Figure 1.5: Model of Employer Brand Experience and its Impact on Affective Commitment

Source: Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015: 10

In one hand, there is the sensory experience with the employer brand, which constitutes the working experience, involving the sensory stimuli generated from the brand through the physical workplace (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

On the other hand, the intellectual experience with the employer brand encompasses the employee's internalisation of the brand's values, which means that they have the ability to identify with and commit to the brand (Harris, 2007).

On its side, the emotional component involves the level of enjoyment felt by the employee towards his/her work. This level deeply influences how they perceive their work-life and environment. That way, employees who experience these feelings tend to work better, more positively assess the quality of their work-life and are, usually, intrinsically motivated.

The main results achieved by the authors indicate that all the previously mentioned experience dimensions possess a positive influence on affective commitment. However, it would be interesting to understand if this is the case in the context of companies present in different sectors within the Portuguese market.

1.8. Theoretical Model

Following up on the previously mentioned concepts and, in line with the present study's objectives, the proposed model presents the measures that compose affective commitment to the employer brand, as well as the effects that the different dimensions of the employer brand experience have on affective commitment. The present study aims to confirm these relationships within each of the five studied companies, based on an exploratory study, as shown in Figure 1.6.

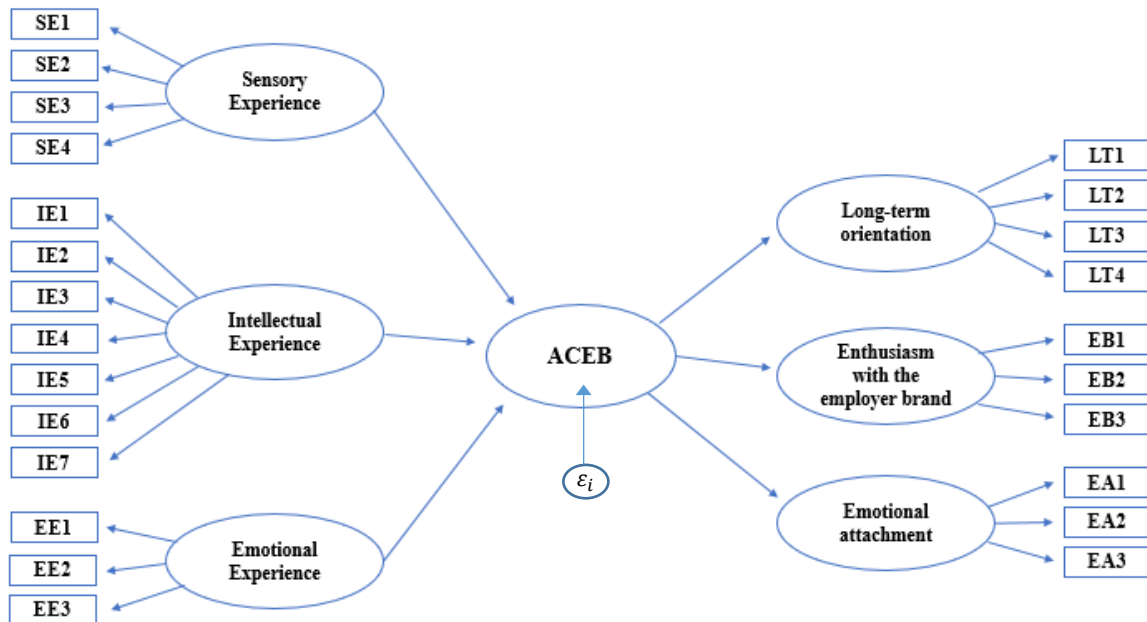


Figure 1.6: Theoretical Model

Based on Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015

The expected results are similar to the ones achieved by the authors, in which all the extracted experience dimensions demonstrate a positive influence on affective commitment.

H₁: A positive sensory experience of the employer brand will lead to higher levels of affective commitment towards the brand on Organization i , ($i = \text{Sonae, PwC, SAP Portugal, EDP, Bosch}$).

H₂: A positive intellectual experience of the employer brand will lead to higher levels of affective commitment towards the brand on Organization i , ($i = \text{Sonae, PwC, SAP Portugal, EDP, Bosch}$).

H₃: A positive emotional experience of the employer brand will lead to higher levels of affective commitment towards the brand on Organization i , ($i = \text{Sonae, PwC, SAP Portugal, EDP, Bosch}$).

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1. Method

In one hand, in order to understand the way in which internal employer branding initiatives are being developed and managed in the studied organizations, interviews were conducted with the heads of the Human Resource and Employer Branding teams from the five selected companies.

On the other, in order to understand the impact of the employer brand experience on affective commitment, a previously constructed scale of reference in the field of organizational commitment, the ACEB instrument, developed by Fernandez-Lores et al. (2015), was applied.

This tool represents a complementary and compatible measurement instrument to that of Meyer and Allen and, in this sense, both surveys were applied to employees working on five Portuguese companies that were contacted via LinkedIn and agreed to participate in the study.

2.2. Research Context

In the context of the present research, it is important to understand that employer branding initiatives have been found as critical across different categories of organizations in regard to organizational success (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

In this sense, five different companies operating across different sectors within the Portuguese market were invited to participate in the study. That way, the present analysis includes employees working at: (1) Sonae; (2) PwC, (3) SAP Portugal; (4) Energias de Portugal; and (5) Bosch.

It is important to mention that, during the development of the present study, the country was going through a global pandemic, due to the COVID-19 virus, with most of the companies being forced to close for an undetermined period, including the ones mentioned above. Nevertheless, in order to pursue the afore mentioned objectives, a multiple-case study was held, with both quantitative and qualitative focus.

According to Yin (2009), the case study is “an empirical work that investigates contemporary phenomenon in their real context and it is applied when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined, using multiple sources of evidence”, in order to achieve a “broad understanding of the phenomenon in its whole” (Almeida & Pinto, 1995).

However, and according to Yin (2009), the case study research has some weaknesses that make it a less desirable form of analysis, due to the time that it can consume from the researcher, and the lack of precision or of basis for scientific generalization.

In order to overcome these weaknesses, the same author suggests that the use of a Case Study Protocol is desirable, especially when developing a multiple-case study. Since it contains the instruments

and the procedures that will be undertaken, the Case Study Protocol is used in order to increase the reliability of the research and to guide the researcher through the data collection.

In the context of the present research, however, it was not possible to develop this protocol, due to the lack of availability to cooperate in the distribution of the surveys from the interviewed companies.

Yin (2009), citing Herriott and Firestone (1983), further adds that multiple-case studies have the advantage of being perceived as more compelling and robust than single case studies, even though alerting to the higher requirement of resources and time in the data collection and analysis processes. Therefore, the author suggests that it is important to carefully choose the cases that compose the multiple-case study, as they should serve multiple experiments in a similar manner, either with similar results or with contrasting results predicted by the literature.

2.3. Research Design and Instruments

According to Yin (2009), when developing a case study, the most frequent data collection techniques that are used are document analysis, interviews and observation. The same author states that the case study becomes richer if multiple sources of data collection are used.

Thus, the present study will compile document analysis and interviews, which represent qualitative methods, with the application of surveys, which represent a quantitative method.

2.3.1. Document Analysis

Document analysis is normally used to complement other data collection techniques. In fact, document analysis is a source of secondary information, since the data obtained is not produced, nor organized, especially for a specific research's purpose (Valles, 1997).

The document analysis supports the contextualization and understanding of the background in which the interviewed companies operate in and, furthermore, it allows to draw some conclusions regarding their internal dynamics, which will support the understanding of the implemented employer branding initiatives.

In the context of the present research, the data collected resorting to document analysis was obtained through the companies' websites and other internal and closed-access documents.

2.3.2. Interview

As for interviews, which constitute a source of primary data, they are considered a data collection technique that provides an approximation to the context under study and the discovery of new elements originated from the interviewees' frames of reference, that is, how they perceive and interpret certain aspects of their context (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994).

The conduction of interviews in the context of a case study has numerous advantages, including the possibility for the researcher to clarify certain aspects as the interview takes place, access to a variety of information, as well as the appearance of guidelines and ideas for further investigation (Valles, 1997).

However, this technique contains some limitations, such as the fact that it constitutes a time-consuming activity that, in some cases, produces irrelevant information. As a consequence, it is possible that it requires special attention in the moment of its conduction, as well as a careful analysis of the extracted content (Caetano & Vala, 2007).

In the present research, semi-structured interviews were used, allowing the formulation of articulated opened questions, in such a way that the interviewees would be able to express their perception of the reality, providing free-of-constraints information. Also, this method allows to add relevant information that goes beyond the scope of the question asked, providing many relevant inputs.

In this sense, the conducted interviews were based on an orientation interview script, previously prepared in order to allow greater control in the approach of the relevant areas to the study (Annex A). Thus, the interviews were conducted with the company's employees responsible for the Employer Branding division of Sonae, PwC, SAP Portugal, EDP, and Bosch.

The interviews were audiotaped, allowing for a more careful further analysis, with assurance that no relevant information would be left behind. Nevertheless, the interviewees' and information's protection were always guaranteed.

The interview guide that was built was composed by eight questions that, according to the conducted research, would allow to better understand the intended organizational realities.

In one hand, the content analysis on the information collected from the interviews allowed to understand the level of formality of the employer branding process in the selected companies, as well the department/s in charge for that area.

Furthermore, it provided information regarding both the internal and external employer branding implemented activities, even though the biggest focus was put on the first. In addition, questions concerning which are the impacts' measurement tools of those activities, the impacts on commitment, these companies' EVP, and their main concerns in the development of a positive employee experience for their teams were addressed.

2.3.3. Organizational and Affective Commitment Surveys

In order to establish the relationship between the employer branding experience and the employees' level of affective commitment across the five studied organizations and, in that way, validate the defined theoretical model, two surveys were applied.

The main advantages of using surveys are the easiness in adapting the chosen instruments to the type of research and to the sample, as well as the greater authenticity in the given responses, due to the guarantee of anonymity in the participants' responses.

In addition, the data that is obtained is not influenced by the author (Miranda, 2011). Furthermore, surveys intend to assess the respondents' perceptions regarding measurable variables, resorting to a varied number of instruments already validated by the literature, which allows to transform qualitative measures into quantitative data, objective and comparable.

In this sense, the last version of the complete surveys was distributed through LinkedIn, due do the lack of availability to distribute them internally, to employees currently working in the previously mentioned companies (Annex B).

The surveys initiated with a section that approached the respondents' demographic characteristics, including questions concerning their age, gender, seniority in the company where they are currently working at, and the number of companies he/she had worked for throughout his/her career.

The following section contained the first applied survey, which was the Meyer and Allen survey of Organizational Commitment. This survey is composed by eighteen questions that address the employees' experience with commitment feelings which can be experienced in the form of the three different dimensions of affective, normative, and continuance commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

The second, the ACEB scale, allows to further and more deeply understand the affective dimension of commitment. The authors developed a representative scale of the strength of an employee's ACEB, which encompasses the three dimensions of long-term orientation, enthusiasm with the employer brand, and emotional attachment. Here, the authors included four items in the category of long-term orientation, three items in the category of enthusiasm with the employer brand, and four items in the category of emotional attachment.

The third section presented questions that addressed the impacts of the employer branding experience upon employees' affective commitment to the employer brand. Here, the questions approached the employees' content of sensory, intellectual and emotional experiences as contributors to ACEB. Four items were present in the category of sensory experience, seven items for intellectual experience, and three items of emotional experience were considered.

In order to analyse the questions that constitute the dimensions mentioned above, a Likert-type scale to classify the employees' feelings towards their organization was used, in each survey. In the first survey, the questions were organized on a scale from 1 ("totally disagree") to 7 ("totally agree"). In the other two, the scale ranged from 1 ("not at all descriptive") to 7 ("totally descriptive").

2.4. Sample and Procedure

The data collection that supports the present research was obtained through a non-probabilistic of convenience sample, which uses a sample of the total elements of the population that are more available. As main advantages, it can be stated that it is the simplest and most economical method for obtaining the intended results (Hill, 2000). However, since it is not a probabilistic sample, it may not allow the generalization of conclusions to the overall population (Miranda, 2011).

