

EMPLOYER BRANDING: FROM THE TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE TO DIGITAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study performs a literature review into employer branding, from a traditional perspective to a current digital approach. As we are now living in a Digital Age, and the new work generations are already born digital it is crucial to find ways to communicate with them. Employer Branding concept, although it has been around for a few years, it is still a concept with a lot to explore, in the sense of strengthening the relationship between the departments that deal with it and, above all, the search for tools needed to disseminate it. This study intends to facilitate that path, by presenting an exhaustive literature review of both, concept and models of Employer Branding, as a way to promote the research in the area.

Keywords: Employer Branding, Digital Age, Human Resources Department

INTRODUCTION

The talent in organisations are the people, the ones who get involved, think, interpret, evaluate, decide, act, lead the organisation in this new era, where knowledge has become the most important resource, an intangible and invisible wealth, but fundamental to success (Chiavenato, 2009). In the view of Veloso (2018), the employer branding of a company should always be in line with the corporate brand, as well as with the vision and mission of the company. The way the company communicates to the market/external, contributes to "its" image, this makes it possible to obtain good results. A company's corporate brand should be aligned with its intended target audience. It is important that the employer brand is appealing, innovative, but at the same time there is a balance between the real brand and the promised brand (Bancaleiro, 2011).

According to Moroko & Uncles (2008), when companies invest in employer branding, they get the best out of their employees, so that goals are achievable, and is the talent that will allow them to perpetuate their brand of success with the employer. Gehrels & Looij (2011) argue that every company has an employer brand, when someone talks, writes, thinks or remembers a company as a place to work. Employer branding, despite being a strategy for companies in order to differentiate themselves from others and in order to keep existing talent and attract "good" candidates, it is important to differentiate that a product is something that is made in a factory and a brand is something that is bought by customers.

Employer branding is based on a commitment between the organisation and the employee, which has raised the interest of many experts in the marketing sector, since this relationship portrays a promise of mutual investment and trust. This promise begins in the

recruitment process, where employees learn about their roles and obligations as well as those of the organisation (Moroko & Uncles 2008). Employer branding has become one of the main priorities for organizations, which mostly goes through the human resources department, as well as marketing, as it requires long-term strategies to build and develop an original and attractive identity, and also influence the perceptions of potential candidates, without forgetting the talents already existing in the organisation. In this way, organisations become more competitive in the talent search market, as this is an efficient way that human resources uses in the recruitment process (Alves et al., 2002; Monteiro et al., 2020).

Studies show that professionals prefer organizations with an innovative culture, and attractive and supportive leadership and management style, oriented towards development competencies, with fair evaluation processes, whose mission, vision, and values are challenging and inspiring, as well as a good communication and image (Alves et al., 2020).

This study consists of two sections. The first section is dedicated to the literature review of employer branding, where a series of themes were addressed, such as employer branding from the perspective of attracting talent, with mention being made of Backhaus & Tikoo's Employer Branding models, the Ecosystem Model of Employer Branding and the Employer Branding model applied to SMEs, where new technologies in employer branding will also be addressed, as well as digital employer branding and social networks; the generations in the monitoring of new technologies and human resources in the digital evolution. The second section deals with the main conclusions, theoretical contributions, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Definition of Employer Branding and Evolution

For Veloso (2018), the term employer branding emerged at a conference in 1990, where Simon Barrow (Chairman of People in Business) used the term for the first time. The first publication of the concept appeared only 6 years later. Initially, the term employer branding was defined as a set of functional, economic, and psychological benefits attributed to employment. Employer branding emerged when companies began to the characteristics of companies as employer's vis-à-vis competing organizations. Therefore, employer branding highlights the strengths of the organisation as an organisation as an employer, such as its environment (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). However, as Franca & Pahor (2012) pointed out, for an organisation to attract a new candidate, it must focus its attention on external factors, always taking into consideration the situation in the labour market.

The concept of employer branding has been gaining relevance and being addressed more, however, it is important to note that definitions and explanations in the academic literature are still scarce, since the term is still relatively recent (Franca & Pahor 2012). To be able to define the employer brand concept, it was necessary to collect information, through studies, research, interviews, observations, among other forms of data collection.

