

**MASTER
MARKETING**

Understanding the importance of eWOM on Higher Education Institutions' brand equity

Liliana Judite Magalhães Carvalho Maranhão

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UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF EWOM ON HIGHER
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Liliana Judite Magalhães Carvalho Maranhão

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Amélia Maria Pinto da Cunha Brandão

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"The truest wisdom is a resolute determination.", Napoleon Bonaparte

Abstract

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) worldwide are increasingly aware of the importance of brand equity for brand strategy. In a world where the use of the internet became generalized, the current research explores the role of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on brand equity. Since previous research is mainly centred on products, this study aims at understanding the importance of eWOM on brand equity in HEIs and thus contribute to the current research gap. A qualitative approach was adopted, with semi-structured interviews targeting 18 Higher Education students from different nationalities and study programmes. The interviews were examined following the principles of thematic content analysis. The findings show that, within HEIs, positive eWOM positively influences brand equity, whereas negative eWOM has a minor influence on brand equity; furthermore, it was found that firm-generated eWOM has equivalent or even more credibility than user-generated eWOM, thus affecting HEIs' brand equity. These results contradict previous research pointing to the detrimental effect of negative eWOM on brand equity and positioning user-generated eWOM as more trustworthy and credible than firm-generated eWOM. This study contributes to the academy by highlighting the importance of positive eWOM and firm-generated eWOM on brand equity in the context of HEIs.

Keywords: eWOM, brand equity, Higher Education

JEL Codes: M31, M37, I23

Resumo

As Instituições de Ensino Superior (IES) à escala global estão cada vez mais conscientes da importância do valor da marca na estratégia da marca. Num mundo em que o uso da internet se encontra generalizado, a investigação anterior explora o papel do electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) no valor da marca. Uma vez que a literatura existente se centra essencialmente no produto, este estudo tem por objetivo compreender a importância do eWOM no valor da marca em IES e desta forma contribuir para o atual *gap* na investigação. Foi adotada uma abordagem qualitativa, com entrevistas semi-estruturadas a 18 estudantes de Ensino Superior de diferentes nacionalidades e cursos. As entrevistas foram analisadas de acordo com os princípios de análise temática de conteúdo. Os resultados mostram que, em IES, o eWOM positivo influencia positivamente o valor da marca, enquanto que o eWOM negativo tem um efeito reduzido no valor da marca; adicionalmente, os resultados indicam que o eWOM gerado pela organização (*firm-generated*) tem valor equivalente ou maior do que o eWOM gerado por outros utilizadores (*user-generated*), pelo que afeta o valor da marca em IES. Estes resultados divergem da literatura anterior, que aponta para os efeitos prejudiciais do eWOM negativo no valor da marca e posiciona o eWOM gerados pelos utilizadores como mais fiável e credível do que o eWOM gerado pelas organizações. Este estudo contribui para a academia ao enfatizar a importância do eWOM positivo e do eWOM gerado pelas organizações no valor da marca em IES.

Palavras-chave: eWOM, valor da marca, Ensino Superior

Códigos JEL: M31, M37, I23

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
Resumo	iii
Table of contents	iv
Table index	v
Figure index	v
1. Introduction	1
2. Theoretical background	3
2.1. Brand equity in Higher Education Institutions	3
2.2. Electronic Word-of-Mouth	4
3. Methodology	9
3.1. Qualitative approach.....	9
3.2. Data collection.....	9
3.3. Research Participants.....	10
3.4. Data analysis	12
4. Research findings and discussion	13
4.1. EWOM Valence: Positive vs. Negative eWOM.....	13
4.2. Firm-generated vs. user-generated eWOM	20
5. Conclusion	24
5.1 Limitations	26
5.2. Implications for research	26
5.3. Implications for practice	28
Appendices	29
References.....	34
Annexes.....	38

Table index

Table 1: List of interviewees.	10
Table 2: Statements by interviewees I06 and I02 regarding credible positive and negative eWOM.	16
Table A 1: Literature overview on the sources of brand equity - the brand equity dimensions, ordered from the most to the least commonly used ones.	29
Table A 2: Category systems.	32

Figure index

Figure 1: Conceptual framework based on the literature review.	8
Figure 2: Proposed conceptual framework.	24
Figure A 1: Word cloud based on the coded nodes.	33

1. Introduction

The Higher Education (HE) sector has become increasingly aware of the importance of marketing activities (Vukasovič, 2015), with university branding being of interest for academics and marketing professionals due to Higher Education uniqueness (Alam & Saeed, 2016). In fact, HE offers certain particularities, such as the fact that the individual's choice represents a long-term personal investment determining one's professional future. This means that the individual's decision needs to be specially well-considered, wherefore brand equity can play a decisive influence as it works as risk reliever (Mourad, Ennew, & Kortam, 2011).

Meanwhile, with the mainstream use of internet, electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) has acquired a relevant role in providing information about brands and intensifying the exchange of opinions and experiences about products and services. This, in turn, may influence brand equity enhancement (Kwek Choon, Erfan, & Amir, 2014; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016; Sijoria, Mukherjee, & Datta, 2018a; Stojanovic, Andreu, & Curras-Perez, 2018) and brand equity dilution (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Beneke, de Sousa, Mbuyu, & Wickham, 2016).

Despite the importance of these topics, specific research on brand equity and its determinants in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is scarce (Alam & Saeed, 2016; Mourad, Meshreki, & Sarofim, 2019; Vukasovič, 2015), and research on the relationship between eWOM and HEIs' brand equity has not caught the attention of academic researchers so far. Therefore, this study aims at understanding the importance of eWOM on HEIs' brand equity. What is the importance of positive eWOM on HEIs' brand equity? And what is the importance of negative eWOM on HEIs' brand equity? Following a qualitative methodological approach, this study addresses these research questions, following earlier calls to extend to other industries the studies on the relationship between eWOM and brand equity (Colicev, Malshe, & Pauwels, 2018; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015, 2016), and hence contribute to the current research gap.

The research findings diverge from the available literature (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Beneke et al., 2016; Colicev et al., 2018) by showing that, within HEIs, positive eWOM influences brand equity, whereas negative eWOM has a minor effect on brand equity. This research also suggests that firm-generated eWOM has equivalent or even more credibility than

user-generated eWOM, thus affecting HEIs' brand equity. In terms of managerial implications, this study helps brand and communication managers of HEIs to understand the importance of eWOM on brand equity and to reflect upon effective ways to enhance brand equity through eWOM.

The next sections of the paper offer an overview of the theoretical background regarding the relevant topics in the literature. Following, the methodology used to obtain students' insights is presented, proceeding with the discussion of the findings, the conclusion, the limitations and, finally, the implications for research and for practice.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Brand equity in Higher Education Institutions

Brand equity has been conceptualized as the brand characteristics, including name and symbol, which confer extra value to the brand and are reflected on consumers' perceptions with emphasis on loyalty, perceived quality, associations and awareness (Aaker, 1996). The concept of Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) refers to brand equity in terms of consumer knowledge about a brand, which is determined by brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Since brand image relates to the consumer's perceptions of a brand, as reflected by the various types of brand associations held in memory, a positive brand image is thus composed by favorable, strong and unique brand associations in consumers' minds and is able to increase the probability of brand choice and brand loyalty (Keller, 1993). According to the literature on brand equity, brand loyalty can be evaluated from the willingness to pay a price premium, as the additional amount a consumer is willing to pay for a preferred brand (Aaker, 1996; Porto, 2018; Sijoria, Mukherjee, & Datta, 2018b). Consumers with favorable, strong and unique brand associations are probably more receptive to paying a price premium (Keller, 1993), which in turn may impact brand loyalty and, ultimately, brand equity (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000).

HEIs worldwide have become more marketing-oriented, increasingly recognizing the importance of developing strong university brands (Mourad et al., 2019; Vukasovič, 2015) and treating students as customers (Alam & Saeed, 2016; Guilbault, 2018; Mourad et al., 2011). In the context of HEIs, it should be considered that strong, favorable and unique associations with the brand may not be achieved until the individual has finished the experience, consisting in completing a degree, usually a mid- to long-term commitment that will reflect in his/her identity ever after consumption (Vukasovič, 2015). With such a high risk, brand equity can play a major role as risk reliever (Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019).

Another particularity of Higher Education, which cannot be ignored when assessing brand equity, is the fact that a university degree is a one-time purchase; so loyalty cannot be evaluated in terms of repeated purchase, but can be reflected, for example, in the student's decision to pursue postgraduate studies in the same institution (Vukasovič, 2015).

Previous studies emphasize brand awareness and brand image as the main dimensions of brand equity in HE (Alam & Saeed, 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Vukasovič, 2015). Brand awareness is the result of communication and promotion activities, marketing actions and word-of-mouth (Alam & Saeed, 2016; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Vukasovič, 2015). Brand image is generally seen as the major driver of brand equity (Alam & Saeed, 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Vukasovič, 2015), being related to the students associations of intangible and physical attributes (Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016). Among the intangible attributes identified are personality (Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016), reputation (Dennis, Papagiannidis, Alamanos, & Bourlakis, 2016; Mourad et al., 2019), tradition and history, prestige, ranking position (Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019), attachment strength, commitment, trust and satisfaction; from the physical attributes it is considered the specific geographical location and the country it belongs to, as well as the associated faculty and staff (Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019). Perceived quality (Dennis et al., 2016; Pinar, Trapp, Girard, & E. Boyt, 2014), university reputation and brand loyalty have also been identified as core brand equity dimensions (Pinar et al., 2014). There has been, however, little consensus regarding the dimensions and determinants of brand equity in HEIs, which may be explained by the fact that significative variations exist as a result of the HE industry maturity and cultural circumstances (Mourad et al., 2019). Appendix 1 provides an overview on the main sources of brand equity identified in the literature.

Given the above-mentioned literature on HEIs' brand equity, one may expect that it would be subject to the influence of eWOM.

2.2. Electronic Word-of-Mouth

With the advent of the internet, new forms of communication have arisen and the information exchange between consumers and firms, and among consumers themselves, has been facilitated to a point where the online world became a privileged platform for sharing brand experiences (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Resnick, Zeckhauser, Friedman, & Kuwabara, 2000). It is within this global framework that brand equity is currently largely characterized by

what consumers are saying to each other using the various means of electronic communication (Kwek Choon et al., 2014), and making use of the so called electronic Word-of-Mouth. EWOM has indeed been defined as “... any positive or negative statement made by potential, current, or former consumers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet” (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004, p. 1). When adding the firm’s point of view, the eWOM definition also includes shared or reposted messages about products or brands from companies or organizations to current and potential clients or to consumers in general (Hu & Ha, 2015). Different types of eWOM have been identified in the literature, namely: online review websites or online reviews (Beneke et al., 2016; Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Cheung & Thadani, 2012), social networking sites (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015, 2016; Stojanovic et al., 2018), discussion forums/web forums (Chen, Teng, Yu, & Yu, 2016; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017), weblogs (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017), rating websites and email (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017), social media channels and online brand communities (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015), opinion platforms (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011), chat-rooms (Chen et al., 2016), e-bulletin boards and newsgroups (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Nevertheless, there are sometimes differences on what is included in the category of eWOM; for instance, independent product assessment websites and manufacturer/retailer sources have been categorized as a different type of source, separate from eWOM (Chen et al., 2016).

In addressing eWOM one has to focus the (1) valence; (2) source credibility; (3) information/review quality; (4) social relationship; and (5) susceptibility to informational influence.

Valence: Positive vs. Negative eWOM

A central concept of eWOM is the one of valence, directly linked to the impact on the brand image and brand equity (Sijoria et al., 2018b). Generally, whereas positive eWOM positively affects brand equity (Sijoria et al., 2018a) and purchase intention (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017), negative eWOM has detrimental effects on both (Beneke et al., 2016), leading to a significant brand equity dilution (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011) (see figure 1). Even

brands whose consumers detain good brand knowledge are affected by the detrimental effects of negative eWOM (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011). In fact, the more the knowledge about a brand, the stronger the deterioration of brand equity (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011), since the damaging effect of negative eWOM occurs through the perceived quality and brand loyalty dimensions of brand equity (Beneke et al., 2016). Hence, the effect of negative eWOM on brand equity and purchase intention is higher than having no eWOM at all (Beneke et al., 2016).

Additionally, the effect of negative eWOM is more detrimental to the brand equity of high involvement products, in contrast to low involvement products (Beneke et al., 2016; Colicev et al., 2018). The first ones, more expensive, justify the investment in time and effort to learn more about them (Beneke et al., 2016). In contrast, low involvement products represent marginal financial risk, being therefore less affected by negative eWOM (Beneke et al., 2016). Indeed, most consumers search for product information to minimize the risks before purchasing (Park & Jeon, 2018). The available research on eWOM has been focused on products, although it has been recognized that the eWOM effect may be superior for experience goods than for search goods (Park & Lee, 2009). In fact, experience goods are characterized by attributes that cannot be known before the act of purchasing or consumption, and therefore the eWOM may reduce the resulting uncertainty (Park & Lee, 2009).

Source credibility

The source credibility has a significantly positive effect on the credibility evaluation of eWOM (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015), being a key influencer of brand equity among consumers (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). An important distinction made in the literature on eWOM is between firm-generated eWOM, controlled and administered by companies, and user-generated eWOM, identified by prospective consumers as more trustworthy and credible (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Park & Jeon, 2018). User-generated eWOM also has a stronger effect on consumers' brand equity (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016), affecting directly and positively some of the main dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness/associations, brand loyalty and perceived quality (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015). Although available research widely focuses on user-generated eWOM,

studies analyzing the impact of both do exist, showing that firm-generated eWOM has no direct influence on brand equity. Firm-generated eWOM influences positively brand awareness/associations, which in turn affect brand loyalty and perceived quality (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015, 2016). The opinions shared by family, friends and other users about a brand are taken into account as more reliable and trustworthy, impacting directly the consumer's decision (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

Information/review quality

Although previous studies recognize that the review quality has a significant effect on brand equity (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Sijoria et al., 2018a), there seems to exist little agreement regarding the concept of a good quality review. High quality reviews may be the ones considered more objective, supported with facts, in opposition to low quality reviews, generally more subjective and emotional, and therefore less influential (Beneke et al., 2016). However, other studies (Felbermayr & Nanopoulos, 2016; Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, 2005) defend that consumers do not appreciate much feature-specific and functionality reviews, preferring emotion-based reviews, which provide more insight on other consumer's experiences, influencing consumers' cognitive evaluation of the brand (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018).

In sum, review quality impacts positively the credibility of eWOM: the higher the quality of the review, the higher the credibility it detains (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018) and the higher the level of brand equity (Beneke et al., 2016). Next, credibility of online reviews has a positive effect on both functional and hedonic images, with special relevance to the latter (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018).

Social relationship

Social relationship in online platforms enhances brand equity (Colicev et al., 2018), particularly within consumers who are susceptible to interpersonal influence (Sijoria et al., 2018a). Previous studies focus specially on Facebook, showing that positive eWOM in this social platform has a positive effect on brand equity dimensions, with in turn influence purchase intention (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015, 2016).

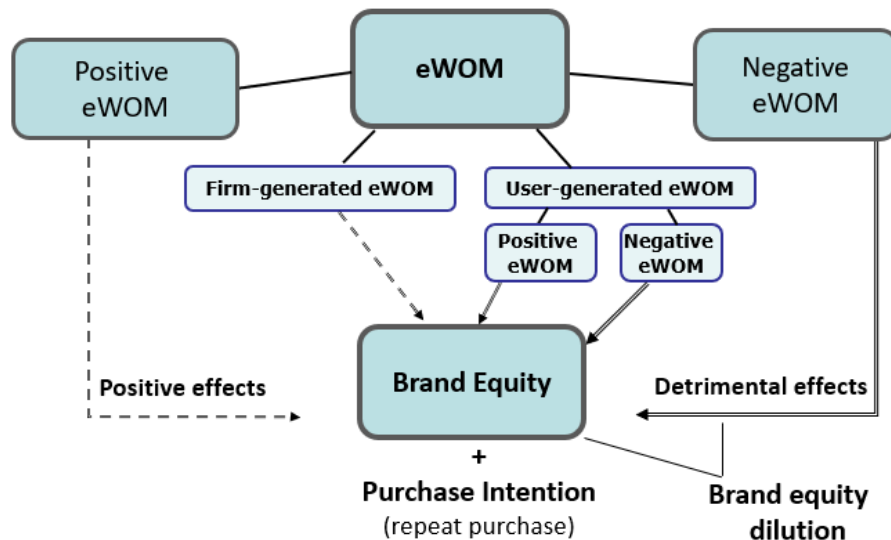
Regarding the intensity of social media use, there is evidence that it influences brand awareness, which in turn has a positive effect on the cognitive and affective image, brand quality, customer value and on the intention to make eWOM (Stojanovic et al., 2018).

Susceptibility to informational influence

It refers to the influence that others have on one’s attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Chen et al., 2016). Susceptibility may be high or low depending on consumer’s characteristics: consumers with high susceptibility to interpersonal influence tend to consider their peers’ opinions in order to fulfil a sense of security, whereas consumers with low susceptibility to interpersonal influence tend to search for multiple sources of information to form a more informed and autonomous opinion (Chen et al., 2016). The level of susceptibility to informational influence of an individual does influence his/her brand attitude and, consequently, the purchase intention (Chen et al., 2016). However, empirical evidence shows that the impact of negative eWOM happens regardless of the consumer’s susceptibility to interpersonal influence, which sustains the detrimental effects of negative eWOM (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011). Figure 1 sums up the aforementioned empirical evidence that frames the present research.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework based on the literature review.

Source: Own elaboration.



3. Methodology

3.1. Qualitative approach

To address the objective of this study, which is understanding the importance of eWOM on HEIs' brand equity, a qualitative approach was followed. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, which is the most common method in qualitative research (Aires, 2011; Symon & Cassell, 2004; Tracy, 2013); interviews are specially valuable because they provide information and insights on aspects that otherwise cannot be observed or easily accessed. Through the interviews, the research topic was explored from the interviewees' point of view, with the aim of giving an answer to the "how" and "why" of the perspectives brought to light (Symon & Cassell, 2004).

3.2. Data collection

The semi-structured interviews focused on the two main topics related to the research questions, namely the positive and negative eWOM, and the brand equity and its main dimensions. The interview guide contained several broad open-ended questions in order to ascertain that respondents were free to elaborate by using their own vocabulary, which constitutes the greatest richness of qualitative data (Patton, 2015). Some examples are: "Do you recall any positive eWOM about (name of faculty/university)? What was it about?"; "What was for you the most impactful message received through eWOM about (name of faculty/university)? (You can refer to something positive or negative, it just should be something that somehow has an influence on the way you feel about the institution)"; "How would you describe (name of faculty/university) to someone who does not know it?"; "If (name of faculty/university) was a person, how would you define this person in terms of personality?"; "If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education at (name of faculty/university)?".

The interview guide was first tested with a student from the Faculty of Arts, and then revised in terms of sequence and content, according to the feedback received. Participants were given the choice of doing the interview in English or in Portuguese. Since not all interviewees were familiar with the meaning of eWOM, before starting the interview the

participants were invited to read a short definition of this concept. The interviews lasted on average 43 minutes and took place in private to guarantee that the interviewees would not be interrupted and that they could feel as comfortable as possible without the presence of others. The interviewees signed an informed consent statement (Annex 1) where the research scope was introduced and where was guaranteed that the data collected would only be used in the context of the present research.

3.3. Research Participants

The participants were selected according to the following criteria: (1) both genders represented; (2) participants from all degree types; (3) local and international students; and (4) different years of study. The profile of research participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: List of interviewees.

Interviewee code	Faculty(ies) involving current programme	involving study	Degree type	Year	Gender	Age	Country
I01	Engineering (FEUP)		PhD	1 st	Male	26	Jordan
I02	Engineering (FEUP)		PhD	3 rd	Male	28	Colombia
I03	Engineering (FEUP)		PhD	3 rd	Female	32	Mexico
I04	Engineering (FEUP)		Master	1 st	Female	27	Belorussia
I05	Engineering (FEUP)		Integrated Master	5 th	Male	25	Portugal
I06	Engineering (FEUP)		Integrated Master	3 rd	Female	23	Brazil
I07	Sciences (FCUP)		Bachelor	1 st	Female	22	Brazil
I08	Economics (FEP)		Bachelor	1 st	Male	22	Brazil
I09	Engineering (FEUP)		Integrated Master	5 th	Female	23	Portugal
I10	Sports (FADEUP)		Master	1 st	Male	29	USA
I11	Arts (FLUP);		Bachelor	3 rd	Female	20	Portugal

	Engineering (FEUP); Economics (FEP); Fine Arts (FBAUP)					
I12	Arts (FLUP); Engineering (FEUP); Economics (FEP); Fine Arts (FBAUP)	Bachelor	2 nd	Female	20	Brazil
I13	Arts (FLUP); Engineering (FEUP); Economics (FEP); Fine Arts (FBAUP)	Bachelor	2 nd	Female	20	Portugal/ Spain
I14	Sports (FADEUP)	Bachelor	2 nd	Male	20	Lebanon
I15	Law (FDUP)	Master	2 nd	Female	29	Portugal
I16	Economics (FEP)	PhD	1 st	Male	59	Nigeria
I17	Arts (FLUP); Engineering (FEUP); Economics (FEP); Fine Arts (FBAUP)	Bachelor	3 rd	Female	20	Portugal
I18	Biomedical Sciences (ICBAS)	Integrated Master	6 th	Female	31	Portugal

As observed in Table 1, the sample is composed by 18 degree-seeking students from the University of Porto, in Portugal. The average age was 26 years old and 39% were male. Regarding faculty representation, eight from the 14 faculties figure in this study; the eight selected faculties represent 76% of the total number of students at U.Porto (29,624); the Faculty of Engineering, the most represented one in this study, corresponds to the largest faculty of U.Porto, with 23% of the total number of students (Universidade do Porto, 2018).

Two sampling methods were applied in this research: the convenience sampling, the most common method used in qualitative research (Patton, 2015), and additionally the chain

sampling method, with the interviewees themselves referring other colleagues (Patton, 2015). In the process, the researcher was making sure that the purpose of diversity of characteristics was met, namely students from different faculties, degree types, age, gender and nationalities. Table 1 provides respondents characteristics without revealing their identity, as part of the confidentially agreement.

3.4. Data analysis

All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and afterwards translated to English by the first author (Annex 2). The qualitative data was subject to a thematic content analysis (Krippendorff and Bock, 2009), the most common method for descriptive qualitative projects. Thematic analysis strives to identify the common issues in data as well as the main themes representing the collected views. It involves the development of a coding scheme, which means defining the emerging themes and the codes which will apply to the raw data (Patton & Cochran, 2002). To assist in making sense of all the data collected, the transcripts were imported into NVivo 12 and manually coded. For the analysis, the transcripts were re-read to identify the main themes which were then listed and the material coded following a top-down and bottom-up procedure (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Grbich, 2003). An inductive approach to the qualitative data was undertaken to identify the new themes. After this first level of codification, a second code order was performed by adding subordinate thematic categories and searching for patterns. Appendix 2 presents the defined category system and Appendix 3 displays a word cloud extracted from the coded nodes in NVivo.

4. Research findings and discussion

The main findings of this research are organized into two main themes: eWOM valence and firm- and user-generated eWOM. These topics are intertwined and contribute to our understanding of the importance of positive and negative eWOM on brand equity in HEIs.

4.1. EWOM Valence: Positive vs. Negative eWOM

Interviewees were able to recall in similar ways both episodes of positive eWOM and negative eWOM:

Positive: "In Facebook people are just like saying good things. (...) There's a guy from India in my class who everytime is happy. FEUP is a good place." (I04)

Negative: "Mmmm... during exam periods people are just annoyed because they don't want to study. I guess it's the same in every country. Students don't want to study for exams. (...) Some guys were complaining about the physical centre. That FEUP said that every student can attend the physical centre, physical activities, pool... but when they tried to enrol they told that it should be paid for, so it is not free for students." (I04)

When questioned about the most impactful eWOM message they could think of, the positive eWOM came up more often, with 12 interviewees pointing out positive examples, against only three (I11, I13, I18) identifying negative situations as the most impactful ones. From these three, only one (I13) shows predominantly negative statements in relation to the four main dimensions of brand equity, namely image, associations, perceived quality and loyalty (cognitive), as demonstrated by statements like as follows:

"For me, FLUP is among the faculties with less investment in U.Porto. I don't know the reality of FBAUP, but I feel there's a big difference in terms of the opportunities offered, being conferences or workshops. It also doesn't have many youth associations, like the BEST at FEUP." (I13)

"When I talk to colleagues about my vision of the university I'm a bit alone on this vision, let's say a more negative vision." (I13)

"I'm lucky I don't have to pay for it [studying at the university] because if I had to pay by this time I wouldn't be here anymore. I honestly think I wouldn't be here. Because I feel that what I learn here I could learn at home on my own in front of a computer. Maybe I'd learn even more." (I13)

"I hope I finish next year and I won't come back soon. (...) I don't plan to do a master or a doctorate programme, not here at least." (I13)

For instance, interviewees I09 and I18 present positive statements regarding image, associations, perceived quality and loyalty (cognitive):

"So, I think in general, even having no terms of comparison with other universities in Portugal, I think it's a good faculty. Of course, there are aspects that do not please me so much, but I like it, I like it." (I09)

"I have a very emotional connection to the faculty; I cannot say that I don't. There are negative things, situations that we learn the hardest way, but that's life and it's going to be life after finishing the studies, throughout our career, at home, at work... It is always going to be the faculty of my heart, the university of my heart, my student city (...) I hold a lot of affection and bad things I will keep as a lesson for the future." (I18)

When talking about positive eWOM, only three interviewees (I09, I13, I18) considered that it did not influence their thoughts and feelings about the institution, as illustrated by the following comments:

"I do not know if this is a very correct answer, but ... since I'm here, I no longer care so much about the information I see from other sources or people, etc., about the experience of being at FEUP, because I'm here myself. So I have my own experience, my opinion. Honestly, there is not much that will change. It's my opinion. I'm already here, I have my opinion formed, each time is more difficult to change." (I09)

"It doesn't change a lot my image of the university. Indeed, this is positive, but I consider this what it is supposed to be like. I mean, I think if things are going well,

then we have to try to do even better. When it is not going well, we have to see what is wrong and try to improve.” (I13)

“At the moment it doesn’t influence anything. I’m about to finish my degree, in the 6th year we are quite far away from everything. Events, parties... I like to see it, in case I have time I like to join. But, of course, when I see something positive about my faculty, on tv for instance, of course I’m glad to see that. Recognition is always positive.” (I18)

Differently, negative eWOM seems to have less influence in interviewees’ thoughts and feelings towards the institution, with eight respondents considering that it did not influence their thoughts and feelings, as shown by these statements:

“Look, I think I have an advantage over my colleagues. Most of my colleagues are 21, 25, 26 years old, I’m almost 30. So I know which things must influence me and which ones I must leave to the side. We also have a very good teacher who came in contact with us to have feedback on the negative issues pointed out by students. I found this very positive and nice.” (I10)

“It doesn’t influence because in these situations I try to analyze whether the institution is to blame somehow or not, and most of the times it is, but I evaluate and that isn’t going to change my opinion because I try to see also what could have been done by the person himself/herself to avoid that situation.” (I18)

The interviewee I18 clearly states that “most of the times” the institution is “to blame somehow”, but she still does not feel influenced by this negative eWOM. Indeed, this study shows that negative eWOM is generally underestimated, triggering a feeling of resignation towards negative information about the HEI. This happens even when the interviewees admit that the negative eWOM is credible or when they went themselves through similar situations:

“It is a bit biased, isn't it? [regarding the credibility of negative eWOM from other students and colleagues] The person is nervous, anxious, under pressure, sloppy, left to the last minute ... That is why I say it is not easy to get around, and for me it is not serious, because it is often our fault, not the

institution's fault. But I recognize that pressure is a lot. Pressure is too much.”
(I05)

“Do not think so. [about recalling negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto] Nothing very relevant, but for example: about some professors, the way they give the class, about some services provided, but nothing much... this happens anywhere in the world. So I've never heard of a relevant negative point.”
(I08)

“Not that I remember of. [about recalling other examples of negative eWOM about FDUP/U.Porto] Of course there are always a couple of teachers that people don't like because of his or her personality or because of the way he or she deals with students, but this I don't even consider a negative point, it's just the way it is. (...) It happened already that people painted a gloomy scenario and the professor being quite ok for me. (...)” (I15)

It comes out consistently throughout most interviews that positive eWOM has a greater influence on interviewees than negative eWOM. Even when interviewees recall negative eWOM and acknowledge these messages as credible, having some of them experienced similar negative situations, it seems that the positive messages have more weight. This comes out either in the statements about how the eWOM influenced the thoughts and feelings regarding the institution, as in the intention to make eWOM, i.e. messages shared, which reflects brand equity dimensions (Stojanovic et al., 2018). Table 2 presents two examples of interviewees referring to credible positive and negative eWOM.

Table 2: Statements by interviewees I06 and I02 regarding credible positive and negative eWOM.

		Positive	Negative
I06	What eWOM	<i>“I remember seeing, I think on Facebook, something about the financial incentives that the Faculty gives to</i>	<i>“It was very much about the way of teaching, that the exams were very fast and then people could not do so well in the</i>

	<p><i>students, and this was an electronic word of mouth that I saw before arriving. I remember seeing a photo of the students who received the scholarship.”</i></p>	<p><i>tests.... and that at the same time the preparation, sometimes of themselves, was not so good. Or things about integration itself. That they did not feel integrated with the Portuguese, that they did not feel welcomed. I had the experience of knowing, even before I came, people who had re-entered universities in Brazil because of this, but from what I saw it was not a general situation, it was individual based, so it was not something that I took in consideration because it was not a process that happened in mass before I arrived.”</i></p>
Credibility	<p><i>“I thought it was credible because the student was on the photo, so I found it credible.”</i></p>	<p><i>“I consider it quite credible when it comes from a very large number of people. When many people are really talking about it, you really stop to think and take that into account.</i></p> <p>Interviewer: And are they really many?</p> <p><i>Returning to Brazil were not many, but people who become unhappy, disgruntled, really are many.”</i></p>
Influence	<p><i>“It influenced positively. I think it's an important initiative, and at the time I researched to see if other faculties did this, and at the time they did not (I do not know if they do today), but it positively influenced me because FEUP was a pioneer in this type of initiative. So, you</i></p>	<p><i>“As I feel part of the institution, I feel that this may be the fault of both the people who are in charge of the institution's administration and the students as well. So, this is something that I want to improve and influences me to improve since I feel I'm part.”</i></p>

		<i>see it's a faculty that really cares about the students."</i>	
I02	What eWOM	<i>"Yes, the quality of education, quality of the teachers, the programme, in particular the possibility of going to MIT."</i>	<i>"I recall hearing something about the processes, the bureaucracy."</i>
	Credibility	<i>"I trusted my colleague a lot, but I also have many other colleagues in the academic field in Colombia and when I told them that I was coming to Porto for my PhD they said good things about the university."</i>	<i>"I myself I'm experiencing that. Processes take a long time. For instance, I'm travelling in a few weeks and I don't have my travel tickets taken care of. It is taking a long time. And for instance, I talk to someone and that person says that someone else is not working very well; I talk to someone else and that person says that the other is the one not working well. I have the feeling that Portuguese people always say things about each other. And never give clear answers about how long something will take. The answer is always "I don't know. Portuguese people never give clear answers."</i>
	Ever shared eWOM on FEUP/ U.Porto?	<i>"Yes, I have many colleagues in Colombia who heard that I'm here and started asking questions. I was asked several times about my experience and I answered. The contact came mainly from people in Colombia who know I'm here and want to know my opinion. Interviewer: And you shared a positive or negative experience?"</i>	

	<p><i>Positive, always positive. I have a good experience.</i></p> <p>Interviewer: So, you've never shared any negative information?</p> <p><i>No, because there are many positive things and only a few negative. And negative things exist anywhere in the world. In Colombia as well. And the negative things are ordinary things, those aren't significant enough."</i></p>	
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Although no direct question was asked on the reputation or prestige perception, this topic emerged in practically all interviews (except from I03, I07 and I09), with positive eWOM contributing to disseminate it, as illustrated in statements like these:

"The rankings influenced me because in high school I did not consider going to Lisbon or to Braga. On the one hand I wanted to stay home, on the other hand the University of Porto is good, so why should I leave the city? And this is because of what I've heard before. A prestigious university." (I11) [about how the positive eWOM recalled by the interviewee, about the rankings, influenced her thoughts and feelings towards the institution]

"The consistency and improvement of the University in the rankings comparing to the year before. This told me it was the right decision to come here." (I14) [about what was the most impactful message the interviewee could remember about FADEUP/U.Porto]

Two of the interviewees (I08 and I12) even shared these positive messages regarding the rankings, as shown in the following example:

"Whenever something pops up that I'm proud of, I like to share; also events that I find interesting I invite all my friends. I like to spread the information I receive."

