



Escola Superior de Hotelaria e Turismo do Estoril

**Masters in Hotel Management**

**Masters Dissertation**

**The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in  
Hotels**

**Gabriel Almeida Kilson - 11519**

**December 2021**



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**Supervised by: Professor Maria de Lurdes Calisto**

**Co-supervised by: Professor Rita Peres**

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## CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1. Theoretical Background.....	9
1.2. Study's Relevance .....	10
1.3. Study's Objective.....	11
1.4. Dissertation's Structure .....	12
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1. Employer Branding .....	13
2.1.1. Employee Value Proposition (EVP).....	14
2.1.2. Employer Branding and Person-Organisation Fit .....	17
2.2. The Online Recruitment from the Perspective of Signalling Theory .....	20
<b>3. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1. Purpose and Type of Study .....	25
3.2. Sampling and Data Collection Methods .....	26
3.3. Data Analysis Method .....	28
<b>4. RESULTS.....</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1. Websites.....	31
4.1.1. Company's Initial Presentation .....	31
4.1.2. Social Responsibility Initiatives .....	35
4.1.3. Career Opportunities.....	41
4.2. Job Advertisements .....	52
4.2.1. Non-standardised advertisements.....	52
4.2.2. Company's Relevance in the Industry .....	53
4.2.3. Job Description.....	54
<b>5. DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>65</b>
5.1. The Employee Value Proposition Dimensions .....	68
5.1.1. Application Value.....	68
5.1.2. Authenticity .....	70
5.1.3. Development Value .....	70
5.1.4. Economic Value.....	72
5.1.5. Interest Value .....	72
5.1.6. Management Value .....	74
5.1.7. Social Value.....	75
5.1.8. Work/life Balance.....	76
5.1.9. Social Diversity .....	77
5.2. Employer Branding and the Covid-19 Pandemic .....	80
<b>6. CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>81</b>
6.1. Theoretical Contributions.....	82
6.2. Managerial Implications .....	83
6.3. Limitations and Future Researches .....	84
<b>7. REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>86</b>

<b>8.</b>	<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>92</b>
8.1.	Codification Process with MAXQDA .....	92
8.2.	List of Categories and Codes .....	93
8.3.	List of Job Advertisements .....	95
8.4.	Codification Guide.....	97

**LIST OF FIGURES**

**Figure I - Sampling Process..... 26**  
**Figure II - MAXQDA Screen ..... 92**

**LIST OF TABLES**

**Table I - Employee Value Proposition Dimensions ..... 15**  
**Table II - List of Hotel Chains..... 27**  
**Table III - List of Themes and Subthemes ..... 30**  
**Table IV - Websites Highlights ..... 51**  
**Table V - Job Advertisements: Highlights ..... 64**  
**Table VI - List of Categories and Codes ..... 93**  
**Table VII - List of Job Advertisements ..... 95**  
**Table VIII - Codification Guide ..... 97**

## RESUMO

Os colaboradores exercem um papel fulcral no sucesso da marca dos hotéis. Existe um número incontável de marcas de hotéis, cada uma com as suas características únicas, o que requer diferentes colaboradores para darem vida às suas promessas. Estes devem estar em sintonia com os valores e requisitos da marca do hotel de modo a poderem representá-la adequadamente durante a interação com os hóspedes. Os gestores devem comunicar corretamente as suas *employer brands* de modo a atrair os colaboradores desejados.

As empresas enviam sinais sobre o seu posicionamento enquanto empregadoras sempre que utilizam um meio de comunicação *online*. Estas devem apresentar aos potenciais candidatos informações claras e precisas de modo a permitir-lhes avaliar a sua afinidade com a empresa mesmo antes de se candidatarem. Assim, a hipótese de ocorrer um emparelhamento entre os colaboradores e os seus empregadores aumenta. Os gestores devem tomar especial atenção à forma como comunicam o seu posicionamento enquanto empregadores de modo a potencializar ativamente este emparelhamento.

Neste estudo, explorou-se como dez das maiores redes hoteleiras do mundo utilizam os seus *websites* de recrutamento para apresentar o seu posicionamento enquanto empregadoras. Paralelamente, analisou-se como estas redes comunicam aos seus potenciais colaboradores, através de anúncios de trabalho, os valores da empresa e os benefícios que estas oferecem. Para tal, seguiu-se um design qualitativo e adotou-se uma abordagem abductiva.