Before distributing the surveys, the interviewed managers for the Employer Branding process of the five analysed companies were asked to distribute them in their companies, in order to reach a more complete sample in a faster way. However, there was no availability to perform this in any of the organizations.

Furthermore, it is important to notice that, as previously mentioned, the data for the present study was collected during a time of a global pandemic, where most companies were closed and the employees were working from home, which could have influenced the results, since they mainly focus on emotional dimensions. Furthermore, this situation, aligned with the lack of availability from the companies to distribute the surveys, did not allow to reach the number of employees that was initially intended.

In this sense, the sample of participants was found and contacted through LinkedIn, where it was possible to verify in which company the respondents are current working at, allowing to only contact the ones present in the companies under study. In this sense, an online survey, built through Google Forms, was developed and sent to these employees between March and May of 2020.

The online distribution of questionnaires has several advantages, namely in terms of being a simple and economic method of distribution, as well as assuring the respondents' anonymity. This minimizes potential biases on the most "sensitive" items, making it a relevant method in assuring greater responses' authenticity. In addition to the above, online distribution does not subject the respondent to the influence of the investigator, increasing the data authenticity (Babbie, 1998).

Even though this method presents the previously mentioned advantages, it does not allow the clarification of questions, in case of need, and it also does not allow for sample diversification, since it predominantly evaluates the responses of individuals with computer and internet access.

However, despite the described context, it was possible to obtain a final sample that included employees from different departments and areas in their company's structure, from top strategic hierarchical levels to more operational functions.

As in what concerns the interviews, they were conducted in a space of two months, in January and February of 2020. The interviews with SAP Portugal and PwC were conducted in person, in the companies' offices, and the ones with Sonae, Bosch and EDP were conducted through Skype.

The two different approaches to the interviews are a result of both the geographical location of the companies and the interviewees' availability. The five respondents were either members of the Human Resource Corporate teams of their organization or members of the Employer Branding and Internal Communications teams that, in those cases, acted independently from the Human Resource Corporate teams. All the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed.

2.5. Data Treatment Approach

In order to analyse the collected data, content analysis to further comprehend the document analysis and interviews' content was performed. Due to the large diversity of information produced by interviews, there was the need to execute a careful analysis of their content, in order to prevent subjectivity and misinterpretation.

Bardin (2002) defines content analysis as a “set of communication analysis techniques aimed at obtaining, through systematic and objective procedures for describing message content, indicators (qualitative and quantitative) that enable the inference of relative knowledge concerning a particular topic.” It constitutes a technique that enables data analysis in a controlled and systematic way, which allows its organization and classification, as well as an acquisition of new knowledge regarding the reality under study.

Like other treatment techniques, content analysis has some limitations, such as the risk of subjective interpretation or misunderstanding of the message's meaning. In order to minimize these limitations, the researcher needs to assure that a rigorous interpretation is being carried out.

As for the surveys' results treatment, the Google Forms tool allowed to compile the received data in Excel files that were exported to the IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.

Chapter 3

Results' Analysis and Discussion

3.1. Companies' Characterization and Employer Branding Initiatives

3.1.1. Sonae

3.1.1.1. Company Characterization

Sonae is a Portuguese multinational company, headquartered in Maia, Portugal. It currently employs nearly 54,000 workers and is present in 74 countries across 5 continents.

Sonae has always been known for its large investments in several different businesses, and it currently operates across seven different areas: food retail; specialized retail; retail properties; financial services; investment management; shopping centres management; and telecommunications (Sonae, 2020).

3.1.1.2. Employer Branding Initiatives

Sonae's interviewee is a member of the Talent and Human Resource Development corporate team, with a special focus on young talent and employer branding.

During the interview, it was revealed that the company has employer branding practices, for both internal and external audiences, in a formal and standardized manner. The interviewee also revealed that, even though employer branding is, formally, a responsibility of the Talent and Human Resource Development corporate team and of each holding of Sonae Group for their own internal activities, this company believes that employer branding is a responsibility of every employee that works there.

Also, she reveals that the centralization of the process is a mix between a local and global approach, since what is implemented in this field depends on a large scale on what is decided by the Group's headquarters, even though there are many activities developed by each holding. Therefore, it can be considered that employer branding in Sonae is a dynamic process, aligned with both the corporate and commercial brands.

In what concerns Sonae's main internal employer branding activities, the interviewee stresses the importance of the company's strong culture in successfully creating and implementing those initiatives.

She mentions that the company gives importance to internal events, due to the Group's dimension, in order to promote a variety of leisure moments that foster the contact between employees from different holdings. In this sense, every year, Sonae organizes an Autumn, as well as a Christmas party for all the Group's employees. Also, it promotes the organization of many annual teambuilding activities, with a focus on both social and leisure projects. At a smaller scale, it celebrates each employee's seniority and birthdays, and organizes smaller gatherings for employees to be closer to top managers.

In addition, she mentions the creation of the “FlexItUp” Program at the end of 2019, which aims to provide employees with more flexibility and work-life balance opportunities, adding that this is considered one of the main internal employer branding resources.

The first aspect of the “FlexItUp” is the opportunity for internal mobility within the Group, which is something valued by employees, due to the large dimension and diversity of each business, where they can experience many different work experiences without ever needing to leave their current company. Internally, Sonae calls this flexibility opportunity provided to its employees the “zigzag career”. Additionally, this program provides schedule flexibility, where employees are allowed to organize their time in such a way that allows them to choose their entry and exit hours. There is also the possibility for schedule reduction, as well as the option for a remote working day per week, which means that employees are allowed to have a maximum of four remote working days per month, if they decide so.

This program also offers employees the chance to “buy” vacation days, up to a maximum of five extra vacation non-paid days per year, as well as the opportunity to decide to take an unpaid leave for a year. The interviewee further mentions that this last initiative was one of the company’s major recent investments on its people, and that the company is already collecting benefits in terms of employee satisfaction.

Also, the company bets on the “leadership school”, which is focused on skills’ development in terms of fostering autonomy and responsibility.

Internal employer branding is also reflected on the company’s care with the employees’ journey, which begins during the onboarding procedure and continues until the end of the employees’ time with Sonae. It was also mentioned that it is important to continue what has been fostered in the employees’ minds during the recruitment and socialization phases and, in this sense, the company marks each employee’s first month of work with a small present to remind him/her of his/her importance to the company.

Furthermore, on the third month, there is a feedback meeting to understand if both the company’s and the employee’s expectations are being met and, after some time, these meetings begin to happen in a more periodic manner. At the end of the employee lifecycle, if any worker decides to leave, there is always an exit interview to understand what could have been done differently.

Furthermore, it is mentioned the importance that Sonae gives to the improvement of workspaces, more opened and pleasant in order to foster creativity and innovation. There is also the constant distribution of fruit to employees, as well as company’s merchandising to announce new projects in which Sonae engages in.

In the corporate centre, there are employee benefits such as access to car-washing and hair-dressing services with reduced prices. Also, for the generality of employees, there are discounts programs in certain restaurants and clinics, as well as cheaper access to Sonae’s gyms.

Regarding the performance measurement of these activities to assess their level of success, the interviewee reveals that this is something being currently implemented at Sonae. The company performs its internal satisfaction survey, annually. In addition, it conducts focus groups to assess the quality of employees' experience and their relationship with the brand, and she adds that this is something that the company also aims to perform externally in the future, in order to access these opinions from potential candidates. Furthermore, Sonae assesses the impact of specific actions which happened, for example, for the "FlexItUp" Program. However, for more specific actions being implemented in each of the Group's holdings, the measurement tools differ, accordingly.

Nevertheless, it was interesting to understand that Sonae does not make a link that accesses the impact of these initiatives specifically on employees' level of commitment.

On the other hand, in what concerns Sonae's main external employer branding activities, the interviewee mentioned that they are highly focused on young talent. In this sense, there are roadshows with presence in academic job fairs at national and international universities, partnerships with universities, sponsorship of many different events, and the creation of internship opportunities for young talent. The participant adds that one of the ways in which they assess the impact of these initiatives is by collaborating with other companies, such as Spark Agency.

The company's value proposition is built around five main aspects of the company's working experience, as it will be further addressed in the present study.

Regarding the development of a more positive employee experience, the interviewee refers that this concern is mainly expressed on the company's careful onboarding and socialization processes, as well as on the constant effort for creating a good work environment.

3.1.2. PwC

3.1.2.1. Company Characterization

PricewaterhouseCoopers, also known as PwC, is a network of independent firms that is present in 157 countries, with more than 276,000 professionals dedicated to providing services in auditing and assurance, tax and advisory services (PwC Global, 2020).

In Portugal, PwC has been operating for over 50 years, with offices in Lisbon and Porto, with the Portuguese team also being responsible for the divisions present in Cape Verde and Angola. Currently, it has over 1,600 employees distributed across these 4 locations (PwC Global, 2020).

3.1.2.2. Employer Branding Initiatives

PwC's interviewee is the Head of the Internal Communications division at PwC Portugal, Cape Verde and Angola.

During the interview, it was revealed that the company has employer branding practices, for both internal and external audiences, in a formal and standardized manner, even though the entire written strategy is not available for all employees.

It was also possible to understand that, due to PwC's structure being formed by different independent firms, employer branding initiatives are mainly managed locally, even though some central directions are given and incorporated in the company's strategy in this field.

According to the interviewee, PwC puts in a high effort on internal employer branding initiatives, while focusing on showing them on the outside through social media and the company's corporate website. In her perspective, this approach ends up being translated into two desired outcomes: in one hand, it represents external employer branding for potential applicants; and on the other, it allows to show employees in other geographies what is being done in each of the four offices, transmitting a sense of equity.

Furthermore, the interviewee states that, over the last years, PwC has been trying to transform the interaction between the employees and the brand into a less materialized relationship through the implementation of these internal initiatives which, she believes, can improve their well-being and happiness at work.

In what concerns both internal and external employer branding initiatives, they are handled by both the Internal Communications and the Corporate Human Resource teams, which share all the formalities of this strategy between each other, passing the relevant information to the rest of the employees.

In what concerns PwC's main internal employer branding activities, the interviewee mentions the existence of internal events to provide employees with more relaxing and fun times with their colleagues and families, for example with the celebration of mothers' and fathers' days, as well as the children's day. According to her, this is a way to bring the best of the working life to the personal life of each employee, strengthening the relationship with the brand.

In addition to these events, there is the Health Week celebration where, among other initiatives, private clinics and pharmacies go to the company and make all different kinds of health screenings to employees. Also, there is the organization of the Christmas and Summer parties with all of the company's employees, as well as the organization of internal sessions that address a variety of current topics such as diversity, bullying, depression, stress, nutrition, or social responsibility, among others.

Also, PwC developed two internal electronic pages, one where employees can find information regarding health and life insurances, as well as vacation days. On the other, which is called the "iMind Portal", employees can find information regarding benefits and discounts in restaurants and clinics.

In addition, the company has been investing on new workspaces, such as in what concerns leisure areas and the investment on a new big canteen with a space for employees to spend more informal times together. Furthermore, she mentions the investment made on "technology rooms", with advanced tools mainly directed for employees in the IT areas.

Furthermore, the interviewee mentions the existence of many flexibility and work-life balance initiatives, such as the “Casual Friday”, where employees can go to work on a more relaxing outfit. This takes particular relevance, since the consultancy area is one in which employees are required to be formally dressed every day, with the participant mentioning that PwC is the first consultancy company in Portugal to adopt this measure. She further adds that the company insisted on sharing this initiative on social media to capture the attention of their main target, the new graduates. In line with the dress code flexibility, it was also mentioned that PwC has the “Casual Summer”, which takes place in August, inviting every employee to go to work dressed in a more relaxing manner. In terms of flexibility, there is also the recently implemented “home-office” initiative, at least once a week.

In addition, PwC bets a lot on corporate social responsibility initiatives since, according to the interviewee, this is a company that, due to its size and influence on society, has the power to make a difference in the communities where it is present. As an example, she mentions events that take place on Women’s Day, where PwC’s women are invited to join social causes of their choice, supported by the company. According to her, this is another area that the company is interested to promote outside of its boundaries, since the millennials are highly interested in CSR and she believes that this is an aspect where PwC can differentiate itself from the competition.