Interviewer: Do you remember anything specific that you shared?

Yes, the rankings. I also shared the Congress of Journalism and information about a job fair at FEP.” (I12)

It is also quite evident that most interviewees did share mainly positive eWOM. From the fifteen who answered this question, twelve did share predominantly positive messages, reinforcing the importance of positive eWOM in the context of HEIs:

“Interviewer: And did you share a positive or negative experience?

Positive, always positive.

Interviewer: Have you ever shared any negative information?

No because there are many positive things and only a few negative. And negative things exist anywhere in the world.” (I02)

The influence of positive eWOM on brand equity may be a particularity of the eWOM applied to HEIs, since it is not consistent with the literature stating that positive eWOM positively affects brand equity (Sijoria et al., 2018a) and that negative eWOM leads to a significant brand equity dilution (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011). Indeed, the data collected shows mostly positive statements concerning all main dimensions of brand equity considered relevant for this research: image, associations, perceived quality and loyalty (cognitive). The importance of rankings as a crucial determinant of brand equity in HEIs (Mourad et al., 2019) is confirmed in this study, being intrinsically linked to prestige and reputation (Mourad et al., 2019), which has also been identified in the literature as a relevant brand equity dimension (Pinar et al., 2014).

4.2. Firm-generated vs. user-generated eWOM

The present research reveals that interviewees rely on user-generated eWOM to make daily life decisions in university-related matters, like the choice of a course, events attendance or extra-curricular activities. This happens usually with classmates in private messages or closed groups in Facebook or WhatsApp. However, when it comes to important decisions, the interviewees do not rely on user-generated eWOM, which is particularly evident when talking about the university's choice. Although most interviewees had other institutions into

consideration, most of them did not search for other people's opinions before making their final decisions:

"No, [did not search for people's opinions on the internet before choosing to study at U.Porto] but I trusted considering the news about U.Porto. (...) I usually don't listen too much [to other people's opinions on the internet] because I think opinions must be filtered with care. My experience tells me that people have different opinions. I have colleagues who hate FDUP and don't want to do any further studies there, others did the bachelor somewhere else and came now here for the master, but if they could, they would choose another institution. So, it really changes from person to person. For me, and since I had quite many previous experiences, I am satisfied. Anyways, I always search for institutional sources." (I15)

Since most interviewees admitted reading reviews online and search for opinions before buying products, they were asked why they did not search for online reviews during the process of university choice. Aspects related to the reputation and rankings (Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019) and to the unique character of HEIs (Alam & Saeed, 2016) came forward in the answers:

"The University of Porto is really good in the rankings. Even if I saw a review saying like "don't go there" I would have come. If the rankings say it's the second in Europe, even if the review is not good... come on, it's second in Europe! Doesn't make sense to hear what people are talking when you see the rankings!" (I14)

"I don't know, maybe because the product is a direct sell; there's a promotion behind it; it needs to be sold. Something tells me that I should be more careful in this case than when it comes to education institutions." (I17)

Furthermore, while the available literature, essentially focused on products, points out user-generated eWOM as more trustworthy and credible (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Park & Jeon, 2018), having thus a stronger effect on brand equity (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016), in the context of HEIs, the so-called firm-generated eWOM seems to have equivalent or even more credibility than the user-generated eWOM:

“Always start with what FEUP has said about itself, and in a second phase take information from whoever has been there or who is there, namely students, employees, or other type of connection at FEUP. Because there you will have an unfiltered opinion, that is, people will talk without any sort of reservation.” (I05)

“When there are many people saying the same thing, I have a tendency to believe, but I think it does not surpass the institution, the final word comes from the institution.” (I12)

Another indication of the importance of firm-generated eWOM on brand equity is the fact that most negative feelings and associations made by the interviewees seem to be related with the faculty, and not the university or the study programme, with for instance interviewee I17 referring the following about her faculty:

“Only U.Porto, FLUP not at all. [about remembering seeing FLUP and U.Porto on “social networks and newspapers”, as designated by the interviewee] In this matter, the faculty is very much behind the University of Porto or other institutions. But University of Porto performs quite well, and it even reaches a lot of people!” (I17)

The fact that the faculties are not active on social networks means that the interviewees do not have access to firm-generated eWOM from the faculties. This distinction on the University vs. Faculty is indeed observed when students spontaneously refer to different associations in their minds towards the faculty and the university, evoking distinct personalities. This happens in several interviews, as illustrated in the following examples:

“My feeling towards the University of Porto is very positive. In relation to FCUP, it is a bit more negative, because I associate to classes and the academic side. It’s nothing against FCUP, since I like the atmosphere and everything, but I associate more to the academic side, which I didn’t adapt to and I don’t like, whereas U.Porto I associate more to the professional area.” (I07)

“I think FLUP has a very different personality from U.Porto. U.Porto has an institutional personality, conservative, firm, but at the same time kind, not strict to the point of being distant or arrogant, it is rather a formal person, accessible

though. FLUP is more of an authoritative person, I imagine a professor of history, of white hair, quite studious, who does many researches and who is also open to movements and creativity.” (I12)

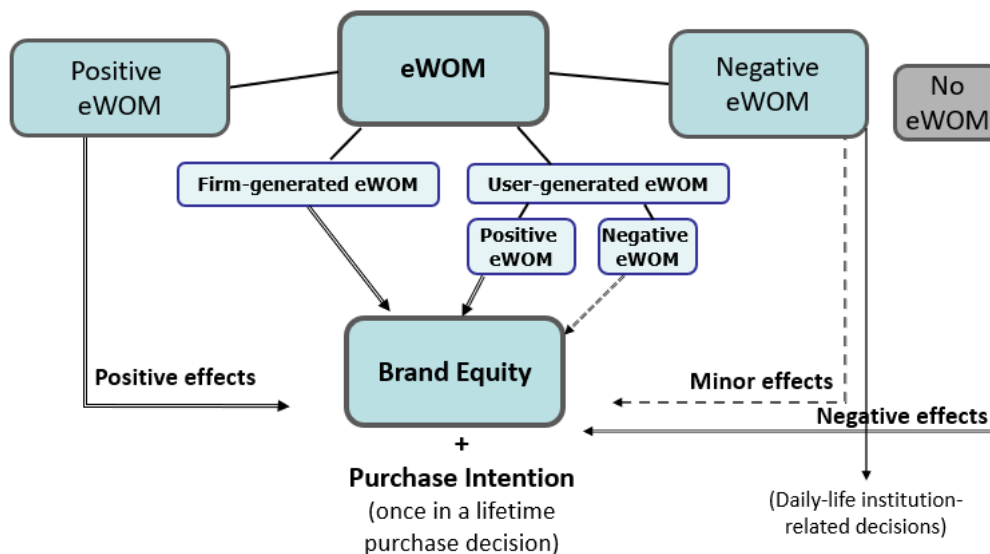
An important finding of the present research is about the importance of firm-generated eWOM, predominantly positive, in relation to user-generated eWOM, which might be positive or negative. The results come to reinforce the importance of the firm-generated eWOM on brand awareness and associations (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015, 2016) and bring into question the literature stating that only the user-generated eWOM directly affects the main brand equity dimensions (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015) and that the negative effect of eWOM is stronger than no eWOM (Beneke et al., 2016).

5. Conclusion

The main purpose of this exploratory study was to understand the importance of positive and negative eWOM on Higher Education Institutions' brand equity. Following a qualitative approach, it was found that, within HEIs, positive eWOM has significant positive effects on brand equity, whereas negative eWOM has minor effects on brand equity. Nevertheless, negative eWOM has a relevant influence on daily life decisions regarding the institution (see figure 2). These results point to a greater influence of positive eWOM than negative eWOM on brand equity in HEIs, and thus contradicting earlier research (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Beneke et al., 2016), which express that negative eWOM has detrimental effects on brand equity, leading to brand equity dilution. Additionally, it emerged from the data analysis that negative eWOM is generally underestimated by Higher Education students, even if it is acknowledged as credible. This might happen because of the unique character of HEIs (Alam & Saeed, 2016), where the individual's choice represents a long-term personal investment with consequences in the professional future (Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019).

Figure 2: Proposed conceptual framework.

Source: Own elaboration.



Another important finding is that firm-generated eWOM has similar or even more credibility than user-generated eWOM in the context of HEIs, which is not in consonance with the available literature stating that user-generated eWOM is more trustworthy and credible (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Park & Jeon, 2018), having a stronger effect on consumers' brand equity (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). The user-generated eWOM appearing as less relevant in this context is confirmed by the fact that most interviewees did not search for user-generated eWOM in order to choose the university. The reason is mainly related to the university reputation, which is very much associated to rankings. This is consistent with the literature stating that rankings (Mourad et al., 2019) and reputation (Dennis et al., 2016; Mourad et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2014) are major drivers of brand equity in HEIs (Mourad et al., 2011). Since ranking positions are frequently known through positive eWOM, and since it has been shown that it is sometimes (re)disseminated by interviewees, this is consistent with the literature suggesting that social relationship positively influences brand equity (Sijoria et al., 2018a), specially through brand awareness, having a positive effect on the intention to make eWOM (Stojanovic et al., 2018).

The importance of firm-generated eWOM is also verified in the associations made by the interviewees. In this specific study, some interviewees refer to the fact that, contrary to the university, their faculties are not active on social networks, which is reflected in the associations made, clearly more negative towards the faculty and more positive towards the university. This result comes to reinforce the importance of the firm-generated eWOM on brand awareness and associations (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015, 2016), and brings into question the existing literature stating that only the user-generated eWOM directly affects the main brand equity dimensions (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015) and that the negative effect of eWOM on brand equity is stronger than no eWOM (Beneke et al., 2016). Indeed, in this specific context it seems that no eWOM may have more negative effects on brand equity than negative eWOM itself. It is, however, not possible to assess this effect properly since the interviewees referred to both the faculty and the university when talking about the HEI, and since there is also firm-generated eWOM being guaranteed by the university, this one might influence the general levels of brand equity.

5.1 Limitations

As with all academic studies, there are limitations stemming from this study. Firstly, the results are extracted from a sample of students of the University of Porto, so results are not transferable to other contexts and samples. Secondly, this study takes into consideration the perspective of students of eight from a total of 14 faculties composing the University of Porto; therefore, the sample does not completely cover the entire diversity within the university. Third, this study is based on a too long interview guide, which is considered a common mistake in qualitative interviews (Patton, 2015). The interview guide was designed so that the researcher would develop the most adequate questions according to the course of the interview but did not allow for an in-depth development of all questions. Fourth, the interviewer was a member of the institution, which facilitated the contact with students but might have increased the chances of social desirability bias. Finally, this study focuses on current degree-seeking students only, not considering prospective students, alumni, faculty and staff, which should be explored in future research.

5.2. Implications for research

This research bridges a pertinent academia gap as it seems to be the first study addressing the importance of eWOM on brand equity in the context of HEIs. The findings highlight the importance of positive eWOM and firm-generated eWOM in the context of HEIs. Overall, the findings suggest the following propositions:

P1. Positive eWOM has a higher impact than negative eWOM on HEIs' brand equity.

Since it comes out quite evidently from this exploratory study that positive eWOM has a great importance on HEIs' brand equity dimensions, it is recommended that future work compares the impact of positive and negative eWOM on HEIs' brand equity.

P2. No eWOM has a higher negative impact than negative eWOM on HEIs brand equity.

The present study suggests that in the context of HEIs no eWOM is more detrimental to brand equity than negative eWOM. This contradicts previous research stating that the negative effect of eWOM on brand equity is stronger than no eWOM (Beneke et al., 2016); it is however in consonance with one of the main results of the present study revealing that negative eWOM has minor effects on HEIs' brand equity. Future research may measure the impact of no eWOM comparing to negative eWOM on HEIs.

P3. Firm-generated eWOM has equal or even more credibility than user-generated eWOM in the context of HEIs.

The present research suggests that firm-generated eWOM by HEIs seems to be more trustworthy and credible than user-generated eWOM. This is not consistent with the literature on eWOM, generally applied to products and stating that user-generated eWOM is more trustworthy and credible (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Park & Jeon, 2018), having a stronger effect on brand equity (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). This might happen in the context of HEIs due to its uniqueness (Alam & Saeed, 2016) resulting from the fact that the connection to the *alma mater* exists forever (Mourad et al., 2011; Vukasovič, 2015).

P4. For the university selection, firm-generated eWOM has more credibility than user-generated eWOM when the institution is considered to be well-positioned in international HE rankings.

It came out from this study that rankings and reputation played a relevant role when it came to choose the university. Reputation has also been considered in the literature a core brand equity dimension (Mourad et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2014). Since the university choice represents a long-term personal investment with consequences in the professional future, it is our proposition that at this stage firm-generated eWOM will only be considered more credible when the HEI is well-positioned in international rankings, enjoying thus from good reputation.

P5. Brand equity is higher within institutions which actively produce firm-generated eWOM.

The importance of firm-generated eWOM has come out high in this study, having positive effects on brand equity. This result might happen because of the Higher Education uniqueness (Alam & Saeed, 2016). With such a great importance of firm-generated eWOM in the context

of HEIs, it is our proposition that brand equity is higher when the HEIs actively produce eWOM.

Stronger research designs are required to test these propositions and further research the connection between eWOM and brand equity in HEIs.

5.3. Implications for practice

Despite being exploratory, this study helps brand and communication managers at HEIs to understand the importance of eWOM on brand equity and thus strive to find strategies to efficiently make use of eWOM to enhance brand equity. This study highlights the importance of firm-generated eWOM on brand equity. Higher Education brand professionals may thus reflect on strategies to potentiate the firm-generated eWOM.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Table A 1: Literature overview on the sources of brand equity - the brand equity dimensions, ordered from the most to the least commonly used ones.

Brand Equity Dimensions	General definition	Author(s)	Author(s) in the field of Higher Education or other services
Quality (perceived)	The consumer's perception of a product or service in relation to similar ones.	(Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Beneke et al., 2016; Dennis et al., 2016; Kwek Choon et al., 2014; Mourad et al., 2011; Pinar et al., 2014; Porto, 2018; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015; Stojanovic et al., 2018; Vukasovič, 2015; Yoo et al., 2000)	(Dennis et al., 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2014; Stojanovic et al., 2018)
Awareness	The ability to recognize and recall a brand.	(Alam & Saeed, 2016; Beneke et al., 2016; Keller, 1993; Kwek Choon et al., 2014; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Porto, 2018; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015; Stojanovic et al., 2018; Vukasovič, 2015)	(Alam & Saeed, 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Stojanovic et al., 2018; Vukasovič, 2015)
Associations	The connections made to a brand, forming	(Aaker, 1996; Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Beneke et al., 2016; Keller, 1993; Kwek Choon et al., 2014; Porto, 2018;	

	the brand knowledge.	Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015; Vukasovič, 2015)	
Image	The brand associations in the consumer's mind.	(Alam & Saeed, 2016; Keller, 1993; Kwek Choon et al., 2014; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Stojanovic et al., 2018; Vukasovič, 2015)	(Alam & Saeed, 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016; Stojanovic et al., 2018; Vukasovič, 2015)
Loyalty	The attachment to a brand over time.	(Beneke et al., 2016; Kwek Choon et al., 2014; Pinar et al., 2014; Porto, 2018; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015)	(Pinar et al., 2014)
Price Premium	The additional amount a consumer is willing to pay for the brand.	(Aaker, 1996; Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Keller, 1993; Mourad et al., 2011; Porto, 2018)	(Mourad et al., 2011)
Reputation (incl. rankings)	A symbolic attribute related to brand associations and image.	(Dennis et al., 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2014)	(Dennis et al., 2016; Mourad et al., 2011; Mourad et al., 2019; Pinar et al., 2014)
Personality	Perspective of brand as a person; linked to brand associations.	(Aaker, 1996; Mourad et al., 2011; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016)	(Mourad et al., 2011; Royo-Vela & Hünermund, 2016)

Attitudes	Evaluation of a brand, usually the basis for consumer behavior.	(Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; Keller, 1993)	
Consumer attributes	Socio-economic characteristics and experience with the brand.	(Mourad et al., 2011; Vukasovič, 2015)	(Mourad et al., 2011; Vukasovič, 2015)
After sales service	In this specific study referring to “alumni relations”.	(Mourad et al., 2011)	(Mourad et al., 2011)
Intention to recommend through eWOM	The willingness to recommend the brand using eWOM, influenced by brand awareness.	(Stojanovic et al., 2018)	(Stojanovic et al., 2018)

Source: Own elaboration.

Appendix 2

Table A 2: Category systems.

eWOM		This category includes all interviewees' statements regarding eWOM.
	Positive eWOM	This category contains all interviewees' statements regarding positive eWOM before and after entering university, its credibility and influence in thoughts and feelings towards the institution, platforms used and most impactful messages.
	Negative eWOM	This category contains all interviewees' statements regarding negative eWOM before and after entering university, its credibility and influence in thoughts and feelings towards the institution, platforms used, most impactful messages and willingness to share.
	User-generated	This category contains all interviewees' statements regarding user-generated eWOM, its valence and credibility.
	Firm-generated	This category contains all interviewees' statements regarding firm-generated eWOM, its valence and credibility. It also includes the statements regarding no eWOM.
Brand equity		This category includes all interviewees' statements regarding brand equity.
	Image	This category contains all positive and negative interviewees' statements about the institution, including general considerations, description, general feelings and reputation-related comments, like rankings.
	Associations	This category contains all positive and negative interviewees' associations made to the institution when thinking about it as a person's personality.
	Awareness	This category contains all interviewees' statements regarding the information accessed about the university via eWOM, WOM, tv and other means as well as the perceived knowledge about the institutional

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Annexes

Annex 1: Informed consent statement read and signed by all interviewees.

Informed Consent Statement

The present interview is part of a research work in the scope of the Master in Marketing of the Faculty of Economics, University of Porto. It aims at understanding the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on the brand equity of Higher Education Institutions.

In order to facilitate the registration of the information collected, the audio of this interview will be recorded and the data collected will only be used in the context of this research. All aspects related to the confidentiality, anonymity and data processing are therefore ensured.

We emphasize that your participation in this study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time, or refuse to participate, without this having any consequences for you. Please be advised that after this interview it may be necessary to supplement data and, in this sense, you may be contacted again.

This research is carried out by the Master student Liliana Carvalho, under the supervision of Full Professor Amélia Brandão, from the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto. Both would like to thank you for your availability.

I, (signature) _____, agree to voluntarily participate in the research project described above, being aware that my data will be confidential and that names of people or institutions that I do not want will not be mentioned. Plus, I was informed of the objectives of this research work.

Date: ___/___/___

Annex 2: Interviews transcripts.

Interview I01

How is it like to study at FEUP?

It is a horrible experience. I'm not comfortable here and I think I made a very big mistake coming here.

Why is that?

I took my master from Poland and the reason why I chose to study in a different country is that in Poland you have Ukranian. And since the language is similar they have more opportunities than other students. And here there are the Brazilians. To be honest here that's not even a half of internationalization experience. Here you have like 90% students from Brazil and other nationalities they don't exist. Sorry to say that like this. I have no problem with Brazilians or Ukranians, but if a university is searching for an international identity... There are many correspondence coming in Portuguese, many advertisements in Portuguese, even jobs in Portuguese. Brazilians are half integrated from the beginning because they speak the local language and also the university is... even there are special fees from them, you are even supporting others to come to this country. For example, in my office we have 8 or 10 students: 6 from Brazil, 2 from Portugal, 1 from Spain, 1 mobility student from Lebanon and I'm from Jordan.

I took a Portuguese course from the student association, they offered it in cooperation with a language centre, I paid 85 euro and learned nothing. The same happened to my friend at the office from Spain, she asked for refunding and no answer. At the Arts Faculty there's a language course but it costs about 350 eur and my friend from Minho University paid 90 euro. I mean, this is what drives me crazy. I am a student, I should have a special price. I already pay 3000 euro for a PhD.

How would you describe FEUP to someone who doesn't know it?

I don't want to be biased. I like modern universities and I can describe FEUP as a modern building. The building is nice, I like it from this point of view. I don't like the Portuguese

culture, there's no time conscious at all - like 90% of teachers come late for the classes. There's also some conflict in emails: the director of the programme sends an email saying there are no classes, the teacher sends another email saying that there is class, you have to go there to see that there is no class.

This is my personal experience, maybe I have bad luck.

I missed the first class from LEA because I was not included in their email even though I registered for these classes the first semester.

There's a course I registered for and I received an email saying that the materials will not be in English this semester so if I want I have to take it next year, even if officially the programme language is English. This is when you see you are not a priority for the university.

You feel in this university that if you don't speak Portuguese you don't belong here. Believe me, come to one of the classes: the first 15 minutes will be in Portuguese. Any chit chat will be in Portuguese, any friendly conversation will be in Portuguese.

In the first class the teacher asked "who doesn't speak Portuguese?". I was the only one saying I couldn't speak Portuguese and everyone was looking at me like "because of these guy we have to speak in English".

What makes me crazy... sorry! is when the teacher comes and starts making plans with the class in Portuguese like I don't exist; then maybe she addresses a word to me after they agree on something. Literally I don't exist. If I get admission in other university I will leave without hesitation because it is disrespect also. I have nothing against Portuguese! I made my choice to come to Portugal without any... it was a personal choice. I have no problem with Portuguese language or Portuguese people, or even Brazilians, but you feel... they talk in Portuguese like I don't exist. I'm sorry, but this is what I'm going through.

I studied my master in Poland. Many people think Poland is not a good country. But is a guy at the class would ask a question in Polish the teacher would say "English, please". Because the discussion in the class is part of the class. I told you! Some people in the class maybe are not confident speaking English but if the teacher himself is speaking in Portuguese the student thinks "ok, I can speak in Portuguese".

Back to the questions: describe...

They are qualified. The professor is graduated from UK, he has no problem communicating in English, but he speaks Portuguese. I don't know, may it is a habit.

FEUP library has no books about my specific area of study or they have old ones. It is not something they are interested in. I could not find the books physically or digitally.

Did you complain?

I asked for the book and the answer was: if you need the book that much you should ask your supervisor to write us a letter and you see: bureaucracy, bureaucracy, bureaucracy.

I did not study my master in Harvard but I had better experience in Poland.

What are your general feelings towards FEUP?

I told you, I like the building, my colleagues are nice but I can't describe it as a friendly research environment. The language barrier, the culture: my culture is totally different when it comes to time; they co-work but most of the time they are making jokes, today they were listening to music. I don't have any problem, I mean, you cannot work the whole day, but for me I feel isolated. When there's a majority who speaks Portuguese they will not switch.

I'm trying to enjoy my experience, but I can't.

If FEUP was a person, how would you define this person in terms of personality?

Introvert, middle-aged because I don't see they are open for a lot of new experiences, they are not open, and middle-class, not rich at all.

When talking about your university's physical elements (e.g. logo and colours) what comes to your mind?

Black and white, I think.

Do you think you would be able to recognize FEUP among other institutions?

Logo? Yes, of course! This is U.Porto, so I know it.

How do you see FEUP/U.Porto in terms of quality, comparing to other institutions?

I will compare it to my university in Poland, Poznan University, In the QS it's like 800. They consider Porto 200, so there's 600 difference, but I don't feel that difference. Really! Sorry!

How do you define the relation price/quality at FEUP/U.Porto?

This is a tricky one. I give you an example. A friend of mine is doing his PhD at University of Minho. He's from my country. He pays 2750, I pay 3000. I was also admitted there when I came to Portugal, Minho and Porto, and I chose Porto because I thought it would be better.

He has an office for himself alone, he has access for printing for free; here I'm in a room with 9 or 10 and for printing I have the same system as a bachelor student, I have to pay for it.

In Poland there's student ID and researcher ID. Here I have a student ID even if I'm a researcher. In Poland you have discount in public transportation, here you have discount if you are under 25. This doesn't make sense! How could a PhD student be under 25?

How do you evaluate the price you pay for studying at FEUP?

It's overpriced. Because I'll compare Portugal to other European countries.

I feel frustrated because I made this choice. I was also admitted in Madrid, fees there are like 500 eur. I can compare to Italy: it is the same.

To what extent could FEUP/U.Porto charge a higher price or a price premium considering the level of quality delivered?

I told you, the university is highly ranked because it publishes great, not because the university is supporting that. Maybe if you have a better system you'll be 100, not 200.

I'm finishing my first year PhD and I still don't have a topic for my PhD.

When an international student comes here he doesn't come here for fun, he comes here to study. I'm paying for this. I pay 300 eur/month for rent, I have the tuition fees... One other thing: I don't see my family since 2017, my sister got married. I still don't have my residence permit so I can't leave the country. I have my appointment in April, I took this appointment in December. Most Jordanians go to study in Canada or the USA. I'm the only Jordanian here, now I know why. It's hard to find accommodation, people don't want to hire foreigners to avoid paying taxes.

If you finished your current study programme now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

If I keep going through this experience I won't even finish my PhD.

Since I arrived in September I'm having a bad experience. I can't even share this feeling with my family because they will say "it was your choice". And it was my choice! I should take responsibility.

Would you recommend FEUP to a family member or a friend? Why?

A friend of mine, he's Jordanian, studying a Master degree, and I told him "don't bother, avoid that". Even my brother, he studied Mechanical Engineering, he wanted to come here and I said "no, no, no, go to Canada, somewhere else", I don't want them to go through this like me.

You told him not to come?

Yes, even my brother. I told him "you go to Canada, go somewhere else", because I'd feel guilty if someone comes here.

How did you communicate with them?

Mainly chatting online.

How likely is it that you want to keep the connection to FEUP/U.Porto after finishing your degree?

I don't think I'll be valuable for the connection. I'm not valuable for the university while I am a student so I won't be valuable for the connection after I finish my studies.

Have you ever heard about FEUP on the Internet before you came?

No.

So before you came to FEUP, for instance, you haven't searched for more information on FEUP on the Internet?

Yes, the QS rankings. University of Porto ranks as the best university in Portugal in the QS. It is not easy to find other people's experiences for this kind of things on the internet.

After all, I thought I was coming to the best university in Portugal.

So you really haven't search for other people's opinions on the Internet?

I had the experience of my friend in Guimarães, studying at University of Minho.

My friend in Guimarães told me all stuff about Portugal. He was my only source. I trust him.

How did you communicate with him?

We chatted all the time. He's one of my best friends.

Do you recall any positive or negative eWOM about FEUP?

No, maybe because everything is in Portuguese and maybe I haven't translated.

Interview I02

How is it like to study at FEUP?

For now I'm very happy to be here. I like the city of Porto and I like the Faculty of Engineering.

In the beginning it was weird for me. I was going to classes and wasn't at FEUP very often. In the second year I started spending more time at FEUP and getting to know more about the benefits of FEUP. I didn't have an introduction from the Faculty but my supervisor is a very good person and explained me some things. I don't know if it is poor knowledge from my side or if the faculty indeed doesn't have an introduction.

Have you ever heard about FEUP on the Internet?

No. I had a colleague in Colombia who had studied at FEUP and he told me about FEUP. So I started looking for more information on the Internet and found this doctoral programme.

Did you talk to your colleague through the Internet?

We were working together, so we talked face to face.

What kind of information have you searched?

I searched FEUP's position at the world level. But I'm from the programme MIT Portugal and I focused on this programme.

Have you considered other institutions?

I had the opportunity to live in Porto, Lisboa or Coimbra because of the MIT Programme, so I searched more for life conditions in the city. I asked for the opinion of some colleagues who told me that IST is much better but the living costs are also much higher, that's why I selected Porto. More for the city conditions than the Faculty itself.

And have you searched on the internet for other people's opinions?

No... just with his words... that was enough for me. What I searched in google was more the living conditions.

When you search information on the Internet about FEUP what do you consider credible information?

I don't understand.

When you search information on the Internet about FEUP what kind of information is for you trustworthy?

Rankings. I searched for information on FEUP website and I searched in rankings websites. But I trust my colleague a lot because he's a very important person in Colombia and I believed very much in his words.

In general, are you a person who uses internet a lot?

Yes, a lot.

To communicate with others as well?

Yes, a lot. I think it's even a problem. I use the internet a lot.

Have you ever connected to other people in order to get information about products or services before purchasing them?

I joined Facebook groups of Colombians in Porto to get more information on the city.

That happened after you arrived?

Yes, after I arrived. I also contacted the Embassy of Colombia. This is about the city. For buying products I always try to look up in google what the difference is between one and another. And I like to read the recommendations and everything before doing anything. No matter it costs 10 eur or 1000 eur, I do the same before purchasing.

Only for FEUP you haven't done that!

No, I trusted my colleague. And it was really nice because in the beginning I used Uber a lot and I remember this special situation when I caught a Uber and the driver was a student of FEUP who told me very good things about FEUP; she mentioned how students get very good jobs after they finish their degrees at FEUP. Also I heard many good things about the faculty. Every time I met people when I mentioned what I was doing, that I am a PhD candidate at FEUP, people mention that FEUP is good, very good.

And are you in groups on the Internet from the University/Faculty?

Not from the Faculty, I'm in small groups, 5-6 people, with people I know, colleagues from other countries.

Which platforms?

That's on whatsapp and Facebook.

And in these groups have you ever accessed on the internet information on FEUP, either positive or negative?

I recall hearing something about the processes, the bureaucracy.

How credible is this information?

I myself I'm experiencing that. Processes take a long time. For instance, I'm travelling in a few weeks and I don't have my travel tickets taken care of. It is taking a long time.

And for instance, I talk to someone and that person says that someone else is not working very well; I talk to someone else and that person says that the other is the one not working well. I have the feeling that Portuguese people always say things about each other. And never give clear answers about how long something will take. The answer is always "I don't know". Portuguese people never give clear answers.

Any other negative example?

No.

And positive?

Yes, the quality of education, quality of the teachers, the programme, in particular the possibility of going to MIT.

When you search on the internet what would be a credible opinion for you?

I forgot to tell something: I trusted my colleague a lot, but I also have many colleagues in the academic field in Colombia and when I told them that I was coming to Porto for my PhD they said good things about the university.

How have you contacted them?

I contacted them just to let them know, it wasn't to get an opinion from them, but they started to give their opinions. However, the objective was not to get an opinion about the university, but really an email to friends to give them the news. Although my intention wasn't to ask for an opinion about FEUP, they ended up sending their opinions about FEUP.

How have you contacted them?

It was mainly by email and whatsapp. I don't remember well.

So I started hearing good things about the faculty and I think that this was the reason why I didn't look for opinions on the internet. Because these are people with experience.

And yourself have you ever shared your opinion about FEUP with others?

Yes, I have many colleagues in Colombia who heard that I'm here and started asking questions. I was asked several times about my experience and I answered. The contact came mainly from people in Colombia who know I'm here and want to know my opinion.

And you shared a positive or negative experience?

Positive, always positive. I have a good experience.

So, you've never shared any negative information?

No because there are many positive things and only a few negative. And negative things exist anywhere in the world. In Colombia as well. And the negative things are ordinary things, those aren't significant enough.

How would you describe FEUP to someone who doesn't know it?

It's the Faculty of University of Porto. In my area it has got many well known professors, with a lot of experience. In my situation I have the possibility of getting to know many people from other countries, which doesn't happen a lot in Colombia.