O presente estudo demonstrou, por meio de uma *template analysis*, que as redes hoteleiras avaliadas gerem explicitamente as suas estratégias de *employer branding* com o intuito de atraírem apenas colaboradores que partilham os seus valores e objetivos. Também revelou que os hotéis que promovem um ambiente de trabalho socialmente diverso são potencialmente mais atrativos enquanto empregadores. Finalmente, apresentam-se recomendações sobre como os gestores de hotéis podem melhorar a comunicação das suas *employer brands* através dos meios digitais.

**Palavras-Chave:** Hotelaria. *Marca do empregador. Teoria do Sinal. Websites. Anúncios de Trabalho.*

**ABSTRACT**

A significant part of a hotel's brand success relies on its employees. There are many hotel brands, each with their unique characteristics, demanding employees who give life to their brand promises. To assure employees know how to represent it while interacting with guests, they must align with company values and requirements. Managers must know how to communicate their employer brands to attract the right employees.

Companies send signals about their employer positioning whenever they use online communication. Employers must offer potential candidates clear and precise information, allowing them to judge their fit within the company, even before applying for the job. By doing so, employers and employees increase their chance for a match. To actively enhance this match, managers should pay attention to how they communicate their employer positioning.

This study explored how ten of the world's largest hotel chains use their recruiting websites to present their employer positioning and communicate their values and employee value proposition on their job advertisements. A qualitative design, adopting an abductive approach, was used.

Through a template analysis, this study found that these companies, while intending to attract employees who share similar values and objectives, are explicitly managing their employer branding strategies. Further, this study revealed that promoting a socially diverse work environment is a relevant aspect that helps a company attract employees. Managerial recommendations associated with how managers might improve their employer branding online communications are discussed in this paper.

**Keywords:** Hotel Industry. Employer Branding. Signalling Theory. Websites. Job Advertisement.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Theoretical Background

Human resources are the hospitality industry's heart. As a labour-intensive industry, employees substantially influence the delivered service's quality. Therefore, meeting the customers' expectations is crucial when building a good team (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Frye *et al.*, 2020; Poulston, 2008; Yao, Qiu & Wei, 2019).

Actually, as Buil, Martínez and Matute (2016) complement, to truly deliver all the brand promises, the employees must first internalize and live the brand. Their behaviour influences how the stakeholders perceive the company brand (Cascio & Graham, 2016). Therefore, the company must consider its employees as one of its most important stakeholders (Ewing *et al.*, 2002). Employees, if well managed, represent a foremost source of competitive advantage for a company (Chawla, 2020; Messersmith, 2011).

To accomplish this, human resource managers need to incorporate the brand components into the human resources practices (Buil *et al.*, 2016), which demands that marketing and human resources managers work together. Firstly, organizations need to attract and hire the right employees (Sirianni *et al.*, 2013). Managers responsible for recruiting new employees must ensure that they use the right signals to present their company as an employer to potential candidates (Connelly *et al.*, 2011; Spence, 1973). When receiving and interpreting these signals, potential candidates must be able to answer questions like "Do I fit in this organization?" and "Am I aligned with what that company demands and offers to its employees?" (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007; De Cooman *et al.*, 2009; Elving *et al.*, 2013; Ganesan, Antony & George, 2020).

Potential candidates will decide more informedly, either or not to apply for a job if they manage to answer these questions correctly. This informed decision will increase the probability of a match between the professional and the organization occurring (Elving *et al.*, 2013). This match is relevant not only because of the potential service quality benefits that will arise (Buil *et al.*, 2016; Chawla, 2020; Sirianni *et al.*, 2013) but also because it is an important aspect to improve the organization's capacity to retain its employees (Kristof, 1996). Employees that do not feel there is a match between them and their company have higher turnover intentions (De Cooman *et al.*, 2009).

Unfortunately, one of the most known problems in the hotel industry is its difficulty attracting and retaining qualified professionals (Bharwani & Butt, 2012), including tourism and hospitality management undergraduate students. Due to the gap between

these undergraduate students' expectations and the reality of the employment (Kilson, 2021), many of them lose most of their interest in pursuing work in the hospitality industry after a first job experience (Brown, Thomas & Bosselman, 2015; Kim & Park, 2013; Le, Klieve & McDonald, 2018).