The same happens with the company’s recruitment campaign, where the responsible teams aim to translate the firm’s culture and values.

The respondent mentions that the company is also very concerned with external initiatives, since PwC is a firm that recruits many people every year. In this sense, it has been betting on promoting internal employer branding initiatives that are distinctive and different from the ones of competitors to external audiences, that is, potential employees, as a means to become more notorious and attract the best talent.

Regarding the performance measurement of these activities to assess their level of success, the interviewee reveals that this is something being currently implemented at PwC. In this sense, it carries out the “Global People Survey” every year, in May, where employees are invited to give their opinion regarding, not only internal events, but also more formal aspects of the job, such as their salary and benefits. After the results are analysed and released for employees’ knowledge, PwC conducts focus groups in order to understand what initiatives can be improved or changed.

In addition, the Internal Communications team conducts a variety of smaller and more specific surveys after each internal event, in order to understand what the employees’ opinions on that initiative was. Furthermore, the company works with social media and website metrics to analyse the impacts of external employer branding initiatives.

Also, it was mentioned that PwC does make a link that assesses the impact of the internal initiatives specifically on employees’ level of commitment and intentions to exit the organization by connecting the results of the Global People Survey with the participation rate on internal events, as well as with the turnover rates.

Regarding the development of a more positive employee experience, the interviewee refers that this concern is mainly expressed on the company's concern with a careful onboarding procedure, where employees are given many information regarding the company, as well as PwC's merchandising.

Also, it was mentioned the existence of a global internal platform where employees in the Portuguese offices can contact with other employees in offices across the world, which is something that, in her perspective, contributes to narrow working and personal relations among employees, allowing for more positive work experiences. Additionally, she mentions the company's flexibility and work-life balance policies as something that is highly valued by PwC's employees, as well as the internal events that bring employees closer.

3.1.3. SAP Portugal

3.1.3.1. Company Characterization

SAP SE is a German multinational, headquartered in Walldorf, Germany. It is a market leader software company that produces and develops corporate software to manage business operations and customer relations. It is present in 140 countries, with more than 100,000 professionals across the world, and around 420 in Portugal (SAP Portugal, 2020).

3.1.3.2. Employer Branding Initiatives

SAP's interviewee is a member of the Corporate Human Resource team, on the Employee Engagement sub-division.

During the interview, it was revealed that the company has employer branding practices, for both internal and external audiences. In what concerns internal initiatives, they are handled by the Employee Engagement team, while the external activities are of the responsibility of another team within the Corporate Human Resource department.

From the interview, it was possible to understand that employer branding directions that come from the company's headquarters are documented and some of the local ones are formalized within the company's structure. However, most local internal initiatives, developed by the Portuguese subsidiary, take on an informal positioning. In this sense, the centralization of the process is a mix between a local and global approach, with aspects such as the company's career section on the corporate website being organized according to the headquarters' directions.

In what concerns SAP's main internal employer branding activities, the interviewee mentions the existence of internal events that aim to gather all the employees together, such as the Christmas party and the summer cocktail, as well as many teambuilding activities for both the entire company and also inside each team, throughout the year.

In addition, SAP bets a lot on career development initiatives for its employees, offering continuous training and development on both hard, necessary for the job, and soft skills on current themes such as

mindfulness and well-being. According to the interviewee, this concern is reflected on the company's mission to "help the world run better and improve people's lives" which, according to her, is true not only for the company's clients and partners, but specially in what concerns a commitment made to its employees.

Furthermore, there are career development plans for each employee, which contemplate opportunities for both horizontal and vertical mobility, supported by initiatives of career coaching and mentoring available for all employees in order to understand what they would like to be doing inside the company, providing the opportunity to think about their own skills on a deeper level.

To foster employees' motivation, SAP also opens job vacancies not available on the company's website and only accessible for its current employees.

In line with the importance given by SAP to the themes of well-being, the participant mentions the creation of an anonymous support line for employees to call if they have any type of problem and wish to discuss it with a professional psychologist.

Also, the company invested on the development of workspace initiatives that promote physical exercise and stress management.

In addition, SAP is also a company that recognizes the importance given to work flexibility nowadays, specially by younger employees. In this sense, it tries to keep up with the market's reality in this field by implementing schedule flexibility and remote work in some pre-established cases negotiated directly with team managers.

In addition, she mentions the existence of a variety of employee benefits such as health and life insurances, as well as the existence of compensation plans, where employees can use a certain percentage of their salary to acquire a variety of products and services. SAP also gives employees the opportunity to acquire company's shares and collect dividends according to its results which, according to the interviewee, may also constitute a source of motivation.

Also, the participant stresses that feedback is something very important and highly rooted within the company's culture, something that is reflected in its mission and values, reflected on the initiative to organize periodic global and local meetings with employees to discuss the company's results for the different business areas.

Regarding the performance measurement of these activities to access their level of success, the interviewee reveals that this is something being currently implemented at SAP. The company performs an annual satisfaction survey in order to understand the level of satisfaction with internal initiatives, as well as to understand the level of engagement to the company. Here, the major focus is on which initiatives are worth continuing and which are not.

Also, regarding the link to commitment, there is the effort to connect those results to the turnover rate, as well as to the analysis of exit interviews. Additionally, the company performs a "pulse-check", which is an interview with a sample of employees, twice a year, to collect feedback on the developed initiatives.

Regarding the development of a more positive employee experience, the respondent refers that this concern is mainly expressed on the company's concern to assure the necessary working tools and physical conditions to develop a good job. In addition, she mentions the importance of delivering proper training and the existence of a good work environment of support and friendship.

3.1.4. Energias de Portugal

3.1.4.1. Company Characterization

EDP is a Portuguese multinational, vertically integrated utility company headquartered in Lisbon. It is the third largest electricity production company and one of the largest gas distributors in the Iberian Peninsula (EDP Group, 2020).

Throughout its 40 years of existence, EDP has been building a relevant image in the energy field, with presence in 19 countries, in 4 continents (EDP Group, 2020). It has over 12,000 workers and, in Portugal, it counts with more than 6,000 employees.

3.1.4.2. Employer Branding Initiatives

EDP's interviewee is part of the People Experience Unit, which is divided in two teams. One is focused on candidates' attraction, being more related to external employer branding, and where the People Experience Unit works directly with the Branding Unit. The other, in which the interviewee is currently working at, is oriented towards the engagement of existing employees, focusing on aspects that concern internal employer branding.

During the interview, it was revealed that the company has employer branding practices, for both internal and external audiences, in a formal and standardized manner. From the information provided during the interview, it was possible to understand that employer branding decision-making power is a mix between the activities developed by the Group's People Experience Unit, which are mandatory and must be implemented in all of the Group's business units, and the ones developed by the Human Resource team of each company within the Group. This initiatives' alignment occurs resorting to "focal points", which are managers inside every EDP subsidiaries that contact directly with elements from the People Experience Unit of the Group, in order to define and implement employer branding strategies.

In what concerns EDP's main internal employer branding activities, the interviewee mentions the existence of internal events at three levels. At a macro level, there is the biannual internal gathering with all the Group's employees in Portugal. This event lasts for two days in Altice Arena, with many activities that aim to bring employees together in an informal setting, where there is space for results' discussion, employees' rewarding and leisure moments. At a different level, each company within the Group organizes its own individual gatherings. At last, at a micro level, the People Experience Unit encourages the organization of teambuilding activities inside different teams within the different companies. The

interviewee mentions that these three levels aim to foster employee engagement, not only to the EDP Group's strategy, but also to the strategy and culture of each business unit and, ultimately, to each team.

Furthermore, there is the "Conciliar Program", which consists of a group of initiatives created by EDP that allow employees to be more socially responsible and to reconcile their personal and professional lives and, in this sense, she stresses the international distinction that EDP was given two years ago as a "family responsible company". In this program, the interviewee mentions the existence of three groups of initiatives: (1) the discounts program; (2) work-life balance; and (3) volunteering programs.

The discounts program provides employees with discounts in several different restaurants, clinics, health clubs, and institutions.

The work-life balance aspect has initiatives such as maternity incentives with the existence of specific parking places for pregnant employees, closer to work, and a nursing room at the company's facilities, as well as the opening of a savings account in the amount of €500 when a birth occurs in each of the Group's companies. Furthermore, there is the organization of summer camps for the employees' children.

For the volunteering part, the company created a portal where, for one, employees can propose different initiatives in which they would like to participate and, for other, they can register to participate in existing ones, since EDP has a list of initiatives that it already supports, with a fund to spend on them. In this last category, the interviewee reveals that EDP employees have a total of four working hours per month that they can occupy with volunteer work, adding that this is something highly valued, specially by younger workers.

In addition, the respondent focuses the importance of onboarding on employee engagement and retention, which constitutes a tool of internal employer branding. In this sense, she discloses the existence of two different onboarding moments with all the employees that join the Group's companies in a civil year. One of those moments is more formal and institutional, with the presentation of videos and lectures for them to get to know the Group, as well as with the opportunity for them to interact with EDP's different business units by talking to employees from those units and hearing their testimonies. The other moment that constitutes the onboarding is more ludic, with many different fun and leisure activities, with the interviewee giving the example of bringing TV guests to the event.

Also, there is the "Flex Program" of benefits that incorporate above-the-average salary and meal allowance, as well as health insurance and discounts on electricity. The participant refers that there also some benefits specific to certain groups within the company, such as the possibility that a flexible part of the employees' remuneration can be used in parking areas, gyms, discount vouchers on mobility apps, learning tickets to buy school material for children, technology vouchers, and pension plans.

Furthermore, there is the concern that EDP has with the themes of enablement, with the creation of EDP University. This is an entity within the Group that dedicates, exclusively, to training and developing

EDP's employees right from the moment they join any of the Group's companies. Here, there is a package of training sessions that address key competencies and is, therefore, directed to every employee.

Regarding the performance measurement of these activities to access their level of success, the interviewee reveals that this is something being currently implemented at EDP. In this sense, for both the Group's and each company's events and programs, there is the conduction of specific surveys that aim to understand the workers' opinions regarding those specific actions. In addition, and on a larger scale, there is the "Climate Survey", which is held every two years, with the objective of collecting people's opinions regarding several different aspects of the company, including their perspective of satisfaction regarding internal employer branding initiatives.

Also, it was mentioned that EDP attempts to make a link that accesses the impact of the internal initiatives specifically on employees' level of commitment and intentions to exit the organization by having a section on the "Climate Survey" that addresses engagement and exit intentions, as well as with the conduction of exit interviews with the employee and one member from the People Experience Unit and another from the Human Resource team of the employee's company.

On the other hand, in what concerns EDP's main external employer branding activities, the interviewee stresses that EDP is both active and reactive. According to her, the company is reactive by answering to invitations from universities to be present on academic job fairs throughout the country. However, she mentions that the company has been trying to be more active in this regard, by organizing open days in certain job areas in the different business units, as well as with internships and partnerships with different brands and events. Also, she mentions that EDP has a strong presence in three main fields within society, and this presence constitutes, in her perspective, an important pillar of the Group's entire employer branding strategy, as a tool for attractiveness. Those fields are: (1) ecology, with the company's presence in different "green" initiatives and a strong investment in renewable energies with a specific brand for this purpose within the Group, which is EDP Renováveis; (2) music, with the sponsorship of music festivals and concerts across the country; and (3) sports, with the sponsorship of many sports events, such as marathons. Furthermore, the respondent adds the importance of a strong social media presence to reinforce all these initiatives.

Regarding the development of a more positive employee experience, the respondent refers that EDP's first concern in this sense is to assure that this experience is holistic, giving support and following up with that experience in every stage of the employee journey at the company. According to her, this means that it is important to ask and give feedback, not only at the beginning stage of the employee within the Group, but also throughout the entire relationship with the company. In her perspective, one way in which EDP expresses this concern is through the attempt to cover the needs of different demographic groups, according to their age and stage in life. In addition, the concern with clarity and transparency in terms of support entities and teams to contact in case of need is another aspect stressed by the participant, who further mentions that it is a concern of EDP that every employee knows exactly who to talk to depending on the subject to be addressed. Lastly, she reinforces the opportunities for

internal and international mobility, as she believes that they foster innovation and constitute a differentiating aspect of the company's strategy.