So what are your feelings towards FEUP?

It's positive. But in the beginning it wasn't positive. Even today I don't know all the services at FEUP, if there's a pool, if I can go to the gym... I don't know these things after more than 2 years at FEUP.

If FEUP was a person, how would you describe its personality?

Kind, peaceful, but not very open, it's a closed person. My first months here were very lonely. In Colombia people are more joyful, they integrate. Here people are more closed, but I think it's the European environment.

When talking about the physical elements, what comes to your mind?

I think there's a lot of concrete. It's very much dark. One occasion I sent a photo to Colombia and people commented that it looked like a prison. Concrete, much concrete. And grey.

And the logo?

It's black and white.

How do you compare FEUP's quality in comparison to other institutions?

In my area?

Yes.

I studied my bachelor in my city and my master was in Bogotá, in the best university in Colombia. I felt a big difference between these two levels. I had to work a lot for my master, it was a very high level. And I thought the same would happen here. Maybe the quality is a bit

better but not much (in relation to my master programme). The best university in Colombia is at the same level of FEUP. I thought it would be like it was from my bachelor to my master.

And how do you define the relation price/quality.

I have a scholarship. Only after one year I got to know the value of fees. But anyway I think it's a very good relation price/quality.

To which extent do you think FEUP could charge more?

I think it's ok like it is, also considering the situation in Portugal. Otherwise it will be like in Colombia that only a few people can afford education.

If you finished your studies now, how would you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

I'm very interested in continuing here for the post-doctoral level. I like the life in Portugal a lot so being here in the next 3-4 years is my wish. Before I arrived I planned to go back to Colombia, but now I prefer to stay a few more years at least.

And that's because you are enjoying the experience at FEUP and in Portugal.

Yes. In FEUP is becoming better and better. In the first year I didn't like a lot, in the second year it became better and now even better. I feel more confident, I feel more like a FEUP student.

Would you recommend FEUP/U.Porto to a friend or a family member?

Why not? I'm enjoying this experience, so I would.

If you finished now and if you went back to your country would you like to keep the connection to FEUP?

I have a stronger connection to INESC than to FEUP. My supervisor is a researcher at INESC TEC. My office is at FEUP, I like the work environment there better than at FEUP. But I would like to keep the connection to INESC TEC more than to FEUP.

To which extent would you like to become our Alumni Ambassador?

Maybe that's not really part of my personality. I'm not a very active person.

Interview I03

How is it like to study at FEUP?

I have a very positive experience. I have been studying abroad for the past 5 years. I did 2 masters in different universities. I've been in a lot of different universities in Europe in different places, doing exchanges and this kind of things and the experience here at FEUP has been very positive.

Have you ever heard about FEUP on the Internet?

No, not really. Not at all.

So you didn't have a recommendation?

No. Actually I'm in a programme together with MIT that's how I came to FEUP.

Were you considering other institutions?

I evaluated the possibility of studying in the USA, but then I found out about this MIT Programme.

And after you arrived here have you ever got information or other people's opinions about FEUP on the internet?

Yes, specially about the drawbacks of the institution. I remember reading something about language courses of the institution, either Portuguese or other languages. Complaints about them not being very accessible, either because of the timetable or because of being a bit expensive.

I took the course here at FEUP and I think it can be improved.

Have you yourself ever shared something about FEUP on the internet?

Yes, there are groups, specially for the newcomers, and I've shared stuff like this.

The messages you shared were more positive or negative?

More often positive.

Even when you were thinking of coming to FEUP you haven't searched for information on the internet?

Yes, of course!

What kind of information have you searched?

Google is the first approach. Nowadays I use Facebook, mostly. And time to time Eventbrite.

In Facebook where do you get information?

More in closed groups.

Related to the faculty or to the city?

To the Faculty. Of course there are other groups more related to the city, but when I want to learn about the faculty I use these ones.

In these interactions do you remember someone being very positive or very negative about FEUP?

Not that I can remember.

What's for you a credible source of information when you search information about FEUP/U.Porto?

Sigarra. The different links to Sigarra always give me a degree of confidence.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Always.

Before coming, have you tried to collect opinions...?

No. I was in Porto for tourism, I liked the city, I knew I wanted to come here. I did my research on the faculty but not on the city because I already knew it.

How did you do this research on the faculty?

More on google.

Do you remember which pages google pointed to?

It was three years ago but more on academic stuff. I remember that very important for me were the sports facilities which are available at the university.

So when you came you didn't collect any recommendations from anyone using the internet?

No. Well, I have a friend who lives in Lisbon. I know him from an international association of young leaders. He was the only one I actually contacted to ask for some help to ask where to live, and so on.

Did he help you?

Yes, he sent me some references, some links on where to find accommodation.

How have you contacted him?

If I can remember well, we chatted essentially on Facebook and whatsapp.

If FEUP was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

Mmmm... I would say most of the times is warm but it can also be cold, a bit distant I would say.

It is also open for alternatives; you can find something for each no matter your preferences. I also feel that... (this is not related with being a person or not) there are not many places to work in, except from the library. Or maybe I haven't come to find them. I barely come to work to the faculty, so in that sense it lacks some comfort.

So you don't have an office?

No.

In terms of the physical elements, what comes to your mind when you think about FEUP/U.Porto?

The logo is nice and fresh.

Do you remember the colour?

Yes, black and white.

Would you be able to recognize it among the logos of other institutions?

Yes, I think so.

Which one? The one from the University of Porto or from FEUP?

Both.

How do you compare FEUP to other institutions in terms of quality?

It has good standards, it is comparable to other good universities in Portugal, Europe and in the world.

How do you define the relation price/quality here?

Like the tuition fees?

Yes.

I guess the price/quality ration is balanced. This is something difficult to assess. You have phds in the USA and Mexico which are very expensive. Well, a friend told me that in a university in Spain the year fee is 60 eur. I don't know if that is true, I don't have much information. So I would need further information to answer.

But regarding your study programme itself, do you think we could charge more or that we should charge less regarding the value delivered?

If I didn't have a scholarship it would be difficult to cover the expenses by myself. In that sense I think it is affordable.

If you finished your study programme now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

Yes, in general I would be happy to do it.

Would you recommend FEUP/U.Porto to a friend or family member?

Yes, I have done so.

Can you tell me more about it?

Yes, to friends who contact me to know how I'm doing these days. Yes, I consider FEUP as a very good option to do your studies.

How do these recommendations happen?

By chat mainly.

Have you ever shared something on the internet to a large number of people?

No, this happens one by one.

How likely is it that you want to keep the connection to FEUP after you finish your studies?

Well, I guess high, through an alumni association, for instance. I think that that connection is good for everyone.

Would you consider be an Alumni Ambassador?

Possibly yes. I consider myself an open person, I like to spread some good news, but it depends on the time and on the approach, I cannot guarantee it now.

Interview I04

How is it like to study at FEUP?

Amazing! Everything I expected, I mean almost everything I found here.

Have you ever heard about FEUP on the Internet? Before or after coming to FEUP...

No, I didn't. I found information about FEUP only after I had the intention of coming to Portugal. By this time I searched information on the internet.

So how did this intention of coming to Portugal happen?

It happened from my childhood, I've always been in love with Portugal and once I had the opportunity I looked at the list of universities in Portugal and chose FEUP because you have the most powerful Engineering speciality.

And what kind of information did you search for before coming?

Rankings about universities in Portugal.

Have you tried to find other people's opinions, recommendations...?

No, my main focus was on how good the education was less than how happy people are here.

And what gave you the guarantee that the information which you were searching was credible?

University rankings. Comparing for example with German universities. I know how good education in Germany is, so I can see in the rankings how good is Porto.

When you were deciding on coming to Porto/FEUP, were you considering other institutions?

No. I was exactly sure I wanted to do Software Engineering.

So you searched first the university and then you saw the study programme?

Yes, I saw that I was interested in software engineering. Actually, I was working before, so it was based in my profession.

And did you already know you wanted this study programme?

Yes.

After coming to Porto, have you ever heard about FEUP using electronic means?

Yes, I joined groups on Facebook, and mostly talking with students, getting information mostly from people.

Which students?

Mostly from my class but some of them from other classes.

What is for you a credible source of information when you are searching information about FEUP and the University of Porto?

Statistics. I like when it's like facts, when people do some research and compare universities so I can base myself on it.

Information that comes from the university itself or from other organizations?

From other organizations.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

With my family or everyday?

Everything.

With family everyday. With friends once a week, I guess.

So it's not that you are connected the entire day.

No, I'm keeping distance just so I have the time for study and for life.

Have you ever connected to other people in other to get more information or opinions about FEUP?

About FEUP not. About Portugal yes.

How important is information coming from other people when deciding which product or service you want to buy?

Sometimes I use it. Not always, but sometimes I do. First of all looking for facts and characteristics and then I try to check whether it's right, how people use it.

Do you recall any positive or negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

In Facebook people are just like saying good things.

Where on Facebook?

In my groups, in the group of FEUP, in Erasmus groups... I'm also in Erasmus communications... Everyone is happy!

Were you in Erasmus here at FEUP?

No, no, no! I just joined them because they are like so active! I'm not Erasmus but it's quite useful for me because they know every party in the city.

Can you give me examples of the groups you mentioned?

Students in our class... just chat.

Is it in Facebook?

Whatsapp, mainly whatsapp.

And do you recall what people say? Which information is shared?

Mmmm... during exam periods people are just annoyed because they don't want to study. I guess it's the same in every country. Students don't want to study for exams.

Anything else that you recall?

There's a guy from India in my class who everytime is happy. FEUP is a good place.

Do you remember anything else that you want to mention? No negative eWOM?

Some guys were complaining about the physical centre. That FEUP said that every student can attend the physical centre, physical activities, pool... but when they tried to enrol they told that it should be paid for, so it is not free for students.

So did you hear it was for free?

Yeah, everyone who came... they guessed that it was free.

**Anything impactful that you remember receiving electronically about FEUP/U.Porto?
Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.**

Mmmm... Good, I remember one thing. Also it was chatted on whatsapp, also with Erasmus students. FEUP has a body system when Erasmus students come who help them to find a place. And it was really useful when international students just ask "is this accommodation good?". And this local students were so helpful!

Was it this year?

Yes. They gave a lot of support.

So you are in this Erasmus group?

Yeah. Here there's no system to support full-degree students but for Erasmus they have so for me it was really good.

And have you ever yourself shared any eWOM about FEUP/UPorto?

No, I'm not so social.

How would you describe FEUP/UPorto to someone who doesn't know it?

First of all I'd like to say that professors do their job really good. So they focus on knowledge, they try to plan all semester and try to prepare students so...

Second is about timetable. Administration organizes classes so we have classes 2 days a week and 3 days off, so it's good.

Next I was surprised that students talk English. I guessed that everyone would talk in Portuguese, and I was surprised that everyone can talk English.

About entertainment and physical activities, I've never tried but I guess there isn't enough information for students about what they can do, that they can join teams and stuff like that.

So what are your general feelings about FEUP/UPorto?

Positive!

And how would you describe FEUP/UPorto to someone who doesn't know it?

Good European University.

If FEUP was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

Mmmm... innovative, I think. Because of students. They always have a lot of energy, new plans, new events every time...

When talking about FEUP/UPorto physical elements, what comes to your mind?

Mmmmm...

Think about logo, colours....

I don't like the colour, it's like brown. I don't see how it's connected to the university. But I like the letters... good multimedia work, I think.

So the colours are...?

Like brown for FEUP.

And the UPorto? Are you aware?

No... well, like multicolour.

How do you see FEUP/U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

Comparing to America it's not so good. I guess the best education you have in America. Because of the system and like students working intensive hours for the university.

Have you been there?

No, I just follow... and I fall in love with their system.

And how would you define the relation price/quality here?

For me as an international student not good. It's quite a high price for the education and the reason that non-european students should pay twice more is unfair.

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

It is over what it should.

It's too high?

Yeah.

So to what extent could FEUP/U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

They can't increase. It's more than it should.

If you finished your study programme now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

Like... PhD?

Yes.

Well... in my profession, being a developer or a programmer, education is not so good. So I'm going to finish this education, this master's degree, and never come back. Continuing working and earning money.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

To friends. But I would not recommend master's degree, but licenciature, the first cycle degree after high school.

Why do you only recommend the first cycle degree?

I see how happy students are after school, they have like some events, special events... We are masters, we just focus on studying. We don't have like this feeling of university. Well, we have but like in a smaller extent. They have like this family feeling.

So I would recommend any Bielorussian student to study in Europe after high school. Anywhere, Porto included.

And how likely is that you want to keep the connection to FEUP/U.Porto after you finish your studies?

Mmmm... I'd like to keep connection with teachers. I'm not sure with students, because most of them are not responsible, but teachers yeah, I'd like to.

Would you be available to become an Alumni Ambassador?

I guess not. I mean in my future I see myself totally focused in a profession.

So not because you don't like it.

No, just because I'm focused, spend time, in my profession.

Interview I05

How is it like to study at FEUP?

When I arrived it was incredible, a person arrives and it is a new world. On top of that I'm not from Porto, I'm going to a bigger city, and it's a great feeling to be part of a super-recognized college (because it's true), that is, when a person walks in here, he's proud of himself "hey, I achieved to be in FEUP! " Then there is that initial excitement of getting to know the people and so for and starting to take classes, starting to understand that this is really how people say, it is not a joke, which means that it is going to be hard. I started to notice this not in the first semester, but in beginning of the 2nd. Then it's a bit roller coaster of emotions. My experience is that I've been waiting for something more practical and found something more theoretical. And the first 3 years are very very boring, in my opinion. It was really hard, I only completed my 2nd and 3rd years during the last two yeoars, ok? I delayed the course because the subjects were really boring. I am not a person who likes to study, so I dragged. This then made me feel a lot worse in my excitement of "I'm studying at FEUP"; made me say "hey, what crap, this is not worth anything, it was not what I was expecting".

I entered the programme I wanted. I really wanted this study programme. It's not like someone who enters a programme with the idea of changing in case he or she doesn't like it. I entered the course I really wanted, I did not like it, so I have nowhere to go. I let myself stay. And until I get back the feeling of "okay, this can even go somewhere" it took me about 2 or 3 years. I just started to say "oh no, this is cool, even I'm learning a few things", but I recognize that the first 3 years for me were very complicated.

Have you ever heard about FEUP on the Internet?

Of course!

Before entering FEUP?

I had already heard about FEUP. Cannot say if it was through the Internet.

And through electronic means?

I cannot remember. But at the time social networks were not as ... easy or as many as today. I entered FEUP in 2012, by the time Facebook was in the beginning. I had Facebook for 1 or 2 years, I do not know if FEUP already had a page or not at that time.

And after entering FEUP?

Yes, after entering FEUP there was a lot of information in the social networks.

And where do you usually see information about FEUP and University of Porto? In which platforms exactly?

Email, Instagram and also a little bit on Facebook.

Before coming to FEUP were you considering other institutions?

Yes, just as backup.

Which ones, do you still remember?

Aveiro and IST.

Did you compare the information?

Not much because the reasons for me to consider different institutions were the geographical location and the recognition. And these were the ones that had the greatest recognition, both nationally and internationally. And I always preferred FEUP, first for the city itself, because I already had my sisters here, so at the financial level it was easier, and because it was the most recognized. So it was a win win situation, always.

Did you come to do some research?

No.

And did you search for other people's opinions?

Yes, that I did.

Which people?

People I knew.

How did you contact them?

Talked to them face to face, I think. It was a long time ago.

What is for you a credible source of information when you are searching information about FEUP and the University of Porto?

It is credible if this information comes directly from FEUP or from someone who is connected in some way to the institution, otherwise I consider it a bit biased (to the negative!).

Imagine you are a high school student who is not sure yet if he wants to come to study at FEUP and wants to search for information. What's for you a credible source of information?

Always start with what FEUP has said about itself, and in a second phase take information from whoever has been there or who is there, namely students, employees, or other type of connection at FEUP. Because there you will have an unfiltered opinion, that is, people will talk without any sort of reservation.

And in your case currently? Which sources do you search when you want to know more about FEUP? What are the most credible sources?

For example, if I want to know more information about a discipline to know if I want to make this discipline, beyond the information on the webpage I will look for other sources, no doubt.

How do you do it?

I try to find someone who has finished the same discipline.

Do you prefer that that person is a friend or someone you do not know?

It could be someone I do not know. The advantage of being someone I know is that the person already knows me, already knows what I'm going to look for. That is, he or she knows that I do not like studying very much, so let me say, for example, that this discipline is very

practical and I do not need to study hard. While someone who does not know me will tell me about the discipline, but will not be specifying the good part or the bad part for which I should or should not register, so it is always a more general opinion, but credible as well.

How do you get in touch with people in cases like this one?

Chat. Closed groups mainly on Whatsapp.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Very often, at all times. It's almost impossible nowadays.

Have you ever connected to other people in order to get more information or opinions about FEUP?

Several times. Also at all times. And at all times people come to me as well.

What are the privileged platforms to do that?

Whatsapp. Whatsapp, with no doubt. The most privileged ones. Then there's also Facebook. And Instagram is used for event sharing and so for.

Have you ever searched for information on FEUP/U.Porto in order to make a decision/choice regarding FEUP/U.Porto?

Yes. I have already done it regarding not to my particular study programme but regarding the student group in which I participate, for example. If we're organizing an event and we will see how others did in their institutions to decide how we are going to do here in FEUP, to improve or just to compare, or something like that.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

Yes, a lot. Almost every week I see. Either because a student was able to discover or reach some product, together with some company... received a scholarship; or because he came to some spectacular conclusion about something; some research; or because he or she has achieved a very good position in a company recognized worldwide or abroad...

Where was this information disseminated?

Mainly Instagram and email.

Please, explain when it happened and how it influenced your thoughts or feelings towards FEUP/U.Porto.

Influences a lot. That's when I stop a little to think and say "FEUP really provides us with a good teaching, it guides us to a good course ...". In these moments I also think "we really are capable of what we want, and FEUP helps us a lot in this, it gives a good impulse".

Who is the sender of this type of message?

80 to 90% it's the institution itself.

And the rest?

Colleagues, former colleagues, professors...

How credible is this information for you?

Super credible.

Do you have any other example of positive messages besides prizes, new findings and projects together with companies? Do you remember anything else?

The academic environment. At all times we see several groups or associations, in short, groups of people who gather in FEUP for a greater purpose: for themselves, for colleagues...

What messages have you see about this particular subject?

Usually messages shared saying "today we gather for this purpose". Or "there will be this event which we organized for you".

That's sent by the student groups?

Student groups, associations... from FEUP itself, like with the Career Fair, for instance. This is all very positive and is very much disseminated in the social networks, and I think it has impact in students. And students themselves also share.

How does it influence your thoughts and feelings towards the institution?

It doesn't, for the reasons I mentioned.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FEUP/U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

I can not say one specifically, okay? But all those student shares that can achieve a certain ... or ... a very specific professional output. For example, the student who went to work for NASA, or who is on an internationally well-known project ... that to me is what has the most impact. It's like, "Wow, I've got close to me people who have achieved this kind of goal (because 90% of times it's their personal goals), they got there because they fought for it, and U.Porto was the launch pad, it is true. That is, if I want to fulfill my goals I am on the right path because they have walked this path. That is, I can one day get there too. And this has a great power over us, of motivation.

And have you ever yourself shared any eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

Yes, very often.

About...?

About events which happen here. Sometimes people say "I'd like to get in touch with this company" and I answer "look at this event".

Do you share more positive or negative messages?

I already shared something negative, for example, that bomb threat that happened here. But it was once, almost without an example, because it gets diluted... A person shares but it's almost a joke. I usually only have positive things to share.

Are you the original sender of these messages or do you repost?

Yes, I repost. Or when I do not repost I probably show it at home or to someone else.

And have you ever been yourself the promoter of a specific message?

Yes, sim! I'm a member of the group of electrotechnical students and we share many events which we organize, international meetings, gatherings, and so forth.

How would you describe FEUP/UPorto to someone who doesn't know it?

In summary, FEUP is a great institution. I've learned a lot here at the academic level. It was not easy to get where I am now, but it is possible to do it, anyone can do it. FEUP not only provides teaching, but also provides many other experiences, and that is what is important. The most important thing that I take away from FEUP, apart from the course, is everything I have known and learned here, from different people, to opportunities (because FEUP offers many many opportunities), at a personal level, at a leisure level, to meet people, people from different countries, different cultures... Even if they come from Portugal, just as I came here and I am not from here, there were other people who came and I had the opportunity to know.

This is very important for me: meeting people, and FEUP gives us this, meeting lots of people. I've met lots of people at FEUP, I've met 200-300 people a year with international students. This was done easily. And this was the best experience that FEUP gave me, because I developed a lot, I grew a lot.

All this was besides my study programme, of course.

So what are your general feelings about FEUP/UPorto?

Very good, Generally, I have a great affection for FEUP, although I'm dying to get out of here. Because it was a roller coaster of emotions, very good and very bad, I think it is normal, and I have a very great affection. Except that I've been here for so long that I'm getting tired of some things, so I do not want to leave here with a bad image. I want to get out of here as soon as possible, because I do not want to lose the good image I have.

If FEUP was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

Bipolar and even conflicting, sometimes. Bipolar because it has both sides of which I have already spoken. Confused because when we are well at FEUP something will always come up, some situation provided by FEUP that will send us down again. And then there will be something that will pull us up again.

So it is not conflict between people?

It also generates! Because FEUP makes us feel so many different emotions that I feel in one way, another person feels another way, so it ends up generating a conflict. But in the end we remain all friends! But it generates many conflicts! It is not to say that FEUP is the direct generator of this conflict, but indirectly... it was FEUP that brought us together and guided this conflict.

When talking about FEUP/UPorto physical elements, what comes to your mind?

Engineering colour, brick's colour. Those images from the main entrance, the glass corridor...

And the U.Porto logo?

That basic one, black one.

Would you be able to distinguish the logo among the ones of other institutions?

Yes, sure!

How do you see FEUP/U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

Honestly, my perception is that I can say that it is as good as others. Because what FEUP gives me I have to listen to other people say that maybe elsewhere they do not provide this so good; but there are other very good aspects that FEUP may not provide. Then in the end it gets balanced. But I have the idea that FEUP has a superior recognition abroad, which has to do with people who have already been here, and this has to do with the fact that FEUP students are of higher quality.

And how would you define the relation price/quality here?

Very good.

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

I think it's not much. FEUP has many conditions. And we have to see: we pay the same for all study programmes, whether engineering or not. And in our case we have very expensive

equipment at our disposal, and if we look we do not pay that much. I think the price is not so high (considering my economic conditions, of course).

So to what extent could FEUP/U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

It could, but it would be unfair.

If you finished your study programme now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

I do not see, I do not want to. Like I said, I'm not a very hard studying person. I like to learn but I do not like being forced to study things I do not find so interesting. I recognize that there are things we have to learn, but what bothers me is the way I get the information, how I have to assimilate and how I will be evaluated. It's not easy to turn a boring thing into something less boring, but I think it would be possible. And in my opinion they should make things more practical and less theoretical. The way teaching is performed does not captivate me to continue.

Unless later, one day, I feel the need to come and specialize in a certain area, if I need it professionally. But not now.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

Yes, for sure.

How likely is it that you want to keep the connection to FEUP/U.Porto after finishing your degree?

Very much likely! Because apart from the course I fought a lot for some improvements at FEUP in general. And I want to continue to have a connection with this, I want to continue to follow and see (hopefully) the evolution of these things for the better. Ever.

Would you be available to become an Alumni Ambassador?

Easy easy. Easy because as I said before I am very much grounded in interpersonal relationships. And try to provide a spirit of connection between students, employees, alumn ...

people! Because FEUP is made of people! And providing that contact is always a pleasure to me. I would be glad to do it one day, with pleasure!

Interview I06

How is it like to study at FEUP/U.Porto?

I really enjoy studying at FEUP, I really like the faculty, the teaching methods, so it's a wonderful experience. I think I fit very well within the academic community, which makes me very fond of being here.

Have you ever heard about FEUP on the Internet before applying?

Before entering FEUP, I had never seen anything about FEUP. After I joined FEUP, during the application process, I started to search, to access social networks, Instagram in particular, and to learn more about FEUP.

That was when you started to be interested?

Yes.

Did you join social networks?

Yes, I started following the Facebook page, Instagram, and the website itself.

And after entering FEUP?

Yes, I kept hearing about FEUP through all those means and through the email also.

Before choosing FEUP/U.Porto did you consider other institutions?

Not in Portugal. I came from Brazil and there I was already at another institution.

Did you consider other institutions outside Brazil and Portugal?

No. I only considered FEUP.

So before entering FEUP you only searched in institutional profiles?

I got a leaflet at the education fair I went to in Brazil. In that leaflet there were testimonials from students together with their photos, so I searched those students on Facebook to try to talk to them about their experiences, since they were already here.

What is for you a credible source of information when you are searching information about FEUP/U.Porto and the University of Porto?

I consider FEUP's official page, the website; the page of the Rectorate of the University; Instagram; the Facebook official page.

And if it is from the point of view of deciding if it is the institution you want to choose, what is the most important: those official pages or other people who can talk about FEUP?

For me the official pages were important, but the most important was the opinion of those who were already here, who were the people I contacted.

Those are people you didn't know before.

Yes, I did not know it before. For me it was the one that had weighted most. I already wanted to be here, but of course if they were having a bad experience here it would probably make me think twice.

Did you search other sources outside the university?

I also searched international rankings of European universities.

How do you evaluate its credibility?

There's a tool to see the study programme you want to study and the university ranking related to that programme, and that was what I searched for.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

A lot.

Have you ever connected to other people in order to get more information or opinions about FEUP?

Yes, as I mentioned before.

And what are the privileged platforms for that information exchange?

Social networks, mainly Facebook and Instagram. Before entering FEUP I used Facebook more because by that time, 3 years ago, Instagram wasn't so much developed.

In general, what electronic means do you use to connect to other people?

I use social networks a lot. All of them.

Which are the ones you use more often?

I use Facebook a lot, LinkedIn and Instagram. These are the 3 I use most at the moment.

And after entering FEUP, have you ever tried to connect to other people to get more information about FEUP/U.Porto?

I can remember I connected to someone recently to obtain information about my Erasmus. I contacted students who were already there, they were even there when I contacted them.

How did you established the connection?

Through Facebook.

How important is information coming from peers towards your final decisions regarding FEUP/U.Porto?

I consider it very important and essential. Every time I have to make a decision regarding something I have to do I usually connect with people through social networks to learn about their experiences.

When looking for information on FEUP/U.Porto, what is for you a good quality review?

What do you mean? Rankings?

Other people's opinions... people who went through the same. What do you consider a good review? Something more factual or more emotional, for instance?

I consider a bit of both, factual and emotional, because I think emotional has that thing of

empathy, whether you identify with someone's story or with the experience someone has lived, and factual is a lot of what the institution is, so I try to balance a lot of these two scopes.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

Yes.

What?

I remember seeing, I think on Facebook, something about the financial incentives that the Faculty gives to students, and this was an electronic word of mouth that I saw before arriving. I remember seeing a photo of the students who received the scholarship.

How did it influence your thoughts or feelings towards FEUP/U.Porto?

It influenced positively. I think it's an important initiative, and at the time I researched to see if other faculties did this, and at the time they did not (I do not know if they do today), but it positively influenced me because FEUP was a pioneer in this type of initiative. So, you see it's a faculty that really cares about the students.

Where did you see that information?

The first time I saw it was on a student's Facebook. Then I saw it somewhere else, I believe it was in one of the official pages.

How credible was that information disseminated by a student?

I thought it was credible because the student was on the photo, so I found it credible.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

I cannot remember... I can remember but not within social networks. I can remember the questionnaires we applied in our association. In the data collection we obtained many negative comments of the University, of the integration in general. Not only of FEUP. And I only remember that case.

I can also remember some comments on Facebook, in this case people talking to me.

And do you remember what was the negative message in this case?

It was very much about the way of teaching, that the exams were very fast and then people could not do so well in the tests... and that at the same time the preparation, sometimes of themselves, was not so good. Or things about integration itself. That they did not feel integrated with the Portuguese, that they did not feel welcomed.

I had the experience of knowing, even before I came, people who had re-entered universities in Brazil because of this, but from what I saw it was not a general situation, it was individual based, so it was not something that I took in consideration because it was not a process that happened in mass before I arrived.

Has this negative information about the academic and integration aspects happened in an individual message for you or in groups?

Both: individually and in closed groups.

What kind of groups?

Of the international students and a group of only Brazilian students, in which there was this sharing.

How do these negative messages influence your thoughts and feelings about FEUP / U.Porto?

As I feel part of the institution, I feel that this may be the fault of both the people who are in charge of the institution's administration and the students as well. So, this is something that I want to improve and influences me to improve since I feel I'm part.

How credible do you consider this information?

I consider it quite credible when it comes from a very large number of people. When many people are really talking about it, you really stop to think and take that into account.

And are they really many? Returning to Brazil were not many.

To return have not been many, but people who become unhappy, disgruntled, really are many.

Was that a long time ago?

It was a recent thing. When I had the answer to the questionnaires, I began to integrate more into these groups, both Brazilian and international. And then what we try to know more is the individual opinion of each one individually.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FEUP / U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

The first impact I had was at the fair that, if I remember correctly, had an institutional video. That the next day I think I watched facebook again to show my parents. This video impacted me very positively. I really liked the faculty a lot because of this video. I started looking for the institution within the social networks because of this video.

Another thing that impacted me a lot was a YouTube channel of a girl who was Brazilian and was already studying at FEUP. A video of her I remember doing all the way inside the Faculty.

And have you ever yourself shared any eWOM about FEUP/UPorto?

Various. I shared a video that I was part of, which I shared with everyone on my own page. I shared another video recently about internationalization within the University of Porto, which I think was done by the Rectory itself. It's an all-English video very well done. I shared in Whatsapp and per message with some people.

I have already shared FEUP contents about fairs here within FEUP; I've already shared many things!

Have you ever shared something negative?

No, I do not think so.

How would you describe FEUP / UPorto to someone who does not know it?

I describe it as a faculty of excellence at the engineering level. I think it's a very modern college with excellent infrastructure. I have already visited other universities and I have never seen a university with FEUP's infrastructure, so well prepared, so well equipped, at the level of rooms, equipment, and teachers.

I describe it as a pole where you can develop, since it has lots of technology, many opportunities for you to get involved in extracurricular projects.

I really describe it as a college of excellence.

So what are your general feelings about FEUP / UPorto?

I feel like I belong to FEUP, you know? I feel that I really am an integral and fundamental part of the academic community. I even feel if I will ever want to develop an academic project and even take it as a profession, develop a technological university pole, or even be a teacher. I really like the academic environment and would like to have this experience. I really like being here and I find it wonderful to be here.

If FEUP was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

FEUP is bad-tempered, you have to know how to deal. I do not say that FEUP is difficult person, but you have to know how to deal. It is a person that if you behave well and do everything to please you can get on very well; but when you really do not do it or do not take it so seriously, the consequences come and they are bad.

When talking about FEUP / UPorto physical elements, what do you eat to your mind?

The Engineering Red. Also the garden, that part of the lawn, that picture there always comes to mind, and the very façade on which is written "Faculty of Engineering of the University of Porto."

What about the University of Porto?

From the University of Porto comes the black and white logo, the façade of the Rectory, there with the Fountain of the Lions Square. I think that's it.

Would you be able to recognize FEUP/U.Porto among other institutions based on the logo?

Yes.

How do you see FEUP/U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

I think it is at a level well above other institutions, not only nationally but also internationally. I have already met some universities and experience of some people even though they went to other universities within Europe and say that FEUP and the University of Porto is far above in terms of quality. So it's very much like this, I see it much above.

How would you define the relation price/quality here?

I would say that for the Portuguese it is very fair. And for us too. There are many universities within Portugal that charge more for Brazilians, so I think the price/quality ratio is fair.