Ambler & Barrow (1996) defined employer brand as certain psychological and economic benefits that the company offers to the employee as a reward for their work. According to Edwards (2009), employer branding concerns the activity that involves some of the principles of marketing, however, it has also been noticed an increasing number of interventions by the human resources department, since the main objective is to since the main objective is to empower employees. Farrell (2002) stated that the employer brand is about the commitment that employees make in order to assist the development of the organisational of the organisational identity, and in this way they build a psychological contract.

Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) describe human resources as “human resource practitioner literature describes employer branding as a three-step process. First, a firm develops the “value proposition” that is to be embodied in the brand. Using information about the organization’s culture, management style, qualities of current employees, current employment image, and impressions of product or service quality managers develop a concept of what particular value their company offers employees”. According to Peters (1999), the concept of branding has evolved according to the needs of companies, initially branding was used to differentiate products, over the years and due to the demand, the term began to be used to define people and companies. As an employer, the organisation must provide clear signals of its culture and needs.

In this vein, Table 1 summarises the main six definitions of the employer branding concept most commonly cited in the dominant literature review, as well as its evolution over the time.

Table 1	
MOST CITED DEFINITIONS OF EMPLOYER BRANDING CONCEPT	
Definitions	Authors
"We define employer branding as the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company"	Ambler & Barrow (1996)
“Managing a company’s image as seen through the eyes of its associates and potential hires”	Martin & Beaumont (2003)
"The term employer branding suggests differentiating the characteristics of a company as an employer from those of its competitors. Employer branding highlights the unique aspects of job offers or the company's environment"	Backhaus & Tikoo (2004)
“The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits offered by an employer and which hold identification with this employing company. The main rule in Employer Brand is to promote a coherent management scenario to simplify and focus priorities, increasing productivity and improving recruitment, retention and engagement”	Barrow & Mosley (2005)
“Overemphasis which is placed on communicating brand promises at the expense of longer-term management of the employee experience”	Mosley (2007); Moroko & Unlces (2008)
"The drive to employ strategies to attract and retain staff has never been more urgent, as financial markets are increasingly recognising "human capital" - or the skills human capital" - or the skills, experience and knowledge of as sources of value to the company and its shareholders”	Bancaleiro (2010)
"Employer Branding is a process aligned with organizational values and business objectives, structured in a comprehensive, consistent and continuous way, that communicates, externally and internally, the most relevant aspects of the organization's identity, i.e. its organizational purpose, its deepest values, its management practices, its compensation and benefits policy, etc" "Employer Branding, involves the identification of the unique "employment experience" by considering the totality of tangible and intangible reward resources that a particular organization offers its employees"	Edwards (2010)
"The core of Employer Branding can be defined as the strategy for recruiting and retaining suitable employees, maintaining a consistent image, both internally and externally"	Jonze & Öster (2013)
"Employer branding is a first step, the most important step in understanding how to position employer branding as a business function that adds the high value to an organisation"	Minchington (2018)

Employer Branding – The Scope of Talent Attraction

According to Muscalu & Stanit (2012), there are organisations that prefer to offer a salary well above average in order to attract the best potential candidates, however, the authors consider that a good brand offers good career opportunities career, which is an attractive factor to potential new candidates. Many employees choose to make a difference in a particular organisation where their work, can be reflected in their future

For Gehrels & Looij (2011), Google is an example of an attractive employer, as its employees are served free meals, have an in-office laundry available to them, as well as on-site medical care, these factors, and not only, contribute to a flexible and modern organisational culture, which makes the company attractive in the eyes of potential candidates. These authors defined employer branding as a strategy that an organisation uses to differentiate its own brand from that of its competitors, with the aim of ensuring talent retention within the organisation. In addition, they also defined some steps for an organisation to be able to start its own employer brand, the first step being to define what a good employee is, according to the needs of the organisation, and from there to focus its attention on organisational attractiveness, in order to obtain employees of excellence. The second step deals with employee motivation, this being a form of improvement and development of the employee itself, if the employee is satisfied and motivated, the chances of having a more profitable and more productive working day is greater (Wels, 2007; Gehrels & Looij, 2011). The third step involves employee loyalty, since we no longer believe in jobs for life, employee retention is done through a relationship, which is built from the moment of the interview, between the organisation and the employee (O'Malley, 2000; Gehrels & Looij, 2011).