Amongst the most cited of the hotel industry's human resources issues in the academic literature are the low salaries (Baum, 2015; Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Janta *et al.*, 2011; Kilson, 2021; Yao *et al.*, 2019), lack of work/life balance (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Janta *et al.*, 2011; Kilson, 2021), low-status jobs (Baum, 2015; Janta *et al.*, 2011), the relationships at work (Baum, 2015), and lack of growth opportunities (Bharwani & Butt, 2012). Consequently, the hotel industry often suffers from high employee turnover rates (Frye *et al.*, 2020; Yao *et al.*, 2019). Altogether, these human resources issues reinforce the hotel industry's poor international reputation as an employer (Baum, 2015; Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Janta *et al.*, 2011). Any potential candidate may effortlessly notice this poor reputation and the human resources problems when searching the internet, making the recruitment and retaining process even harder (Janta *et al.*, 2011).

## **1.2. Study's Relevance**

The development of the internet brought many new opportunities for the recruitment process. Numerous companies started to use the online environment to communicate their employer positioning to attract potential employees. Nowadays, the internet already represents one of the leading sources of job information for generation Y professionals (Mičik & Mičudová, 2018). On the internet, managers have access to plenty different communication means, including their organization's websites (Allen *et al.*, 2007; Baum & Kabst, 2014; Behrend, Baker & Thompson, 2009; Williamson, 2010), profiles on social media (Benitez *et al.*, 2020; Mičik & Mičudová, 2018), and advertisements (Baum & Kabst, 2014; Collins & Han, 2004; Kanar, Collins, & Bell, 2015).

For example, organisations' websites are a predominant recruitment tool as they may represent the first contact that professionals have with a company as an employer (Baum & Kabst, 2014). On their websites, managers have space to, dynamically and interactively, present a company at different levels (Behrend *et al.*, 2009). The company's attractiveness is positively related to how potential employees perceive it when visiting its website. They consider several aspects, such as the organizational culture, salary and career growth (Cober *et al.*, 2003).

As talented employees are becoming a scarce resource (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Ewing *et al.*, 2002), there is a fierce competition to hire and retain the best employees on the market (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Elving *et al.*, 2013; Ruchika & Prasad, 2019; Russell & Brannan, 2016). Becoming an attractive place to work represents a source of competitive advantage (Mičák & Mičudová, 2018). Consequently, many companies started to benchmark themselves against their competitors to evaluate their attractiveness as an employer (Russell & Brannan, 2016) and adopted branding practices to develop their job advertisements (Elving *et al.*, 2013; Ewing *et al.*, 2002). However, as a study conducted by Elving *et al.* (2013) demonstrated, many companies still fail to create job advertisements that differentiate their employer positioning from other companies positioning.

In summary, the hotel industry's economic performance may decrease without talented professionals that truthfully align with the company's values (Buil *et al.*, 2016; Le *et al.*, 2018).

### 1.3. Study's Objective

To expand the comprehension of what type of benefits are considered relevant by employees in an employment relationship, Dabirian, Kietzmann & Diba (2017) appraised comments made by thousands of professionals about their perspectives related to their employers. The study considered comments about companies from different contexts, including hospitality. It provided generic viewpoints of the most attractive groups of benefits to employees. Nevertheless, the authors advised managers to gather data from their specific industry due to its unique characteristics. With this action, managers will understand better what is valued by the professionals working in those contexts. Likewise, they will be better prepared to improve their employer branding strategies with this knowledge.

After exploring how companies presented their employer brands on their job advertisements, Elving *et al.* (2013) recommended that future studies explore how different employer branding activities, including career pages on companies' websites, contribute to organisational attractiveness. According to the authors, companies might develop stronger employer brands when the various recruiting activities complement and reinforce the company employer positioning.

The present study follows Dabirian *et al.*'s (2017) suggestion about the individual evaluation of each industry and assuming an employer perspective and Elving *et al.*'s (2013) recommendation to study companies' career websites. Following a qualitative design, this study explores how global hotel chains present themselves as employers in a digital context. Thus, the description of how they do it is the main purpose of this study. This purpose was cleaved into the following three specific goals:

1. How and in which depth of detail do hotel chains, as employers, present themselves on their websites to potential job seekers?
2. How are the hotel chains' values communicated in the job advertisements?
3. What types of benefits given to employees do hotel chains mention in their job advertisements?