So how do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

I think it could be more egalitarian for everyone. Even comparing with other faculties of the University of Porto, I think it would be fair to be a little less, since the international students themselves have an expense that exceeds that of Portuguese students. But comparing with other universities within Portugal, which charge 7 thousand euros, it is understandable and legal to have this attitude of being less than that (thank goodness!), but at the same time I think it could be more understanding since we foreigners have others spending.

So to what extent could FEUP/U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

I do not think it would be right to charge a higher price. I already think this price is excellent, and it is already very expensive for us, given that our currency is devalued, so it becomes very heavy to charge more. Even if the quality increases, which is the natural tendency of things, I do not think it would be fair to increase the amount of the tuition, is my opinion.

If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

I would see how excellent and most likely I will continue my training here, whether doing PhD or research, I have that will.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

For sure I would recommend.

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FEUP after you finish your degree?

Most likely, I would like to be part of the alumni community.

Would you like to become an Alumni Ambassador?

I see myself in that role, yes. I would be one of those who would like to contribute, for sure!

Interview I07

How is it to study at FCUP/U.Porto?

There are two sides. The first side has to do with the teaching methods, which I didn't adapt very well to. I do not like very much the system of not having many assignments, it's only one examination instead of having several tests. I think this does not evaluate as so well as students. I do not think it's a test that will determine if I know or not the subject or if I'm doing well in the course or not.

The second side is in terms of opportunities for the future. I like the things that U.Porto can provide in general, for example, I am part of a youth association called Share, I and my colleagues founded InterUp that has many positive results, I go straight in job fairs with opportunity with companies that in Brazil I would never have access to, so, in this question I like a lot and recommend. But in terms of classes, I do not like it.

The methodology in Brazil is a little different, we have to make articles and publish, and do internships and participate in laboratories, reports, etc. We participate in a Congress in the bachelor's degree, so I feel that we are more prepared for this academic, scientific and professional world than here, that's what I mean.

I did Erasmus for a year and a half here, it was quite long, during this time I had to write a single article and all the students in the class were complaining about all the work. In Brazil it is completely normal, in almost all courses we have to do work like this. That's why I say that we get more prepared there. I think there we get more experience, and here I feel it's not an exam that will determine whether I'm a good student or not. What determines that is my work, if I'm researching, in the field, in the lab and doing things manually, etc.. Because in real life, at the time of doing a job, we will have access to Internet, books and things won't come only out of our minds.

So why did you decide to come back?

I decided to come because of the opportunities, I evaluated both scenarios and realized that for me this was better, but I also know people who looked at both sides and decided to go back to Brazil. I feel like my experience was very different from other people because I was

supposed to come and stay for six months and then I prolonged out for a year. So when I came for the full programme I already knew what to expect.

Have you ever heard of the (Faculty of Ciencias DA UP) on the Internet? Before you came?

No, not because I didn't have access, but because maybe I'd never even researched about it, I was already doing college there, so I didn't have much interest in researching other colleges elsewhere.

And for your Erasmus Programme, did you search for information on the internet?

No, because for the Erasmus programme my college in Brazil had agreements with some other institutions, and I was doubtful between the University of Porto and the University of Coimbra. I was in Coimbra once when I was little and I fell in love with the university, but when I went after information about Coimbra, the officer at my university recommended Porto, she said Porto was better, with a nicer nightlife, more people. I followed her advice and it really was great.

So did you start searching information on U.Porto back then?

I don't remember much. The thing is that my parents did their Masters and PhDs abroad, so they always pushed me to live abroad, so much that we lived for four years in the USA. So since I was in high school I desired to go abroad, more in the USA and Canada. I didn't think much of Europe, so when the opportunity came up to do Erasmus and the most viable option was Portugal, more specifically Porto, I thought "ok, let's try it", since it was only six months and I was already working, I realized that I could gather all the money to come without relying on my parents to come, without needing their money, and it was an opportunity. The I searched for information, I saw videos, but I already had made up my mind, because in the beginning I was going to stay only for 6 months anyway.

So you didn't try to know more, talk to people...

I didn't know anyone who had already come. I talked to people who were coming just like me, for the first time. I joined a Facebook group of Brazilians in Porto, I was following the communication there, I saw some videos on Youtube. But I think now, 2 years later, it's easier to find information because there are more Brazilians now living in Porto.

And after arriving? Do you remember seeing information about FCUP and U.Porto?

About FCUP I don't think so. Not that I remember.

About the university, yes. But there is still a lot of information that I've discovered recently, like the U.Porto bicycles; it was only when InterUp posted about it that I found out, and I was already here a year and a half ago. So there's still a lot of information I'm discovering now.

-Where did this happen or did it happen? (within the Internet space)

Facebook, more in groups of Brazilians, and on Youtube.

-What is a credible source of information on the Internet when it comes to looking for the information you need?

When I see Brazilians talking about it, because it is a little different to have an European or a Brazilian commenting on the the same situation. I am in the same situation of other Brazilians. If something goes wrong the European crosses one or two countries and has already arrived back at home. So these are different issues, and the Portuguese are already accustomed to the teaching system here. So I don't see how a reliable source can talk. Because it's not really our case, since our high school was very different from high school here. So, as a more credible source, I think more of our people, who went through the same experiences. But if it were at a university in the US, it wouldn't matter if it was a Brazilian speaking or a Portuguese speaking, because we would be in the same situation.

What about the information by the institution itself?

If it's just the University talking, it's not so much credible, but if there are videos, images, or student reports, regardless of nationality, then I see that it is more credible. Because if it's only

the University talking, then it's like a mum talking about her son, the son may be a little devil, but she's going to say that he's cute.

How often do you use the Internet to connect/interact with other people?

Everyday, every hour.

Have you ever connected to other people on the Internet in order to obtain more information/opinions about FCUP/U.Porto?

Yes, there's a group of the study programme and of the faculty on Facebook. So I posted something there, asking about a certain class or exam. There are also groups of students on Whatsapp, not only Brazilians. And even groups for certain classes, that happens a lot.

What were or are the privileged platforms to do?

Facebook and WhatsApp.

What about other products or services? Are you someone who usually sees reviews/opinions before buying?

I try to check with someone who actually has got the product, not to rely only on what is said. Depending on the product, sometimes I see the videos on Youtube.

When looking for information on FCUP/U.Porto, what is a high quality review/opinion for you?

Videos with testimonials like what I did. Because it get on the emotional side and on information about the faculty structure, about everything. For me, if I was going to review it, I'd talk about what I like and what I don't like, about what makes it worth more. I can't give direct answers.

Do you remember any positive eWOM about FCUP/U.Porto?

Yes, the high employability rate of graduate students, this is very cool and very positive. Among colleagues we commented on this.

Also about opportunities that BEST launches on social networks, like case studies and internships.

And also posts about the different associations, because there are indeed many opportunities.

How was it disseminated?

We talked among friends, facebook, whatsApp chats.

Do you remember any negative eWOM about FCUP/U.Porto? What was it about?

It's more about the distance between professors and students, the lack of integration with national students.

FEUP has psychological support and FCUP does not, and with SASUP it takes quite long. It happened with me that I tried to make an appointment with a doctor and it would take a very long time; so it didn't work out because when the day came I was already feeling well.

Anything else?

Not directly connected to the University, or maybe it is. I heard about accommodation, rental prices, little access to the U.Porto dorms.

How was this disseminated?

Face to face, on Facebook, on the Facebook groups of Brazilians living in Porto and also on Facebook groups about renting accommodation.

Please explain when it happened and how it influenced or influences your thoughts and actions regarding FCUP.

No, because I wouldn't really use this type of accommodation. I heard there's not even a kitchen there, and I always cook at home to save money. But I cannot think only about myself. So although it doesn't influence me, I end up feeling sorry for them.

How credible did you consider this information?

It's credible.

What do you remember, what was the most impactful message received by eWOM about FCUP? You can mention something positive or negative, it should only be something that somehow reflects your feelings regarding FCUP.

It is the issue of the university accepting our ENEM, this ends UP giving a lot of opportunities for Brazilians to come here to study, like me. The dissemination of this has been very positive for students. The bad point is the increasing competition which makes the minimum grade higher and higher. That's a pity for those who want to come.

So do you remember seeing this eWOM?

Yes, people talk about it, share posts, even in Brazilian news sites, and this is something very positive. I see a lot of feedback, people tagging others, tagging family members and friends so they also don't miss this information.

Have you ever shared an electronic message about U.Porto/FCUP? What was that message about?

Yes, different subjects. The same question of ENEM, for example, I sent in the family group on whatsapp and soon after a cousin applied. My grandma is always using whatsapp and sending out news about Portugal and Porto. My mum as well.

Among groups of friends we share more things like workshops, job fairs, stuff regarding associations, recruitment opportunities...

Was it a positive or negative message?

Positive.

Have you ever shared something negative?

Not that I remember of. Maybe it did happen but I cannot remember.

-How would you describe FCUP/U. Porto to a friend who doesn't know you?

I would describe as a great opportunity, being very realistic in the question of the difficulties of everything, in relation to teachers, classes and students, but also don't forget to mention that

since there are many Brazilians here, I do not miss either Brazilians or Brazilian food. You don't need to miss these things, the only thing you miss here is family, for the rest it's quite ok. In terms of teaching, although I find my area stronger in Brazil, I also think that U.Porto is much more renowned. If I go to Holland and say that I studied in U.Porto everyone will know, what would not happen with my university in Brazil. This makes it much more interesting.

In general, what are your feelings regarding college/U. Porto?

My feeling towards the University of Porto is very positive. In relation to FCUP, it is a bit more negative, because I associate to classes and the academic side. It's nothing against FCUP, since I like the atmosphere and everything, but I associate more to the academic side, which I didn't adapt to and I don't like, whereas U.Porto I associate more to the professional area.

And the social part where do you associate to?

To the university, because at the faculty I have only two friends.

If FCUP/U.Porto was a person, how would you define that person in terms of personality?

I think it would be that person who has a goal and goes after the goals and tries to the maximum to grow professionally, and I say this for the opportunities that U.Porto provides, associations, job fairs, case studies... Things that make us grow.

A determined person.

When talking about the physical elements of your university (e.g., logo and colors)

What picture what comes to mind?

I don't know about FCUP.

Just the U.Porto, black. I see a lot more stuff from U.Porto.

Would you be able to recognize the logo among the logos from other institutions?

Yes, the U.Porto logo I would be able to. FCUP's logo not really, as I said.

How do you see FCUP/U.Porto in terms of quality, comparing with other institutions?

It is something very positive, I compare with the public University of Brasilia, where there are often strikes, things don't work very well.

And besides the question of opportunities, there's no way to compare. U.Porto is superior.

How do you rate the price you pay to study in the (name of the institution)?

It's worth it. In Brazil, in public institutions it is for free, but there is no infrastructure for all.

In the private ones the conditions are very good but it is expensive.

To what extent could the (name of the institution) charge a higher price or a premium price for the education offered, considering the level of quality in question?

Comparing all that is paid, housing, etc, I think it would be expensive. Since I don't pay only the tuition.

Nonsense was what happened in relation to the status of equality, that Brazilians cannot apply anymore for the price reduction.

If you finished your current course at this precise moment, how would you see the possibility of continuing your studies at FCUP/U.Porto?

I'd like to do my masters here. Actually, I wanted to do it in Holland, but I want to get the Portuguese citizenship, so I should stay a bit longer. I plan to do my masters here and then I'm be able to work and move freely in Europe.

Would you recommend the (name of the institution) to a friend or family member?

Why?

I already recommended it, and my cousin came along with his girlfriend to FEP.

I've also recommended it to a great friend and still recommend it.

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FCUP/U.Porto after completing your studies?

I don't know, I don't think so. Only if it was connected to the association I'm part of. If there's any way to keep this connection, specially to the University as a whole, I would like to cooperate.

How likely is that you will become an alumni Ambassador in the future, actively promoting the institution?

I'm already promoting U.Porto to the people I know in Brazil. I want to contribute.

Interview I08

How is it like to study at FEUP?

Look, very good because in comparison with Brazil we can see that here education has a very high quality of teaching compared to the vast majority of institutions there. There again people study in private universities when they can afford it and even private universities are not so ... they do not have as much qualification as a university here.

Here it is very very good. The problem, the only difficulties or barriers you also have is a little of the language as well; it's the same language, Portuguese, but it's different; want it or not we, Brazilians, have a bit of a difficulty to understand, specially if the person has a stronger accent. And being far from the family, far from everything, the issue of support, of getting away from everything and everyone. To make it worse one comes here and has winter and that situation a bit depressing, you know? This all upsets a little, I confess, but there are pros too, to have very good quality of life here, safety and everything ... In the end one makes new friends, knows many good people who are in the same situation too. It's very good, yes, I think that overall it's positive.

Have you ever heard about FEP/U.Porto on the Internet?

No. I learned from here by a friend of mine that he saw ... I do not know how he saw it, I do not know if he saw it on the internet, if he researched how to study abroad, I do not know how he saw it, but I knew through him. I would never have thought that here I had the opportunity to use ENEM, the national Brazilian examination, to enter university.

And how did that friend pass this information on to you?

It's funny, the story was this: I was already living abroad, I was in Australia (I lived there for almost 2 years) and then I was still in Australia and this friend came to me and said "bro, what are you doing there in Australia? Why are you there, I'm researching on how to study abroad and I saw an opportunity at the University of Porto in Portugal to study there". Then I answered, "What do you mean? What kind of opportunity? Do you have to go there to do a test?". And then he said "You don't have to go there, you can use ENEM". For us the people

who did the ENEM in 2014 it was still valid, that is why the year after I applied and I got finally selected.

And how did this interaction with your friend took place?

Always by electronic means.

This information given by your friend was then positive?

Totally positive.

And by that time did you search more about U.Porto?

At first I entered the website of the University of Porto, but at that time I did not know, I had no idea of the importance of the University of Porto in Europe in general.

And did you try to find more? Did you look for other people's experiences?

No, to be honest, no. I did my research this way: I searched how I was going to apply, I looked where it was, Engineering qualifications, whether it was a good university or not.

So you did some research!

Yes, I saw that. This my friend sent me, actually. He had already seen and told me that this was one of the best universities in Europe, so I had not been researching so much.

You believed in your friend's information.

Yes, I believed my friend! I think this filtering he had done in the first place had greatly reduced my interest in looking further.

Before you decided to come did you consider other universities?

Yes, I considered it in Australia because I was there, but there has the issue of the price which is very high especially for the engineering programmes which was what I wanted at the time. So I had no budget for that. I thought that here was also very expensive, I said "Europe should be very expensive". My friend answered "not at all, university is practically the price of one private college in Brazil". And the quality was not even comparable.

And after you arrived here, do you remember seeing information about FEUP and the University of Porto by electronic means?

Yes! Yes, I do.

And usually where do you see this kind of information?

Usually on the University's Facebook page. Messages like "The University of Porto was elected as one of the best in Europe, top 10 of Europe", then you click on the link and you get Civil Engineering in the 3rd place, Management in the 8th place...

Is that on the university's own social networks?

Yes Yes! Or disseminated by friends as well. I think they want to show the University where they are studying.

Thinking about when you look for information about the FEP and the University of Porto on the Internet or electronically: what is one credible source of information for you?

Mmmmm ... Nowadays it is very difficult to say what has credibility or not, even more with this fake news story. I always seek to read the article, the news, and not just the news slogan. Then you end up researching ... But I think that nowadays that if a university is recognized there must be something out there to prove it.

Even in other topics, for example some information for your daily life, what sources are credible for you? Do you look for sources from the university or friends, for example?

Talking to anyone who has already had or has had this experience is always ideal to know something, so this usually happens with the disciplines. You want to know the best way to deal with the teachers, to study the subject, then you talk to old students or students who perform better, so I think the best way is to always talk to someone who has lived or already gone through a similar experience.

What platforms do you use?

Social networking is ideal.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Very often. Enough. Daily.

All the time?

It used to be like that, but today I try to reduce, try to do other things. I think it takes a lot of time. But I still use a lot.

Have you ever connected to other people in order to get more information or opinions about FEP/U.Porto?

It's happened, but for example I really like doing these things in person. So where I can I prefer to do it personally. For example, if I want some information from the Academic Services I prefer to go there, talk face-to-face with the person. Instead of sending an email I rather go there.

Of course if it is a small thing it is easier to send an email or even send a whatsapp. You can communicate with teachers in Brazil by whatsapp.

And other situations besides the disciplines? Has it happened to you to connect with other people electronically to find out more?

Yes. When I moved from Civil Engineering to Management, for example, I joined Facebook groups, asked how others did it, where I had to go to. And people help.

Which platforms do you remember using?

Facebook was the main one in this transition from the Faculty of Engineering to the Faculty of Economics, but for example when I was at FEP or just before entering I joined a group of Brazilians at FEP including exchange students from Brazil, and it contains all kinds of questions. There's always a person who has been through a certain situation. There are always new people, there are people coming every year, and there are people who are more experienced.

How important is the information coming from other colleagues, people like Sergio, who are students ...?

There are a lot of Brazilians coming here, and we recognize why we go through the same situation of leaving the country and coming here, so we are very fragile, needing help for anything. It is very difficult to do everything independently, to do everything by ourselves, so it is always good to give support because the person either needs it or will need it.

You need to make friends too. In Brazil we are very friendly, and we miss it. We leave the comfort zone and go to the zone of discomfort. Nowadays, I have enough Portuguese friends, but it was very difficult here at FEUP to do this because the number of students was very large. And the number of Brazilians was also very large. Then we would end up as if closing a circle. The Portuguese already had their group, so we ended up doing a group. Here at FEP the number of Portuguese friends has increased a lot, so this is very valid. Portuguese who help me: where do I have to solve such a thing, what to look for, where is better... because they already know!

What about other products and services? Are you a person that before shopping likes to read reviews?

Yes. I always search. Even to see if the site is reliable. On hotel websites, for example, it's always good to see reviews despite the photos. Then you get an idea. I always try to leave mine.

But for the University did not do that so much! You did not search...

No, because I already had this filter. The level of friendship I have with this friend... he wouldn't pass me the wrong information, do you understand?

And when you are looking for a review on the internet, what is for you a good review?

It is the person's experience primarily. And you have to describe it well. Whether it was good or bad and why. And that is where you will filter the information given by someone else. If I say "I did not like a hotel room because it's small, or because the rooms do not have wide tables". This for me may not be a negative point, it can be a neutral point. So I will not give a

negative opinion on this. But someone else probably found that a negative point. So it's always good to read and understand why, but always have your own critical sense.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FEP/U.Porto?

InterUP is a good example. And before InterUP, in the year I joined here, I think it was the University director, I do not know who he was, who invited the Brazilians to make a video explaining everything for the other Brazilians to come and to know how the process was. A video on YouTube and such. At the time it was shared on social networks... all my friends who study here were promoting to reach as many people as possible, and I think it has had a very positive return, so much that the number of students is growing here.

I remember from experience that when I reposted this video I had several people talking to me in the chat. Lots of people who had no idea of the price, which is the most important factor in the decision to come. Many people think that living here in Europe is super expensive, but sometimes they are paying more to study in Brazil. And here is a very good university. So I think this is still missing.

To what extent has this video influenced the way you see the University and your feelings about it?

Optimism! The focus was to attract more Brazilians, and we want that, we want more Brazilians to come and interact more. Many people do not like that there is a great miscegenation of countries, on the Portuguese side, that has a lot of tourists, but for us it is very important because they are our brothers.

But I see in the younger people, in the university, I see that they like; they like to have other countries involved. Today at FEP, for example, there was a formation of groups there at work that we are going to do and it is very cool because the Portuguese came to talk to me, with a friend of mine and my friends "bro, let's do a group", so that makes us more comfortable . These are small details that make us feel more comfortable.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FEUP / U.Porto?

Do not think so. Nothing very relevant, but for example: about some professors, the way they give the class, about some services provided, but nothing much... this happens anywhere in the world. So I've never heard of a relevant negative point.

This topic regarding teachers, for example, where does the communication happen?

Usually in closed groups, and sometimes even personally. We also talk to older students, as we are entering now we are scared by the way the teacher gives the class, a bit intimidating. Then we talk to the doctors, the veterans, and they confirm "yes, the teacher is really like that". Sometimes this happens on the social network as well.

How does this affect your thoughts and feelings about the university?

In general, for example, in these points of services provided, there is a lot of inefficiency in the services provided. At least I had this experience of inefficiency, of lack of clarity in information. For example, I have a friend now who he lives with me, he's also leaving FEUP to go to FEP, but he needs a seal from Brazil from the education department that was not specified in the application, it wasn't clear, so his candidacy was rejected and he will have to apply for the 2nd phase. The problem is that this application round had more denials than the number of places. A person may miss an opportunity because of the lack of clarity, lack of objectivity in the information.

I've had a lot of experiences like that here so I created the habit to always go face-to-face in Academic Services or wherever I go to look for information, just to avoid this kind of problem. But I have several friends who had problems like this.

Was there any eWOM about your friend's situation?

Sure enough, he complained via email, through Facebook, he shared it with the closest people.

To what extent does this influence the way you see the institution?

It does influence, it ends up influencing, ends up influencing, yes. Because I've never been through it, but I know it's possible, I know it can happen. I am cautious but I know that not everyone does it. Another good point is always to help others using the groups, because we

cannot be all over the place helping the whole world, then the person sends a message and says "I went through this situation", so someone recommends the right person.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FEUP / U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

I think the fact that... sometimes when I see messages like "students of FEUP or FEP can launch a device that, I do not know, clean garbage in the street at a cost of almost 0". I do not know, things like this. There are quite a few! Or, "FEUP students will run for the championship in Sweden". So you see that the university is a good university.

What about FEP?

Yes, I was trying to remember FEUP because I also studied here. But FEP also has it. There is FEP Junior Consulting, which is a junior consulting company, very difficult to enter, I tried to enter and I could not (I think it is difficult to accept 1st year students, since they do not have much to contribute), but they made a fair here also of two days, with big companies like Sonae, PWC, I think. So it's a faculty company that renders services for very large companies, which is a very positive side to college.

And have you ever shared any electronic message about FEP/U.Porto, positive or negative?

Yes Yes! Positive! It was about that ranking of European universities, I remember I shared that.

On what platforms?

Facebook.

How would you describe FEP or University of Porto to someone who does not know it?

It's an excellent faculty. Teachers are mostly very good. Now we are having classes in containers, but you see a very good infrastructure. And even now the structure is very good, even in the containers has air conditioning, hot or cold. It's nice. You see the structure, the concern for the students and everything, and I think everyone should come here and see how the faculty works, the space is very interesting.

So what are your general feelings about FEP/UPorto?

Quite grateful for being welcomed, having such a good support, you know? But I also feel quite challenged. It's a good, difficult faculty, so it's complicated. The teaching system is different from the Brazilian system. Here the responsibility is much bigger, so it's more of a challenge for me. But nothing that I cannot manage. Personal growth is very good!

If FEP/U.Porto was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

I would say very ambitious. In terms of always seeking the best of students, to develop students in a very intense way, to study hard, to do tests that challenge the student. Optimize the time and resources you have. I think FEP does it very well, and FEUP does it too. In general, the University of Porto does this well.

When talking about FEP/UPorto physical elements, what comes to your mind?

FEP's logo is red and white.

What about U.Porto?

Black and white.

Would you be able to distinguish them among other institutions?

It's very confusing. There are some red and white, some white and red. It's complicated, but this is my university so I guess I could do it.

How do you see FEP/U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

I think it's very good. Very positive. I can mainly compare it with the city I come from in Brazil, and FEP would be the best there. I've heard a lot about FEP here at the University of Porto, in Economics and Management, which is very good, which provides opportunities for outstanding students, so I think the university is very good.

How would you define the relation price / quality here?

Great. Great!

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

I think it's a good price. It is a price that for education is a greater investment of the state in the people because we will in the future contribute much more than we pay effectively in college.

Could FEP / U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

I think they could but then it would negatively affect the number of international students coming here. Because taking the local currency into account coming here is already a big challenge; at FEP we pay 1500 eur per year, at FEUP it is 3000 eur per year, which dividing in installments it means 300 eur per month, so it is already more expensive, it gets quite expensive. I think it would be very difficult for international students to come here.

If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

I intend to do masters, specializations ...

At the university?

At FEP, actually. I think FEP is a good institution to continue my studies.

And would you recommend FEP to a family member or friends?

For sure!

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FEUP?

I would like to teach at FEP because I think it is interesting that the Portuguese also have access to the style of education in Brazil. Taking the good points of the two ways of educating I think the university only has to win. I think in the future I would like to bring this together. Or even work on something involving the institution.

Would you like to become an Alumni Ambassador?

Yes, with pleasure. We end up creating very strong bonds. Which has to do also with gratitude. Of course this happens with all people involved, but I think the institution, which is the symbol of it, plays an important role and I would certainly like to participate as good as I can.

Interview I09

How is it like to study at FEUP?

It's a bit difficult to answer because I have no comparison with other universities or colleges, except when I was on Erasmus in Chile. In terms of classes, in my specific programme honestly now is when I'm starting to like it more. In the beginning it was a lot of theory and the teachers were not very approachable. But now I'm enjoying it more because I entered the masters, the number of students begins to reduce, we also have more maturity, teachers are more approachable, and in that aspect in terms of study programme I even started to like it more. In terms of faculty facilities, it is amazing, I use everything and anything, even the douche, and I think it gives a lot of opportunities in terms of extracurricular experiences. I get into a lot of things.

In terms of international experience is also very good, this already has to do with the University of Porto in general, who is always sending emails, etc., with opportunities. So I think in general, even having no terms of comparison with other universities in Portugal, I think it's a good faculty. Of course there are aspects that do not please me so much, but I like it, I like it.

Have you ever heard about FEUP or U.Porto on the Internet?

Not before. I mean, I went to FEUP and the University of Porto website but only after knowing that I wanted to come in and that it was in my interest to enter.

You looked for information on the site, was that it?

Yes.

And have you considered other institutions?

Inside the University of Porto. Always.

Which ones?

Economics, Dental Medicine ... several ...

And you compared information between them?

No, I do not think so... But it was some time ago. Because as they were very different courses at the time it was only to see the disciplines that they had.

What about other people's opinions on the internet?

No, no.

Not even friends?

I do not think so!

And even after being here, did you hear about FEUP or U.Porto on the Internet?

Mmmm... I follow FEUP on Instagram. And nothing else.

What is a credible source of information for you when looking for information about FEUP or U.Porto?

What brings me more credibility I think is all that is official source, like official website, official instagram, and so on, and word of mouth, that is, hear from others experiences, I think in terms of experience that is the most important.

If it's a person you do not know, is it the same?

I think a person I do not know will give me more information... With friends maybe we go straight to certain details because they already know what we are looking for in terms of relationship with the teacher, etc. And therefore I consider more important being a better known source, and a friend, opinions regarding teachers and so, because a friend will be much more comfortable to tell me something like "look, in the theoretical teachers are bad." Whereas an unknown person probably would not give me this information, but on the other hand, an unknown person will probably give me an insight a little more informed, detailed and unbiased, so I think they have both their importance.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Everyday, always.

Have you ever connected to other people in order to get more information or opinions about FEUP / U.Porto?

Probably yes. When I have questions about disciplines and so I always ask a person I already know that has already done that discipline.

And how do you usually communicate?

Whatsapp.

Have you ever searched for information or opinions about FEUP / U.Porto on the internet in order to make a decision?

To see the regulations on the internet, to see if I have access to special calls and so on. So more official stuff; more abstract stuff not really.

And how important is the information coming from colleagues, from people in the same situation as you, to make final decisions about matters related to FEUP / U.Porto?

It depends on the situations. There are things that are official and it is even in terms of regulation, there is not much to escape from.

And things that do not have to do with regulations or bureaucracies?

Mmmm... I remember, for example, the thesis: do it outside or do it here. I talked to friends, not through electronic means but in person, and then for big decisions like this I give more importance on the experience of other people.

And you talked to them in person because you preferred that way or could it have happened on the internet?

It was because it was cool, but I prefer to talk in person, because it is a final decision.

What about other products and services? Are you a person who likes to read reviews before purchasing?

Yes, I read, I always read. This has a lot to do with my personality. I am not very consumerist, so when I buy something I am very thoughtful and check everything that is in the reviews, etc, mainly using the internet or electronic means. Then I see all the reviews, etc...

However, in choosing the university you did not have this need.

Because FEUP already has a good name. I come from Espinho, and many people from Espinho go to the University of Porto. I've heard of FEUP for many years.

But if you were looking for a review about U.Porto, what would be a good quality review for you?

A review which focuses on the more emotional side. Personally, I am a very transparent person, so I can feel more emotion and empathy with a person who is similar.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FEP / U.Porto?

On Facebook there are always those news posts, from newspapers like JN and Expresso, where a FEUP teacher gets very well placed in the top of something...

Do you remember any specific situation?

Yes, I remember a professor in my department (friends of mine shared the news) who won the teaching prize, top 10 university professors by Expresso newspaper. It was all over the country and people talked a lot.

You see on what platform?

Facebook.

Did you think that was credible information?

It was the Expresso newspaper, yes!

Any more examples of positive eWOM?

More in relation to university tops, which come in the news as well. For me they are credible, they usually are, except from Correio da Manhã and so on.

To what extent did this eWOM influence the way you see the Faculty / University and your feelings about it?

I do not know if this is a very correct answer, but ... since I'm here, I no longer care so much about the information I see from other sources or people, etc., about the experience of being at FEUP because I'm here myself. So I have my own experience, my opinion. Honestly, there is not much that will change. It's my opinion. I'm already here, I have my opinion formed, each time is more difficult to change.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

Not really.

You can think a little.

So, in the Facebook groups there are always complaints, always!

Do you remember any of them?

Some! Regarding grades. Grades come always after the deadline.... Or teachers that go against not only the deadlines but the regulations in general, not in a serious but more bureaucratic way. The examples I remember are always a bit of a outrage feeling because we cannot do much about it. So these examples which come to my mind are always situations where there's a bit of a protest mood against the teachers and a sense of impotence.

And on what platform (s) do this take place?

Usually closed groups on Facebook, of course, of a specific year within a specific study programme. Or groups of Whatsapp, messenger or Facebook.

But the class only, not the study programme in general, right?

Yes, the class only.

How credible is this information?

It's credible, it is.

How does this affect your thoughts and feelings about the institution?

Influence more than positives. Yes, that's for sure! I feel empathy for it because I often experience it myself, so it usually confirms what I'm already experiencing.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FEUP / U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

It was this news of the teacher who was in the top 10 of university professors, who won the prize of pedagogical level. But this is because of a personal experience I had with him, so I strongly disagreed. But this is something personal, it's personal! Really!

So you did not agree with that message which was positive?

Exactly.

How did this make you feel?

It takes out the credibility of news like this one. It was a prize awarded by Expresso, in this case. In this case I knew the person and had an experience with the person in question, but there are lots of other cases in which I have no personal experience with the people who are in the news. But the fact that I have had this person, and the experience has been negative and the media say something else, makes me not to believe this sort of information.

And have you ever shared any electronic message about FEP or the University of Porto, positive or negative?

I have already been asked to write a testimonial which is published on the website. I think that counts.

Was it a positive testimonial?

Yes, yes!

Anything else?

In public, for a lot of people, I never said anything, either positive nor negative. I abstain.

And within your closed networks?

No, but I never share anything. It's nothing against FEUP, but I never share anything.

How would you describe FEUP or University of Porto to someone who does not know it?

I think this goes a little bit to the first question you asked me. Basically, this has to do with my experience. Talking to a person who had never heard of it I was probably going to speak well overall and probably would emphasize the things I've said before. In terms of facilities, I think FEUP is, in fact, the best college in the University of Porto. Extracurricular activities and the possibility of having an international experience, and also the possibility of doing research with teachers...

I do not have great contact with U.Porto; perhaps through BEST. One of the things I did was contact the Rectory to ask for support and they were really nice to me.

So what are your general feelings about FEUP / UPorto?

It's a love-hate relationship. This should be a bit in general: in the 1st and 2nd year everything is always very cool: "I joined FEUP, and this is very cool!", and things like that. After that, however, it starts to get a bit... "okay, this is not going to change, and it will be like this in the next 3 or 4 years"... You lose a little motivation.