3.1.5. Bosch

3.1.5.1. Company Characterization

Bosch is a German multinational company, market leader in providing technology and services, mainly in the areas of engineering and electronic. It was founded in 1886, in Stuttgart. Currently, Bosch Group is composed by Robert Bosch GmbH, the holding company, and its 440 subsidiary and regional companies in, approximately, 60 countries (Bosch, 2020).

Nowadays, Bosch's global manufacturing, engineering, and sales network covers nearly every country in the world and its operations are divided into four business sectors: (1) Mobility Solutions; (2) Industrial Technology; (3) Consumer Goods; and (4) Energy and Building Technology (Bosch, 2020).

In Portugal, Bosch is composed by Bosch Termotecnologia, in Aveiro, Bosch Car Multimedia Portugal, in Braga, and Bosch Security Systems, in Ovar, developing and manufacturing residential water solutions, car multimedia and sensors, and security and communication systems, respectively.

3.1.5.2. Employer Branding Initiatives

Bosch's interviewee is part of the Corporate Human Resource department, which is responsible, in cooperation with the Internal Communications team, for the employer branding initiatives carried out in the company. The Human Resource team, at Bosch Portugal, is a central structure that coordinates the human resource related projects and activities of the different Bosch's locations in Portugal.

During the interview, it was revealed that the company has employer branding practices, for both internal and external audiences, in an informal manner. In this matter, the interviewee states that some activities are standardized and expected to happen in a certain time, but most of them are informal in the sense that they occur in response of what the responsible teams believe to be more adequate at a certain moment, always considering the company's strategy and culture.

In line with this approach, the respondent considers that, in terms of centralization of the employer branding process, Bosch follows a local approach, with the identification of what makes sense to implement according to employees' needs and expectations within the national boundaries, and even in each Bosch company, specifically. He further mentions that it is rare that the company receives mandatory guidelines from the headquarters in this topic and that, even in what concerns external initiatives, the same line of action is applied. In this sense, it is possible to understand that the Human Resource team has a set of international guidelines to follow when developing their employer branding activities, although having the freedom to adapt the guidelines to the national reality and, in the participant's perspective, a very clear evidence of this autonomy is the fact that when the company

communicates its initiatives to the outside with the creation of online content, it does it as Bosch Portugal.

In what concerns Bosch's main internal employer branding activities, the interviewee mentions the existence of internal events such as the Christmas party, which is the only time where all the employees from Bosch in Portugal meet, due to the company's large size and national geographic dispersion.

Also, he refers to the recent implementation of the "Internal Talks", which is an event where employees from different areas in the company share knowledge and experience with employees in other areas, fostering knowledge acceleration and creating opportunities for more interaction between workers that, normally, would not contact as much.

Additionally, and since there is flexibility and autonomy in the area of employer branding in the company, there is the organization of teambuilding activities inside each team on the different national locations, as well as sports teams and internal championships organized by employees. According to the interviewee, this last point is very important because it fosters employee interaction even outside the company's boundaries and he refers that some employees meet at weekends to play together, which creates feelings of friendship and companionship with positive impacts on work environment and performance.

Also, the interviewee states the great importance that Bosch gives to work-life balance, with initiatives such as schedule flexibility and the implementation of "mobile-office" in some days of the week, with previous agreement with each team manager. According to him, of all the internal employer branding initiatives carried out by Bosch, work-life balance initiatives are the ones that employees value the most, since they give them autonomy to manage their work and coordinate it with quality personal time.

In addition, he mentions the existence of certain benefits, such as the utilization of a pharmacy within the company's office in Braga, and the existence of a company's doctor for all the national locations. Furthermore, it was possible to understand that Bosch has a variety of external protocols with many institutions, in order to provide a large amount of benefits to its employees. In this sense, the participant mentions the existence of more than 300 protocols that allow for the company to ensure discounts in health, banking facilities, travelling, insurances, gyms and restaurants. Furthermore, employees benefit from discounts when they acquire Bosch products, and they are entitled to a company's car.

Also, he refers the effort that Bosch puts on career development through the execution of career plans according to the employees' profile and results. In his perspective, this fosters the clarity and transparency felt by employees towards their job, since they know exactly where they are in the company, but also what they can be doing there, in the future. In this sense, he refers the great investment that Bosch makes on continuous training and development initiatives, on both hard and soft skills.

Furthermore, it is mentioned the existence of a weekly newsletter sent to all the employees, which includes the most relevant information regarding events happening in the company, both locally and

globally. He believes that, through communication initiatives like this, Bosch is able to contribute to a more positive employee experience that is based on employee interaction, even if they are physically apart, and on a sense of belonging to a “big family”.

Regarding the performance measurement of these initiatives to assess their level of success, the respondent reveals that this is something being currently implemented at Bosch. The company performs two different satisfaction surveys to its employees, one is handled twice a year and the other is handled every four years. These are global measures, as they are built for and distributed to Bosch’s employees across the world. However, the interviewee mentions that the company does not have tools to specifically measure and assess the impact of each initiative on individual terms. In this sense, the only way in which Bosch is able to identify the impacts of its internal employer branding initiatives on commitment is through the analysis of exit interviews.

On the other hand, in what concerns Bosch’s main external employer branding activities, the interviewee stresses that the company provides financial incentives for employees that move to the Braga district to work for Bosch. In addition, he mentions the existence of roadshows and presence in academic job fairs in universities throughout the country, as well as the sponsorship of many events. However, he believes that one of the company’s most notorious initiatives is “Um dia com o engenheiro”, in which academic students can apply and spend a day with a Bosch engineer to learn more about the job and the company.

For both the internal and external events, he mentions that they are reinforced by a strong presence on social media, where they advertise them as an attractiveness tool.

Regarding the development of a more positive employee experience, the interviewee refers that this concern is mainly expressed through the great importance that is given to the existence of opportunities for individual feedback, through both periodic and emergent meetings, when an unusual situation is detected. In addition, he believes that the existence of a flat hierarchy contributes to a better communication by fostering transparency in a way that reduces constraints between employees and their managers, leading to a better work environment.

3.2. Comparative Analysis

Following the presentation of each of the companies in study through its own case study, it becomes important to make a comparative analysis between them. This comparison will allow to draw conclusions that will be used as a tool to fulfil the first objective of the present study. To do that, the analysis will be split into three different topics, each being followed by a cross comparison table, that summarises the main conclusions of the developed analysis.

3.2.1. General Features

The first topic is related to general companies' features, to understand the context in which employer branding is developed, in each of them, namely: what are the main characteristics of each company under study (Table 3.1); how is this process planned and implemented; who is in charge of the process; the main centralization features; and what characteristics constitute their employer value proposition.

Regarding the main companies' characteristics, it is possible to understand that all the five companies that compose the present study are multinationals, and two of them, Sonae and EDP, are Portuguese leading companies in the sectors in which they operate. They run across different sectors within the Portuguese market, and every company under study is highly representative of its sector, each providing jobs for thousands of employees in Portugal. It is also worth to highlight that only two of the companies, Bosch and Sonae, have their main structure located outside of Lisbon.

Table 3.1: Multiple Comparison I - Companies' Characteristics

	SONAE	PwC	SAP Portugal	EDP	Bosch
Year of foundation	1959	1998	1972	1976	1886
Size	Multinational	Multinational	Multinational	Multinational	Multinational
Nationality	Portuguese	British	German	Portuguese	German
Geographic Dispersion	74 countries	157 countries	140 countries	19 countries	60 countries
Main location in Portugal	Maia	Lisbon (holds the Portuguese, Angolan and Cape Verdean subsidiaries)	Lisbon	Lisbon	Aveiro
Sector	Retail Financial Services Telecommunications Real Estate Technologies Investments	Professional Services (Audit; Consultancy; Tax)	Information Technologies	Energy	Electronic and Engineering
Number of Employees	54,000	276,000 (1,600 in Portugal, Angola and Cape Verde)	100,000 (420 in Portugal)	12,000 (6,000 in Portugal)	410,000 (4,800 in Portugal)

Source: Own elaboration

3.2.2. Development of Employer Branding

Regarding the employer branding process itself, it was discovered to be present in each of the five companies (Table 3.2), although not being a formal process in all of them. Even though employer branding activities are expected to happen in every company under study and besides the fact that they all have their own dedicated team to the employer branding process, in companies such as SAP Portugal and Bosch, employer branding is informal in the sense that it mainly occurs in response of what the

responsible teams believe to be more adequate, at a certain moment, considering their staff's present needs and expectations.

Furthermore, it was possible to understand that, in SAP Portugal and EDP, the department responsible for employer branding initiatives for both internal and external audiences is the Corporate Human Resource department.

As for Sonae, this is a process described as being transversal to the entire organization and held differently in each holding of the Group. Sonae views the employer branding process as a responsibility that belongs to every employee, which is a positioning defended by authors like Martin et al. (2005).

It is interesting to point out that, for PwC and Bosch, this responsibility is shared between the Corporate Human Resource department and the Internal Communications team.

It is also interesting to mention that different companies assign different names to internal employer branding, and most of them even state that they do not associate the term employer branding to those internal practises. For example, Sonae and Bosch include them in the range of their existing retention policies, whereas SAP Portugal refers to them as engagement policies. This is an interesting fact in the sense that these companies use terms that, according to the existing literature, constitute employer branding outcomes to refer to the employer branding initiatives. In the model conceptualized by Tanwar and Prasad (2016) and Tanwar and Prasad (2017), employee commitment and engagement are a direct outcome of employer branding, and employee retention constitutes an indirect outcome of employer branding.

Regarding the centralization of the employer branding process, the interviewees of Bosch and PwC revealed that their strategy is developed according to local standards, with the intervention of these companies' headquarters being the minimum in this concern.

On the other hand, the respondent from SAP Portugal discloses that employer branding is a mix between a local and global approach, as the Portuguese subsidiary develops its own policies in coordination with directions from the company's headquarters.

As for Sonae and EDP, since they are headquartered in Portugal, it is possible to understand that their approach to employer branding is more local. However, because they both constitute a Group of companies that operate throughout different business sectors, each subsidiary is independent at a certain level, with a mix between the guidelines from the headquarters and the initiatives in each of the business units.

Regarding the EVP of the companies under study, each of the interviewees has mentioned different characteristics. As for PwC, no information was provided in this concern, due to strategic reasons.

However, Bosch's and EDP's participants mentioned that these companies want to be perceived as technologic and innovative, with a strong focus on dynamism in the sense of more functional and geographical mobility, as well as on work stability and work-life balance issues.

Making a parallel to the previously mentioned Seven Employer Branding Propositions by Dabirian et al. (2017), these approach of Bosch and EDP can fit into the work-life balance proposition, which

states that working conditions should be flexible enough to achieve success on and off the job. In addition, these company’s EVP can also be associated to the interest and development value propositions, as they aim to continually develop interesting and innovative workplaces that appeal to their employees’ skills and well-being, while assuring development opportunities that foster professional growth through the encouragement of geographic and functional mobility. Furthermore, Bosch’s EVP can also fit into the social value dimension, since it is a company that reflects its CSR orientation as a way to strengthen its current organizational culture.

As for Sonae’s employer value proposition, it is composed by the business, geography and profiles diversity, the careers and internal mobility, the leadership school, the constant training and development of their employees, and the recognition and meritocracy during performance appraisal. Looking at the Dabirian et al. (2017) model, this approach can be placed into the interest and development value propositions, since the company’s EVP is based on providing opportunities for employees to professionally grow and advance, in combination with a strong focus on the objectives’ importance, which can be observed in the implementation of a meritocracy system.

SAP’s interviewee, on the other hand, revealed that the company’s EVP is focused on a constant development of employee knowledge and business transparency to all its stakeholders. As highlighted in the proposal of Dabirian et al. (2017), this focus lands on both the application and social value propositions, as it concerns the possibility that both the job and the company itself provide for workers to apply, in practical terms, the developed knowledge and skills, while keeping a strong focus on the existence of a fair and positive organizational culture.

The existence of different EVP’s is coherent with the literature on this topic, following Barrow and Mosley (2005) and Santos et al. (2019), in the sense that the employer value proposition must differ from one organization to the other, since one of the objectives of the EVP is to be unique and a differentiating feature of each company (Figure 3.1).