Through this study, it was possible to identify which aspects associated with the employment experience in the hotel industry seem to be the most critical to creating an attractive and sustainable employment experience for the employees and the companies. Furthermore, it was also possible to attain insights about how managers should communicate their employer positioning online to boost their companies' capacity to attract and retain the desired employees.

#### **1.4. Dissertation's Structure**

This dissertation has six main chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion and Conclusion.

The Introduction chapter presents the study's relevance and objectives. Next, in the Literature Review chapter, the main concepts related to this study are discussed. These include employer branding, employee value proposition model, the importance of recruiting professionals who align with the company's values, and how signalling theory may improve the online recruitment practices in the hotel industry.

Then, in the Methodology chapter, all the methodological choices are described, such as the philosophy, approach, methodological strategy, sampling technique and the method used to analyse the data.

In the Results chapter, all data compiled from the hotel chains' recruitment websites and their job advertisements posted on LinkedIn are presented. Next, the Discussion chapter presents all collected data analysis following the method presented in the

Methodology, compares the results and integrates them into the previous academic literature.

Finally, the Conclusion chapter presents the theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Besides, it introduces the study's limitations and suggestions for future studies.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Employer Branding**

Helping consumers differentiate between brands in a specific product category and presenting what benefits a consumer may get by acquiring and using a specific product are amongst the key objectives of branding a product. Whenever a company brands its products, it develops brand elements like the product name and design. These elements help consumers to identify 'who' the product is and 'why' they should purchase it instead of any other similar product available on the market (Keller, 2013).

By creating and managing the brand elements, a company might develop positive and unique brand associations which generates positive customer-based brand equity. When customers compare two similar products, one labelled with a company's brand and the other with no brand, and demonstrate a preference for the branded product, it is possible to argue that this company's brand has positive customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993).

Branding is often associated with the creation and maintenance of a company's corporate and product brands but, it also may apply to a company's employer brand (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Elving *et al.*, 2013). In this case, the 'consumer' is a potential or current employee, and the 'product' is the benefits' package that this professional will receive by working for a specific company, while the competitors are the other companies aiming to attract and retain this employee (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Cascio & Graham, 2016; Ewing *et al.*, 2002).

In line with the concept of employer branding, Ewing *et al.* (2002) proposed an extension of the brand equity concept to incorporate a company's employer brand, proposing the concept of employer brand equity. Employer brand equity is "a set of employment brand assets and liabilities linked to an employment brand, its name and symbol that add to (or subtract from) the value provided by an organisation to that organisation's employees" (Ewing *et al.*, 2002, p. 14).

In this way, the employer branding objective is to differentiate a company from its competitors by highlighting and externally promoting its unique employment offerings while internally exposing the employees to the company goals and brand values (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Attracting and retaining employees with a higher qualification level and identification with brand values may increase recruitment efficiency (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Cascio & Graham, 2016; Elving *et al.*, 2013; Kashyap & Verma, 2018; Ruchika & Prasad, 2019; Russell & Brannan, 2016; Tumasjan *et al.*, 2020). Companies can achieve it by carefully managing their employment positioning (Tumasjan *et al.*, 2020).

Managers must hire employees who faithfully align with the brand values to assure remarkable quality service. Otherwise, clients will perceive employee performance as not authentic (Sirianni *et al.*, 2013), which might affect the brand image and reputation (Russell & Brannan, 2016). Therefore, hotel managers need to see job positions as products, aligning the employees and the company's objectives and brand values (Kaurav, Paul & Chowdhary, 2015) to improve service quality. In this regard, a strong employer brand helps strengthen a company's service brand; a service brand results from the combination between the company, its employees and its customers. Companies capable of attracting the right employees, satisfying them and fostering a sentiment of identification with it might harvest positive outcomes by stimulating their employees to deliver excellent customer experiences, thus building a strong service brand (Schlager *et al.*, 2011).

Companies attract employees according to what they believe these companies may offer them in exchange for their work (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Therefore, managers must understand what these professionals are looking for in an employment relationship. Companies can only develop their employee value proposition (EVP) after acquiring data about their present and future potential professionals' needs and desires (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Cascio & Graham, 2016; Ewing *et al.*, 2002; Mičik & Mičudová, 2018; Moroko & Uncles, 2009).