What exactly is not gonna change?

The place will be the same, the study programme will be the same, that is, I will continue here, there is nothing will change much. At first maybe it's nice to go out, get out of the house, get on the train and come to FEUP... Now that I'm in the last year, nostalgia is coming and coming back again, maybe looking at FEUP in a more emotional... Maybe in a year I will miss these corridors and the social experience.

If FEUP was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

I would imagine a very energetic and proactive person. Always with new ideas, so a very dynamic person. A little stubborn, proud, no doubt, but a person... I think I would get along with that person.

Proud in what sense?

Proud in the sense of being proud of what you do, and that you should be proud of, but on the other hand sometimes falls into the stubborn. If criticized, maybe do not accept criticism so well, and things like that.

When talking about FEUP / U.Porto physical elements, what comes to your mind?

The colour of Engineering.

What about U.Porto?

Rainbow. Those colors ...

Would you be able to distinguish them among other institutions?

Yes Yes!

How do you see FEUP / U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

I think that generally almost everything has more quality. Thinking about research, for example, comparing with the University of Aveiro, I know that the University of Aveiro has strongly developed in the area of research (they are probably more dynamic than us in this field). And as far as teaching is concerned, I do not know if it is good or bad, whether it has better quality or not, but I have often heard, and I share the same opinion, that it is a more theoretical teaching, whereas in other faculties it is sometimes more practical.

How would you define the relation price / quality here?

Good. Good!

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

For what I have right to I think it is very good, comparing with the rest of the prices that I know of in other universities. As I said before, I think I take very good advantage of what I pay.

To what extent could FEUP / U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

I think that's not the way, being a public education. I have the possibility to pay, even though it is almost 100 EUR per month, and I know that for the average salary in Portugal increase the price is not a good policy.

If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

No, I would not like it. It is nothing against FEUP or against the University of Porto in general, I simply think that if I were to continue studying at FEUP it wouldn't bring me a big increase beyond the study programme, and if I went to another university or to another country besides the programme I would have much more to gain in terms of experience and personal growth.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

Yes!

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FEUP after finishing your studies?

I'd like to! Because I feel affection for the faculty!

Would you like to become an Alumni Ambassador?

Yes, I think so! I do not know for how long, because now I'm in the last year and I already feel that nostalgia. I do not know if 5 years from now, but at the moment I would do it.

Interview I10

How is it like to study at FADEUP/U.Porto?

In 2015 I was in Lisbon, I had opportunity with FC Dragon Force, the coach of FADEUP advised me to do a postgraduate here. At that time I was thinking about going to Germany and he advised me to stay, that there are very good universities in Portugal in the field of sports. Living in Lisbon I was thinking of the FMH (Faculty of Human Motricity of the University of Lisbon), I tried to get in twice but I found that FADEUP is better. In 2018 I tried with UTAD and with FADEUP, and I entered, so I decided to stay here in Porto.

And how is studying at FADEUP/U.Porto?

It's very strict, but I like it, I like it! Unfortunately, my colleagues who have done their bachelor's are hearing things for the second time, but for me... I'm learning things that I never had during my graduation, such as: Sports sociology, sports aesthetics, statistics classes... I didn't know the difference between qualitative and quantitative before getting here. So for me I like it a lot. I really like it.

Have you ever heard about FADEUP/U.Porto on the Internet?

Before having this relation with the Mister, the coordinator of the Dragon Force of Lisbon, I did not hear much; I never thought I'd come to Portugal to study, so I didn't do the research. I was thinking about Germany.

So when he told you about this possibility, did you do some research?

Oh, yes, yes!

And do you remember seeing people's opinions?

I did not see opinions, but the first thing in 2015 that I found when I googled FADEUP was the ranking of the best universities in the world on sports, and that position of FADEUP was the best in Portugal: better than FMH in Lisbon, University of Coimbra, Minho in Braga and UTAD. I also tried with Beira Interior, but FADEUP was impressive.

And since you're here, do you remember seeing information on the Internet about college/university?

When I came here talking to people who did not attend university but who live in Porto, I still meet people who know FADEUP. Even at the airport catching the flight from the U.S. I found people at the airport who knew FADEUP, that was impressive for me. Portugal is a small country of only 10 million people, and it is impressive that it has such a recognized school.

And when you decided to come here, did you look for opinions? Did you try to talk to the students here, see how the experience was being, how it had been...?

No, not much! My first question when I got here was to find a house to live in. SASUP does not give much support to find accommodation. Then I contacted the Office of International Relations at the rectory and everything went very, very well.

How was it?

I did a photoshoot with them where I met Polish, Germans, Australians, Brazilians... That is, students from other faculties of the University of Oporto in the same situation as me. So everything went well.

And when you're looking for information on the Internet, what is credible information for you?

A site that was very useful during my dream of coming to Europe to study. It's called studyportals.eu. It helped me a lot. At the time I was conducting my degree thinking about coming to Europe, Germany, as I said, and I used that site to see not only the institutions but the rules, the laws in Germany, for example. I did the same for Portugal, and there I found more information for example about the University of Porto, FMH, UTAD and UBI.

Have you looked for other people for more information?

Not people. I've done a lot of this work myself.

And how often do you use the Internet to connect to other people?

I used to talk too often, but I don't like it. I have a lot of friends younger than me and they use it all the time. That's enough for me.

The only problem in my case is that I have lived in many places outside the United States, so it is necessary to use Facebook and WhatsApp to keep in touch with my friends and my family. I recently started using Instagram, but this is more of a hobby. Therefore, Facebook and WhatsApp I use everyday, Instagram maybe once a week.

And on those platforms you use do you have some group with only colleagues, for instance?

Yes.

And for instance with those colleagues have you ever looked for more information regarding the faculty or the university?

I could say that half of my class has that interest. They're discussing this in the groups, arranging more meetings between us and teachers to discuss things (they like to improve things within the faculty), but for me I'm very happy, I'm very happy, so for me these things don't interest me as much as they do to my colleagues.

But when you're looking for information, do you ever try to get it through colleagues?

Usually people who studied at FADEUP before they have this kind of contacts, so they're going to get in touch with them. For example: This one did biomechanics two years ago, let's see what he says about it. That's the way. Since I'm new I don't have as many connections with past students.

So you don't do it that much?

No, no, no.

So how did information coming from other colleagues influence your own decisions?

It didn't. Just my coach.

Do you still have contact with him?

Yes, sometimes. In October last year I needed to go to Lisbon to take care of things at the consulate, so I stopped by. He was very happy to see me. He saw on Facebook that I came to Portugal but did not expect my visit there at the Dragon Force that day, ie, I made him a surprise and he was very happy.

I shared with him the interview I gave to the Jornal Económico in which I mentioned his name and he was very happy. He shared this on the Dragon Force Lisboa page.

I have this contact, we have this connection, but we don't need to talk every week.

At the time when he advised the University of Porto how did this sharing of information occur? Through personal or electronic?

That was face to face.

What about other products and services? Are you a person looking to see reviews before you buy?

Depends on the purchase. For example, if it's not food. I was out of Portugal using Amazon a lot. Now in Portugal I go to the store and talk to the employee.

Yes, but it's always possible to go search the Internet for other people's comments.

The comments do not interest me because many people have experiences different of my own. So I don't like to use the comments of one or many people to influence me on a product that I might like.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FEP/U.Porto?

Unfortunately when I'm researching or looking for something on the internet the names of the colleges that appear are not FADEUP. Architecture, economics, engineering, and only once in a while FADEUP.

And University of Porto?

Oh, yes, yes! Often.

What do you remember seeing?

The best destination for students in Portugal. The city of Oporto has the largest number of international students. I also know from my experience that the cost of living in Porto is less than in Lisbon, and I saw many things about it on the Internet.

And where do you usually see it?

Most of the time on Facebook.

These positive messages... to what extent does this influence your thoughts and feelings regarding the institution?

100%. It makes me feel very proud.

Do you consider this information credible?

Yes, I think so.

Do you recall any negative eWOM about FEP/U.Porto?

From colleagues yes, on social networks I do not. With colleagues for sure!

And where?

Whatsapp, face to face and groups on Facebook.

It was not something like a college repost, it's more in closed groups.

Do you remember any specific examples?

If I choose the common point of many people it is the fact that our classes have little practical component and a lot of theory. We are often only in the auditorium to have lectures. We're on a sports course, we want to go to the halls, the camps, the labs, stuff like that. This didn't happen until the second semester, so many of my colleagues are unhappy about it.

Where was this shared?

Many ways: face to face, WhatsApp, closed groups, meetings with teachers...

These negative messages... to what extent does this influence your thoughts and feelings regarding the institution?

Look, I think I have an advantage over my colleagues. Most of my colleagues are 21, 25, 26 years old, I'm almost 30. So I know which things must influence me and which ones I must leave to the side.

We also have a very good teacher who came in contact with us to have feedback on the negative issues pointed out by students. I found this very positive and nice.

This negative situation you were talking about was credible?

Yes, in this case I agree with my colleagues. But I'm still learning a lot of things, so it's not that bad.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FADEUP/U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

I remember a news piece of three or four weeks ago. The coordinator of our course gave an interview to the Olympic Committee of Portugal, so this was shared on Facebook by U. Porto and FADEUP. I felt very proud.

Have you ever shared anything about FADEUP or U. Porto?

Yes. I participated in a project of the international relations of the rectory, which included a video, then I shared the video saying "I did this for my university, I am here in Porto..:" And then I also shared the interview with the Jornal Económico. And I bought five or six newspapers and told everyone "I'm in the paper, I'm in the paper."

How would you describe FADEUP/U.Porto to someone who doesn't know it?

In the case of FADEUP I can say that for those who think of doing a bachelor is good, very strong even; if you are for a master's degree it is very good if you want to continue for a PhD; but if you're a coach you have to think about whether it's really what you want because it's more directed for the life after a master's degree, i.e. PhD.

I have a friend of mine from Brazil, she majored in Architecture in Germany, is now in Erasmus in Italy, but I advised him to come here for his master's degree. I told him Porto is one of the best universities in the World.

So what's your general feeling towards FADEUP/U.Porto?

Every day I wake up thinking how lucky I am that in case I don't have classes I can catch a bus to Castelo do Queijo, eat a Pastel de Nata, this is sensational. The next day I go to the faculty to find my friends, my teachers, that is, it's really good! I can't feel any regrets.

If FEUP was a person, how would you describe its personality?

I can answer with two different people. The University of Porto is my mother, very passionate, things like that; FADEUP is my father, very strict, very hard, but taking care of me. There's a professor at FADEUP, a genius, a genius, but he's got the hardest class. It's Professor Maia. To me, FADEUP is Professor Maia. The other day I saw Professor Maia for the first time smiling, he actually has a heart. I was very happy to see this side of Professor Maia; he is a real genius.

FADEUP is Professor Maia and the University of Porto... There's a great friend of mine, her name is Sara Martins, she works in the International Relations office. When I got to this town, I got the flu because of the weather, and she advised me to a health center. Again I lost my bag from U. Porto and she said "come and get another, we have here".

When talking about the physical elements, what comes to your mind?

I have to admit, I'm not very pleased with the physical aspect of our faculty. Our gym. We're a sports faculty, but our gym sucks. Besides, I think of the library, which is very good! I think of the auditorium, which is very good. The athletics track, I run many times there. The view from the faculty: there are pictures of the faculty, as it was before.

And the logo?

It's green. There's a list of all faculties, ICBAS is blue...

What about U.Porto?

Black.

How do you compare FEUP's quality in comparison to other institutions?

In comparison to the university where I did my degree (University of North Carolina Wollington, in the state of North Carolina), the big difference is that there a school has everything: be it business, biomechanics, etc.; Here is different, you have a different faculty for every area. Also back in the USA when I started my bachelor's degree, our Sports Science program was growing; when I went there last year I arrived and it was another world, passed from the Earth to Mars. It has grown a lot in the last six years.

But under sports, FADEUP is very strong. Also in comparison with Brazil here is better. It's better.

And how do you define the relation price/quality.

Pfffff.... It's almost unbelievable for us an American. Because at the school I attended, it wasn't five stars but it was a good university. Even so, I being from North Carolina would pay about 18.000 dollars a year. If I was from outside North Carolina price would double, that is, 36.000 dollars a year. It's ridiculous! Here is almost 3000 and such for two years. So it's really good!

To which point do you think FADEUP could charge more?

This I do not know because I arrived here only in September. In my way of thinking there was no problem, it would be fair. The only thing I could complain about are the scholarships for foreigners and the lodging.

If you finished your studies now, how would you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

No. After the classes with Professor Maia and other people I'm fine with the master's. Next year I finish it up.

Would you recommend FADEUP/Uporto to friends or family?

Unfortunately I do not have many friends in the sports area, so I cannot recommend the FADEUP, but could recommend the University of Porto, for sure.

If you finished now and if you went back to your country would you like to keep the connection to FEUP?

Yes, especially with the FADEUP. Because between 2013 and 2016 I tried to enter the master's, and every year I wasn't selected. Both Lisbon and UTAD they answered no to my application, so I'm very grateful to FADEUP.

To which extent would you like to become our Alumni Ambassador?

Yes, actually I've collaborated with a project from the Rectory of U.Porto, with a video and pictures, and I'm very grateful. The project was cool! I'd like to keep helping.

Interview I11

How is it like to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

I'm studying Communication Sciences, which is taught at FLUP only since last year. In the first year we had classes at the downtown pole, next to the Faculty of Law, and the university spirit for me was very much connected to the programme of Communication Sciences, that is, I knew all the colleagues, the older and the younger ones, and I was very much at the Faculty.

In the 2nd year we had the theoretical classes in the Faculty of Arts, which means that I finally got in touch with my faculty. However, practical classes were still at the downtown pole (it was annoying because in some days I had classes in both places, which was not very well done). I left my comfort zone and met other people from other programmes at FLUP. These were people of the same type, friendly people, but as I am from Porto I didn't get involved in many academic activities, such as the Tertullia and the practices for the newcomers. And therefore I've never really experienced this academic life.

The University of Porto for me... I have no great opinion. If you ask me if I enjoyed the study programme... but if I enjoyed the University of Porto I really don't know.

In general, the experience is very much positive, I grew up a lot. Comparing to high school, we have more freedom, which sometimes is good, sometimes is bad, sometimes we don't feel the support we were used to, but it is great because I grew up, I learned how to manage, I learned to go talk to people, to talk to older students, so I think it's an asset for everyone to get a higher education degree.

Have you ever heard about FLUP/U.Porto on the Internet before choosing the University?

I think I've never looked that much, honestly. I don't think so.

What about after you entered?

Now I do. More University Porto than Faculty of Arts, very honestly. Regarding Communication Sciences, it is normal to start joining groups, especially Facebook. WhatsApp we don't use.

As for the University of Porto, now that I'm doing my internship I started seeing posts, what they do. But I never paid much attention, I've never thought like "Ah I'll see what the

university has published." No. In fact, I've never been to the University of Porto website. Never.

Not until you get in?

Yes, only after I started studying here.

And before you entered university have you considered other institutions?

I knew one thing: that the University of Porto was a highly prestigious university with a good name. For my parents, for my older brother, for friends. At the time I wanted to stay home, I wanted to stay at the University of Porto. I had good grades to get in. By that time the only alternative I could think of was the Catholic University, in case I decided to study Law, which didn't happen in the end.

Did you search online reviews?

Never.

But did you ever get on the site before you started studying at FLUP?

I had a look at the study programmes at FLUP. I even made an Excel table containing all options. At the FLUP website I checked the courses for the 3 year-programme... I did everything carefully because I didn't want to miss any year or lose money. It's not that it's too expensive, but...

At the U. Porto website I've never been to. We don't go to websites much, I guess. We use applications or Facebook or Instagram.

What is for you a credible source of information when you are searching information about FLUP/U.Porto and the University of Porto?

For example, the media channels I follow. I think they check the sources before they release the news, so I trust them.

Do you follow these online media?

On Facebook, yes. I like the pages and then the news come to me. Another source that I normally believe in are my friends and family, which I also talk to on WhatsApp. My friends on WhatsApp sometimes send me the news. For example, the construction works at FEP: there's a friend of mine studying at FEP, so when I saw some news about the works finishing

on April 14th, I sent her the news. She received this news from me, but my source of it, but my source was the online channel (I don't even remember which one).

So what are for you the most credible sources?

The media. For example, I don't believe much in the comments, I never go to the comments of the publications. Because I don't know people, a lot of them are just angry with life, and sometimes I don't even have the patience. If I want to know someone's opinion, I'll ask someone I can trust. I prefer.

In other words, if you don't know people, you don't trust them.

Exactly.

What people do you trust?

Family, friends... friends of friends are also ok. That's it!

How often do you use the internet to connect to other people?

Everyday. I have a good mobile data package which allows me to always be connected. If I turn the internet off it's because my phone battery is low. But I'm not addicted to the phone. In fact, I have lots of friends who are very much, but I try to control it a bit. I use WhatsApp a lot, that's what I use most because of the groups.

Have you ever connected to other people to get more information or opinions about FLUP/U.Porto?

Yes. I've never thought about it, but I just remembered one thing now. I talked to a friend of my brother on Instagram because she also studied Communication Sciences. I'm finishing my degree and I don't know what I'm going to do next year. I wanted to know what she thinks of the masters at FEP. She told me she did her master's degree at Catholic University because she was a little tired from the University of Porto and wanted to switch.

I like the programme but honestly the teachers and so... I think it is a little old-fashioned in many aspects so I would also like to switch. And he also told me about IPAM. Oh, and she

even told me, "If you want to talk to this friend of mine who's doing Marketing at IPAM, I'll bring you both in touch".

And what are the most privileged platforms for this information exchange?

Whatsapp. Instagram is not so much to get information about organizations, but to connect to other people. Facebook is what I use less nowadays.

And after entering FEUP, have you ever tried to connect to other people to make a decision about FLUP/U.Porto?

The only thing I did was in high school to see the disciplines, to see a little bit what is done in each one. I have my own opinion and I'm not influenced by my parents, for example.

And when you were already at the faculty?

When I have doubts I usually write in the Facebook group. We have a group with people of the 3 years (1st, 2nd and 3rd year), where we share tips. In fact, we have a repository, a drive, only with notes and assignments from the years before. And every year we update that for the younger ones.

And to come up with a decision, do you remember if it ever happened to you? Any concrete situations?

A lot! For example, in the 2nd year to choose an optional course I asked what was the easiest, the one with higher grades. They answered something like "this course is boring but everyone gets a grade of 20".

Was this in that Facebook group of the 3 years of course?

Yes, and we have one for the class too. I only use Facebook for the faculty.

And how important do you consider this information coming from colleagues?

Very important! I didn't know them, because I didn't know them, I trusted them right away! Why would they lie?

But they're people you don't know!

I don't know but they're people who... The study programme brings us together! Because we all belong to Communication Sciences, we are thus a bunch of strange people who are even on a different pole, but who are studying a really cool programme, which is the future, I suppose. Besides that... I am not in the tertullia, but the people who are in the Tertullia know us well. Besides, in the second year I chose my optional course based on that. The result is that everybody's trying to register in the same course because of the good grades.

And regarding other products and services, are you a person who before you buy will read the reviews on the internet?

I never do. I don't buy anything online either, i always go to the store. For example, if I see that Adidas is on sale I'll go to the store to see. Sometimes I see for instance that Zara comes up with very nice shirts; that only reminds me of the possibility of Zara having cute shirts, but I always go to the store.

And when you see information about the University of Porto or FLUP, thinking of a review, what would be a good quality review for you?

In a review of a master's degree, for example, I prefer it to be based on facts: I liked this teacher because his classes are like this. Obviously, if you tell me that the teacher takes good care of students that touches me more because we are all human.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FLUP/U.Porto?

The student festivities always have positive feedback. Sometimes it's also negative, but the negative I never read.

Next to that, I always see prizes, but because I'm currently doing my internship at CINTESIS.

Mmmm... I don't even know!

Sometimes we see on TV or on Facebook something like "University of Porto among the most prestigious in Europe", and a person gets that Portuguese pride "ah we are the greatest".

So you remember seeing that?

Yes, lots of times. A lot of times!

Where have you seen it?

Television and Facebook too.

For example, the University is doing the collection of goods from the history of Mozambique. I think that's great! And it unites all faculties in one project, which is great.

And how did you see that information?

Flyers, Facebook (now I'm more on Facebook because of the internship).

How credible were these examples of positive eWOM?

Very much credible. The one about the rankings I ask myself: "Jesus, if ours is the best how should the others be?". Because I have lousy teachers who don't give a damn. Sometimes you notice they're there and they don't like what they're doing. It's super demotivating because they force us to stay to the end to go sign a sheet... In fact, I don't think there should be any control of who attends classes.

What about Mozambique? Was it credible the information you saw?

Yes, absolutely!

To what extent does this influence your thought and feelings towards the institution?

The rankings influenced me because in high school I did not consider to go to Lisbon or to Braga. On the one hand I wanted to stay home, on the other hand the University of Porto is good, so why should I leave the city? And this is because of what I've heard before. A prestigious university.

From Mozambique it is always good because to see our university coming together for a good cause that has nothing to do with teaching, has nothing to do with it, makes me feel that U. Porto is human and is not indifferent. Also involving students in these causes is very good. Really! Many end up not even seeing, I'm honest. On Instagram we see images, I do not follow the University of Porto on Instagram, I do not follow. I've been there, they have spectacular pictures, but I don't follow, I don't feel like it. My biggest problem is getting that information, I don't have that information because I'm not looking. I don't really look on the University

Facebook and Instagram; I spend my time watching other people's lives and I don't look at the University of Porto.

Your choice, right?

Yes, my choice. Because... This from Mozambique I happened to see and I was really happy. I thought it wasn't our kind, and it was.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

The student festivities (“queima”). I've seen negative eWOM about the academic festivities. But it was the students' fault.

What was the matter?

There were many fights. There was this girl who got abused while she was sleeping drunk.

Where did you see that?

On WhatsApp. The girl's video ended up in one of my groups, by the way, several groups, and I don't even know her or the boys around. This was from group to group and ended up in my hands very fast... in one day.

Who was the sender of that message?

It was a friend of mine who got it and shared it.

Was the information credible?

I saw it, so it was credible.

To what extent does this influence the way you see FLUP, your feelings towards the institution?

Not at all because this has nothing to do with the university. Now I don't know how the parents can think otherwise. Or those more conservative parents can blame the organization for lack of security, and associate it with the University of Porto, but I have the perfect notion that this is the students' fault: either we drink too much, or we get out of control...

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FEUP/U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

There it is, my biggest problem is indifference, I do not seek much information.

I've heard a lot of terrible things about the activities for the newcomers ("praxe"), for example. I don't remember what happened, but I remember at the time I was like, "That's ridiculous." But there it is, it's the new students who want to attend it and the older ones who want to have the power.

Is that the one that impacted you the most?

That and the one about the rankings! If I lived in Aveiro I would probably think twice if I wanted to stay in Aveiro or come to Porto.

And have you yourself ever shared any eWOM about FLUP/UPorto?

I don't use Facebook no more. No one uses it, actually. I don't use it. And Instagram I used to share things about myself, my friends... Sharing university stuff only if it is to someone specifically.

Okay, but have you ever done it?

Yes, I did. That situation of sending my friend from the FEP that the construction works will end that day. Or that of the FEP treasurer who managed to divert money... I remember sending this to my family, to the family group, even because my uncles are teachers at FEP, so I remember making fun of it. Because nothing influences me. It has nothing to do with the university, that is, they are people who have attitudes that are wrong. And it may stain the name of the university, but in my view it will not influence anything, any kind of decision to stay or not to stay.

What influences me to stay at the University of Porto is even I know whether the study programme is good. And having prestige in the labor market, that's the most important thing to me.

So the messages you remember sending are both from FEP, a positive and a negative.

Yes, indeed.

How do you describe FLUP or U. Porto to someone who doesn't know it?

If I describe University of Porto I describe it in a positive way; If I describe the FLUP I describe as an ugly faculty, because it's ugly, it's really ugly. Moreover, nobody likes the practice for newcomers at FLUP. I think people associate a bit of faculty with academic life, but I didn't live the academic life, I'd finish my classes and I'd leave because I come from Porto and my friends come from Porto, not from FLUP. I think there are great things that students organize among themselves and that makes them so fond of the programme, and living so well these years, and these are the best years of life.

So what are your general feelings about FLUP/UPorto?

I like the study programme, and I met very dear and intelligent people. On the other hand, there are very childish people, I am also very childish, I hate to criticize this... I think there are teachers who don't deserve to be working, who should say, "I'm not capable of teaching these students," and they wouldn't teach, they would only do research. I think in some respect it's a little outdated. I'm not finding the right word, it's not very conservative, because it's not.

But your feeling? What are your feelings about FLUP?

Indifference, I think it's indifference.

If FLUP was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

If FLUP was a person, it would be a very smart person, involved in activities, very much committed, but at the same time quite tired, with no life beyond the faculty.

When talking about FLUP/UPorto physical elements, what comes to your mind?

It's blue. The flup is dark blue, the communication sciences is light blue, with two Cs, and then the words "Communication Sciences"; The University of Porto is that typical black and white.

Could you recognize the FEUP/U. Port among other institutions based on the logo?

Yes, for sure.

How do you see FLUP/U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

The only one I can compare is probably Catholic University because I have a lot of friends there. What I feel is that at Catholic they are a bit taken to the lap, so in the end quality is better here at U.Porto.

On the other hand, I feel that I miss that support sometimes, and that's why maybe there are times of the year when I'm more frustrated. And there are times of the year when I am much more relaxed, which is also bad, because as I do not have this support I can do things my way, and I have more time to do the work, or to study for exams that is only at the end of the year, while other institutions probably have more tests throughout the year.

In terms of quality, what do you really think? What do you prefer?

I think it's nice to try a little bit of everything. The options that for me are on the table are either U. Porto, Lisbon, and Catholic University. And I think a person who's not sure of what he/she wants to do shouldn't get into such expensive private colleges.

Despite this situation about the teachers, the University of Porto turns out to be a great university. Really!

And how would you define the relation price/quality here?

I think it is ok. For those who need it, I think the state should help. For me, thank God I have parents who help me and pay my tuitions, so the price of 100 euros per month is fine.

So how do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

It is a fair price.

So to what extent could FLUP/U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

I think this would lead to general panic, it was going to generate great controversy, it was just going to go bad for the university.

If you finished your study programme now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

It's very much likely. I even signed up for a master's degree at FEP. For instance, this friend of my brother I talked to through Instagram advised me to do it. Teachers themselves at FLUP advised to look for other faculties, to go outside. The normal course is to apply to the Master in Marketing, and Marketing at FEP is not bad.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

I'd recommend my study programme. FLUP I can't recommend because there are some crap study programmes.

You admit there might be some crap study programmes?

Yes, I admit it. I'm sure of it.

How ... keep the connection to FEUP?

The only way to keep this connection is social networks. Teachers haven't been friends with anyone.

I compare it to my high school. I loved my school, I finished and I left. I think the university is the same thing.

Would you be available to become an Alumni Ambassador?

If you asked me, I'd take it, all happy, and do whatever I was asked to. But I think I would never in life be invited to such a thing.

But if you were invited, would you see yourself in this role of promoting the university?

I don't know, I don't know because I haven't lived much the academic life. So I wasn't going to promote something that I don't really know what it is. If I were to do something like this, I would never be a self-assigned unless I became an expert in communication or some other area.

Interview I12

How is it to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

When I got here, I had a big impact. Just entering the academic world is already a difference, but entering another country is even more impactful. I really like my study programme, each year I enjoy it more because I have been finding myself professionally. I have very good teachers who are persons of excellence and support me, help me and advise me professionally and academically, so I think that the faculty itself provides you with extra curricular activities that also help you achieve this professionalism and I'm enjoying it very much. I am a person who likes to learn, to ask everything, and the Faculty of Arts, at least in my study programme, offers me a lot of it. I have there three professional branches that are: Journalism, Public Relations and Multimedia, and although normally students separate a lot: "Ah, I like journalism and I will not make the multimedia course", I see how they all complement each other, as Communication Professional. So, it's an experience where the University of Porto has been really amazing.

Have you ever heard of the University of Porto, FLUP, on the Internet, before deciding to come here?

No, I hadn't heard about it in the Internet. I started seeing more things after I started researching. And then I found on Youtube people who had University of Porto as a reference, even if they were not studying here but they were in the Northern region of Portugal. I also found Brazilians who did blogging and stuff.

So you found it, and what do you remember seeing exactly?

Before deciding that I would come to Portugal, a friend of mine came to Lisbon, so my idea was to come to Lisbon or Coimbra, which are the most famous study destinations in Brazil. In the end, my family decided to come with me, so we had to combine, not just college, but also the best place for the whole family. Porto seemed like a place with lower living costs, with good quality of life, quoted at the time as one of the safest cities, the best tourist place in the world, so these things drew a lot of attention. We saw that things were easier, we found a

residence, and then the Faculty is ok, we received more information, when I started sending emails I had a quicker response from U.Porto as well, that's why I decided for U.Porto.

When you were searching, did you seek other people's opinions, did you try to see other people in this situation?

Yes, I came to ask this friend of mine who lives in Lisbon, and she said that the U.Porto is very good, that it is recognized nationally and internationally. Also those blogs I mentioned ended up helping me more in a general way: how is it like to live in Portugal, living costs, documentation. The details about the faculty I discovered here.

With that friend, how did you communicate?

It was through WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

Which electronic information/message was more important for the decision of coming here?

It was the opinion of my friend, for sure, because the people who are here in the country are kind of the eyes of us. Although we have access to blogs, to written texts, it is different than really watching a video on Youtube, having a testimonial, watching someone live saying something, it's feels like you're talking to her. So, I can say that my friend's experience and the Youtubers had quite a big impact on my decision.

Was YouTube the main network?

Facebook was also very important because of the groups; here I had the opportunity to meet people and express my doubts.

What kind of groups were they?

Mainly groups of Brazilians, like Brasup. Groups that help you get in touch with available accommodation and things like that.

At the time you were considering Lisbon, but then the family decided to join you; did you still consider other institutions?

In fact, even though Porto combines all the conditions for the family to be here, the priority is the university, so we first chose the university and family just had to go wherever studies are good. My choice for Porto had to do with having had access to more information, on the internet and on the social networks of the University. This highly contributed for my choice, rather than going to a place where people do not talk much and not give much information.

Did your friend also recommend Porto?

Yes, she spoke very well of Lisbon but spoke very well of the U.Porto, which in the end highlighted the information we had received, the information we had researched before.

After being here, do you remember seeing information on the internet about FLUP/U.Porto?

After I got here, I started using the email more often, and this opened up a world of possibilities, of courses and workshops, and since I'm signing up for a lot of activities I think the social networks algorithms bring to me more and more of these events.

When looking for information on the Internet, about FLUP/U.Porto, what seemed a credible source of information?

The University of Porto newspaper, the online magazine, these seems to me to be quite credible. I particularly don't take as official sources the blogs and what people talk about, it's just good for an opinion but when I want something official, something that is important and that I cannot take risks, then I either send an e-mail to the institution or I go to the website, in Sigarra.

What about when you had to choose the university...

I got in touch, besides the friend's opinion. And they (the university services) were fast.

How often do you connect to other people on the internet?

Daily, I've been working a lot with social networks, so I'm practically all hours of my day on social networks and connecting with people. But when it's not about work, I can say that, about 5 or 6 hours for leisure. It's quite a lot of time. Actually, it's leisure and information

search simultaneously, because we end up updating ourselves and having access to news, to information.

Have you ever connected with someone, through the Internet, for more information about FLUP/U.Porto?

Yes, besides contacting the institutions, FLUP/U.Porto, I have already connected to students for knowing they are here and sent messages to ask for their opinions, ask how it is like to study.

This before you arrived?

No, here. To make friendships, sometimes ask for an opinion.

What means do you use?