The main steps to be taken for a brand to develop as an employer, start by establishing a clear vision of what the term means, as well as the as well as its implications. It is also convenient that all the employees of the organisation have knowledge about the importance of the brand. The second stage of this process is to work on the development of a plan for training and growth of the employees, so that in a third phase an internal communication plan is developed, which also has to an internal communication plan, which also has the objective of making the internal plans to be passed on to the outside. In the fourth stage, it is time to declare the brand as well as applying it, and it is in this phase that the leadership team has its prominence. The fifth stage falls on the consistency of the investment in the employer brand so that it is effective in attracting new talent as well as retaining (Thorne, 2004; Gehrels & Looij, 2011).

Gehrels & Looij (2011) state that the brand has always been a specialty of the marketing department, however, they argue that the human resources department should also take some responsibilities in the matter, focusing more and more on the development strategy of the organisation and its employees. Gehrels & Looij (2011) also argue that the basis of a quality employer brand is employees' understanding of what the customer's brand means, that is, only when they believe in the customer's brand, they have the ability to promote it.

Franca & Pahor (2012) concluded that an organization that offers a salary that candidates consider good, becomes an attractive organization, as does the prospect of personal development as well as career progression. However, the job stability does not seem to be relevant in the opinion of new candidates.

It can be inferred that potential candidates are influenced by the symbolic benefits of the organisation, such as the prestige of the organisation and the good image it would bring them, hence marketing and human resources are crucial departments in developing the employer brand, as they contribute to the organisation's brand image, which leads to the attractiveness of the organisation.

Employer Branding Models

Backaus & Tikoo (2004) developed a model of employer branding (Figure 1) based on the relationship between marketing and human resources concepts, thus creating two main assets: brand loyalty and brand associations. These brand associations are intended to shape the employer's image, so that it will influence its attractiveness to win over potential candidates. The employer brand, on the other hand, is what influences employee loyalty, since it is the organisation's identity and its organisational culture. It is through marketing that the organisation's brand is externalised, in order to publicise and present to the target audience its practices, benefits of belonging, as well as its advantages. However, by using internal marketing, the organisation reinforces its organisational culture in order to motivate employees to be more productive, thus contributing to employee retention.

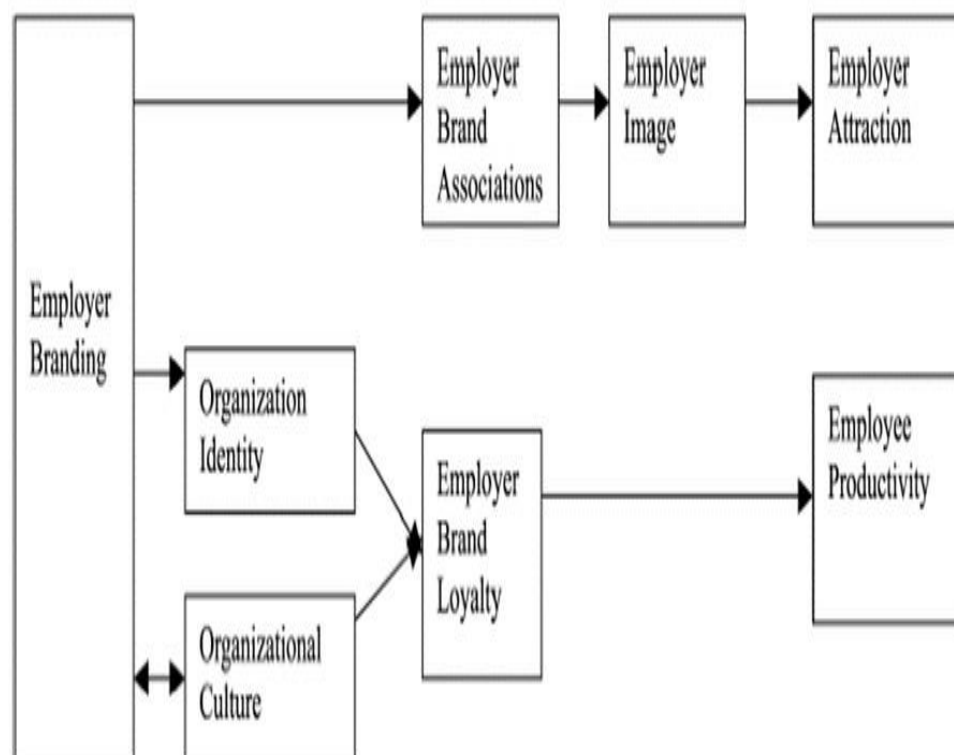


FIGURE 1
EMPLOYER BRANDING MODEL

Source: Backaus & Tikoo (2004)