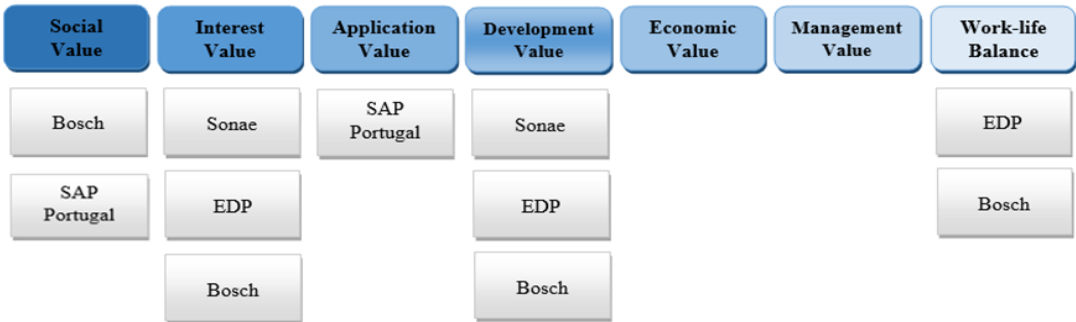


Figure 3.1: The selected companies’ positioning on the EVP process

Table 3.2: Multiple comparison II – Development of Employer Branding

	Sonae	PwC	SAP Portugal	EDP	Bosch Portugal
Formality of Employer Branding	Formal	Formal	Informal	Formal	Informal
Departments in charge	All the organization (held by each holding)	Internal Communications and Corporate Human Resource Department	Corporate Human Resource Department (Employee Engagement)	People Experience Unit	Internal Communications and Corporate Human Resource Department
Centralization	Local Approach	Local Approach	Mixed Approach	Local Approach	Local Approach
Employer Value Proposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business, geography and profiles diversity; - Careers and internal mobility; - Leadership school; - Training and development; - Meritocracy system. 	No information was provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop employee knowledge; - Business transparency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovative company; - Dynamism in terms of geographic and functional mobility; - Technological leadership; - Geographic coverage; - Company that provides work stability; - Company concerned with work-life balance issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovative and technologic company; - Company concerned with work-life balance issues; - Dynamic company in terms of functional mobility; - Organized and structured company that provides stability; - Eco-friendly and socially responsible company.

Source: Own elaboration

3.2.3. Implementation and Measurement of Employer Branding

Looking at the five companies under study, even though some of them have unique and different activities regarding their internal employer branding activities, the existence of internal events and teambuilding activities that aim to create unique moments that bring all the employees together is a transversal practice to all of them (Table 3.3).

Another transversal practise is the attribution of benefits to employees, namely discounts in many different health and leisure places, mainly in restaurants, clinics, gyms, and travelling. In addition, some companies such as Bosch and EDP offer employees discounts in the acquisition of these brands' products and services, and PwC's and SAP's interviewees mention the existence of an internal platform to manage the information regarding these benefits. In the perspective of Maxwell and Knox (2010), assigning benefits and rewards is one of the company's actions perceived as being more attractive by current employees.

Some of the interviewed companies also mention the presence of internal employer branding on their new entrants' onboarding processes, namely Sonae and EDP, since they believe that this procedures mark the first steps of the employee experience with the brand, being important to ensure consistency between these onboarding experience and the other internal practices further encountered in the

company. This is in line with the literature stressing the critical function of onboarding on the development of a positive employee experience (Arnold, 2018; Ellis, 2018; Johnson, 2019).

Furthermore, the implementation of practises related to flexibility and work-life balance is also common across the studied organizations, mainly in what concerns schedule and geographic flexibility. In the case of PwC, SAP and Bosch, the participants add to the flexibility subject, the implemented practice of “home-office” as a means for employees to better integrate their personal and professional lives.

Another common practise of relevance, in the participants’ perspective, is the investments on training and development, a subject that was mentioned by four of the five interviewed companies. In line with the study developed by Tanwar and Prasad (2016), it is mentioned that training and development are some of the aspects that are considered more attractive in an employer.

The existence of CSR initiatives is referred by PwC and EDP as being a crucial part of their internal employer branding strategy, since they constitute initiatives that are increasingly more valued by employees.

Looking at the Tanwar and Prasad (2016) model of employer branding, procedures related to WLB, training and development and CSR are believed to constitute employer branding dimensions of relevance, contributing to different desired organizational outcomes, namely commitment.

Lastly, practises related to the enhancement of communication and transparency were referred by four of the five interviewed companies. It is important to notice that the literature is consistent in referring the efficacy of this strategy as an employer branding initiative, namely by Arnold (2018), who believes that investments made on communication initiatives between workers and managers are able to contribute to the development of a more positive employee experience.

Workspace initiatives that aim to contribute to a better work environment and increased employee well-being were mentioned by Sonae, PwC and SAP. It is interesting to mention that, according to Fernandez-Lores et al. (2015), these initiatives are crucial for the development of a more positive sensory experience.

In what concerns external employer branding, the main strategies that are developed in order to attract the most talented workforce are based on the presence in academic job fairs and networking sessions, both being the result of partnerships with universities. Internships are also a common practice that is recognized by companies such as Sonae and EDP.

Most companies add to these initiatives the fact that they focus on having a strong presence on social media, as a complementary effort for both internal and external audiences. This is a positioning defended by authors such as Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) and Sharif and Sharif (2017), who consider the use of these platforms as an important step of the employer branding process.

Regarding the impacts’ measurement of internal employer branding on current employees, this is a practice being currently implemented in all the five organizations considered in the present study, mainly

through internal surveys. In the cases of Sonae, PwC and EDP, targeted surveys towards specific internal actions are carried out.

Furthermore, except for Sonae and Bosch that, to date, have not implemented a way to measure the relationship between these initiatives and commitment, it was possible to understand that, for the rest of the three companies, these impacts are mainly measured through the existence of a specific section on each company's internal surveys addressing this issue, and through the analysis of exit interviews. This means that these companies mainly conceptualize the relationship between internal employer branding and commitment in terms of exit intentions.

Table 3.3: Multiple comparison III – Implementation and Measurement of Employer Branding

	Sonae	PwC	SAP Portugal	EDP	Bosch Portugal
Main Internal Employer Branding Activities Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Events; - Leadership Development; - Workspace Initiatives; - Careful onboarding and socialization; - Communication Initiatives; - Employee Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Events; - Flexibility and Work-life Balance Initiatives; - Communication Initiatives; - Workspace Initiatives; - Employee Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Events; - Flexibility and Work-life Balance Initiatives; - Career Development; - Workspace Initiatives; - Communication and Support Initiatives; - Employee Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Events; - Flexibility and Work-life Balance Initiatives; - CSR Initiatives; - Careful onboarding; - Training and Development; - Employee Benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal Events; - Flexibility and Work-life Balance Initiatives; - Career Development; - Communication Initiatives; - Employee Benefits
Main External Employer Branding Activities Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roadshows and presence in academic job fairs; - Partnerships + events' sponsorship; - Internships; - Open Innovation Initiatives 	No information was provided	No information was provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presence in three main fields within society; - Roadshows and presence in academic job fairs; - Open days; - Internships; - Partnerships; - Strong presence on social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial Incentives; - “Um dia com o engenheiro”; - Events' Sponsorship; - Roadshows and presence in academic job fairs; - Strong presence in social media
Results Performance Evaluation of Internal Initiatives	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Results Performance of the Initiatives on Commitment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Source: Own elaboration

3.3. Surveys' Results

3.3.1. Sample

In order to make a reliable and conclusive analysis of the aspects that were proposed to be investigated in the theoretical model, it becomes relevant to perform an analysis on the main characteristics of the individuals that compose the sample that supports the present study.

In this sense, it is important to analyse the main characteristics of these individuals and, for that matter, some statistical indicators were selected, allowing the employees' socio-demographic analysis.

The sample for Sonae's respondents is composed by 119 employees working throughout different companies and across several different business areas within the Sonae Group (Figure 3.2).

It is possible to verify that the distribution of the respondents' gender is relatively homogeneous, with the female gender representing around 52.9% of the total respondents, the male gender accounting for 46.2%, and one respondent answered "other" to this question. It is also noticeable that most of these respondents have between 25 and 34 years (43.7%), and most of them have been working at Sonae for more than 5 years (37.8%). Furthermore, most of this company's respondents have worked for four or less companies before starting a career at Sonae (87.3%).

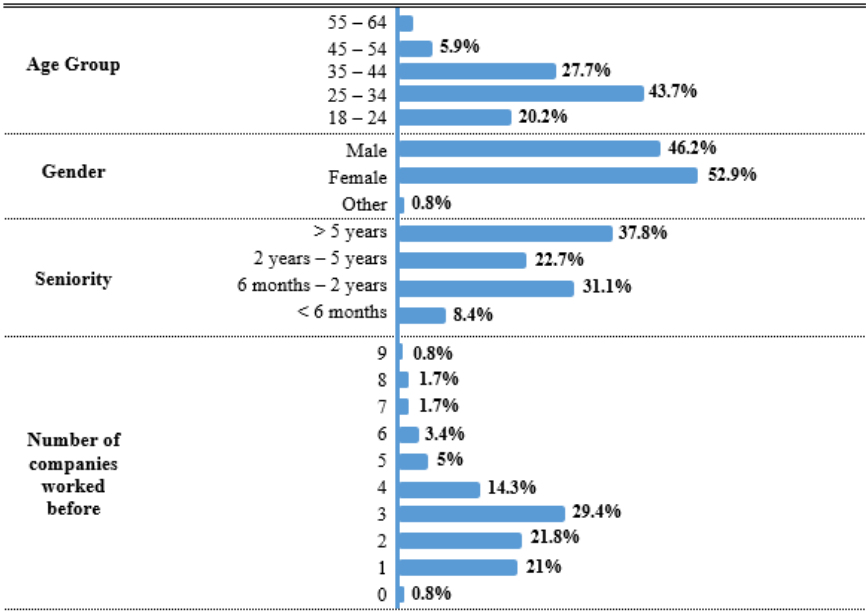


Figure 3.2: Sonae's Participants' Demographic Profile

On the other hand, the sample for PwC's respondents is composed by 127 employees working throughout different business areas within the company. From Figure 3.3, it is possible to state that the majority of PwC's participants are men (62.2%), aged between 25 and 34 years old (60.6%), and who have been working at this organization for a period between 6 months and 2 years (57.4%). In addition, in what concerns the number of companies in which these employees worked before, it is possible to

understand that the great majority of them (92.2%) worked for three or less companies before starting a career at PwC.

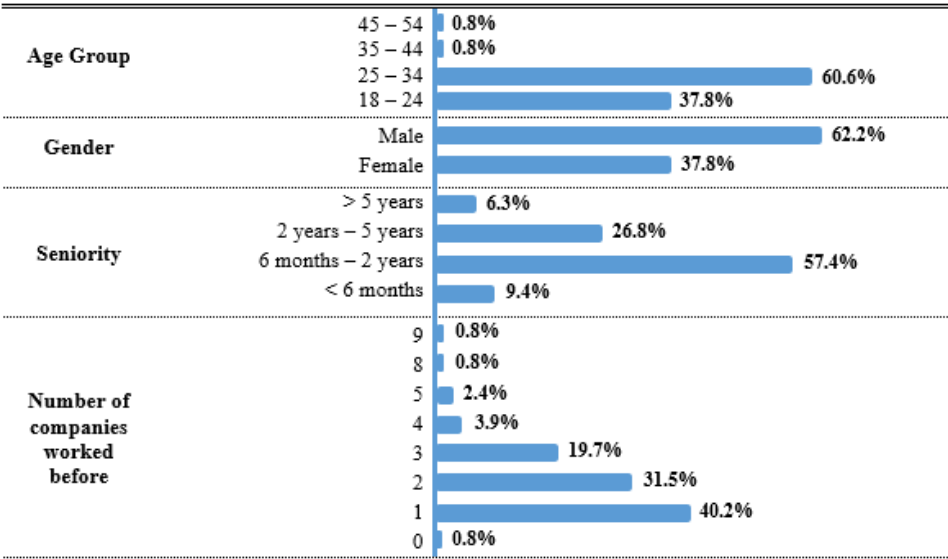


Figure 3.3: PwC's Participants' Demographic Profile

The sample for SAP's respondents is composed by 117 employees working throughout different business areas within the company. From the sample analysis (Figure 3.4), it is possible to understand that most respondents are men (59%) aged between 25 and 34 years old (49.6%). Furthermore, most respondents have been working at SAP Portugal for a period between 6 months and 2 years (35%). In what regards the number of companies in which these employees worked before, it is possible to state that the great majority of them (86.4%) worked for five or less companies before starting a career at SAP Portugal.