I think that for this purpose Facebook is better because there you have a description of the person, where he/she studies, the study programme. So it's easier, sometimes the person confirms attendance to the same event as you, then you check out the profile, see what he/she is studying and you send out a message, and that's how the networking happens.

Still in relation to the question of credibility, if you have to point out what gives you more credibility: an institutional body or, for example, a friend's opinion?

When there are many people saying the same thing, I have a tendency to believe, but I think it does not surpass the institution, the final word comes from the institution.

Have you ever sought information about FLUP/U.Porto, to make a decision?

Normally, if I have to make a decision, for example: In the last semester, I had to make some optional courses, and I did not contact the institution to get an opinion on these courses, I contacted friends, colleagues from the following years to collect their opinions, then I talked to colleagues from my year of study to know what their perceptions were, and people who have the same professional vision as mine, to see what they recommended.

How was that connection established?

With some people it was in person, with others I'm not so close to it was easier to speak by message. Specially by messenger.

Messages for private people, or closed groups?

I did not get to participate in any group, but in my faculty there's the group of the study programme, which works like a forum, people often ask a lot of questions there, ask for opinion. Recently there was a poll to know how many people go to the Public Relations, how many go to Journalism and to Multimedia, and they give opinion, "Ah, the labor market is good for this area, for younger students".

How important is this information coming from other students?

It is very important because it is an experience, it is a real information, it is not an institutional, superficial information. It is information from someone who lived it and will not pass me only the bureaucratic issues, the programme plan, the programme objectives, but will pass me the feelings, the work, the additional value, how was the relationship with the teacher, which are aspects that matter because when we talk about dealing with people, there are not only hard skills there, but also the softs skills matter very much, and we usually don't know about that through the traditional and official means, it has to come from a colleague.

Do you consider credible what the colleagues tell you?

Of course, when it comes to an opinion, we are part of the assumption that is much of the personal vision of each one, and it does not have to be a hundred percent truth, but it is a pespective that we consider. And joining with other experiences, we can take a conclusion from there.

These are always people you know?

Yes, mainly friends. Also friends of friends.

Regarding products and services, do you see reviews before buying?

Look, I'm a little more careless at this. I know it's not a very good habit, but when I want something very much I only do some price research; only when it's something online that I I

don't know the site, then I try to check a bit if it's a credible place to buy. When it's a general known site, where people buy a lot, I don't care so much anymore.

When you are looking for information about FLUP/U.Porto, in these blogs that you saw, what is a good quality review for you.

A good quality review is a sincere review, in which the person really does not try to sell something and also does not try to discredit something, but simply speaks what it is, speaks about his/her experience. Sincerely and transparently.

Is it something more factual or emotional, what do you think is most important?

I think the approach can be both factual and emotional, I just think it depends on the communication goal. If the person says he/she loved it, he/she found it incredible and that was very good, regardless of the intensity of the message, I think if the goal is to inform about something, it is valid.

Do you remember any positive eWOM about FLUP/U.Porto?

One thing that impacted me a lot last year and made me very proud, was that report about U.Porto being among the 100 or 50 best in Europe in the world. I was very happy.

Where did you see it?

I saw it on the Facebook of a friend who shared it.

And then you considered this information credible?

Yes, and it was a friend who shared the university's own post.

How does this positive eWOM influence your thoughts and feelings toward the institution?

It does influence! Because we in Brazil have the tendency to think "I'm going to study in Portugal, I do my Master elsewhere" because it's like a door to Europe here. But since I see the institution is well renowned and has an excellent quality of teaching and I am already adapting here, I feel like staying here. As I see this positive news, I ask myself about the sense of going

somewhere else, so it impacts me mainly on this aspect. I have the opportunity to have access to such good quality here, equivalent to the best in Europe, and I'm already adapted here, so why should I go to another country?

Do you remember any negative eWOM?

There was a time when I signed up for a course and I shared it in the Facebook group. People were saying "Oh, poor girl, I can't believe you picked that course!". This made me upset. The reaction was because the course gave a lot of work, but in the end I managed to do well.

In relation to the institution, I think there are many jokes between faculties.

Any complaints, anyone unhappy with anything, or any less positive news?

I also remember the complaints about the new coffee machines at FEUP, all other faculties heard about it. I saw there was going to be a protest here and that everyone was indignant. I saw it on Facebook, there was a Facebook event for participating in the protest.

I think it was the only negative eWOM I saw so far.

What about messages not directly related to the university but related to topics that influence your experience here as a student?

I've seen assault reports, rape and stuff like that. Also on social networks and shared by friends.

How do these messages influence your thoughts and feelings in relation to the institution?

I think this influences a lot in my opinion, because the institution is very distant from the student, so if we see a group of students who have an idea about it and have arguments, we end up believing more in the students who are closer, even more those who have been in the institution for longer. What teachers speak also matter very much, how they position themselves, also the way they behave... if they do not treat you well, it also impacts the way we feel towards the institution.

Have you ever seen a message about teachers who don't treat students well?

I don't remember a specific message about it, but there are parallel Facebook groups talking about teachers, like rumors. There was a specific one I remember it changed the way I saw that teacher. Sometimes the teacher I thought was super professional because of that one comment that I don't even know if it's true, I no longer see him the same way.

What was the most impactful message that you have ever seen, electronically, about FLUP/U.Porto? It can be positive or negative.

I don't know if it was a specific message, but what really impacts me on the Faculty of Arts is the student activism there. There are many strikes, many protests, mainly in relation to tuition fees, women, so this is something that impacts me a lot, because I see how strong this is, how the students mobilize themselves in online and offline contexts to be able to influence other students.

And you see that as positive or negative?

I think it's interesting how students talk, how they position themselves, but I also don't believe in a dictatorship of opinion, so I think everyone has to be free to stand up and position himself.

Have you ever shared a message about FLUP/U.Porto?

Whenever something pops up that I'm proud of, I like to share; also events that I find interesting I invite all my friends. I like to spread the information I receive.

Do you remember anything specific that you shared?

Yes, the rankings. I also shared the Congress of Journalism and information about a job fair at FEP.

Were you the author of these messages or did you repost?

They were reposts.

What about something negative?

I do not like it, the negative will always have a positive side, it depends on how you look at it.

How do you describe FLUP/U.Porto to someone who has never heard of it?

Look, I describe it as a world of opportunities, here you really have a privileged position in relation to any university. It is really a place that, if you want and you are willing to, you can do many things, here the institution gives you the basis for it.

What are your general feelings?

I feel really grateful, very much. Specially in relation to U.Porto, because many of the things I do are not only in FLUP. I participate in associations in FEP and FEUP, so I think it is a general result of U.Porto this interaction, multidisciplinary, I think it delivers a lot to me as a student, so that's really it, I'm grateful to be an U.Porto student.

If FLUP/U.Porto were a person, what personality would this person have?

I think FLUP has a very different personality from U.Porto. U.Porto has an institutional personality, conservative, firm, but at the same time kind, not strict to the point of being distant or arrogant, it is rather a formal person, accessible though.

FLUP is more of an authoritative person, I imagine a professor of history, of white hair, quite studious, who does many researches and who is also open to movements and creativity.

If you think about the physical elements of the faculty, what comes to mind?

Of FLUP, the first thing that comes to mind is the building, I don't know if because of the publications and social media, that orange brick house, it comes to mind.

Regarding U.Porto, it comes to my mind the rectory, those most historical buildings and, the colours, the university flags.

And the logos, do you know them?

I know. FLUP's is blue and U.Porto is black.

Could you recognize it among other logos?

Yes, yes!

How do you see FLUP/U.Porto quality comparing to other institutions?

At the study level, I think U.Porto is above average, comparing to institutions nearby, like ISCAP, but also at a national level; comparing to Lisbon, for example, I think here is better because it is more practical and prepares you better for the job market. In Lisbon or even Coimbra it is a very theoretical course you come out knowing articles but you are not prepared for the job market. In Coimbra you do not have a professional direction, you have the freedom to choose your courses, which means that I could today be doing psychology, management, or anything else that is not related to communication sciences and finish my degree without all necessary knowledge. And here at U.Porto they have a very accurate program in that regard.

How do you define the quality price relationship?

Here is much cheaper than Coimbra, for example. Comparing to Lisbon I am not sure, but also think it is more expensive, because of the international student statute and this discount of 50% for Brazilian students at U.Porto, here is much better.

So how do you rate the price you pay?

Accessible.

Thinking about the quality that is offered, to what extent could U.Porto increase the price?

I think that in FLUP looking at the level of the infrastructures, there are some things that can be improved, for example, the library is cold, the bathrooms are sprayed, there is no right floor, some tiles are even missing. At FLUP there are a few things missing, some investments, and I don't know if I'd be willing to pay more for it. In the library I can request imacs, which I find incredible, but there are just a few and they end quickly, so there are some services but they are very limited.

At FEUP I see that there is a greater investment on students and on what they can do; for example the faculty is open 24 hours, whereas FLUP closes at 10pm or 11pm, and sometimes I need to do work and I do not have that possibility.

So I don't know if I'd be so willing to pay more.

If you finished your studies now, what is the possibility of continuing your education here?

I think about doing a master in FEP, I wish to continue, I still have doubts if I go to the job market, to feel about what I want professionally, and then do the Master. But sooner or later I definitely want to pursue a master programme at FEP.

Would you recommend FLUP/U.Porto to a friend or to a family member?

Of course, I've done it already! I influence my friends to come to U.Porto, I very often advise people to come to here because I think it was the best choice I've made.

If you finished your studies now, how likely is that you want to keep connected to U.Porto?

I think I would like to keep the connection with some teachers. I do not know at the institution's level because my contact is not so close, so I do not create a very close connection. I believe it is rather the contact with people, and for sure I'd like to keep it.

Would you see yourself in the role of Alumni Ambassador?

Sure! It is something I believe in, something that I experience, so I wouldn't have any problem with that. Actually, I would be very happy to be able to inspire and direct other people to a path that makes me happy, that I like and recommend.

Interview I12

How is it to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

When I got here, I had a big impact. Just entering the academic world is already a difference, but entering another country is even more impactful. I really like my study programme, each year I enjoy it more because I have been finding myself professionally. I have very good teachers who are persons of excellence and support me, help me and advise me professionally and academically, so I think that the faculty itself provides you with extra curricular activities that also help you achieve this professionalism and I'm enjoying it very much. I am a person who likes to learn, to ask everything, and the Faculty of Arts, at least in my study programme, offers me a lot of it. I have there three professional branches that are: Journalism, Public Relations and Multimedia, and although normally students separate a lot: "Ah, I like journalism and I will not make the multimedia course", I see how they all complement each other, as Communication Professional. So, it's an experience where the University of Porto has been really amazing.

Have you ever heard of the University of Porto, FLUP, on the Internet, before deciding to come here?

No, I hadn't heard about it in the Internet. I started seeing more things after I started researching. And then I found on Youtube people who had University of Porto as a reference, even if they were not studying here but they were in the Northern region of Portugal. I also found Brazilians who did blogging and stuff.

So you found it, and what do you remember seeing exactly?

Before deciding that I would come to Portugal, a friend of mine came to Lisbon, so my idea was to come to Lisbon or Coimbra, which are the most famous study destinations in Brazil. In the end, my family decided to come with me, so we had to combine, not just college, but also the best place for the whole family. Porto seemed like a place with lower living costs, with good quality of life, quoted at the time as one of the safest cities, the best tourist place in the world, so these things drew a lot of attention. We saw that things were easier, we found a

residence, and then the Faculty is ok, we received more information, when I started sending emails I had a quicker response from U.Porto as well, that's why I decided for U.Porto.

When you were searching, did you seek other people's opinions, did you try to see other people in this situation?

Yes, I came to ask this friend of mine who lives in Lisbon, and she said that the U.Porto is very good, that it is recognized nationally and internationally. Also those blogs I mentioned ended up helping me more in a general way: how is it like to live in Portugal, living costs, documentation. The details about the faculty I discovered here.

With that friend, how did you communicate?

It was through WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

Which electronic information/message was more important for the decision of coming here?

It was the opinion of my friend, for sure, because the people who are here in the country are kind of the eyes of us. Although we have access to blogs, to written texts, it is different than really watching a video on Youtube, having a testimonial, watching someone live saying something, it's feels like you're talking to her. So, I can say that my friend's experience and the Youtubers had quite a big impact on my decision.

Was YouTube the main network?

Facebook was also very important because of the groups; here I had the opportunity to meet people and express my doubts.

What kind of groups were they?

Mainly groups of Brazilians, like Brasup. Groups that help you get in touch with available accommodation and things like that.

At the time you were considering Lisbon, but then the family decided to join you; did you still consider other institutions?

In fact, even though Porto combines all the conditions for the family to be here, the priority is the university, so we first chose the university and family just had to go wherever studies are good. My choice for Porto had to do with having had access to more information, on the internet and on the social networks of the University. This highly contributed for my choice, rather than going to a place where people do not talk much and not give much information.

Did your friend also recommend Porto?

Yes, she spoke very well of Lisbon but spoke very well of the U.Porto, which in the end highlighted the information we had received, the information we had researched before.

After being here, do you remember seeing information on the internet about FLUP/U.Porto?

After I got here, I started using the email more often, and this opened up a world of possibilities, of courses and workshops, and since I'm signing up for a lot of activities I think the social networks algorithms bring to me more and more of these events.

When looking for information on the Internet, about FLUP/U.Porto, what seemed a credible source of information?

The University of Porto newspaper, the online magazine, these seems to me to be quite credible. I particularly don't take as official sources the blogs and what people talk about, it's just good for an opinion but when I want something official, something that is important and that I cannot take risks, then I either send an e-mail to the institution or I go to the website, in Sigarra.

What about when you had to choose the university...

I got in touch, besides the friend's opinion. And they (the university services) were fast.

How often do you connect to other people on the internet?

Daily, I've been working a lot with social networks, so I'm practically all hours of my day on social networks and connecting with people. But when it's not about work, I can say that, about 5 or 6 hours for leisure. It's quite a lot of time. Actually, it's leisure and information

search simultaneously, because we end up updating ourselves and having access to news, to information.

Have you ever connected with someone, through the Internet, for more information about FLUP/U.Porto?

Yes, besides contacting the institutions, FLUP/U.Porto, I have already connected to students for knowing they are here and sent messages to ask for their opinions, ask how it is like to study.

This before you arrived?

No, here. To make friendships, sometimes ask for an opinion.

What means do you use?

I think that for this purpose Facebook is better because there you have a description of the person, where he/she studies, the study programme. So it's easier, sometimes the person confirms attendance to the same event as you, then you check out the profile, see what he/she is studying and you send out a message, and that's how the networking happens.

Still in relation to the question of credibility, if you have to point out what gives you more credibility: an institutional body or, for example, a friend's opinion?

When there are many people saying the same thing, I have a tendency to believe, but I think it does not surpass the institution, the final word comes from the institution.

Have you ever sought information about FLUP/U.Porto, to make a decision?

Normally, if I have to make a decision, for example: In the last semester, I had to make some optional courses, and I did not contact the institution to get an opinion on these courses, I contacted friends, colleagues from the following years to collect their opinions, then I talked to colleagues from my year of study to know what their perceptions were, and people who have the same professional vision as mine, to see what they recommended.

How was that connection established?

With some people it was in person, with others I'm not so close to it was easier to speak by message. Specially by messenger.

Messages for private people, or closed groups?

I did not get to participate in any group, but in my faculty there's the group of the study programme, which works like a forum, people often ask a lot of questions there, ask for opinion. Recently there was a poll to know how many people go to the Public Relations, how many go to Journalism and to Multimedia, and they give opinion, "Ah, the labor market is good for this area, for younger students".

How important is this information coming from other students?

It is very important because it is an experience, it is a real information, it is not an institutional, superficial information. It is information from someone who lived it and will not pass me only the bureaucratic issues, the programme plan, the programme objectives, but will pass me the feelings, the work, the additional value, how was the relationship with the teacher, which are aspects that matter because when we talk about dealing with people, there are not only hard skills there, but also the softs skills matter very much, and we usually don't know about that through the traditional and official means, it has to come from a colleague.

Do you consider credible what the colleagues tell you?

Of course, when it comes to an opinion, we are part of the assumption that is much of the personal vision of each one, and it does not have to be a hundred percent truth, but it is a perspective that we consider. And joining with other experiences, we can take a conclusion from there.

These are always people you know?

Yes, mainly friends. Also friends of friends.

Regarding products and services, do you see reviews before buying?

Look, I'm a little more careless at this. I know it's not a very good habit, but when I want something very much I only do some price research; only when it's something online that I I

don't know the site, then I try to check a bit if it's a credible place to buy. When it's a general known site, where people buy a lot, I don't care so much anymore.

When you are looking for information about FLUP/U.Porto, in these blogs that you saw, what is a good quality review for you.

A good quality review is a sincere review, in which the person really does not try to sell something and also does not try to discredit something, but simply speaks what it is, speaks about his/her experience. Sincerely and transparently.

Is it something more factual or emotional, what do you think is most important?

I think the approach can be both factual and emotional, I just think it depends on the communication goal. If the person says he/she loved it, he/she found it incredible and that was very good, regardless of the intensity of the message, I think if the goal is to inform about something, it is valid.

Do you remember any positive eWOM about FLUP/U.Porto?

One thing that impacted me a lot last year and made me very proud, was that report about U.Porto being among the 100 or 50 best in Europe in the world. I was very happy.

Where did you see it?

I saw it on the Facebook of a friend who shared it.

And then you considered this information credible?

Yes, and it was a friend who shared the university's own post.

How does this positive eWOM influence your thoughts and feelings toward the institution?

It does influence! Because we in Brazil have the tendency to think "I'm going to study in Portugal, I do my Master elsewhere" because it's like a door to Europe here. But since I see the institution is well renowned and has an excellent quality of teaching and I am already adapting here, I feel like staying here. As I see this positive news, I ask myself about the sense of going

somewhere else, so it impacts me mainly on this aspect. I have the opportunity to have access to such good quality here, equivalent to the best in Europe, and I'm already adapted here, so why should I go to another country?

Do you remember any negative eWOM?

There was a time when I signed up for a course and I shared it in the Facebook group. People were saying "Oh, poor girl, I can't believe you picked that course!". This made me upset. The reaction was because the course gave a lot of work, but in the end I managed to do well.

In relation to the institution, I think there are many jokes between faculties.

Any complaints, anyone unhappy with anything, or any less positive news?

I also remember the complaints about the new coffee machines at FEUP, all other faculties heard about it. I saw there was going to be a protest here and that everyone was indignant. I saw it on Facebook, there was a Facebook event for participating in the protest.

I think it was the only negative eWOM I saw so far.

What about messages not directly related to the university but related to topics that influence your experience here as a student?

I've seen assault reports, rape and stuff like that. Also on social networks and shared by friends.

How do these messages influence your thoughts and feelings in relation to the institution?

I think this influences a lot in my opinion, because the institution is very distant from the student, so if we see a group of students who have an idea about it and have arguments, we end up believing more in the students who are closer, even more those who have been in the institution for longer. What teachers speak also matter very much, how they position themselves, also the way they behave... if they do not treat you well, it also impacts the way we feel towards the institution.

Have you ever seen a message about teachers who don't treat students well?

I don't remember a specific message about it, but there are parallel Facebook groups talking about teachers, like rumors. There was a specific one I remember it changed the way I saw that teacher. Sometimes the teacher I thought was super professional because of that one comment that I don't even know if it's true, I no longer see him the same way.

What was the most impactful message that you have ever seen, electronically, about FLUP/U.Porto? It can be positive or negative.

I don't know if it was a specific message, but what really impacts me on the Faculty of Arts is the student activism there. There are many strikes, many protests, mainly in relation to tuition fees, women, so this is something that impacts me a lot, because I see how strong this is, how the students mobilize themselves in online and offline contexts to be able to influence other students.

And you see that as positive or negative?

I think it's interesting how students talk, how they position themselves, but I also don't believe in a dictatorship of opinion, so I think everyone has to be free to stand up and position himself.

Have you ever shared a message about FLUP/U.Porto?

Whenever something pops up that I'm proud of, I like to share; also events that I find interesting I invite all my friends. I like to spread the information I receive.

Do you remember anything specific that you shared?

Yes, the rankings. I also shared the Congress of Journalism and information about a job fair at FEP.

Were you the author of these messages or did you repost?

They were reposts.

What about something negative?

I do not like it, the negative will always have a positive side, it depends on how you look at it.

How do you describe FLUP/U.Porto to someone who has never heard of it?

Look, I describe it as a world of opportunities, here you really have a privileged position in relation to any university. It is really a place that, if you want and you are willing to, you can do many things, here the institution gives you the basis for it.

What are your general feelings?

I feel really grateful, very much. Specially in relation to U.Porto, because many of the things I do are not only in FLUP. I participate in associations in FEP and FEUP, so I think it is a general result of U.Porto this interaction, multidisciplinary, I think it delivers a lot to me as a student, so that's really it, I'm grateful to be an U.Porto student.

If FLUP/U.Porto were a person, what personality would this person have?

I think FLUP has a very different personality from U.Porto. U.Porto has an institutional personality, conservative, firm, but at the same time kind, not strict to the point of being distant or arrogant, it is rather a formal person, accessible though.

FLUP is more of an authoritative person, I imagine a professor of history, of white hair, quite studious, who does many researches and who is also open to movements and creativity.

If you think about the physical elements of the faculty, what comes to mind?

Of FLUP, the first thing that comes to mind is the building, I don't know if because of the publications and social media, that orange brick house, it comes to mind.

Regarding U.Porto, it comes to my mind the rectory, those most historical buildings and, the colours, the university flags.

And the logos, do you know them?

I know. FLUP's is blue and U.Porto is black.

Could you recognize it among other logos?

Yes, yes!

How do you see FLUP/U.Porto quality comparing to other institutions?

At the study level, I think U.Porto is above average, comparing to institutions nearby, like ISCAP, but also at a national level; comparing to Lisbon, for example, I think here is better because it is more practical and prepares you better for the job market. In Lisbon or even Coimbra it is a very theoretical course you come out knowing articles but you are not prepared for the job market. In Coimbra you do not have a professional direction, you have the freedom to choose your courses, which means that I could today be doing psychology, management, or anything else that is not related to communication sciences and finish my degree without all necessary knowledge. And here at U.Porto they have a very accurate program in that regard.

How do you define the quality price relationship?

Here is much cheaper than Coimbra, for example. Comparing to Lisbon I am not sure, but also think it is more expensive, because of the international student statute and this discount of 50% for Brazilian students at U.Porto, here is much better.

So how do you rate the price you pay?

Accessible.

Thinking about the quality that is offered, to what extent could U.Porto increase the price?

I think that in FLUP looking at the level of the infrastructures, there are some things that can be improved, for example, the library is cold, the bathrooms are sprayed, there is no right floor, some tiles are even missing. At FEUP there are a few things missing, some investments, and I don't know if I'd be willing to pay more for it. In the library I can request imacs, which I find incredible, but there are just a few and they end quickly, so there are some services but they are very limited.

At FEUP I see that there is a greater investment on students and on what they can do; for example the faculty is open 24 hours, whereas FLUP closes at 10pm or 11pm, and sometimes I need to do work and I do not have that possibility.

So I don't know if I'd be so willing to pay more.

If you finished your studies now, what is the possibility of continuing your education here?

I think about doing a master in FEP, I wish to continue, I still have doubts if I go to the job market, to feel about what I want professionally, and then do the Master. But sooner or later I definitely want to pursue a master programme at FEP.

Would you recommend FLUP/U.Porto to a friend or to a family member?

Of course, I've done it already! I influence my friends to come to U.Porto, I very often advise people to come to here because I think it was the best choice I've made.

If you finished your studies now, how likely is that you want to keep connected to U.Porto?

I think I would like to keep the connection with some teachers. I do not know at the institution's level because my contact is not so close, so I do not create a very close connection. I believe it is rather the contact with people, and for sure I'd like to keep it.

Would you see yourself in the role of Alumni Ambassador?

Sure! It is something I believe in, something that I experience, so I wouldn't have any problem with that. Actually, I would be very happy to be able to inspire and direct other people to a path that makes me happy, that I like and recommend.

Interview I13

How is it like to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

For me, FLUP is among the faculties with less investment in U.Porto. I don't know the reality of FBAUP, but I feel there's a big difference in terms of the opportunities offered, being conferences or workshops. It also doesn't have many youth associations, like the BEST at FEUP.

Regarding infrastructures it's not that bad. I lived at the residence inside the Faculty of Arts and the rooms were ok, but there was something ridiculous: it didn't have a kitchen, only a microwaves. So how are people supposed to live with only a microwave? They would justify it with the university canteen next door, but it is obviously much more expensive to eat at the canteen than cooking. There's also the question of number of places available, it is important to have more places. In my first year I had to travel everyday between Guimarães and Porto. 1h20 to go and 1h20 to return. If I had classes at 9h I'd have to wake up at 5 am or 6 am to be able to arrive on time. Since I didn't have a computer at the time, sometimes I had to return home very late, sometimes in the train of 11pm to wake up again very early in the day after. In the enf of the first semester I was completely fed up with this routine.

So you had to travel this early every day?

Yes, although not every day it was this early. I can't remember if by that time I had any day free of classes, but generally every day, that is true.

So tell me, in short, how is it like to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

I'm in the case that Communication Sciences wasn't my first choice, so this of course affects everything.

But are you happy with the study programme?

Yes and no, I applied to international relations at the time, but I wasn't selected. Still, I realize that this programme gives me useful competences for what I want to do later. However, although it is a programme with 3 different ramifications - communication sciences, journalism

and multimedia - in practice everything is very focused on journalism, so those who are more interested in multimedia should probably have followed a specific audiovisual programme.

Anyway, there are never really bad things, you always get positive things. Journalism disciplines for me are a waste of time. It's not something that motivates me.

For me, the university was more of a passport to leave home. I wanted to leave home and the university allowed it, and I knew that after university I would be able to continue my life. The way the university is, the whole system... I was waiting for a different thing, in the beginning I was isolated. And during the first year, which marked me the most, what made me not to give up were the people I met at the faculty. I had teachers who clearly did not want to be there, I do not know if they are because they have to, they are obliged to, it's a job, but I think that it should not be like that; if the person is a teacher, he should like what he does because he really influences the work, the dynamics, the motivation of the students. Demotivated students can also demotivate teachers, so it is a cycle process.

How is it like to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

I consider that it gives opportunities, but not studying itself. I feel I learn more outside the university than in the university, but that has to do with my way of learning. I like to learn with people, with experiences, with life. Even the theoretical part I like it to be more from person to person than it being like a box just releasing information.

Have you ever heard about FLUP/U.Porto on the internet before being a student?

No, I don't think so.

Did you consider any institution besides U.Porto?

Yes, University of Minho, in Braga.

Were you between these two?

Yes. Actually, my choices were as follow: International Relations in Porto, International Relations in Braga, Communication Sciences in Porto and Communication Sciences in Braga. After I submitted my application I talked to some people and I was actually wishing to get in

International Relations in Braga, which didn't happen, so I ended up on Communication Sciences in Porto.

When you were making these choices how did you know that these were the institutions you wanted to go to? Have you contacted anyone?

I talked to some people, but that was after I made the choice.

And how did you talk to these people? In person or electronically?

In person.

After coming here, do you remember seeing messages/information about FLUP/U.Porto on the internet?

Yes, specially in Sigarra because we have to access it to go to Moodle, Webmail... Since we belong to 4 different faculties, we receive a lot of spam and useful messages as well, so we have to go there quite often. And I know that U.Porto has an Instagram profile which I don't follow.

Why don't you follow?

Right now I'm following for a current discipline. So I follow because it is something related to the university. In my personal account I don't follow and I'm not those kind of people who write: I study Communication Sciences, I study at U.Porto. I consider that this has to do with how much I want to expose from my own life. This has to do with how much I want to expose from my own life.

So you don't follow anything related to the Faculty, like Instagram or Facebook?

I think I don't even follow Facebook.

What is for you a credible source of information on the internet when want to know more about FLUP/U.Porto?

People who work and study there, because obviously if I go to the institution's website they will only say good things about themselves. And the media are also influenced.

So you don't find the media credible?

Although I study communication Apesar de eu ser de comunicação...

So in terms of credibility you believe more in people you know?

Yes, people who have had an experience. And of course one person is not enough.

How often do you use the internet to connect to other people?

Always. I mean, I'm always in touch with people.

Have you ever connected to other people on the internet in order to obtain more information about U.Porto?

No, but actually yesterday I received a message from a girl who wants to know more about my study programme. I know her but we are not close at all. She is like friend of a friend.

When I did Erasmus, I communicated more with the International Relations Office, by email and phone.

And in terms of credibility...?

By the time I asked a girl how she did it. I contacted her by message because of the study plan.

Do you remember what platform you used?

It was through Facebook Messenger. I also have to mention that before the faculty my Facebook was dead. After I entered faculty he came to live again because there were several groups and chats. Indeed maybe it's not the best in terms of organization, but it is the most widely used.

There was the group of Communication Sciences for each study year, where people share the drive with the notes and assignments from the year before; there are also event announcements and people help each other. There was also a chat with all first year students, which wasn't practical at all because we were 80 people. Can you imagine 80 people sending out messages? In the end no one uses it anymore, it's not duable, this happens with any chat.

There are other platforms besides Facebook?

Not of my study programme. It was mainly Facebook and Facebook messenger. In the associations I take part there are other platforms, mainly whatsapp and slack. We also use trello for task management.

Are you a member of student associations?

Yes, I am a member of BEST and InterUp.

Besides that question about Erasmus, do you remember any other situation of contacting someone through electronic means?

Not really. Well, there was a situation I just remember. I want to do an internship next year and I was searching for someone I could talk to. I talked to several teachers to see if I could find someone who can give me some extra information, but I haven't received a reply yet.

Did you contact them electronically?

No, in person. Well, I contacted two of them by email but haven't received an answer yet.

Have you ever contacted anyone electronically in order to make a decision about FLUP/U.Porto?

No, no! For financial issues, I had only two options before coming to the university: Porto or Minho. Lisbon was out of the equation. Braga was too close from home and I wanted to be as far as possible from home. So Porto was my first choice.

In relation to other topics, after you entered the university?

Not that I remember of.

Regarding products and services, do you usually search for reviews before buying?

Yes, yes, yes. Before buying something I have to be sure that I really want that so I search a lot and more than that I'm always looking for opportunities, from workshops and courses to opportunities to travel, events, organizations.

But when deciding for the university of Porto you didn't search that much.

No, because for the university I wanted it to be as far away as possible. In Braga they could not consider it far away enough to provide me with the accommodation.

When searching information about FLUP/U.Porto what is for you a good quality review?

I would suspect from reviews in the university website, so to be good quality reviews they should be in external sites, in fora... Reviews containing people's experiences would be of good quality.

Do you remember seeing in the internet any positive eWOM?

No, I've never searched for that.

What about these groups you take part in?

Interup says that there are many international students coming here, which I think it is positive. When I went on Erasmus I also heard there are many people going abroad which is also positive. And for me this was quite an easy process, whereas some people told me by that time that it was a complicated process because it was quite competitive. For me this was something positive that I saw online.

In which platform have you seen that?

Facebook, but I think it was also shared on Instagram.

How does this positive information influence your thoughts and feelings towards the university?

It doesn't change a lot my image of the university. Indeed, this is positive, but I consider this what it is supposed to be like. I mean, I think if things are going well, then we have to try to do even better. When it is not going well, we have to see what is wrong and try to improve.

Was this information credible?

This should be based on statistics, but I don't know if it is exactly like that.

Who was the sender of this information?

Interup. I believe they wouldn't publish something if it wasn't true or if it wasn't validated by the university, and the university is not supposed to lie about its data, that would be really bad.

So for you it was credible?

Yes, let's say it was.

Do you remember any negative eWOM?

Just by chance, last week we saw the blog of a student. I think that she left the faculty years ago and she created a character, a blog, and in that blog she talked about a specific teacher. She ironically talks about the pleasure of having classes with this teacher, how fantastic it is to have this teacher.

Which nationality is she?

Portuguese.