Minchington, (2006) developed a model to support leaders of organisations, "The Employer Brand Excellence Framework" (Figure 2), to enable them to adopt measures and strategies to manage and evolve the employer brand. This model is aligned with "The Minchington Employer Brand Business Model" (Figure 3) to provide guidelines for organisations to best assess and/or audit their employer brand development plans.

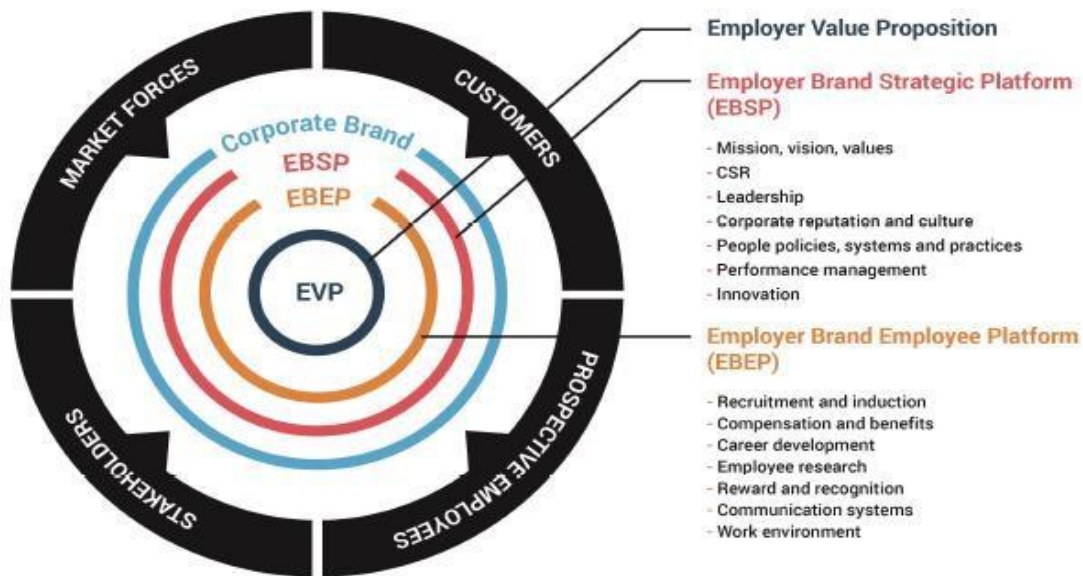


FIGURE 2
THE EMPLOYER BRAND EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

Source: Minchington, (2006)

In 2017, Minchington published the "Employer Brand Business Model" (Figure 3), intended to help leaders, managers and executives understand how employer brand can influence business if it is taken into consideration in the development and growth strategies of organisations. The aim of this model is also to provide the organisation with the best and most up-to-date ways of attracting new candidates, which will also contribute to the growth and enrichment of the organization.



FIGURE 3
EMPLOYER BRAND BUSINESS MODEL

Source: Minchington (2017)

From another perspective, Minchington (2018) developed, over five years, a new employer branding model, entitled "The Employer Branding Ecosystem Model" (Figure 4), which aims to innovate the systems of the elements that most influence the development of employer branding. This model will identify the main points to focus on in the development of the employer brand, such as development of the employer brand.