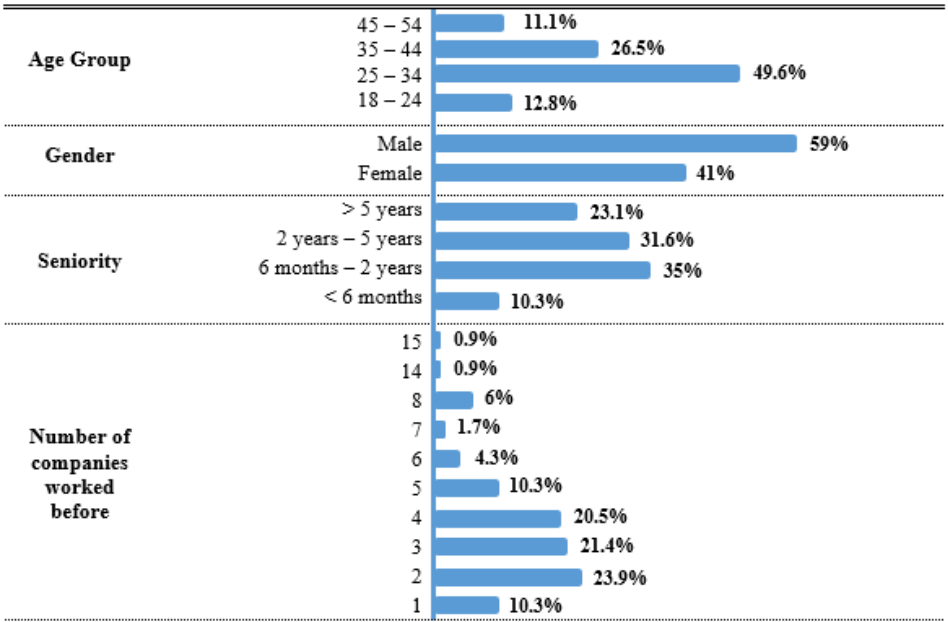


Figure 3.4: SAP's Participants' Demographic Profile

The sample for EDP’s respondents is composed by 112 employees working throughout different companies and across several different business areas within the Group.

From the sample analysis (Figure 3.5), it is possible to understand that most of these company’s participants are men (61.6%), who are aged between 25 and 34 years old (60.7%). In this group of respondents, most of them have been working at EDP for a period between 6 months and 2 years (37.5%) and before being employed by this company, most of them worked for three or less companies (78.6%).

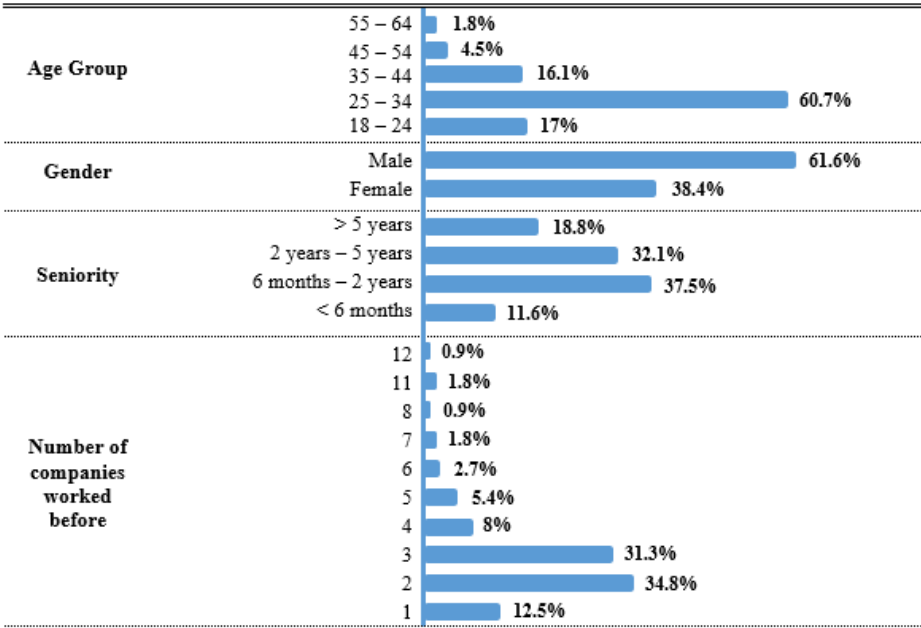


Figure 3.5: EDP’s Participants’ Demographic Profile

Lastly, the sample for Bosch’s respondents is composed by 111 employees working throughout different business areas across the four locations of Bosch in Portugal. From the sample analysis (Figure 3.6), it is possible to understand that most participants from this company are men (63.1%). Similarly, Bosch’s respondents are also aged between 25 and 34 years old (42.3%). Additionally, the majority of these participants have been working at Bosch for a period between 6 months and 2 years (38.7%) and, before working at this company, most of them have worked for five or less companies (90.9%).

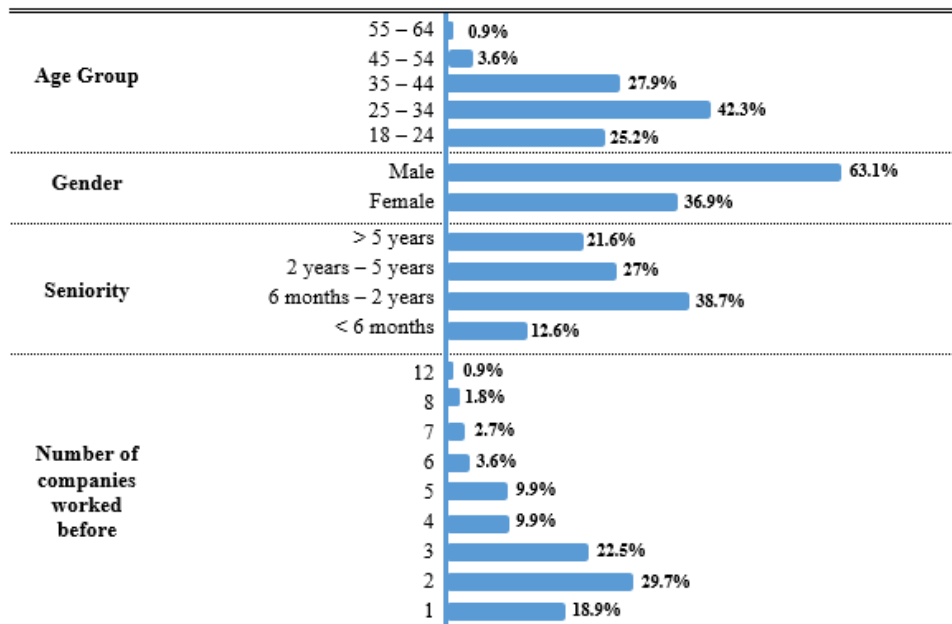


Figure 3.6: Bosch's Participants' Demographic Profile

3.3.2. Organizational Commitment Survey

In order to assess the participants' level and content of organizational commitment, the analysis of their answers to the eighteen questions from the Allen and Meyer survey was conducted. To begin, the internal consistency analysis of the answers provided by the participant employees, resorting to the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients, was analysed.

The internal consistency of an instrument is the extent to which the items that compose it measure the same concept or construct and, for that matter, the Cronbach's Alpha must present a value superior to 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978).

The internal consistency among the respondents about the identified eighteen items in each organization is low, especially for SAP, EDP, and Bosch, meaning that there is high divergency among the respondents' answers regarding some of the scale's items. This dispersion occurs throughout the five organizations under study, with different levels of intensity, as displayed in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: The reliability coefficients of the 18 items related to the organizational commitments

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.733	18
PwC	.701	18
SAP Portugal	.609	18
EDP	.606	18
Bosch	.624	18

However, if an item is deleted, it is possible to identify the items responsible for these low values, as displayed and marked on Annex C.

For Sonae, the items responsible for the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.733 are, respectively: 'I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization'; 'I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization'; 'I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization'; 'I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization'; 'I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization'. For instance, if the item 'I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization' is eliminated, the Cronbach's Alpha's value increases to 0.765.

For SAP, the items responsible for the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.609 are the same items identified for Sonae.

In its turn, for PwC, the items responsible for the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.701 are four of the five identified for Sonae and SAP. If deleted, the item 'I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization', would not increase this value.

As for EDP, there are six items that, if eliminated, would increase the Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.606. Four of those items are the same as the others already identified for PwC plus the items 'This organization deserves my loyalty' and 'This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me'.

In the case of Bosch, the items that, if eliminated, would increase the value of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, are the same four as identified for PwC.

The previous analysis allows to conclude that this instrument needs to be further studied, as its internal consistency presents low values. The responses' skewing could be due to the fact that the scale has many questions asked in the negative, which can affect the responses given by the participants, as their interpretation could be confusing. This is evidenced in the fact that most of the items that, if deleted, would increase the Cronbach's Alpha are the ones made in the negative form.

Furthermore, the fact that the survey does not offer the respondents the option of "I do not have information to answer that question" can also be a disadvantage of this instrument, influencing the given responses.

3.3.3. Affective Commitment to the Employer Brand Scale (ACEB)

In order to analyse the internal consistency of the answers provided by the participant employees from the five companies under study regarding the ACEB scale, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were computed.

For the dimensions that constitute the ACEB instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha are high. This is something that is also consistent across organizations for each of the three dimensions of affective commitment to the employer brand, which demonstrates great internal consistency for the responses regarding this instrument, justifying the construction of the three constructs long-term orientation, enthusiasm with the employer brand and emotional attachment (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 3.5: Reliability statistics related to the long-term orientation

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.890	4
PwC	.916	4
SAP Portugal	.901	4
EDP	.883	4
Bosch	.864	4

Table 3.6: Reliability statistics related to the enthusiasm with the employer brand

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.893	3
PwC	.838	3
SAP Portugal	.856	3
EDP	.864	3
Bosch	.845	3

Table 3.7: Reliability statistics related to the emotional attachment

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.937	4
PwC	.916	4
SAP Portugal	.921	4
EDP	.919	4
Bosch	.902	4

3.3.4. Brand Experience Model

In what concerns the variables that compose the brand experience model, and based on the average inter-item correlation, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are high, meaning that the respondents show high consistency in the items related to the sensory, intellectual and emotional experiences in each of the companies under analysis, which justifies the construction of the respective latent variables, according to Nunnally (1978).

Table 3.8: Reliability statistics related to the sensory experience

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.969	4
PwC	.940	4
SAP Portugal	.916	4
EDP	.943	4
Bosch	.941	4

Table 3.9: Reliability statistics related to the intellectual experience

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.906	7
PwC	.893	7
SAP Portugal	.875	7
EDP	.871	7
Bosch	.864	7

Table 3.10: Reliability statistics related to the emotional experience

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.925	3
PwC	.903	3
SAP Portugal	.951	3
EDP	.827	3
Bosch	.897	3

As shown on Table 3.11, the reliability statistics of long-term orientation, enthusiasm with the employer brand, and emotional attachment, being superior to 0.7 in each organization, allow to compute the latent variable ACEB.

Table 3.11: Reliability statistics related to the ACEB construct

Organization	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Sonae	.894	3
PwC	.872	3
SAP Portugal	.884	3
EDP	.812	3
Bosch	.873	3

3.4. Validation of the Theoretical Model

The Multiple Linear Regression Model (MLRM) is now going to be applied in each organization. The model's hypotheses are validated on Annex D.

On the other hand, the method to estimate the models' coefficients is the Stepwise, which is suitable when there are expected relevant correlations between the independent variables. The models' estimations can be viewed on Table 3.12.