### **2.1.1. Employee Value Proposition (EVP)**

Ambler and Barrow (1996) first presented the EVP model with only three dimensions: the functional, economic, and psychological benefits. Over time, it was refined and expanded by Berthon, Ewing and Hah (2005) that developed the Employer Attractiveness (EmpAt) scale, composed of five dimensions: Application Value,

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

Development Value, Economic Value, Interest Value and Social Value. Many scholars, in different contexts, intensively applied the EmpAt scale (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017; Kashyap & Verma, 2018; Reis, Braga & Trullen, 2017). Taking the EmpAt scale as the base for their studies, Dabirian *et al.* (2017), during the analysis of thousands of reviews posted on Glass Door, proposed the additional dimensions of Management Value and Work/Life Balance, while Reis *et al.* (2017) introduced the dimension of Authenticity.

Table I presents all the dimensions proposed by Berthon *et al.* (2005), Dabirian *et al.* (2017) and Reis *et al.* (2017) and their respective descriptions.

**Table I - Employee Value Proposition Dimensions**

Authors	Dimensions	Description
<b>Berthon <i>et al.</i> (2005)</b> <b>Dabirian <i>et al.</i> (2017)</b>	Application value	Employers that demonstrate a genuine interest in their customers and their employees by giving them opportunities to demonstrate what they know, what they are good at, and allowing them to share their knowledge with their colleagues.
	Development value	A company that recognizes employees' efforts fosters self-worth and confidence in their employees and offers opportunities for professional development, career growth and future employment.
	Economic value	A company that offers above-average salaries and other benefits like job security, health insurance, and pension contribution.
	Interest value	Workplaces that are stimulating adopt novelty work practices and have innovative employees to develop innovative and high-quality customer value propositions.
	Social value	A working environment that promotes a people-based culture and aims to create a positive work atmosphere with happy and fun coworkers who work as a team and share similar values.
<b>Dabirian <i>et al.</i> (2017)</b>	Management value	The relationship between employees and their bosses can influence the employees' professional performance. It can also strongly influence their other personal activities. For this reason, a good boss can be the cause for employees to decide to continue working at the company. Likewise, a bad boss can be responsible for employees to leave it.
<b>Dabirian <i>et al.</i> (2017)</b>	Work/life balance	A job that grants employers the opportunity to live a balanced life. These sort of jobs allows them to have time to do their work and manage their personal lives. In other words, professionals have time to be with their families, practice leisure activities, amongst other aspects, without creating conflict between professional and personal activities.
<b>Reis <i>et al.</i> (2017)</b>	Authenticity	A working environment that allows the employees to behave authentically, respecting their own beliefs and convictions.

Source: The author, based on Berthon *et al.* (2005), Dabirian *et al.* (2017) and Reis *et al.* (2017).

The EVP may also split into two main groups: functional and symbolic benefits. The firsts are all the EVP components that may be desirable in an objective way, as salaries and health insurance (Economic Value). Contrarily, the symbolic benefits are all the components that a person cannot directly observe but imagine that may get while working for a determined company. For example, the prestige and social approval (Social Value),

and the possibility to behave following his/her convictions (Authenticity) (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Dabirian *et al.* (2017) note that the EVP dimensions are not equally relevant. Distinct professionals working in unrelated companies in distinct industries will probably attribute a different weight to each dimension. For example, a study investigating the impact of the EmpAt scale dimensions on employees' turnover intentions from professionals working in the information technology sector in India found that when Social and Development Values are present in a company, EVP reduces their turnover intentions. In contrast, the other three dimensions did not have significant effects (Kashyap & Verma, 2018). Another study conducted in Brazil investigating the possible contribution of Authenticity to employer attractiveness found that employees seem to value the possibility of acting authentically and consider it to be a relevant job attribute. Women and long-time employees, as well as employees in power positions, appreciated more Authenticity than others. The study also compared Authenticity with the EmpAt scale dimensions. It concluded that employees perceived Authenticity as relevant as Development and Economic Values and more relevant than Application, Interest and Social Values (Reis *et al.* 2017).

Professionals with distinctive cultural backgrounds also value different things. In the tourism sector it is common to find employees from several countries working together. In this way, companies that consider cultural differences may increase employee satisfaction and organizational performance (Huang & Rundle-Thiele, 2014).