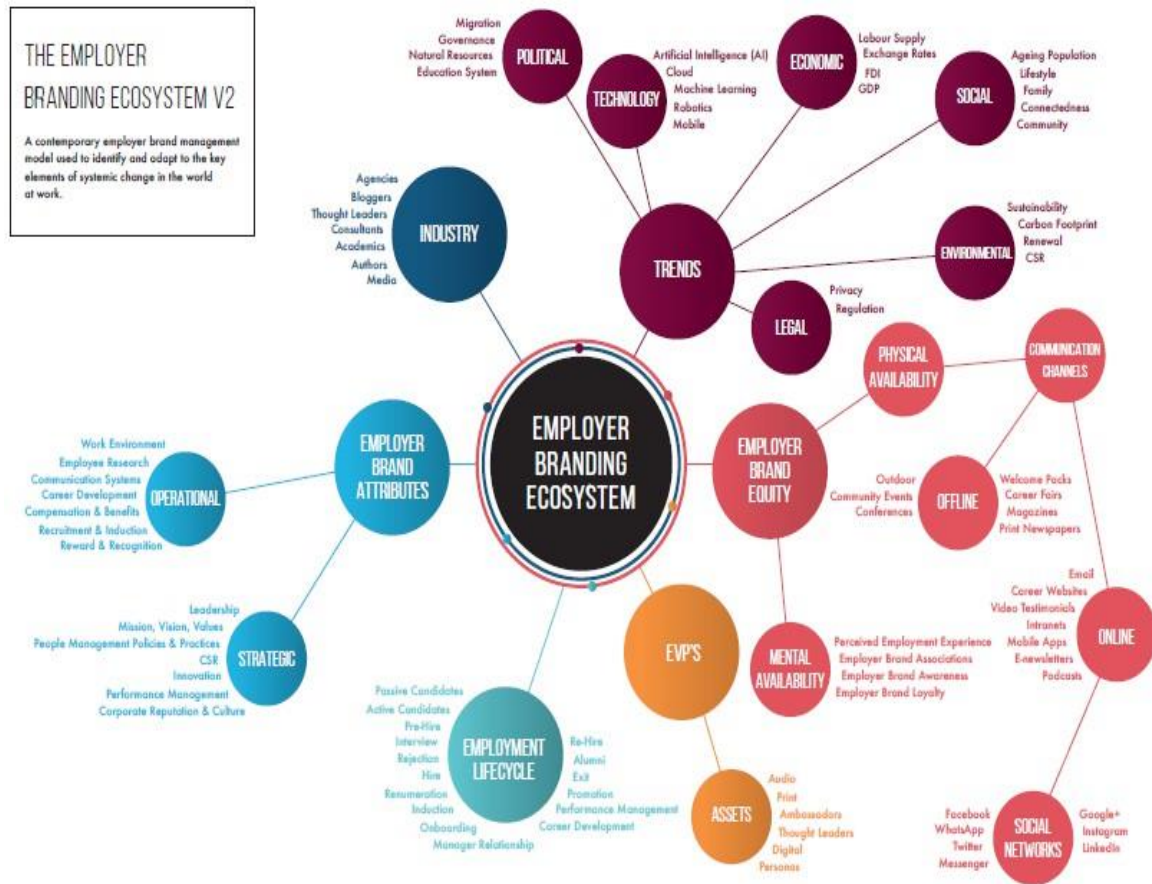


FIGURE 4
EMPLOYER BRANDING ECOSYSTEM MODEL

Source: Minchington (2017)

Monteiro, et al., (2020), created a new model of Employer Branding applied to SMEs enterprises (Figure 5). This model presents as objective the implementation of strategies in small and medium enterprises to attract and retain talent, so that they have less costs with the selection and recruitment of candidates and make them more competitive. This model was presented through a pyramid, being this one inspired in Maslow's pyramid (pyramid of categories of human needs), since it is based on the needs of SMEs in retaining talents, or keeping the ones already present in the company, in order to understand which are the main factors that have influence in the candidature of future candidates.

This model presents the reward system in the top level, and this is due to the fact that organizations feel the need to have all employees motivated, with a sense of accomplishment and belonging, as well as trained, in order to performance in productivity, since the success of an organisation is a reflection of the organisation is a reflection of the work of its employees. In a next phase, is the reputation of the organisation, which absorbs all the opinions and experiences that have an influence on talent retention, and this information can be This information can be disseminated on social

networks, and it is necessary to ensure that the organisation has immediate resolution response capabilities. In addition, in the model (Figure 5), the organisation's strategy is verified, because it is this strategy that will define which path the organisation should follow in order to achieve its objectives, taking into account which financial, technological, intellectual and physical resources are available, as well as the importance of the organisation developing a strategy capable of overcoming all market changes.