It's a written blog or is it on youtube?

It's written. I think it doesn't have many followers.

This information shared by her, is it credible for you?

Yes, it is because he's my teacher. Those who don't know him may not believe, maybe do not understand the irony behind it. But all those who have lessons with this teacher know what she's talking about.

Do you remember any other negative eWOM?

No, I'm not searching stuff about the university.

If we talk about the residence, which is not directly the university, there's also a group with the people of the residence and obviously people complaint when there are problems. I wasn't there yet when I heard that there were windows flying out, which is a bit concerning.

How does this negative eWOM influence your thoughts and feelings towards the university?

They don't bring anything new because this is my reality. So I don't reply "Really? I didn't know!", because I go through all this.

When we start talking about the rotten stuff about the university, the teachers, there is something like a general acceptance.

What was for you the most impactful eWOM you've seen? It can be something positive or negative.

I think I only saw what I already mentioned and it did not impact that much.

Really nothing? Please make an effort to remember.

Maybe I would see something if I followed the University Facebook page.

Regarding the examples of eWOM you talked about, positive and negative, what's for you the most impactful one?

The teaching aspect, no doubts. I think teachers are the face of the university.

But for instance, from the international relations office, Raquel is her name, well, they are amazing, they help a lot.

When I talk to colleagues about my vision of the university I'm a bit alone on this vision, let's say a more negative vision.

How would you describe FLUP/U.Porto to someone who doesn't know it?

I think I cannot describe it very well because I feel that my perspective is very much influenced by my personal experience. Anyway if I am going to talk to someone about it I won't simply say "university is bullshit". I should give the two sides: "if you really want journalism communication sciences is the right programme". However, I think the programme is not so well prepared; although people say that University of Porto has a very good reputation in certain areas, in this one it is maybe very good for Portuguese standards, but I was in Madrid, had lessons there, and both in terms of what you teach and how you teach it is not even comparable. Teachers there do their job quite well, they aren't there to make our lives more difficult.

What are your general feelings about FLUP/U.Porto?

I hope I finish next year and I won't come back soon. Anyway, I think there are good opportunities, like Erasmus, which are very much enriching. I don't plan to do a master or a doctorate programme, not here at least.

If FLUP/U.Porto was a person, how would you describe this person in terms of personality?

For me, U.Porto is one person different from FLUP. There's even a different person for each faculty involving our study programme.

FLUP is an old man, very much tired, not credible anymore, embittered, who is just there in a passive way, just existing.

U.Porto I see as an older man, not as old as FLUP, who thinks more about business, thinking more on strategy than on people, just like a business man.

FEUP and FEP... I don't know so much about FEP but FEUP I imagine like a business man a bit more modern and more aware of people and not only numbers.

FBAUP I see as an older woman, a bit frustrated and let apart, sloppy, but with a lot of potential.

FAUP I imagine as a sophisticated woman but very strict, very much by the book, that is she does what she is supposed to do and that's it, she does not allow to go further. I say this because of the people I know there, even internationals. They want to do something different and the teachers say "that is very good but we aren't focusing on that".

When talking about physical elements, logos, do you know the one of FLUP/U.Porto?

Yes, an U and a dot. Blue.

Would you be able to recognize among the logos of other institutions?

I think so, because you see it in tshirts and so on.

In terms of quality, how do you compare to other institutions?

I don't know, I honestly don't know. I don't know if it is better or worse, I think it depends on the programme, so I think I don't have enough information.

And the relation price/quality?

I'm lucky I don't have to pay for it because if I had to pay by this time I wouldn't be here anymore. I honestly think I wouldn't be here. Because I feel that what I learn here I could learn at home on my own in front of a computer. Maybe I'd learn even more.

To what extent could U.Porto charge a higher price considering the quality delivered?

If quality was higher it could; considering the current quality, it can't do it.

If you finished your study programme now, how would you see the possibility of continuing your education at U.Porto?

It is completely out of the equation. I have a big interest in other areas but I don't want to learn at the university because this system is not suitable for me – neither the teachers nor the classes. I think I prefer much more to follow short courses and create my own set of knowledge.

Would you recommend FLUP/U.Porto to a family member or a friend?

It depends on the person, on the person's profile. If it is someone like me I wouldn't recommend. If it is someone who likes this type of education, then it is possible that I recommend. For instance, if I had to advise my 6 year-old sister I would probably recommend her to go abroad. In Portugal she won't find anything different.

Interview I14

How is it like to study at FADEUP/U.Porto?

It's really amazing, I can't really describe it. I can't believe I applied, I waited for 6 months for the visa and I came. I still can't believe I'm studying here in this university that I admire so much. Colleagues, students, everything is great here. When I wake up I love to come to the Faculty, really, which is a good sign.

Have you ever heard about FLUP/U.Porto on the Internet? Before you arrived here.

I didn't hear on the internet. I heard some news about rankings but not much. My cousin came here for a workshop and after that he came to Lebanon and he told me (we saw it before from the rankings) "oh it's really good!". He checked out the professors, he talked to them and saw that in the area of football, which is what I wanted, professors are really good level.

So how did you talk to your cousin?

When he came back we talked face to face, we live close to each other. But when he was still in Porto he already gave me his feedback by message, mainly whatsapp.

And did he send you any extra information about FADEUP or University of Porto, for instance groups that you could join, testimonials from other students...?

He did send me this but when he came to Lebanon he opened the laptop and we started checking together.

Were you considering other institutions?

I looked for others as well. As you know, Porto is cheap comparing to other countries. I also searched Hungary and Lithuania.

Did you look for other people's opinions on the internet?

Mmmm... I didn't go too much into reviews but I did go to rankings. And I saw the employment demand, which was really good for the university of Porto. This was what made me choose University of Porto.

And after being here, did you hear about FADEUP or U.Porto on the Internet?

Mmmm... Most of these things happen on Facebook and I'm not so active on Facebook so I didn't hear too many things about it. In the beginning I didn't have friends so I didn't hear many things. Later on, when I knew more people here they start talking about this and that so you can hear more about FADEUP and you can see more like events going on. For example, many lectures were going on outside the study part, the technical part, so this formula kind of attracts people.

And where do you see that, since you don't use Facebook?

You can see them like on Billboards or posters, including posters on the street or next to the Faculty.

What is for you credible source of information for you when looking for information about FADEUP or U.Porto?

I use mainly Instagram. Nowadays I'm using Facebook more often because everyone hear uses Facebook so I started using Facebook as well, I'm obligated to use it. Most of the time I go to Facebook to check some stuff.

Do you follow the university official page?

Yeah, yeah!

Do you find it credible? Or do you look for other people's information and opinions, for instance your colleagues?

Yes, it's credible! For example, if an event is happening also they hang posters on the corridor. Plus you go to the official page of FADUP on Facebook and Instagram and they also give the information there. You can find it everywhere, it's pretty easy to get information about anything.

You also mentioned the rankings. That is another institution talking about the university. What's for you more credible? The university talking about itself or someone else giving information about the university?

Actually it can be from both sides. I can take something from one side and something from the other side and try to mix things and see how they make sense.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Nowadays mostly everyday, every moment, because you need to check stuff.

Have you ever connected to other people on the internet in other to get more information or opinions about FADEUP / U.Porto?

Before I came here I did it with my cousin. But when I don't know something, how to manage something, I go to the services of FADEUP, they help me everytime.

What about in the internet? Have you ever connected to other people on the internet in other to try to know more about a certain topic?

For every class we have a group. If today a professor sends an email someone who receives the notification will inform the others. Because everyone is very active on the groups, but not everyone sees the email. Most of the time we use Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger to communicate or get to know more about the Faculty.

Have you ever searched for information or opinions on FADEUP/U.Porto on the internet in order to make a decision?

Of course you'll be talking to friends to see how they do things, to check for feedback, but as I said you have your own perspective. But I like to personally go to staff and ask "What do you think?".

Can you give an example?

For example, we had Mostra this weekeng. I wasn't sure if I should go or not, I was confused. My friend told me like "yes, it will be nice, we can go together", another friend said "no, I won't go" so we just spend time to check on things. Mostra for me was the first time. It was fun.

Did this conversation with your friends happen online?

No, face-to-face.

So do you have an example of electronic contact?

Another decision was about football clubs. I wanted to play football and was searching for a club. So I contacted colleagues to find out where I could search. They informed me about www.zerozero.pt, a website where you can find clubs.

How did you communicate?

By Whatsapp.

Regarding any products or services, are you a person who likes to see reviews before purchasing?

Yes, I do it. For instance, before buying my laptop I checked reviews and asked friends for help.

But you didn't do it for the university, to look for reviews.

University is different. You have this choice you need just to go. Because I didn't have another choice. I had Lebanon or here.

You have the entire world!

Not in the area of Sports. In Lebanon Sports is not that good. The study programme was a boost for me to come here. The University of Porto is really good in the rankings. Even if I saw a review saying like "don't go there" I would have come. If the rankings say it's the second in Europe, even if the review is not good... come on, it's second in Europe! Doesn't make sense to hear what people are talking when you see the rankings.

But if you were looking for a review about U.Porto, what would be a good quality review for you?

I guess the way the professors behave in class, the way they give content. For example, if the class is boring, or it makes you feel you can get the information from google instead of going to the class. So, the quality of professors and everyone participating gives value to a review.

So, the review should be about the professors and how they behave in class, about the content, of course you may also check about the price, if it's cheap or expensive. Mmmm... what more?

This opinion, should it be more factual or more emotional?

Of course it should be more emotional! If you want to feel how other people feel at the faculty.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FADEUP/U.Porto?

There was something shared about a volleyball game for people who can't walk. You can also play to see their difficulties, play with the same rules... This was a very nice initiative from FADEUP. The game was at FADEUP.

Who shared that?

My friends posted it as a story on Instagram. FADEUP also posted it.

How did this influence your thoughts and feelings towards FADEUP?

They don't just take care of the normal students, but they care about the entire population, about people with difficulties. So, this is a positive sign, like expanding the circle to everyone, not restricting it in sports. Sometimes these people are sedentary, they don't do much activity, and this is a way of doing some exercise. It is really good from the faculty, because the institution is helping them to overcome their difficulties. Sometimes these are people with a depression and this is also a way to make them overcome that.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FADEUP/U.Porto?

No...

Anyone complaining about something?

Everyone is really nice, I haven't heard anyone complaining. I really didn't hear about anything.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FADEUP / U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

The consistency and improvement of the University in the rankings comparing to the year before. This told me it was the right decision to come here.

Where did you see it?

FADEUP put it on Facebook and on Sigarra's main page.

Did you share this message on your own networks?

Yes, I did share.

Have you ever shared any other electronic message about FADEUP/U.Porto?

I shared an event where I got a prize for best students of the first year, from each faculty.

I shared the general news and I shared an interview which was done to me. I shared it on Facebook.

How would you describe FADEUP or University of Porto to someone who does not know it?

People are super nice at the Faculty. I don't know about other Faculties, but there professors and staff are really super nice. This gives positive vibes inside the Faculty, which is really good.

So what are your general feelings about FADEUP / UPorto?

Positive feelings, nothing negative. I have the feeling that I'm at the right place.

If FADEUP/U.Porto was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

I cannot talk about the University, but for FADEUP I can say careness, they take care a lot; not strict (in a good way, in the way you feel comfortable).

When talking about FADEUP / UPorto physical elements, what do you eat to your mind?

The logo is green, black and white. We have it in our gymnastics clothes.

Would you be able to recognize it among the logos of other institutions?

Yes, I think so!

How do you see FEUP / U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

Economically, FADEUP could be better. If you go to Medicin or Engineering you feel the difference.

What do you mean by “economically”?

You see the buildings, you feel a difference, it's modern. If you enter FADEUP it is ok, but if you enter FEUP you see it's better. So that could be improved. For example, we are a Sports Faculty but the gym there is old, and the machines are super old. There's a difference in money, I think.

How would you define the relation price/quality here?

I guess it is fair enough. In my case, since I'm not Erasmus and I'm not Portuguese I can't have a scholarship, so it is quite difficult. I have to pay 3000 EUR more than Portuguese. But in average is good having this quality of learning and experiences, because here you focus a lot in experience at work, doing internships and stuff like that so that is really good for the amount of money

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

It's moderate.

To what extent could actually FADEUP/U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

I don't think so. Price is ok in relation to quality.

If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

I have a plan, don't know if it's going to work. My plan is to do the Master after I finish the bachelor. As far as I heard, people who do a Master have more opportunities in terms of work, so as more as you can go with studying you can reach more.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

Yes, of course! No doubt!

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FEP/U.Porto after finishing your studies?

I don't know how I could keep this contact, but I would like to.

To what extent would you consider being an Alumni Ambassador?

Yes, no one would reject this offer! I want to go back to Lebanon, so maybe I can be an Ambassador in the future. People there should know about University of Porto. They would love it!

How is it like to study at FDUP/U.Porto?

I think it is of good quality. FDUP is a very young faculty, so it has got some problems. I lived in Lisbon for some years, I had contact with the Faculty of Law of University of Lisbon, which is completely different. Here because we are less we are closer to teachers; there are teachers with quite a good quality, other not really. But I think the atmosphere is good, people are close to each other, students are very active in the theatre group. The faculty is quite pleasant and we can get out with good basis. Students are good, the access grades say that and I think it is quite nice. Of course there is room for improvement, but it is like that in everything.

Have you ever heard of FDUP/U.Porto on the internet before entering university?

Yes, yes, generally FDUP and U.Porto are in the news. Before entering university I was searching and saw the news about FDUP and U.Porto.

What have you seen by that time? What comes to your mind?

Usually it is the average grades of students who enter university, this comes to the news every year; also entering the judicial career where FDUP is usually in the first place; in the area of criminology some studies have been published in magazines; and U.Porto itself, usually in terms of prizes and dynamism... always in a very positive way.

In which platforms do you remember seeing this type of news?

Usually when I open google some news come up. On information platforms, and also usually that is highlighted on the website of U.Porto. Many often even in the tv news.

Something in the social networks?

I don't have social networks, only LinkedIn, and I have very little time. Facebook and Instagram not at all. In LinkedIn some things come up, but before entering university I didn't have it so it doesn't matter in this case.

Before entering U.Porto were you considering other institutions?

It is like this: my academic path is not straight. I have a bachelor on Oriental Studies by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Lisbon, then since the Faculty of Law was just across the road I ended up having contact with some people, going to some classes, and finding out an interest I didn't have before, also because in my family there's no one in this area. And I

though “this is quite nice!”. I applied but there was quite a lot of people so I ended up coming to FDUP, to Criminology. I did a first year in Criminology and then I applied to switch to Law, I got many equivalences. So before studying Law I experienced other fields. But I have to say that in the beginning I was thinking about Lisbon because by that time I lived there, although I come from Porto.

By that time did you search for other people’s information?

No because the only people I knew were from the University of Lisbon. I didn’t even have friends in the field of Law. I checked on the Internet all public universities, because I wanted a public one, and I applied to all those which worked out for me in terms of location. But I didn’t have a feedback.

So you didn’t search for testimonials of people who studied here?

No, but I trusted considering the news about U.Porto. Actually, I trust them all: Coimbra, Lisbon... I think that in terms of public universities there’s an offer of quality in the area of Law. But in fact I did not collect any testimonials.

If you were searching for information, credible information regarding FDUP/U.Porto, what would you consider as a credible source of information?

The website of U.Porto and FDUP and some fora where students exchange opinions, especially when the applications to the higher education system are about to be published people talk a lot about it, when they are between one university and other.

I usually don’t listen too much because I think opinions must be filtered with care. My experience tells me that people have different opinions. I have colleagues who hate FDUP and don’t want to do any further studies there, others did the bachelor somewhere else and came now here for the master, but if they could they would choose another institution. So, it really changes from person to person. For me, and since I had quite many previous experiences, I am satisfied. Anyways, I always search for institutional sources.

How often do you use the internet to communicate with other people?

As I mentioned, I don’t have social networks. I only use LinkedIn and not much. When I was searching an internship I used it more often, now it works more as a platform for information.

What about whatsapp, for instance?

Yes, whatsapp I use quite often, as well as the email.

Every day?

Yes, everyday, many times in the day.

Have you ever connected to someone on the internet to get information, opinions, about something related to FDUP/U.Porto?

No, because when I entered university I didn't have LinkedIn or Whatsapp, so I got in and I was building up, seeing things by myself. I first was in Criminology, I had time to check it out, decide whether I wanted to stay there or not and by the time I thought this would be a good option.

And after you entered, after being here, did you search for information?

Yes, yes, I always exchanged information with colleagues, there are even whatsapp groups for the master so we exchange content, information...

Mainly by whatsapp, you said?

Yes, by whatsapp and also by email, but it's easier with whatsapp and it is also the most widely means of contact between us.

Have you ever contacted other people in order to make a decision regarding FDUP/U.Porto?

Not really. I make decisions really on my own, so usually I don't unless I have a specific doubt. In this case then I usually listen to 3, 4 people and if the answer is the same, I go ahead. Experiences are very different and usually we get confused if we listen to too many experiences.

Can you recall any example?

I'm doing that now regarding the exam of the Order of Attorneys. I admit I talked to some colleagues. I talked to them not really substantiate my opinion, but to check out how they are doing, their experiences, because in this context it counts a lot, it is something we live quite in an intensive manner. It is an interview, an examination, it is not just about studying. But with some people I had contact with they came to tell me "look, it is more in this direction". So the last time I've been investing more in this search near the colleagues of my study programme.

And which platform do you use most for this?

Again the Whatsapp. Sometimes we go out for a coffee, but for those we are doing internships further away or have a busier life it's more complicated.

And is it a whatsapp group or one to one interactions?

It's a group, yes, a group!

Concerning other products and services, are you a person who searches for reviews before buying something?

Yes, a lot! In terms of products I always search for opinions, reviews, blogs (there are many nowadays). So that's it, I always do a good search before buying, specially if it is a new product that I'm going to buy for the first time, and specially if it involves technology, but other products as well.

Why is it different when it comes to the University?

Because I think it is different, it is a position that the person herself has to experience first. I was in the area of Criminology and I did not feel the need to find extra sources of information regarding Law because I had courses in Law, I met teachers of Law and I saw how it works.

With products it is different, I cannot explain very well, because it is something that does not affect life so much I can trust that opinion, whereas when it comes to life decisions of course I like to listen to family and close friends, but really go look for opinions of other people who are already there I don't do it.

In this case there really was no reference?

No, not at all.

If you searched of a review about U.Porto, what would be for you a good quality review?

Sometimes there are interesting media reports with students. Maybe those who have social networks come quicker to this type of content and to the groups... Sometimes a question on Facebook leads to a response from someone who is doing the master there or who has finished the bachelor. This would be a good way of getting to a personal opinion.

And what adds credibility to it?

It gives extra credibility when people mention both the negative and positive aspects, because everything has negative and positive sides. Also including some constructive feedback towards the faculty. For instance saying "I didn't like this professor" needs extra information on why that is.

Do you remember any positive eWOM about FDUP/U.Porto?

Usually it's more on social communication platforms, where cases like those students with an average grade of 20 still choose for FDUP when they could go to any area of studies, right?

This gives quite a lot of credibility to FDUP because these aren't people without any other alternatives, on the contrary, they chose to come to FDUP when they could enter whatever study programme they wanted to. So I think this is quite a positive eWOM that influences students when it comes to make their own choices.

Also regarding the faculty members, although there are not very well-known people like in Coimbra, some professors stand out, like Professor André Lamas Leite, who goes to many tv programmes and has a strong civic attitude, which in the end guarantees some reliability. Students generally think about it when they choose the place to study, they want to know they will have certain renowned faculty as their professors. For me at least it is a reason to be proud of.

Have you ever received electronic messages about this?

Yes, yes! Specially when it comes to Professor André Lamas Leite, who is from the area I like, he's the supervisor of a friend of mine and she always sends me the links to his interviews, we generally exchange a lot this type of information.

How do you usually communicate?

Through Whatsapp and also by email. But mainly whatsapp.

Do you remember any other electronic message?

No, also because at the master level, which was when I started to use the networks more often, we were just a few, we were 8, and most people had a professional life and so in the end there isn't much contact, some even didn't come to classes, so we communicated a bit in the groups with those we had more contact and shared there all emails and things like that.

Do you remember any negative eWOM about FDUP/U.Porto?

That I remember, specially about FDUP's library. Urgent intervention is needed and now it is closed. Even the deadline for delivering the dissertations was delayed. In fact, it's quite a long time for a library to be closed, they make at disposal a bunch of mandatory bibliography but it's not the same. This is a very negative point about FDUP. For a Faculty of Law the library is the backbone, so it is non-sense. The infrastructure in general needs some construction, it's not FDUP's fault, this is the responsibility of the Rector, which has to manage. In the case of the library, yes, it should have been thought of in advance.

But was there any message about the library?

Yes, many! People sending to the groups: “I came here and it’s closed. Guys, get ready, it will only open in one year!”.

How are the messages sent? Is it in whatsapp?

Yes, yes, in whatsapp or by sms. People say “look, it’s closed.” or “if you need books come now because it is gonna close”. This is a reason to complaint because it is too bad for those who use it and like to study there as well. It really is a service that students miss a lot, also because the books of Law are very expensive.

Anything else?

Not that I remember of. But of course there are always a couple of teachers that people don’t like because of his or her personality or because of the way he or she deals with students, but this I don’t even consider a negative point, it’s just the way it is.

Do you remember any complaint about professors?

Yes! In exams periods there are complaints very often. People who are going to have a certain course send sms, whatsapp or email asking how the professor is; there are courses with two professors and some people even want to change class to avoid a certain professor. So there is always people searching for opinions.

And when there are these negative messages, to what extent does it influence your thoughts and feelings towards the institution?

The library situation really upsets me, it is becoming an abusive situation. This should have been planned in a different way in order to avoid the current situation, which is taking longer than it should. Unfortunately, it’s happening, so there is nothing we can do.

When it comes to teachers, of course that if I had the course I have my own opinion, if I didn’t have it yet, let’s see what comes up. It happened already that people paint a gloomy scenario and the professor being quite ok for me. But of course we get quite influenced, specially when the feedback is negative.

What was for you the most impactful eWOM about FDUP/U.Porto?

It is that message about the students with an average grade of 20 choosing FDUP. We get really proud of that. Also when it comes to news that FDUP is among the 150 best faculties in the world. It’s always impactful that FDUP, a quite recent faculty, achieves this position, even if it is a result of the merit of the student.

To what extent does this influence your thoughts and feelings towards the institution?

When I finished the bachelor, I could have chosen to go to another faculty for the master. I chose to stay here because of the faculty's reputation.

Besides all problems mentioned, I trust the work of the faculty. For sure if my perception was more negative than positive, I wouldn't stay here also because I had other options.

Have you yourself ever shared a message about FDUP/U.Porto?

Yes, usually when people ask me to I do share, even with people who are connected to other faculties and are now more linked to Law. Some people decided to join the Order of Attorneys first and only then the Master, they know I'm doing the Master and ask me questions, so I give my opinion.

And has your opinion been more positive or negative?

More positive.

Do you remember any specific topic that you shared by your own initiative, without anyone asking for it?

No, I've never had the need to share something.

How do you describe FDUP to someone who doesn't know it?

FDUP is an institution willing to have many partners, although it doesn't have many yet. But it finds a lot for it. There are many open lessons, an intensive exchange of students, specially Brazilian students, organization of symposia... I think there aren't more things happening because of a lack of means, but there's a great will to do things. Regarding my area, which is Criminal Law, it is really good here, there are professors of excellence, this was the reason for me to stay here, in a good atmosphere with colleagues. I think that because we aren't many students, we end up becoming closer to each other.

The faculty is growing, more space is needed, the library situation is a negative point, but then in terms of atmosphere and teaching quality it is really good. Coimbra for instance is very theoretical, those who need to understand if they like the judiciary career or the practice of law they won't be able to understand it, just like us. Some faculties promote that a bit more, this one is more conservative in this sense, just like Coimbra, but the atmosphere is good, the infrastructures are getting better so in this sense I think it is very much positive.

What are your general feelings towards FDUP/U.Porto?

Happiness. There were periods when I was very much apprehensive, specially when the library wasn't working, but in general it is happiness and pride for having studied here and because the institution I come from has quite an impact in the job interviews.

If FDUP was a person, what would be his/her personality?

I imagine an American self-made man, a person full of projects and dynamism, with some obstacles but who is going to get there. An entrepreneur. If it was a person, for sure an entrepreneur. I think it is an entrepreneur and it's admirable that besides all difficulties it ends up succeeding. To be mentioned the care when organizing colloquiums having different prices for students or alumni. This care shows respect, so I'd say an entrepreneurial person.

Regarding the image, do you know the logo?

Yes, I know the U.Porto logo, also because of the assignments.

Would you be able to recognize it among others?

Yes, yes, yes!

How do you see FDUP in terms of quality, comparing to others?

I can compare to the University of Lisbon. Although I wasn't a student there, I had contact with students, I attended some classes and conferences. Lisbon has a completely different approach, it is more of a practical approach. I can't help a colleague there because the approach is very practical, here we are very theoretical. FDUP has good quality, but indeed it could be more practical. Usually when people finish the university they want to apply the knowledge and they can encounter some difficulty. We follow the Coimbra style very much, and I think this should change a little so we are more prepared for the labour market.

What about the relation price/quality?

I think it is good. I know that some faculties don't charge taxes for late payments, like Minho, but I think it is acceptable.

So how do you evaluate the price you pay?

I think it is a fair price. It would be great to have it for free, but one can understand that it is a fair price, even in the master's level. You can compare with the private universities.

To what extent could FDUP charge a higher price?

The library should be open 24 hours. I wouldn't agree with a higher price. It would need a different offer in terms of optional courses (the University of Lisbon has many optional

courses per year!), space, infrastructures. For years that we haven't had even optional courses. A higher price only if quality was to be raised in terms of services and infrastructures.

If you finished your studies now, how likely is that you want to continue your education in FDUP?

Only if it is for a post-graduation or workshop. After finishing my master I hope I don't have to touch a book anymore, very honestly.

But in case you considered to study again?

Then maybe I wouldn't choose FDUP because there isn't an extended offer of post-graduation programmes. In terms of Masters it is good, but for post-graduations they have a very limited offer. Here Catholic University has more interesting options.

Anyway, after finishing this cycle I don't plan to study anymore.

Would you recommend FDUP to a family member or a friend?

I would recommend my master, the other ones I don't know, I've heard a lot of stuff. Bachelor I'd also recommend, but there are people who switched to other institutions for considering very theoretical.

It depends on the person, what he or she wants to do in the future. Here we focus a lot on abstract concepts, but if it is someone looking for a solid education FDUP is quite good.

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FDUP after you finish your studies?

I'll want to visit the library if it is open, because it has quite a good quality. I'll also want to keep the connection to some teachers, specially in the area of Criminal Law. I participated in Mostra U.Porto this year, I always try to help someway.

Would you like to be an Alumni Ambassador?

Yes, yes, that's a bit what happened in Mostra: talk to other people about the faculty. My sponsor was there this year, she is the president of the FDUP students, and it's nice because through her I can participate more actively. It's also our role to contribute to the Faculty.

How is it like to study at FEP/U.Porto?

I actually only joined in the first week of November because my visa was not approved early enough. Actually when I came it was very challenging, difficult to start, and moreover I'm the only black guy in the class, so people look at me a little bit strange. The relationship at the beginning was not as smooth... if I had started with them from the beginning it would have been easier to interact. So the courses were quite challenging, the professors were very very helpful, the programme is very detailed, so I think in the end of it it is going to help in our career.

You are the only black guy; also the only foreign student?

Not the only foreigner. Later on I started to know other students: from Brazil, China, Russia or something like that.

So what do you find of studying here?

It's quite exciting!

Have you ever heard about FLUP/U.Porto on the Internet? Before you arrived here.

Actually I didn't hear of FEP. My first application was to University of Minho, but when my sponsors saw it they did not accept it because they were looking to invest on world rating universities. So they came out with a list of schools and University of Porto happened to be number one in Portugal. So that made me search online to get details on the university.

What information did you get then? Where, in which platforms, did you search?

I got the information through google. Then on phd.com.

Did you search for people opinions?

Not many I saw online, only 3 or 4 when I went through the programme. I looked at the line of the subjects on the programme page.

So you didn't have any references from people studying in Portugal or University of Porto?

Actually, the only person I knew around was in Minho, so he told me Portugal is ok. All I wanted was admission and get myself back to school.

Was this person also from Nigeria?

Yes, he comes from Nigeria but has relocated to Belgium. He did his master and is now living there.

How did you communicate by that time?

We contacted mainly through whatsapp. Truly phone is very expensive.

Was this the reason why you applied to University of Minho in the first place?

Yes! Yes... he told me it was ok there.

How determinant was the opinion of this friend of yours?

He said good things. I was scared about the weather, he said the weather was ok. Unfortunately, when I came here Porto was different! I came in November and up until now it didn't get better.

So in the internet you haven't searched for people's opinions, experiences, groups, people talking about the faculty or the programme...?

Well, I looked in the programme and there were two comments. They said much what I wanted.

Have you compared the information between Minho and Porto?

Actually, by the time I applied, Minho got better information disseminated to students. In Porto a lot of information was not really in English that I think now they have improved. Another problem was the application form... sometimes I had to look for translation. In Minho everything was clearer and after application there was follow up.

And even after being here, did you hear about FEP or U.Porto on the Internet?

Mmmm... Well, through Sigarra. I get a lot of information through Sigarra. I don't tune to Portuguese news and things like that because most of the time the information is in Portuguese.

Anything else? Like by email, for instance?

Yes, by email all the time.

Social networks?

I haven't linked to the University Facebook.

But have you maybe seen anything on your feeds?

Since I'm not linked I don't get a lot of stuff.

If your friends are linked you are also able to see.

Most of my classmates they don't share stuff about the university on their individual profiles. Mostly on groups.

Do you have groups?

Yes, the PhD group on Whatsapp. There we share information.

What is a credible source of information for you when looking for information about FEP or U.Porto?

There are two main sources I've been using: one is Sigarra and the second is the academic services.

What about electronic platforms?

I go to google.

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Every day, every minute.

Have you ever connected to other people on the internet in order to get more information or opinions about FEP / U.Porto?

Actually, I didn't have the need yet, but people do it all the time.

What about these groups you talked about?

There yes, through the whatsapp group. For example, we have a lecture tomorrow, it's already on the group. We actually have two groups: one for the PhD students, another one for the Marketing students.

Both on Whatsapp? Who is managing these groups?

Yes, both on Whatsapp. Students are managing these groups.

Have you ever searched for information or opinions about FEP / U.Porto on the internet in order to make a decision?

Yes, when I was feeling ill I tried to find information on medical facilities. Because I remember when I studied in the UK, the university had that facility.

I came late, I missed the Orientation, so I didn't know these things. It was very difficult for me to find information concerning the medical facilities.

How did you search?

I went to the academic office, but the girl didn't know.

Did you try to contact any other students to find out?

I'm in the PhD programme, it means that you are almost on your own. As soon as the lessons are over, everybody is away.

What about the groups?

We have the groups but people don't really know what is happening around FEP. If you ask people will answer "I don't know".

And how important is the information coming from your peers?

Information from peers is very important.

But you didn't try to contact them in this situation.

No, not on this situation. Anyway, most people have an insurance card so they don't need to contact the University medical facilities.

Regarding any products or services, are you a person who likes to see reviews before purchasing?

Yes, always, because of my profession. I always like to check, see the preview.

I like to see reviews very well and be very sure.

But you didn't do it for the university.

I told you I checked Sigarra, I saw 2 or 3 testimonials there.

That's the institutional page, you won't read bad things there.

Yes, but I didn't have a choice anyway, it was my country who chose where I could go to.

But if you were looking for a review about U.Porto, what would be a good quality review for you?

Well, they should tell about the research group, how are the supervisors. Because you are almost on your own. In my master programme in the UK the supervisors were there to guide you and stretch you. Here you are on your own. This is something I'd like to see on a review.

