MEDIA DESIGN IN THE STRATEGY OF EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ELDERLY PEOPLE: CASE STUDY – "VOLTO JÁ" PROJECT.

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Abstract

This article reports a case study through the description of the communication process and definition of graphic identity, production, and broadcast media made for the multidisciplinary scope of a project ("VOLTO JÁ" project) for an elderly audience. The project *VOLTO JÁ* aims to implement a senior social exchange program in social economy organizations, seeking to promote tourism experiences for the elderly and highlighting active aging. The business model was based on the sharing of resources to enhance the value proposition and will be supported by an information and communication technologies (ICT) platform. The project, financed under the FCT program: Scientific Research and Technological Development Projects (2016), was completed in February 2021, involving a multidisciplinary team, with different skills, to achieve the objectives initially stipulated, highlighting four areas of knowledge that were fundamental to its success, namely, the areas of Management, Tourism, Computer Engineering, and Design. A research and development team from two polytechnics higher education institutions (Polytechnic Institute of Santarém and Polytechnic Institute of Beja) also had a Social Economy Organization, the *Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Santarém* as a partner. In this article, we will focus on the work done by the team responsible for the Design and Communication of the project belonging to the Polytechnic Institute of Beja.

Thus, the research carried out within the scope of *VOLTO JÁ* intending to validate a business model proposal based on a service provided by an online technological platform, which promotes: in a first phase, contact between residential structures for the elderly; and, in a second phase, the mobility of the institutionalized elderly according to tourist packages provided by the platform, led us to the need to problematize the communication strategy and the means to be used in the relationship with target audience and all stakeholders. According to the business model validation methodology adopted by the team, namely the *Business Model Canvas* proposed by Osterwalder & Pigneur (2010), we start from the problematics: 1- How to create and maintain the relationship and the level of involvement of all stakeholders involved with the service offered by the platform? In this case, a platform that

allows contact between the residential structures for the elderly, it facilitates the planning of tourist packages, as well as the programming of the mobility of the elderly; 2 - What are the aspects to be taken into account in a communication more oriented to a more senior public, aiming to define aesthetic, cognitive, but also emotional factors? In this way, the team established the main objectives to be achieved, taking into account the project's characterization: a) to define the communication plan; b) to implement the communication channels that would activate the project simultaneously with its validation; c) to define a graphic identity for effective communication, adaptable to various communication materials required for project development and dissemination; d) to implement digital communication channels and the production of content that would simultaneously allow the involvement of the "elderly" and those responsible for the institutions; e) to schedule web marketing campaigns to activate the project, and consequently, the respective validation through the collection of metrics appropriate to verify the interest in the project/platform; f) to define an user interface and user experience design of the software platform enabling social economy institutions to join senior exchange program, seeking to continue the graphic identity created for the project.

The research took on an exploratory case study based on the *VOLTO JÁ* project, ensuring the validity of the research construct by adopting different sources of chained evidence. We propose to present activities' outcomes trying to answer the anticipated objectives, through a methodology based on literature review in Communication and in Design fields. Thus, the study was based on a project methodology in design and in the guidelines for the applicability of the *design thinking method*, based on the recommendations of the Design Council and Interaction Design Foundation. The Design Council describes the design process in five stages and considers that all designers must comply with them when carrying out a project (*first steps, research, planning, communication, and implementation*), in order to determine, in an initial phase, the design problem and then research the needs that are implied, always bearing in mind the user and its behaviors and, thus, give an effective and reasoned answer at the end of the whole process (Visocky O'Grady & Visocky O'Grady, 2006). The creation of the graphic identity and the brand *VOLTO JÁ* followed the guidelines of Budelmann et al. (2010), Gomez-Palacio, & Vit (2009), Lupton (2011), and Olins (2010), but also some pertinent reflections highlighted by Norman (2004), oriented to the levels of emotional processing and Design strategies. A communication strategy more oriented to the target audience followed some guidelines previously defined by some authors, such as Silva et al. (2015), by giving Facebook a social support environment for the elderly. Literature review and empirical knowledge allowed the creation of quantitative data collection protocols which analysis ensured the reliability of the case study and its transferability.

A web-based service implementation, with a value proposition aimed at promoting a business model in the field of senior tourism, requires the study of the digital communication strategy appropriate to the growing involvement of the target audience in the service development. Adopting appropriate metrics to assess the effectiveness of digital communication strategy also provides data for the development and validation of the business model. Consequently, it is intended to demonstrate activities carried out and that were put into practice, responding to the main objectives and challenges of the project, taking into account its specific target audience and stakeholders. We tried to focus on the fact that design and communication can be channels to promote social interaction. Through this case

study and applying a user-centered strategy, we seek to contribute with particular solutions that can be applied in future projects in the social tourism area.

Keywords
Communication Design, Graphic Identity, Digital Communication, Communication Strategy, VOLTO JÁ project, Senior Tourism

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