Thus, it is through a strategy that a path, a form or an action that fits the needs of the organisation is outlined, so that it can achieve the objectives and challenges previously established (Oliveira, 2004; Monteiro, 2020). This model is based on the organisational culture, which is about the mission, values and vision of the organisation; these factors should be intrinsic to the organisation so that its employees can understand the purpose of its existence, what its objectives are and why it exists.

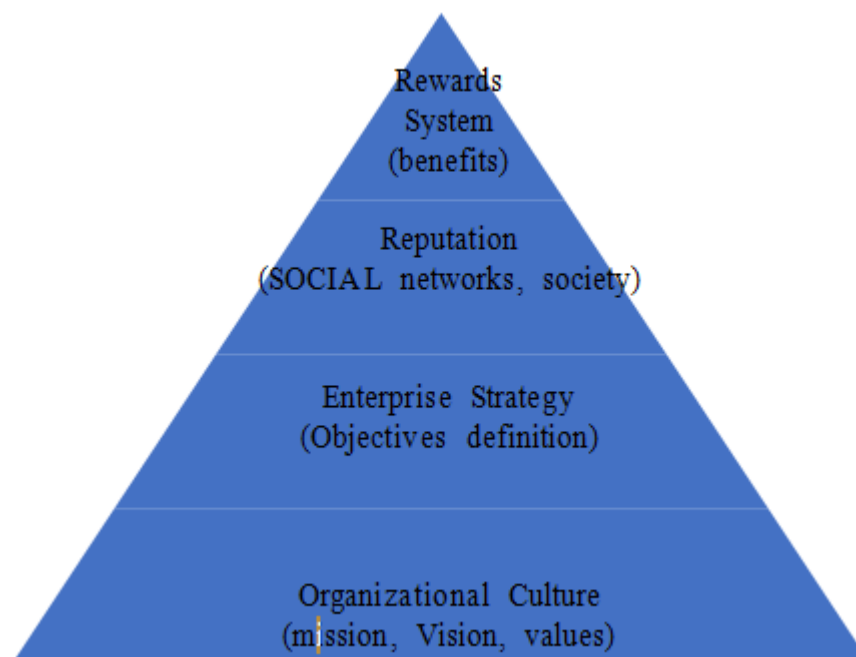


FIGURE 5
EMPLOYER BRANDING MODEL FOR SMES

Source: Monteiro, et al, (2020)

New Technologies in Employer Branding

Mihalcea (2017) advocates that organisations find themselves compelled to make innovative and effective use in order to cope with the digital economy. In this way, organisations organizations are in a better position to face the new challenges of the reinventing themselves, as well as being constantly updated, arising the need to provide need to provide employees with courses and training so that they can keep up with this development. Therefore, all the new social platforms, with the intention of interconnection and communication in the world, are in a attract new candidates to organisations that present attractive image and branding strategies (Mihalcea, 2017).

Over the last few years, young people have been gaining power in the world of new technologies and, in this way, they have great capacities for creation, production and influence. The main creators of the main digital platforms are Generation Y, who use various platforms such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and Tumblr. This

generation has as demands, organizations more open to new concepts, comments and criticism (Burstein, 2013; DeVaney, 2015).

Kaur, et al., (2015) argue that social networks or any online platform nowadays is the main method of attracting new candidates to organizations. Small and medium-sized companies, realizing that the employer brand is not only for large companies, and that this brand brings many benefits both in attracting new candidates and in developing the prestige of the company, have begun to invest and improve their social networks in order to strengthen and affirm their employer brand, presenting online their qualities as employer.

Considering that from the last few years until today, emotional stability and career progression are increasingly sought by new candidates, organizations needed to adapt to these needs, so the strategy to be adopted for the management of talents already within an organization, must pass through early planning and care of the workforce, as well as in the leadership and its development. It has become important for employees to be recognised for their efforts, and so organisations have also started to consider performance rewards, and to communicate more and more with their employees, so that they feel integrated, and thus contribute to retaining talent within the organisation (Deloitte, 2016; Mihalcea, 2017).