Even getting a supervisor is a big challenge. A colleague shared with me (but it was in person), that she couldn't find a supervisor. She went to one he answered he wasn't available, she went to another one and wasn't also available... This is very very hard.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FEP / U.Porto?

I don't think so.

You don't remember anyone sharing nice stuff, any good news?

No.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

One of the complaints was the delay in publishing the exam results. I saw it once or twice in our whatsapp group.

Do you remember anything else?

No.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FEUP / U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

When there are events they always put on the platform for us to see. Even when it comes to events in other universities, we are encouraged to attend.

What about the most impactful message for you?

In that area you may not get the best from me. I told you I'm almost on my own.

How would you describe FEUP or University of Porto to someone who does not know it?

University of Porto is number one school in Portugal. If I was gonna sell it I would say: almost all teachers are professors. The standard is high.

So what are your general feelings about FEP / UPorto?

Good, excellent.

If FEP/U.Porto was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

It is neither very flexible nor as harsh as I expected. If I tell you about my first weeks, I almost went back to my country. When I started talking to the professors, I felt at ease. It's also a friendly person.

When talking about FEP / U.Porto physical elements, what do you eat to your mind?

I never bothered about it.

How do you see FEUP / U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

I already mentioned that. The standard is high and professors are good in terms of delivering courses.

How would you define the relation price / quality here?

I think this is the area where FEP is a little bit... At Minho is less expensive: 2750 EUR. Here it's more than 6000 eur. Comparing to other schools, it's overpriced for foreigners.

But still people prefer to come to the University of Porto. I have a course mate who came from Minho to Porto, he didn't mind paying more. He says no other school in Portugal has this good will, that if you graduate here, your certificate will be respected. This is people's perception, and maybe this justifies the high fee. In Marketing we believe that if you have a very good product people are ready to pay a premium price for it. This good name, good will, is maybe where U.Porto is capitalizing on.

Is your friend also a foreigner student?

Yes, he comes from Brazil.

Was your interaction in person or not?

In person.

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

As a student coming from a developing country, we're very price conscious. I'm in a bad situation.

You also studied in UK! Can you compare?

No!!! I did my master there, it was 10.000 pounds per session. Last year it increased 19.000 pounds. You can't compare.

What about quality? Was it worth it?

There's difference. Quality here is too high. Here you have real professors, there it is more a source of income.

To what extent could actually FEUP / U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

I'm sure people would react. I don't think it would be fair to increase, although quality for sure is worth it.

If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

Actually, I won't continue here because I was sent here. Developing countries have a lot of strings. Once I finish I have to go back to my work.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

Why not? In UK I was able to influence some people to come there. Here is the same. People know that anywhere I go to is good. When I chose a place it has to be very good. The only thing I complain about is the weather.

You talked about having a sponsor. Who is it?

Government has a facility for tertiary institutions workers to study abroad. That's how I came. The institution becomes the guarantor.

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FEP/U.Porto after finishing your studies?

I think they have an alumni. University of East London also is still sending me messages. I'd like to be part of alumni.

To what extent would you consider being an Alumni Ambassador?

I'm willing to do it. A lot of people ask "Why do you go to Portugal?". I say "well, it is my choice!". I'm already promoting the university.

How is it like to study at FLUP/U.Porto?

It's very good. These last 3 years were very pleasant. The University of Porto itself is very welcoming, the Faculty of Arts doesn't develop us a lot as students. I'm doing my internship at FEUP right now and I see a big difference in terms of academic atmosphere. Maybe it doesn't help that in our study programme, Communication Sciences, we are located at a different pole, outside the Faculty, which creates some distance, we feel isolated. We don't feel we are studying at the Faculty. I think this was a mistake from the Faculty. When I entered university I always thought I was going to study at the Faculty. When I knew that for our study programme classes were given at a separate location I wasn't satisfied, I felt apart from the rest. The good side was that we were able to meet all people from all different study years since we were the only ones isolated in this pole. Of course there's also the disadvantage of not being able to meet people from other programmes.

From the University of Porto I have nothing to complain about, they are very helpful. In my opinion there should be a U.Porto big campus with all faculties and study programmes together. It would be much better for us.

Have you ever heard about FLUP/U.Porto on the Internet? Before you arrived here.

I can't remember very well. As a student now I see a lot. When I was at high school it was not really through the internet.

And now where do you remember seeing it?

In social networks and newspapers.

Which social networks?

A lot on Facebook, not much Instagram. I don't feel the presence of the institution so much on Instagram; in Facebook yes.

This applied to both FLUP and U.Porto?

Only U.Porto, FLUP not at all. In this matter, the faculty is very much behind the University of Porto or other institutions. But University of Porto performs quite well, and it even reaches a lot of people!

Have you considered other institutions before coming to FLUP?

Yes, I checked the websites of other institutions, specially University of Minho. I had good references about University of Minho, but I always preferred Porto.

Did you search for people's opinions?

Yes, I did that in a website which is quite known, uniarea.com. It was a forum where people exchanged opinions. I looked a lot in here.

How determinant was this information?

It was quite important because I could access to the opinion of students who had already finished my degree. And I was always paying attention to the reviews and everything. Later on I heard that this information about my programme being taught in different pole had always been there at the forum, I missed this information.

So what's for you a credible source of information on the internet when it comes to get the information you need about FLUP/U.Porto?

The institutional site, the University platform, it is credible because it is made by them. Social networks I always trust a lot.

What's most credible for you? What the university says about itself or what other people say about it?

What other people say about it. University of Porto hardly will tell bad things about itself, so I always try to get information from those who don't get any advantage of speaking well about the university. Here comes an important role of the eWOM.

What are the people who you'll trust in this eWOM?

I refer to students, friends, friends of friends... I believe quite a lot in opinions from other friends of friends.

Even if you don't know them?

Yes, even if I don't know them! Of course isolated opinions won't be relevant because there are negative experiences which won't happen twice. But if I hear several people complaining about the same I try to understand. Anyway, I always try to hear different opinions. Friends, for instance, they might want me to go somewhere to be close to me...

How often do you use internet to connect to other people?

Always! Everyday, everytime.

Have you ever connected to other people on the internet in order to get more information or opinions about FLUP / U.Porto?

Yes, the example I gave before, for example, about the forum.

I can also mention that sometimes I go to the University page on Facebook and see the comments with the stars; I like to check it sometimes, some people give their opinions in there. Usually when something goes wrong people express themselves; this happens more often with negative situations than with positive ones.

I got this habit from when I go out at night, to check the places, and I applied it to the university as well. Once in a while I like to see the stars and comments about the University.

What else? I don't know.

You can also think about before entering university, for instance.

Yes, I did that indeed. Before entering the study programme I contacted a girl who was already studying the same programme to check what was her opinion, if she was satisfied...

How did you contact her?

Through Facebook, I think.

And once at university, anything else you want to mention?

I can't remember.

Have you ever searched for information or opinions about FLUP / U.Porto on the internet in order to make a decision?

When there are seminars and other events I always check the University of Porto Facebook page. U.Porto is much more dynamic in this sense than the Faculty of Arts, which still isn't so active in social networks, I don't know why.

For the rest, we have private groups on Facebook. Before choosing courses and schedules we usually check with the colleagues in the groups and someone recommends it or not. For instance: "do not choose that course because it is more difficult...".

So this happened to you? Do you remember what happened exactly? Any example?

Yes, a course of the 2nd year. Me and my colleagues, we asked for a course where we could get good grades without having to study so much. So the older colleagues told us and the courses and when registrations opened these courses got immediately filled up and I wasn't on time to get a place. I panicked and went back to the group asking which one I should choose from the courses which were left. They advised me International Relations at FLUP and I quite enjoyed it, which was thanks to the people in this group. If it wasn't for this group I wouldn't have chosen this course and maybe it wouldn't have worked out this well.

Did you do any extra research besides the information provided by the people in this group?

No, I only checked the course content on the website page, that was all. I could have talked to the course responsible but I didn't. I trusted that opinion, let's say.

And how important is the information coming from your peers when it comes to make decisions regarding FLUP/U.Porto?

For me it is very important. I trust a lot on other people's experiences and on what they say. It has always been a point of great interest to me. Many of my choices were based on what other people say and their experiences.

Regarding any products or services, are you a person who likes to see reviews before purchasing?

Absolutely! I always like to know what other people think. And nowadays with the influencers... I don't believe their work, or I believe in just a few since usually there's a marketing strategy behind what they do and say and I think they are there just tried to sell a product. Many of them aren't really honest in their opinions; it's their work, probably they are more focused on getting the product from the brand, so I don't really rely on this. I usually trust the opinion of people I do know to ask "have you tried? Did you like it? What do you think of it?".

So for other products and services you rely on people you know and trust, but for the university you did trust people you don't know at all.

Yes, it's different. For the institution I think the important is to talk to several people and understand what is the general opinion. Maybe there is someone who wants to say good things and someone who wants to say bad things, but if I talk to several people the general opinion will be more prevalent. For the institutions, this type of chats I mentioned and the social networking sites they are important because there's here a real share of opinions, honest opinions. We are all young people trying to help each other giving real sincere opinions.

Why is it sincere here in this case and not in the case of other products?

I don't know, maybe because the product is a direct sell; there's a promotion behind it; it needs to be sold. Something tells me that I should be more careful in this case than when it comes to education institutions.

And if you were looking for a review about U.Porto, what would be a good quality review for you?

It needs to be well written; it should not mention only negative points, also the positive ones, giving both sides; being a sincere and considered opinion. I also always check who is the person, if she really belongs to the institution she mentions (in the digital world there's always the risk of fake news and misleading information), if it is really reliable.

The two sides of the coin is important because no institution has everything good or everything bad.

Do you find a review more credible when it is more factual or more emotional? What do you prefer as a good quality review?

I find the numbers important and they really catch people's attention. For example, the ranking position, the number of students interested in applying for a small number of places... This is important, but I also rely a lot on the emotional factor. For consumers, if we can call them like this in this specific context, experience means a lot, so we can't only communicate numbers. It's not only numbers that count, the experience also. It's just like people: there's no use in being a brilliant student with the highest grades if you don't have other skills. Here is the same: no use in having the greatest numbers if people don't integrate, don't feel welcome, if professors are bad... things like this. So both sides count, even the emotional experience, which is also very important, sometimes even more important than numbers.

Do you recall any positive eWOM about FLUP / U.Porto?

I see quite a lot, mainly in social networks, when I'm on Facebook and Instagram. I see students saying good things, giving many stars to University of Porto...

Do you remember any specific cases?

In my study programme I communicated a lot with Erasmus students through the Internet and they always said good things about the university, that they felt very much welcome and integrated...

Who was the disseminator of these messages?

The students themselves!

Which platform did you use to communicate?

Facebook. I don't know why, but at the Faculty we use Facebook a lot.

How credible was this information?

It is credible, of course. They are students like me. They wouldn't lie to me, that doesn't make sense.

How does this influence your thoughts and feelings in relation to the institution?

It influences a lot and I really am very happy that they have this vision of the Faculty. Knowing that they are here and they are doing well makes me really happen. If it was another way I would become really upset since this is my education institution.

Do you remember any other example? Anything else positive?

I've seen so much that I can't really think of something. I usually remember the negative ones easier.

And do you recall any negative eWOM about FEUP/U.Porto?

I actually remember something. I follow an instagramer and she was talking about her path on Instagram, on how she came to this work of influencer. She said she did Law at Catholic University (later on she came to the conclusion that that was not what she wanted to) and she wanted to do a Master in Communication Sciences. And she said that University of Porto did not accept her because she was coming from Catholic University, because this is a private university. I was shocked because in case that is true it is really not correct, I wouldn't expect something like that from the University of Porto. Although it is a private university, Catholic University is a good and prestigious university.

Was this a credible information?

It was because I follow her and I have good consideration for her, she is a person with credibility for me.

How did this influence your thoughts and feelings towards the institution?

It did influence because I was negatively surprised, I didn't have this image of the university, I thought they would accept students from other institutions. I was upset. This is prejudice against private institutions, which is non-sense and is really bad for the image of the university in general.

Any other example of negative eWOM?

Yes, last year with the transition of the Communication Sciences pole to the Faculty of Arts there was a big polemic because we would be in a bad situation regarding transportation schedules and everything. So we, students of Communication, we protested on the social networking sites. We took down all stars at the University and Faculty Facebook pages. And we even went to take out stars from other Faculties connected to our study programme, like FEUP, and their students pretested also against us. So this had quite an impact.

So we was the disseminator of this negative message?

Each student did a part of the work. Not only with the stars but also with posts.

How did this influence your thoughts and feelings towards the institution?

I lived it myself, so it did influence. By the time the director of the Faculty wasn't very understandable with us.

Then when the pole transition happened it wasn't so prejudicial but it is very unpleasant to be studying at two different poles. In that sense I think that the Faculty of Arts and University of Porto they fail us because one day we are in one place, another day at another place, sometimes in the same day we have lessons in two different poles.

Any other example? One that you weren't the producer yourself but that you remember seeing negative eWOM?

Yes, I have friends who went on Erasmus and complain a lot with the equivalences. After being there they are informed that they do not have the equivalences that they were supposed to have. They did complain a lot about it, this happened in private groups in Facebook and whatsapp. They even missed courses in their curricula because of that, this was bad communication from the university side.

Is this information credible?

Yes, they are my friends.

How did this influence your thoughts and feelings towards the institution?

It does influence a lot because now before going on an Erasmus programme I will think twice, I will be more careful. I don't know if I wanna go after this. The course choice wasn't well done by my friends but it came specially for lack of help from the university.

What was the most impactful electronic message you remember about FLUP / U.Porto, either positive or negative? Something that somehow can influence the way you see the institution.

I'm thinking about the donation to Mozambique, recently. I was proud of that action, it is a good initiative from the university. It was something I remember seeing and thinking "well done!".

From the faculty I can't remember very well, the Faculty of Arts is not very active on social platforms. Oh I remember something about the Faculty of Arts: there's a programme for senior students; I thought this was very good because it gives the opportunity to older people to come back to university and be in touch with young people. I did an assignment about this and interviewed some senior students who were feeling very well by being back in the university.

This was something that you saw online also?

Yes, that was how I found out about this programme, in Facebook, and then I tried to know more.

And have you yourself ever shared an electronic message about FLUP/U.Porto?

Yes, I have younger friends who asked me if I was satisfied by studying here, how the study programme was going.

What was your reply? Was your message positive or negative?

Positive. Well, I always try to give the two sides of the coin and talk about the good things and the things which I don't like so much, but in general I liked a lot these 3 years studying Communication Sciences and I recommend it.

How would you describe FLUP or University of Porto to someone who does not know it?

It's a great education institution, prestigious, well ranked, which always try to educate good students and good human beings, I think. It not only prepares us in terms of content, but it also gives us a lot of opportunities for entering the labour market.

So what are your general feelings about FLUP / UPorto?

5 stars. Well, I like it a lot. I wouldn't go anywhere else, at least in Portugal. I had never had any problem in any course or with any professor, they have always been great with me.

If FLUP/U.Porto was a person how would you define this person in terms of personality?

A strong personality for the University of Porto. Also welcoming, caring for the others, helpful, good communicator.

The Faculty of Arts is not such a good communicator, is more modest, timid, maybe a bit old-fashioned, introverted, calm. The University of Porto is younger, active, proactive.

Why is it old-fashioned?

I don't know... The infra-structures, professors are very old... they are not patient with us, they don't care a lot. I never had a young professor, they are all quite old and with outdated teaching methods.

When talking about FLUP / UPorto physical elements, what do you eat to your mind?

From FLUP I think about books, the green of the gardens, the brown of the building.

What about the logo?

The logo is blue.

What about the university?

More bright colours, the logo is a lighter blue. Think about white, light grey.

Would you be able to identify the logos of FLUP and U.Porto among other institutions?

Yes, I think so!

How do you see FLUP / U.Porto in terms of quality comparing to other institutions?

I've always studied here so I can't compare with Nova or Minho because I have never been there. From what I hear I think it is a good faculty, with good quality.

How would you define the relation price / quality here?

I think it is good, as a public university. It is quite balanced.

So do you actually evaluate the price that you pay for studying here?

I cannot complain, I think it is ok.

To what extent could actually FLUP / U.Porto charge a higher price considering the level of quality delivered?

The Faculty of Arts I don't think so, also because of the buildings. We would need more equipment, so I don't think the price could increase at the moment.

If you finished your study program now, how do you see the possibility of continuing your education here?

At FLUP I wouldn't like, no chance. Also because our professors don't recommend us to stay there. But at the University of Porto I see myself at another Faculty, maybe the Faculty of Economics. The ideal situation would be to go to another institution, more to get out of my comfort zone, not because of the teaching quality.

And would you recommend FEUP to a family member or friends?

Yes, absolutely.

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to FLUP/U.Porto after finishing your studies?

I don't see how I could do it at FLUP. I don't integrate any academic group. I'd like it but I don't see it happen. I'll always be connected through the social networks, I want to be aware of what is happening. In the end, it will always be part of my curriculum. If something less positive happens to the Faculty it will also influence my life.

To what extent would you consider being an Alumni Ambassador?

Yes, I think so, also because I think this is quite needed. It's important because if one day we are successful we are always connected to the institution which gave us the wings to fly, so I would be completely available for that.

How is it like to study at ICBAS/U.Porto?

It has been quite a long time. I first studied Dental Medicine at the Faculty of Dental Medicine. It has good and bad things, always. The bad things are the obstacles that we have during our path. The positive things that I can stand out is throughout the years an effort to correspond to the students needs. I feel an evolution also in the access to information. 6-7 years ago there wasn't much information online, today it is possible to find practically everything related to laws and regulations. Comparing to other universities, from colleagues of mine, we have a platform where we can search for information, which is quite positive. Over the years we can access information more easily and also take care of bureaucratic issues online, which I find very much positive. In the past it happened to me to go to the services and get contradictory information, or even wrong information. Even for extracurricular activities, like renting rooms, accessing schedules, if it's there we can access it ourselves.

In addition, and maybe this is the other side of all this, is that ICBAS has always been a faculty for the students, open to students, with very accessible professors. It started like this. Throughout the times this has been changing and I think this is the other side of the coin. The fact that everything is online makes it our responsibility to search online instead of contacting teachers, so the closeness that existed before between students and teachers has been decreasing. These latest generations they don't have the habit anymore to search for teachers directly and talk to them. Still, I think it is a faculty that tries to meet students' needs and expectations or at least listen to them.

In the last years the faculty also became more demanding, maybe because of the need of accessing to financing, and this pressure maybe contributes to a distancing from students.

Have you ever heard of ICBAS/U.Porto on the Internet? Before you came?

I had heard through colleagues, not really on the internet, more in person. I ended up here because someone heard very good things about it.

After you were here?

Yes, on the tv quite a lot, as I mentioned the research projects, also about the rankings. There are also the academic newspapers, the U.Porto news.

So in which platforms have you heard about it?

Yes, a lot on tv, for instance when the president Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa came to the University. Facebook as well; actually Facebook came to change the way people communicate, it is a platform for sharing content, it's a working tool because through the close groups and the drives people can share everything. Nowadays, even the most isolated person can access all information.

I have to mention also the Facebook page of University of Porto, the websites of the students associations... all this is permanent information we can access to.

So in terms of social networks do you use Facebook regularly?

Facebook and Instagram, but this one is more for private matters. Facebook ended up more like an access to information for work.

Still about before entering university: were you considering other institutions?

I live close to Lisbon but I didn't want to go to Lisbon, I wanted to go to Coimbra because of this magic around Coimbra being a student city. In the year I applied the grades were very high for Coimbra and I was selected to Porto and then I didn't want to switch anymore.

By that time did you search for people's opinions on the internet?

I didn't have much access to the internet, I lived in a small village, but I searched, yes, I did. But there weren't so many groups, so many blogs, so many websites which we could access to, or if there was I didn't know. I searched for all faculties in the countries, looked into the study plans of all their study programmes, I used the telephone to contact the services in each faculty to ask questions as well.

When you search for information about ICBAS/U.Porto, what is for you credible information?

I learned the hardest way. I had really bad experiences of the services telling me “if you didn’t read you should have to”. So, for me the most credible source is the Official Gazette. But this is maybe because of what happened to me. Information about exams, and so forth, I only believe it when I see it written.

For the rest, I try to listen to other people’s opinions, I ask people in the faculty which I think are aware of the latest information, but I always filter that information. Because if I keep on waiting for what people promise.... Look, we are many students, and each one has to find his own information.

Other type of information, like news, events happening... There you have the website, the Facebook of the university or the student association... for this I trust these platforms. Websites less well-known, chronicles written in non-official means, things like that I don’t care and even don’t have interest in reading.

How often do you use the Internet to connect/interact with other people?

Every day, all the time. Because even the sms are not so much used anymore, people use the apps.

Have you ever connected to other people on the Internet in order to obtain more information/opinions about ICBAS/U.Porto?

Among colleagues, when there is an exam or an event, we usually talk to each other. I’m in the 6th year now, so if it’s not through platforms and internet people don’t talk to each other. Apart from that I always try to talk to people in person and not only through a mobile phone. My generation values the personal contact, but we talk, yes! But that’s how I explained: if it’s about serious information I look for official sources, if it’s about news or comment on a certain issue, then I talk to colleagues quite a lot. Me and my friends, we are always commenting on something.

And have you ever contacted someone through electronic means in order to make a decision on something related to ICBAS/U.Porto?

Yes, in the beginning before entering the faculty I did that: the procedures for having the Student Worker Statute, Special Exam Period in September... We talked about these issues among friends. With my friends I never had problems, unfortunately sometimes the worst part is in the services, where people should know it and still unfortunately they don't give the correct answer – this word-of-mouth is for me the one which doesn't work well at all. So unfortunately everyone at some time complained about someone from the secretary. And I don't think this is a problem of my faculty, I have several colleagues from other faculties who said the same.

How important is the information you can get from your colleagues (the peers)?

Well, asking for an opinion, yes, it is important. Things like “did you choose that course” or “did had that optional course, how was it?”, I ask that to really close friends who I trust, who I know are gonna answer in order to help, yes I ask. Usually I ask for the opinion of several people and then I create my own opinion. Sometimes I end up choosing something else, different from what people said.

What about other products or services? Are you someone who usually sees reviews/opinions before buying?

Not really, I don't have that habit. Usually I buy based on price and on my needs. Sometimes I should really do some more research, but I barely see reviews. In some specific cases where I did some research I came to videos giving a review but after one minute I'm bored.

If you were looking for a review about ICBAS/U.Porto, what would be a high quality review?

I'd say collect many different opinions, do not focus on one but having a general perception on what people say. I'm a very analytical person, so if I then come to analyse the comments of each person.. I try to interpret people a lot, even unconsciously, so I think I come to make an opinion on the basis of my intuition of what people are saying.

But in case you look only to one review, what should it contain? Should it be more factual, more emotional...? What would be a good review?

Well, if I come to think that it is something very emotional, from someone who is upset... I think it depends on what is said. I'm very instinctive. If there's something with a lot of number or percentages maybe it won't impact me that much, My next question will be "where did these numbers come from? How were they created? How many studies and revisions gave origin to these numbers? When was it done?"

I think I'll rely more on a coherent information, not extremely but also not extremely bad, but based on factual experiences, mixed with a personal opinion from the same person .

Do you remember any positive eWOM about ICBAS/U.Porto?

That happens quite often in the Facebook groups. If there's a party, an event... at the moment the Cultural Week is approaching (an activity from the student association and not from the faculty itself) and people comment on that. If there's an exam people also try to get comments from everybody to do as good as possible.

What do you see as positive in the aspects you mentioned?

The events, seminars organized by the faculty... people comment if it's worth it or not. Very practical stuff.

This positive eWOM: how does it influence your thoughts and feelings towards ICBAS/U.Porto?

At the moment it doesn't influence anything. I'm about to finish my degree, in the 6th year we are quite far away from everything. Events, parties... I like to see it, in case I have time I like to join. But of course when I see something positive about my faculty, on tv for instance, of course I'm glad to see that. Recognition is always positive.

Do you remember any negative eWOM about ICBAS/U.Porto?

There are situations, mainly in the groups, among colleagues. But although I also experienced situations which didn't go that well, I also don't like to see people complaining just because something ran bad. There are situations that I hear about and think "if it went like that it's also because you didn't manage it the best way". It's true that in the secretary we don't always have

the best customer service, that sometimes people don't answer our questions as they should; but I've also seen people there not being reasonable at all, thinking that they can complain about everything". Complaining is of course our right, and people should complain when they are right, but when they shouldn't complain just because they feel like.

And usually when something goes wrong people then complain about everything, which for me is a Portuguese characteristic. And when someone complains usually you get everybody else complaining harder; I don't like that at all and I don't take part in that sort of group conversations which get ignited by one single person who had a bad experience, sometimes because of his/her own fault.

This negative eWOM: how does it influence your thoughts and feelings towards ICBAS/U.Porto?

It doesn't influence because in these situations I try to analyse whether the institution is to blame somehow or not, and most of the times it is, but I evaluate and that isn't going to change my opinion because I try to see also what could have been done by the person himself/herself to avoid that situation.

So you remember any other specific situation of negative eWOM?

Bureaucratic issues, a comma which is wrongly placed; something which was supposed to be one way but it is not possible anymore; an exam which was more difficult than supposed and everybody thinks that this is the teachers' fault... What upsets me is that inflammation of people complaining when I know this reaction is not gonna change anything. And this also doesn't change the way I see the institution.

When people get irritated that group effect happens of people complaining about everything and really exaggerating saying things like "the faculty isn't worth anything", which is of course not true and not reasonable saying when this was the place that allowed us to study and become good professionals.

In these cases I'm very rational thinking on what the faculty did of good and wrong and how our attitude and reaction to a certain issue is doing to improve or worsen the situation.

What was for you the most impactful message (positive or negative) which somehow influences your thoughts and feelings towards ICBAS/U.Porto.

ICBAS principle and purpose, since it was created, was being a faculty for the students, close to the students. When we moved to the new building a big change happened: there wasn't space for the "tunas", for the student associations, treatment wasn't equal for all "tunas" and student groups. I admit that we also implemented some actions which weren't very correct, like making noise to disturb those who could decide on giving us spaces for rehearsal (in the case of the "tuna").

This was the moment when my vision towards the faculty became more rational than emotional.

Were there messages about this situation?

Yes, we received several electronic messages about the things we were not allowed to do, several rules which were sent to us...

There was an intensive exchange of emails, sometimes with not a very pleasant tone of voice from the people in charge of the faculty by that time; things like "you are here to study and nothing else"... really very unpleasant messages. We were never impolite, we always tried to have a good dialogue. There had always been a good relationship between people, but in this period I don't know what happened, maybe the social pressures, even regarding "praxe" (student practice for the newcomers). It was a hard time with a lot of messages and photos exchanged.

So this was something that changed a little bit my vision of the faculty which became less emotional.

This message exchange, was it only between the students and the institution or also among the students?

Yes, among students as well, people complaining a lot, a big buzz around this. And then even verbal fights between groups, which wanted to claim their own space. It was really a very unpleasant situation which didn't make sense at all.

How would you describe ICBAS/U. Porto to someone who doesn't know it?

It's a university and a faculty with good conditions. The study programme is not perfect and doesn't always correspond to the expectations, it's not so perfect as we hear before we get in (I think it's with all study programmes the same). In the end, if I had to choose again a university I would once again choose the University of Porto: for the city, because it does offer conditions for either research or studying for a profession. It has a good place in the rankings, it is located in a great city, with good prices (although accommodation prices are getting higher).

I would tell people not to dream of a perfect place, but if it is about to dream then dream to come to U.Porto and not anyone else in the country, although I do not know all the others. But for sure I wouldn't switch U.Porto for any other.

In general, what are your feelings regarding the institution?

I have a very emotional connection to the faculty, I cannot say that I don't. There are negative things, situations that we learn the hardest way, but that's life and it's going to be life after finishing the studies, throughout our career, at home, at work... It is always going to be the faculty of my heart, the university of my heart, my student city... which isn't Coimbra, it became Porto in the end, and I have no regrets at all for that. Leaving the faculty is going to be hard.

I hold a lot of affection and bad things I will keep as a lesson for the future.

If ICBAS/U.Porto was a person, how would you define that person in terms of personality?

It is very hard for me to answer that question because I've seen different phases of ICBAS.

Tell me about it now. How is this person now?

Let's say that ICBAS is a person who when he was young he had a lot of dreams, he dreamt a lot and had many goals. He grew up and realized that he couldn't live only of dreams, he maybe got disappointed a lot and understood that many often also the students he worked for also prepared some traps to him, that also happened. So he had to defend himself. He is someone who became stricter as he grew up, and he didn't understand yet that maybe this is not the only way of being fair without being distant. And I think that he is a person who is

again trying to understand how to be fair and not so distant as he was. Anyway, he keeps on being ambitious, with many ambitions for the future. I anyway hope that his genesis, his dreams don't die forever. He was a person who changed a lot but let's hope that his origins are still there.

The University is a person who wants to innovate, who is more and more ambitious, who understood that she can dream at an international level and really wants to make it come true, as at the same time she doesn't want to weaken her image among students (I don't know if she succeeds). But it is an ambitious person, who understood that she can be ambitious not only in Portugal.

When talking about the physical elements of your university (e.g., logo and colors) what comes to your mind?

The yellow from ICBAS, black and white from U.Porto.

Would you be able to recognize the logos among the ones of other institutions?

Yes, obviously!

How do you see ICBAS/U.Porto in terms of quality, comparing to other institutions?

It is a faculty/university that keeps growing not only in number of students but also in quality, there are teachers already with long careers who keep on standing out, coming up in the news. In this sense, I think it will continue to attract good students who have the same dreams.

In terms of ranking, it keeps on growing and also it has more and more Erasmus students who specifically choose the University of Porto.

In terms of infrastructures it is quite ok and becoming better and better, even in relation to faculties with old buildings, so I think it offers good conditions to students, with the latest technology.

I think the problems that might exist, mainly in those more theoretical programmes, are the course structure.

In my opinion, the major problem at the moment, which is not linked to ICBAS directly, but to U.Porto, is that there's not enough accommodation. The university is failing in

understanding that his students need accommodation, so I hope that they understand that this may compromise the success of the university.

How do you evaluate the relation price/quality at ICBAS/U.Porto?

That's what it is. I know the tuition doesn't pay the price for each student. As a student of course I would love not to pay anything like in many countries. On the other hand, there are also private faculties with higher prices. Thousand euro per year is a lot considering the minimum wage... Well, for me it is difficult to answer to this question.

How do you rate the price you pay to study in ICBAS/U.Porto?

I'd have to know more about how the money I pay is spent in order to evaluate whether the price I pay is fair or not. I know that there are teachers paid for giving lessons and in the end they give 5 minutes-lesson and don't come to the faculty that much, so students should find their way for themselves. So I cannot really answer to this question.

This has to do with the perception of the price you pay: it it too much or you would be able to pay more?

I really cannot answer to this question right now. My perception is that the money we pay is important to keep the faculties running. What I don't know is whether the this money is well spent.

If you finished your current course at this precise moment, how would you see the possibility of continuing your studies at ICBAS/U.Porto?

Well, at the moment I don't think so but that's because I've spent 6 years studying. It's enough studying now, I don't need it for the career I want to follow. I don't plan do any other study programme right now because in my specific area that's also not that important. It is more important to do short courses and internships related to the medical career. In fact, the medical career doesn't allow for doing another course, it is a very specific career.

Would you recommend ICBAS/U.Porto to a friend or family member? Why?

Yes, I as mentioned, I would strongly recommend it, although it is not perfect. But for sure I wouldn't switch it for any other.

How likely is that you want to keep the connection to ICBAS/U.Porto after completing your studies?

I'd love to. If any opportunity comes up for sure I see that as something positive.

Would you see yourself in the role of Alumni Ambassador, someone who actively promotes the institution?

At this moment I don't see myself in that position. The time of promoting the faculty has gone, I'm very busy now with my career, so I don't see myself in that role. This is not something against the faculty at all, from a personal point of view is something I'm not available for right now, I have other aspirations, other things to do.

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