Lastly, a recent study demonstrated that a positive employer brand equity reduces employees' intentions to leave their jobs by nourishing employees' positive well-being perceptions. In companies where employees face a supportive environment (social value), have opportunities to apply and share their knowledge (application value), and consider that their jobs are interesting (interest value), they feel positive well-being. As a result of feeling positive well-being, these employees present lower intentions to leave their jobs. Surprisingly, the results also demonstrated that benefits associated with the economic value might generate negative well-being perceptions. The authors argue that well-being perceptions are subjective. Thus, different employees might respond differently to the same benefits, which might explain why some employees may not consider benefits like a high salary to contribute positively to their well-being (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021).

Therefore, managers need to consider the context to which each of their companies belongs to effectively manage their EVP (Dabirian *et al.*, 2017). As a first step, managers



should segment the “professional market” (Moroko & Uncles, 2009) and use distinct channels to perceive what their employees think (Frye *et al.*, 2020), allowing them to participate in this process (Elving *et al.*, 2013).

Besides, the EVP composition is an efficacious resource when it lines up the employer positioning and the profile of employees that the company wants to attract and retain (Cascio & Graham, 2016). Hence, the human resources managers must guarantee consistency between the internal and external employer brand images. By accomplishing it, managers might enhance their employer brand equity, becoming attractive to potential employees while retaining the current ones (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021). Meanwhile, misalignments between what is advertised by the company and employees’ perceptions may increase their turnover rate intentions (Kashyap & Verma, 2018), meaning that employers must be honest about their companies’ employment experience (Backhaus, 2016).

### **2.1.2. Employer Branding and Person-Organisation Fit**

Known as the Person-Organisation Fit (P-O Fit), the crossmatch between an employee and a company occurs when what each intervenient expect is compatible with what they receive from this relationship or when both parts share similar fundamental characteristics, such as goals and values (Kristof, 1996). Professionals aligned with the company’s values tend to remain in the company for a long time, while the contrary also happens. Employees with a low P-O fit level tend to leave the company more often, indicating that P-O fit is a good predictor of employee turnover intentions. Job seekers avoid applying for jobs that are not in line with what they desire (De Cooman *et al.*, 2009), thus contributing to the recruiting and selection process’s efficiency (Ehrhart, Mayer & Ziegert, 2012; Ganesan *et al.*, 2020). A match between hotel frontline employees and the organisation’s values also enhances employees’ dedication, emotional engagement and vigour (Buil *et al.*, 2016).

Considering the relevance of migrant workers for the tourism sector, Choi, Kim and McGinley (2017) conducted a study to evaluate how different P-O fit facets’ perceptions could influence migrant workers turnover intentions. The P-O fit facets analysed included the migrant workers fit perceptions related to their colleagues (Person-Group fit), job (Person-Job fit), and supervisors (Person-Supervisor fit). The results demonstrated that migrant workers’ fit perceptions predicted their intentions to leave the company. The Person-Group fit was the only one directly associated with turnover intentions, despite all

the three fit types being critical to retaining the employees. Considering this, as employees from the tourism sector often have to directly work with other colleagues during extended hours and variable schedules, it is relevant to consider, during the hiring process, the team with whom they will work instead of only the candidates individually.

The P-O fit concept brings relevant implications into employer branding. It reveals that there are multiple approaches to developing a company's EVP. Professionals will tend to be attracted to companies with which they match. Then, employers should attempt to clearly communicate how it is to work for them instead of showing themselves as the most attractive employer for all potential employees on the market (Backhaus, 2016).

This capacity to transmit many distinct aspects of a company and its positioning as an employer is especially relevant for the hospitality industry. Plenty of hospitality and tourism undergraduate students seem to lose their interest to keep working in the hospitality industry after having a first work experience through an internship program (Kim & Park, 2013; Le *et al.*, 2018). Student expectations related to growth opportunities (Kim & Park, 2013; Le *et al.*, 2018), salaries, workload, work/life balance do not correspond to the reality of what they encountered in this industry (Brown *et al.*, 2015; Kilson, 2021; Kim & Park, 2013).

It is necessary to diminish the gap between what the undergraduate students expect and what this industry offers to reduce their intention to leave. Therefore, hospitality managers need to provide realistic descriptions of the working conditions and career perspectives (Brown *et al.*, 2015; Kim & Park, 2013; Le *et al.*, 2018). Without qualified professionals, the hotels' service quality level offered to their customers is affected, which may decrease their satisfaction and loyalty. Further, it may negatively affect the economic performance of the whole industry (Le *et al.*, 2018).