Therefore, it is found that more and more organizations are trying to attract new young candidates with experience and digital knowledge, so that they can promote the values and customs of the organization, given this, it is noted that the organization prefers to invest and contribute to the internal training of the same, thus allowing candidates to feel like family within the spirit of the organization (Muscalu & Stanit, 2012).

Other authors, such as Hirt & Willmott (2014), argue that the digital evolution comes to take away some power from large organizations, since small organizations show more ease in communicating with the public and in showing the cultural reality of the same, but on the contrary it is necessary a department, or more, that are dedicated to the market trends and new ways of attracting new candidates.

Social Media in Employer Branding

According to Kaur, et al., (2015), the most efficient way to communicate and sharing a brand is through the use of social media. The human resources departments of organisations are increasingly using social platforms way to carry out recruitment as well as selection of new candidates. The social networks social networks are still being inserted and developed in the marketing department, these are recognized as applications developed on the Internet that allow the creation of content and the exchange of information generated by the user (Kaplan & Haenlien, 2010; Kaur et al., 2015).

New digital platforms have the ability to identify potential candidates for certain jobs, as well as contribution to the development of digital skills and capabilities, as well as drive the development and growth of the new generation of leaders (Smet, Lund & Schaninger,

2016). In social media, opportunities are created for organisations to gain more visibility, as well as to vindicate their identity, also allowing recruitment processes and the selection of new talent to be carried out. The authors conclude that social networks are the new means for organizations to attract new talent, since they are the platforms, most used by Generation Y.

Organisations acquire skills to be able to secure the competitive advantage in the market in order to evolve the employer brand through social media (Gulati, 2019). Online platforms are not only for the use of social media, but also for information sharing, forums to exchange ideas, for community blogs, or social review sites. Gulati (2019) lists some of the most commonly used social platforms such as LinkedIn, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, WhatsApp and Pinterest, among others.

Employer branding and talent management are related as they aim to improve recruitment, selection and retention techniques so that the organisation is successful. However, both concepts have some differences despite their objective is the same, as in the case of talent management whose functionality is to administer and manage employees, whereas, employer branding is about creating, transmitting and sharing the organizational culture that meets the expectations of its target group (Gulati, 2019).

The human resources department of organisations is not directly involved in the digital skills acquired by employees, resulting in a competition for the search for new talent (Mihalcea, 2017). There are several digital platforms that allow access to training and workshops in order to make known these new ways of looking for a job, or search for candidates, contributing to the development of online skills, but these platforms also allow marketing campaigns or even student job fairs, LinkedIn is one such platform. Moreover, Mihalcea (2017) concluded that it is the digital age that is forcing organisations to make adaptations to the way they recruit, select and empower the capabilities of new generations of candidates.

Therefore, human resources departments have entered a process of development and evolution so that organisations have more adaptive capabilities at the structural level, which implies new learning and communication tools, as well as new recruitment analysis skills, the construction of a new organisational structure and finally, the ability to digitally transform all human resource processes (Santiago, 2020).

To sum up, the digital social media platforms aforementioned, used with the purpose of growing the employer brand, are an asset, as they contain all kinds of personal or professional information, which if used thoughtfully and carefully, can be a great help in developing marketing strategies as well as recruitment strategies, while reducing the search effort. The recruitment process through social platforms is a way that organisations turn to in order to find the right talent through specific websites for the intended purpose. However, the use of online platforms are not always safe and true, before starting their journey in the online world, organisations should make a study on the possible limitations and unexpected challenges that can happen during their use, this way, it will be possible to avoid more easily an erratic sharing or a neglected recruitment.

Employees Generations of New Technologies

DeVaney (2015) clarifies that different generations can be defined through age, period and cohort, being the age corresponding to the changes in the life of the individual, the period, on the other hand, concerns the events that happen throughout the life, and a cohort refers to a sharing of experiences and values in a group during the years of life, which are reflected in similar attitudes in the remaining years of life. Generation X refers to individuals born between 1961 and 1981, this was the first generation to have access to the internet (Miller & Laspra, 2017). According to DeVaney (2015), generation X has a greater ability to accommodate compared to the following generations, making them more adaptable and entrepreneurial.