Before carrying out the coefficients' estimation, an analysis of the outliers was conducted and, as a result, some observations were eliminated, as they constituted severe outliers.

Table 3.12: Coefficient estimations in each organization

	Steps	Organization	Unstandardized	Beta	Sig.	Collinearity	Adjusted R
			Coefficients			Statistics	
			B			VIF	Square
Sonae	1						
	2	(Constant)	.305		.109		.879
		Intellectual experience	.283	.281	.000	3.132	
		Sensory experience	.615	.694	.000	3.132	
SAP Portugal	1						
	2						
	3	(Constant)	-1.079		.000		.903
		Emotional experience	.518	.529	.000	3.425	
		Intellectual experience	.399	.337	.000	3.197	
		Sensory experience	.193	.181	.000	1.615	
PwC	1						
	2	(Constant)	-.056		.006		.831
		Emotional experience	.375	.393	.000	1.918	
		Sensory experience	.536	.596	.000	1.918	
EDP	1						
	2	(Constant)	-.218		.002		.673
		Intellectual experience	.735	.672	.000	1.208	
		Sensory experience	.242	.274	.024	1.208	
Bosch	1						
	2	(Constant)	1.038		.939		.611
		Emotional experience	.526	.604	.852	2.436	
		Sensory experience	.201	.221	.852	2.436	

Note: The dependent variable is the ACEB.

The quality of these adjustments, after adjusting for the number of independent variables and the sample sizes, are good for Sonae, PwC and SAP, and moderate for EDP and Bosch.

All the estimates for the independent variables are positive, meaning that for a unit variation in one of the independent variables, it is estimated that the ACEB increases some proportion in units (the estimated slope for that independent variable), holding the other independent variables constant.

On the other hand, and as displayed on Table 3.13, SAP Portugal is the only organization where the ACEB is explained by the three independent variables.

Sonae is similar to EDP in the sense that ACEB is explained by the intellectual and sensory experiences.

As for PwC and Bosch, they present similar results in the sense that ACEB is explained by the emotional and sensory experiences.

As for the assumption which states that the independent variables should not suffer from multicollinearity, and from the values of the variance inflation (VIF) coefficients, which are less than 5 (Sheather, 2009), they are validated. In this sense, multicollinearity is not a severe problem in the scope of the present analysis.

Table 3.13: Summary table of the significant independent variables to explain ACEB

	Significant independent variables	Sign of the estimated coefficients
Sonae	Intellectual experience	Positive
	Sensory experience	
PwC	Emotional experience	Positive
	Sensory experience	
SAP Portugal	Emotional experience	Positive
	Intellectual experience	
	Sensory experience	
EDP	Intellectual experience	Positive
	Sensory experience	
Bosch	Emotional experience	Positive
	Sensory experience	

In this sense, it is possible to state that the present research's hypotheses are validated, or partially validated, as displayed on Table 3.14.

Table 3.14: Summary table of the hypothesis' validation

Hypotheses	Validation				
	Sonae	PwC	SAP	EDP	Bosch
<p>H₁: A positive sensory experience of the employer brand will lead to higher levels of affective commitment towards the brand on Organization <i>i</i> (<i>i</i> = Sonae, PwC, SAP, EDP, Bosch)</p>	Validated	Validated	Validated	Validated	Validated
<p>H₂: A positive intellectual experience of the employer brand will lead to higher levels of affective commitment towards the brand on Organization <i>i</i> (<i>i</i> = Sonae, PwC, SAP, EDP, Bosch)</p>	Validated	Not Validated	Validated	Validated	Not Validated
<p>H₃: A positive emotional experience of the employer brand will lead to higher levels of affective commitment towards the brand on Organization <i>i</i> (<i>i</i> = Sonae, PwC, SAP, EDP, Bosch)</p>	Not Validated	Validated	Validated	Not Validated	Validated

Source: Own elaboration

In line with the main presented concepts and conclusions, it is possible to state that employees' experience emerges as a key driver of ACEB, as it is expected to contribute to the development of affective commitment, which can be associated to many desired organizational outcomes.

The use of the ACEB instrument in the organizational context can be diverse and it presents many advantages, as it could be helpful in the selection of the most committed employees to help in selecting the most suitable candidates during recruitment processes, as well as to mentor new employees. Furthermore, ACEB can be useful in internal mobility, as it points to the organization which are the employees whose identity is more in line with the company's vision (Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015).

In conclusion, these analysis show that these organizations can work harder on developing internal employer branding initiatives that foster their employees' desire to remain working for them, by increasing their level of affective commitment and the frequency of brand citizenship behaviours such as altruism, willingness to help and proactivity (Fernandez-Lores *et al.*, 2015).

This can happen, for example, through the development of actions and internal communication strategies that reflect these companies' corporate values and more transparency on their different business practices and results.

Additionally, when designing experiences that aim to positively impact workers, it is crucial to invest on the areas that matter to people, such as rewards, diversity, flexibility, a supportive leadership, opened communication and learning opportunities (Mugan, 2019), always keeping the organizational values and goals in mind.

Since the sensory experience was found to positively influence employees' level of affective commitment in each of the five companies, it can be assumed that an investment in internal initiatives that foster sensory stimuli could be highly beneficial in the organizational context.

In this sense, designing offices which are aesthetically pleasing could increase visual stimulation, for example by working on colours and lighting, since these aspects have been shown to provide beneficial psychological impacts on people, which could enhance the office environment.

Also, working on the depth and comfort of offices, varying textures and materials can also heighten the sensory elements and create a more pleasant atmosphere by stimulating focus, inspire collaboration and establish an interactive and inclusive company culture. Comfortable and ergonomic seating can also improve physical and cognitive well-being, by stimulating a greater focus in perception, memory, reasoning and motor response.

In conclusion, it is important to notice that, by investing time and financial resources in strategies such as the above, companies will be able to satisfy their employees' most basic needs in a sense that the experiences that they have in their company are in line with their expectations.

Conclusions

In addition to having an essential role in attracting talent, employer branding is also a strategy capable of making current employees aware of the main advantages of belonging to a specific organization.

In fact, this study's findings support the strategic move of employer branding from Marketing strategy to the Human Resource area, as ACEB may be an effective indicator of the relationship between employees and the employer brand.

The present study's literature review explores and highlights the role and importance of employer branding and internal branding in aligning the external corporate image with internal employee commitment contributing to a company's competitiveness in a highly challenging and uncertain business environment.

In this sense, this research adds importance to the employer branding field in the sense that it focuses on the role of internal employer branding strategies on current employees, which constitutes an underdeveloped topic within the existing literature. More particularly, the focus on affective commitment and its link to the employer branding experience is novel in the sense that there are only very limited published studies in this regard.

Based on the information that was collected through the qualitative part of the present research, it is possible to conclude that internal employer branding is a strategy that, even though being currently implemented in each of the studied organizations, for SAP Portugal and Bosch, it does need to become more standardized and formalized within these companies' practices.

Furthermore, it was possible to understand that, in four of the five companies, Sonae, SAP Portugal, EDP and Bosch, the people engagement teams are also in charge of the internal employer branding strategies. In fact, it was possible to conclude that these companies include their internal employer branding strategies in their existing engagement and retention policies. However, even though most of the analysed companies make this link, two of them do not establish a clear connection between the opinions regarding these initiatives and the employees' levels of commitment, and none of them specifically addresses these impacts on affective commitment.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that, even though the EVPs from the five companies are distinct between each other, they can all fit into the Dabirian and colleagues' seven value propositions, as they reflect the different categories that the main literature in this field found to be valued in an employer brand.

Furthermore, it was possible to understand that, with the development of the internal and external employer branding initiatives being a responsibility of different teams, this may lead to some inconsistencies on the messages sent by their internal and external brands.

As for the main conclusions regarding the surveys' application, the model was only partially validated for the sample composing the studied companies. In this sense, SAP Portugal is the only

company where the three model's hypothesis are validated, meaning that the ACEB is explained by the sensory, intellectual and emotional experiences.

As for the other four companies, ACEB is only explained by two of the three considered constructs of experience. However, it is interesting to point out that the sensory experience is an explicative construct of ACEB for all the considered companies.

Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that the presented conclusions must be analysed considering the limitations inherent to the investigation. In this sense, the first limitation imposed is related to possible skewing in the given answers is related to the fact that the data was collected during a time of a global pandemic, where most companies were closed and the employees were working from home, which could have influenced the results, since they mainly focus on emotional dimensions.

Another limitation is the sample size. Because five companies were considered, it can be stated that this is a small sample which does not allow to make inferences regarding the generalized treatment of internal employer branding in the Portuguese market. Furthermore, increasing the sample size would also allow to eliminate some discrepancies in the given responses, especially for the Organizational Commitment survey, where the reliability is low for many of the considered items.

Additionally, another limitation that can be considered in the light of this study is that extrapolating the found results to the population is not possible, since the results are based on a convenience rather than a random sample.

Future related work could be done using a faithful replica of the brand experience model using a confirmatory rather than an exploratory analysis, as performed by the authors, accounting that the sample size increases. Furthermore, it could be interesting that future studies addressed other drivers of ACEB, besides the employee experience.

In addition, replicating the study across sectors and cultures is also a possibility, as the results could be interesting to enrich the present subject.

In general, it is possible to understand that the employer branding experience offers a vision of a meaningful and impactful future for both the Human Resource Management and the next generation of employees. However, when it comes to this subject, there is not a traditional best practice that can be applied to every company in order to maintain talent within their boundaries, since the employer branding experience is about a journey and organizational events that impact employees in a very particular way.

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Annexes

Annex A: Interview Script

Company:

Date:

Introductory conversation regarding the objectives of the interview, explanation of the dissertation's objectives, and question for permission to audiotape the interview.

Employer Branding in the Company:

1. Is employer branding a formal or an informal practice of your organization?
2. What is/are the department/s responsible for the employer branding process?
3. What are the main employer branding initiatives/activities carried out by your company, both internally and externally?
4. In terms of centralization, would you consider that it is a process/strategy that is managed globally (by the company's headquarters) or more locally (by each country division)?
5. Which factors compose your company's Employer Value Proposition (EVP)?
6. Does your company measure the impacts of employer branding? If yes, how?
7. Does your organization measure the impact of implementing employer branding initiatives on employee commitment? If the answer is yes, how does it do it?
8. What are your company's main concerns in the development of a positive employee experience?

Annex B: Organizational and Affective Commitment Surveys

Affective Commitment to the Employer Brand

Employer branding represents "an organization's efforts to promote, both inside and outside the company, a clear vision of what makes it different and desirable as an employer."

In its turn, affective commitment is defined as "identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to the employer brand".

The present questionnaire is part of a study developed for the conclusion of the Master in Management, from ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, one of its objectives being the investigation of the impacts of internal employer branding on affective commitment, resorting to a scale of affective commitment to the employer brand (ACEB Scale).

In this sense, I request your cooperation in filling it out.

I appreciate, in advance, for your availability and ensure the confidentiality of all the given answers.

If you have any questions or wish to obtain additional information regarding the study, please contact:

anafilipa.97@hotmail.com | afbso@iscte-iul.pt | 936 195 867

Part I - Biographical Data

Age *

Gender *

Seniority in the company where you currently work for *

How many companies have you worked for? *

Part II - Organizational Commitment

The following statements represent some possible feelings of employees towards the company they work for.

Please answer, according to your own feelings about the company you currently work for.

Consider the following scale: 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree").

1. I would like to develop the rest of my career at this company *

2. Many things in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave this company right now *

3. I feel no obligation to remain in my current job *

4. Even if it was of my interest, I would not feel comfortable leaving the organization I currently work for *

5. Right now, staying in this company is both a matter of need as it is of will *

6. Honestly, I consider the problems of this company as if they were also mine *

7. I do not feel as being "part of the family" in my company *

8. I feel that, due to a lack of other options, I cannot consider leaving this company *

9. I would feel guilty if I left my organization right now *

10. This organization deserves my loyalty *

11. One of the few serious consequences of me leaving this company would be that there are not many other alternatives *

12. I do not feel emotionally attached to this company *

13. This company has a great personal significance for me *

14. One of the main reasons why I continue to work for this company is that me leaving would involve considerable personal sacrifice *

15. I would not leave my organization now because I feel I have an obligation to the people who work there *

16. I feel indebted to the organization I currently work for *

17. If I had not invested so much of myself in this organization, I would seriously consider going to work elsewhere *

18. I do not feel a strong sense of belonging towards this company *

Part III - Affective Commitment to the Employer Brand

Please answer the following questions according to your own feelings about the company you currently work for.