Thus, to develop a sustainable employer brand, managers must keep consistency between what they promote inside and outside the company (Backhaus, 2016; Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021). However, when a company has many business units spread through different geographical and cultural contexts, it becomes more complex to achieve this task, which is the case of many companies operating in the hotel industry worldwide. In situations like this, a common problem arises: how to deal with the requirement to keep the company's employer brand global standards while at the same time allowing local business units to be responsive to their contexts' peculiarities (Martin, Gollan, & Grigg, 2011).

Due to drastic differences between the headquarter's social context and its business units, employees working in the local business units often face difficulties understanding the meaning behind the corporate values defined by the top managers. Without a clear comprehension of the corporate values, inconsistencies between what the company's headquarter states to its stakeholders about its employer brand and what is done at the local level start to appear (Martin *et al.*, 2011).

Martin *et al.* (2011) propose that situations like this call for an integrative approach in which the headquarter and managers from the local business units need to work in conjunction to develop a flexible employer branding strategy that must be grounded by a focus on authenticity while at the same time privileging the local context. In this sense, local employees must feel empowered to express their unique perspectives, which consequently requires the freedom to interpret and apply the corporate values on their way. By adopting this approach, a company can keep a consistent employer brand permeated by the same corporate values, attending to the company's stakeholders' expectations without sacrificing the necessary flexibility that each unique context will demand.

Mölk and Auer (2018) reinforced this perspective while conducting a study regarding the designing process of a company employer brand that held multiple business units. The authors concluded that top managers need to consider local managers' perspectives to successfully build the desired employer brand through all companies' business units. After all, local managers will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the employer branding strategy. It includes dealing with cultural specificities and operational complexities challenges.

As mentioned before, the hospitality industry has a well-known reputation for having a poor EVP (Baum, 2015; Janta *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, managers should pay special attention to some of the EVP components critical to the attraction and retention of employees. These components include salaries (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Frye *et al.*, 2020; Yao *et al.*, 2019), work/life balance, career progression (Bharwani & Butt, 2012), and training opportunities (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Frye *et al.*, 2020; Poulston, 2008).

Hospitality managers should also allow their employees to express their creativity at work. By letting employees accomplish their tasks distinctly and innovatively, their job satisfaction and, consequently, organization performance may improve. The working environment should also foster a good feeling amongst employees. This way, employers need to pay attention to the space conditions where employees spend their time and

guarantee that these spaces are safe and comfortable (Frye *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, supervisors' attitudes regarding new employees or interns may positively reinforce their work perception in the hospitality industry. Thus, supervisors should, at all times, demonstrate a supportive attitude to their employees (Kim & Park, 2013).

If employees receive a valuable benefits package for their work, they might have their satisfaction and level of identification with their employer increased. Employees who are satisfied and identify with their employers tend to present favourable attitudes while interacting with customers, which positively might influence customer perceptions about these experiences (Schlager *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, by satisfying employees' financial expectations and emotional needs, hotel managers improve their loyalty to the company and reduce their intention to leave (Yao *et al.*, 2019). Thus, managers should constantly manage their employer brand, assuring they foster a good perception of that brand to fortify the company's service brand (Schlager *et al.*, 2011).

The following section will mention some relevant aspects regarding online recruitment activities that managers should perform to improve employer attractiveness.

## **2.2. The Online Recruitment from the Perspective of Signalling Theory**

Internet development and dissemination drastically changed the way professionals look for job opportunities (Cober *et al.*, 2003), look for information about the companies they are interested in working for, and also the way companies present themselves as employers (Mičík & Mičudová, 2018).

On the internet, potential candidates can easily access a large amount of information about employers and share their opinions about these companies. By giving their opinion, candidates can rapidly affect the company's positioning in the employers' market (Cascio & Graham, 2016). For example, a study that analysed the job experiences of Polish migrants working in the hospitality industry in the United Kingdom found that these migrants tend to check the information available online to evaluate employers' attractiveness before applying for a job (Janta *et al.*, 2011). Besides, nowadays there are plenty of websites on which anyone may share their opinion about a company as an employer and millions of people may see it. What is said about companies as employers is out of the control of managers. Due to the possibility of remaining anonymous, employees may share both positive and negative opinions, representing an opportunity and a threat for the companies (Dabirian *et al.*, 2017).