The next generation, generation Y or millennials, depicts individuals born between 1980 and 2000. This generation is characterised by their commitment and involvement in the family, they have great leadership and organisational skills in the work environment and their main goal is to achieve a perfect balance between personal and professional life. Millennials believe themselves to be exemplary and are therefore more ambitious, which leads them to want to hold highly important positions and make a high importance and to make a big impact on the market and, if possible, on society. Social media and technological capabilities are also a great motivation and influence for these individuals, as it is a form of communication and development both personal and professional. It is a generation that aims to be happy in their workplace (DeVaney, 2015).

DeVaney (2015) divides millennials into two groups, those born between 1986 and 1992 and those born between 1992 and 2000, both groups present several differences despite belonging to the same generation, these differences being mostly professional (Kuron et al., 2015). Therefore, within the same generation there is a group that is employed and a group that is still studying, mostly without experience in the labour market.

From Souto's (2018) perspective, millennials are a generation with high levels of qualification and training, and therefore have a greater chance of being selected by large organisations they intend to join, and he also argues that they are a generation that is sympathetic to diversity and changes in the market and, when it comes to technologies, they are curious and well-informed individuals.

Mihalcea (2017) characterises this generation by the importance given to the organisational culture, performance and recognition by the organisation where they work, thus developing some anxiety to reach senior positions. Career progression and professional development being a crucial aspect, these individuals seek organisations that match their needs and expectations, considering the salary, benefits and reputation of the organisation, so that they can maintain a certain level of quality of life, both personal and professional. While millennials have many technological skills, generation Z is fully proficient in all digital technologies.

Generation Z encompasses all individuals born from the year 2000 onwards. This generation is the most educated and qualified, it is the generation with the greatest technological mastery, since from birth they have had contact with new technologies, becoming even becoming dependent on them. They are individuals with great communication skills, however, they are also a little more superficial (Reeves & Oh, 2008; Desai & Lele, 2017). This is a generation that dominates social media and virtually all electronic devices, which becomes an asset in the job market, since technologies are constantly evolving, and this is a generation with agile and easy to learn in the field of technologies. Generation Z generation has a great capacity to mobilise and adapt quickly, however they become low-motivated employees and without high expectations in the organisation (Desai & Lele, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

With the development of new technologies, it has become essential for organisations to follow and adapt to this evolution. From the organisational point of view, there has been a strong increase in investment and improvement of working conditions in order to retain employees and contribute to their better performance. The employer branding can be applied both externally, in order to attract future employees, and internally in order to increase loyalty and commitment among current employees.

Companies have increasingly applied employer branding in order to become more competitive and attractive in attracting talent. The underlying theoretical research base for the employer, "the brand" has not been fully developed, hence companies do not always receive the expected return. It is important that there is greater dissemination of the subject so that it is not only addressed when there is interest in it and so that companies can take better advantage when hiring trained employees.

Currently, the greatest difficulty facing organisations is the ability to retain and attract talent. In order to overcome this difficulty, companies must invest in employer branding policies and be aware of what factors differentiate them from others, what attracts an employee to a company. Since employer branding is the process of transforming an organisation within its employer brand among employees and potential candidates, it is essential that organisations keep abreast of the latest trends in the recruitment market, particularly during the last two years of 2020 and 2021, with the pandemic situation in the country. New online platforms and social networks have emerged to disseminate and share

employer brand information with potential candidates, organisational competition has increased, as well as the competition for the for the best employees. To face this phenomenon, organisations have chosen to make several adaptations, one of them being to find new ways of attracting talent through these platforms and social networks.

Employer branding is a concept that over the years has received more attention from scholars. This study consolidated the concept of employer branding by analysing its evolution in various perspectives, contexts and paradoxes, both at the theoretical and strategic level and at the tactical and operational level. Regarding to the employees, is noteworthy that the new generations, namely Millennial and Z, are the most dependent on technologies, particularly in the search for the organisations to which they apply.

The main limitation found is related to the scarce literature review addressing the employer branding field, particularly the gap of studies about employer branding from a digital perspective. For future studies, a new integrative conceptual model of employer branding is suggested.

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