Consider the following scale: 1 ("not at all descriptive") to 7 ("totally descriptive").

My commitment towards my company is long-term oriented *

I desire to work for this company for a long time *

I would feel sad if I had to leave this company *

I feel myself part of this company and I wish to remain like this in the future *

I feel that any problem of this company is also my problem *

I feel that this company's projects are also my projects *

This company's success is also my success *

I am fond of this company *

I have developed a strong bond with this company *

I am emotionally attached to this company *

I feel my "team colours" *

Part IV - Employee Experience and Affective Commitment

Please answer the following questions according to your own feelings about the company you currently work for.

Consider the following scale: 1 ("not at all descriptive") to 7 ("totally descriptive").

My workplace makes an impression on my senses *

I like my workplace *

My workplace appeals to my senses *

My workplace helps me to do my job well *

I take pride in the corporate values of this company *

My job makes me think *

My job stimulates and challenges my thinking abilities *

I enjoy my job because it engages me in a lot of thinking *

I believe that if I worked hard, I would be able to achieve a promotion *

I rely on my intellectual capabilities to develop my job *

I like to learn new ways to develop my job *

I enjoy my job at this company *

I have fun while working *

I get pleasure from my job at this company *

Annex C: Reliability Coefficients for Organizational Commitment

Reliability coefficients if the items are deleted in Sonae

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	.712
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now	.710
▶ <i>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization</i>	.765
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave	.685
Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as of desire	.704
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	.711
▶ <i>I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization</i>	.743
▶ <i>I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization</i>	.749
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	.700
This organization deserves my loyalty	.715
One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere	.722
▶ <i>I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization</i>	.760
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	.714
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	.717
I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	.700
I owe a great deal to this organization	.694
If I hadn't invested so much in this organization, I would seriously consider working elsewhere	.714
▶ <i>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization</i>	.739

Reliability coefficients if the items are deleted in PwC

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	.683
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now	.670
▶ <i>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization</i>	.722
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave	.675
Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as of desire	.671
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	.685
▶ <i>I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization</i>	.730
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	.687
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	.667
This organization deserves my loyalty	.686
One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere	.673
▶ <i>I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization</i>	.738
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	.677
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	.679
I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	.662
I owe a great deal to this organization	.678
If I hadn't invested so much in this organization, I would seriously consider working elsewhere	.674
▶ <i>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization</i>	.711

Reliability coefficients if the items are deleted in SAP Portugal

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	.585
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now	.565
▶ <i>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization</i>	.658
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave	.573
Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as of desire	.531
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	.580
▶ <i>I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization</i>	.648
▶ <i>I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization</i>	.614
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	.578
This organization deserves my loyalty	.598
One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere	.602
▶ <i>I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization</i>	.644
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	.584
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	.583
I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	.564
I owe a great deal to this organization	.558
If I hadn't invested so much in this organization, I would seriously consider working elsewhere	.561
▶ <i>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization</i>	.644

Reliability coefficients if the items are deleted in EDP

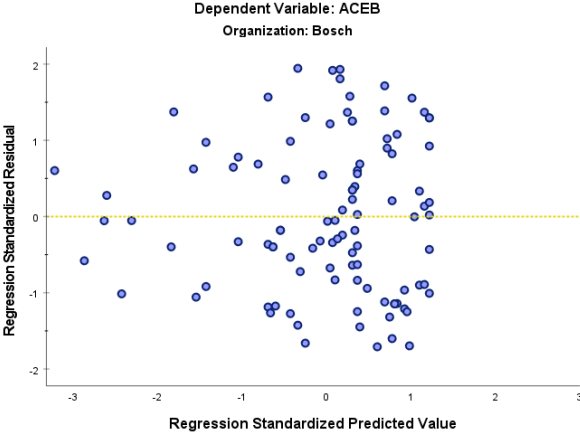
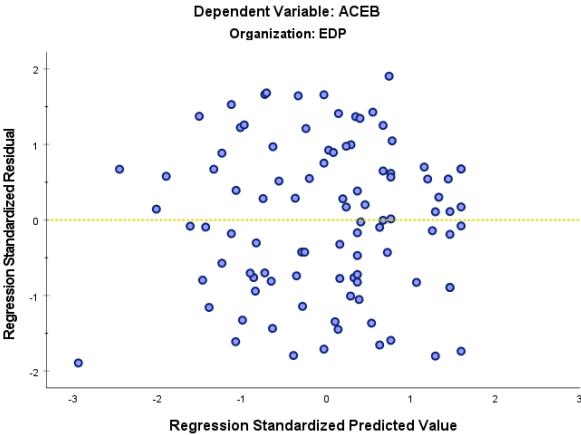
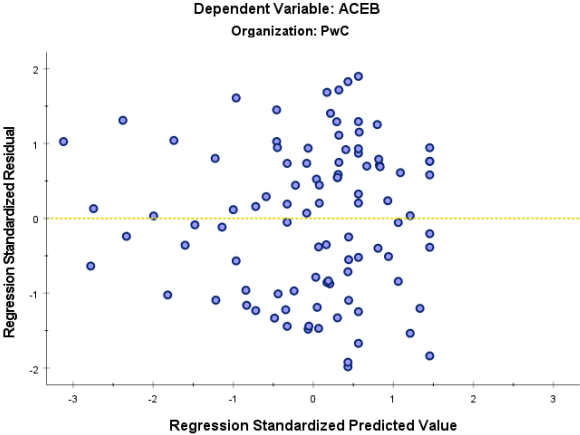
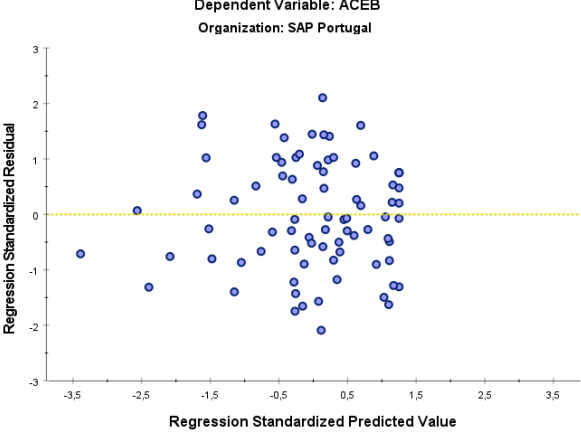
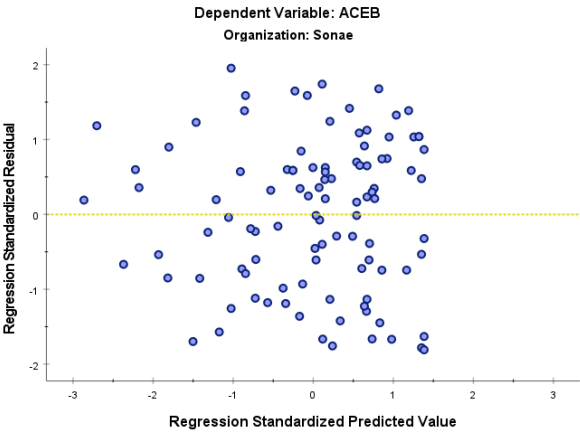
	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	.574
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now	.579
▶ <i>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization</i>	.691
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave	.562
Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as of desire	.561
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	.591
▶ <i>I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization</i>	.623
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	.580
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	.553
▶ <i>This organization deserves my loyalty</i>	.612
One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere	.581
▶ <i>I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization</i>	.615
▶ <i>This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me</i>	.619
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	.571
I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	.545
I owe a great deal to this organization	.552
If I hadn't invested so much in this organization, I would seriously consider working elsewhere	.595
▶ <i>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization</i>	.617

Reliability coefficients if the items are deleted in Bosch

	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	.614
Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now	.598
▶ <i>I do not feel any obligation to remain with my organization</i>	.652
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave	.590
Right now, staying with my job at this organization is a matter of necessity as much as of desire	.575
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own	.609
▶ <i>I do not feel like 'part of my family' at this organization</i>	.633
I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	.602
I would feel guilty if I left this organization now	.567
This organization deserves my loyalty	.620
One of the few negative consequences of leaving my job at this organization would be the scarcity of available alternative elsewhere	.619
▶ <i>I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization</i>	.651
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	.606
One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice	.589
I would not leave my organization right now because of my sense of obligation to it	.601
I owe a great deal to this organization	.587
If I hadn't invested so much in this organization, I would seriously consider working elsewhere	.605
▶ <i>I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization</i>	.639

Annex D: Multiple Regression Model's Assumptions' Validation

- The assumption of the residuals' homogeneity



The residuals' homogeneity assumption is validated, since the dots/circles are randomly distributed with respect to zero.

- **The residuals' normality assumption**

Descriptives				
Organization			Statistic	Std. Error
PwC	Standardized	Mean	.0000000	.088345413
	Residual	Median	.0941471	
		Std. Deviation	.98963703	
		Minimum	-1.88271	
		Maximum	1.89889	
		Skewness	-.111	.244
	Kurtosis	-1.002	.483	

Tests of Normality							
Organization		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Sonae	Standardized Residual	.086	102	.058	.968	102	.014
SAP Portugal	Standardized Residual	.079	79	.200*	.970	79	.062
PwC	Standardized Residual	.090	98	.049	.970	98	.025
EDP	Standardized Residual	.080	97	.137	.973	97	.042
Bosch	Standardized Residual	.074	102	.200*	.964	102	.007

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The normality assumption of the residuals is validated for all the organizations under study, except for PwC ($Sig_i > 0,05$, $i = Sonae, SAP, EDP, Bosh$). However, from the respective Skewness coefficient ($-\frac{0.111}{0.244} \approx .455 \in]-1.96; 1.96[$), the Central Limit Theorem can be invoked. Therefore, it can be assumed that the residuals follow an approximately normal distribution. Thus, this assumption is validated in each of the five organizations.

- **The independent variables do not suffer from multicollinearity problem**

This assumption is validated by the Variance Inflation Factor in each organization since $VIF < 5$ (Sheather, 2009).

- **The residuals are not correlated with each other**

This hypothesis is validated, since the sample is not a time series, meaning that employee i is independent from employee j , in organization k , ($k = Sonae, PwC, SAP Portugal, EDP, Bosch$).

- The expected residuals' value is equal to zero

Residuals Statistics ^a						
Organization		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Sonae	Predicted Value	-1.2865145	.5970765	.0000000	.38600749	112
	Residual	-1.83731651	1.78925335	.0000000	.92249565	112
	Std. Predicted Value	-3.333	1.547	.000	1.000	112
	Std. Residual	-1.965	1.913	.000	.986	112
SAP Portugal	Predicted Value	-.3847592	.3309968	.0000000	.15246516	112
	Residual	-2.01757193	1.83095241	.0000000	.98830885	112
	Std. Predicted Value	-2.524	2.171	.000	1.000	112
	Std. Residual	-2.014	1.827	.000	.986	112
PwC	Predicted Value	-.7357941	.5735742	.0000000	.23855976	125
	Residual	-2.02574492	1.83652496	.0000000	.97112782	125
	Std. Predicted Value	-3.084	2.404	.000	1.000	125
	Std. Residual	-2.061	1.868	.000	.988	125
EDP	Predicted Value	-1.2477330	.7541814	.0000000	.42113909	104
	Residual	-1.84614992	1.80187643	.0000000	.90699607	104
	Std. Predicted Value	-2.963	1.791	.000	1.000	104
	Std. Residual	-2.006	1.957	.000	.985	104
Bosch	Predicted Value	-.2295112	.5775335	.0000000	.18418549	84
	Residual	-2.03497100	1.89998829	.0000000	.98289150	84
	Std. Predicted Value	-1.246	3.136	.000	1.000	84
	Std. Residual	-2.033	1.898	.000	.982	84

a. Dependent Variable: ACEB

As it can be viewed in the previous table, the expected residuals' value is equal to zero in all five organizations.