In practical terms, it means that good and poor human resource management practices may be checked by potential candidates beforehand (Janta *et al.*, 2011). This way, their websites represent a relevant space for companies to advertise jobs (Allen *et al.*, 2007), and job seekers are consumers of this recruitment information (Cober *et al.*, 2003).

Companies have space to reveal information about their employer positioning on their websites. This allows them to present distinct levels of information to various potential candidates instead of only displaying a limited number of aspects related to a specific job position (Behrend *et al.*, 2009). Also, differently from the traditional means of communication of job opportunities like printed job advertisements and job fairs, job seekers control how they access the information shown on the websites (Allen *et al.*, 2007).

Many organizations use their websites to present their values and supportive actions related to social and environmental causes (Behrend *et al.*, 2009) and their vision, mission, internal environment and culture (Cascio & Graham, 2016). Therefore, websites represent a much richer source of information for job seekers than traditional printed job advertisements (Baum & Kabst, 2014). The websites also allow companies with low brand awareness to become known by many potential candidates (Cober *et al.*, 2003). Not surprisingly, for a vast number of companies, the use of the internet to interact with potential candidates is already part of their routine (Gregory, Meade & Thompson, 2013).

As the signalling theory explains, individuals and organisations constantly send and receive signals to/from other individuals and organisations. Signals might assume many different forms, including verbal or written messages emitted by a signaller. These signals serve as information sources that help receivers reduce their knowledge gap about the signaller. Since one cannot readily access all the information about a specific entity because some of this information is private, there is always an information asymmetry between the two parts. In this sense, part “A” does not know as much part “B” as “B” knows itself. Based on this premise, individuals and organisations, through the reception of signals sent by other individuals and companies, try to reduce this information asymmetry to make more informed decisions (Connelly *et al.*, 2011; Spence, 1973). After receiving a signal, a receiver sends feedback to the signaller in the form of another signal that enhances the signaller’s level of information about the receiver. Therefore, in a communication system, it is possible to establish four main elements, the signaller (an individual or organisation), the signal (which carries the information), a receiver (the entity that receives and interpret the signal), and feedback (the receiver’s response to the

signal received). In this sense, the signalling theory provides a valuable framework to study companies' recruiting communications (Connelly *et al.*, 2011).

In a recruiting context, job seekers do not know in advance how good the work experience will be at a determined company when they are applying for it. This way, during a decision process, individuals use the information available to evaluate their options before acting (Connelly *et al.*, 2011; Spence, 1973). In practical terms, the signaller (e.g. the HR manager) selects some favourable information about the company and develops a communication plan presenting the company as an employer. This selected information, and the way it is displayed, represent different signals to the receiver (e.g., the candidate). The potential candidates using these signals evaluate the company's attractiveness level as an employer. To develop an effective communication plan, the signaller must ensure that the signals sent are observable, comprehensible, consistent, and considered credible by the receivers. If receivers do not detect these signals or ignore them, the communication plan needs to be revised. By paying attention to the feedback given by the receivers, the signallers can evaluate if their signals are effective (Connelly *et al.*, 2011).

Due to the growing importance of the internet in recruitment activities, many studies started to explore how companies could increase their attractiveness as employers by sending positive signals through their websites and online advertisements. For example, Cober *et al.* (2003) found that candidates' perceptions regarding compensation, culture and development opportunities were positively associated with employer attractiveness. Then, websites that transmit positive information about these three aspects may increase their company's attractiveness.

Another study found that information about supportive activities related to environmental causes on a company website seems to improve its reputation, which ameliorates potential candidates' intentions to apply for a job in this company. A possible explanation may lay in the fact that job seekers associate this kind of activity with prestigious and stable companies that offer good salaries (Behrend *et al.*, 2009).

Potential candidates may also interpret the company's environmental support as signals that it will treat employees well. Thus, publicizing environmental support on the website represents a cheap way to increase a company's attractiveness as an employer (Behrend *et al.*, 2009). Besides it, to attract the best talents from the Millennial generation, companies should improve the usability of their website and display a good amount of

information about work/life balance. Both aspects increase Millennials' attraction to a company's website (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2012).

When it comes to attracting young and highly qualified employees, a study conducted with college students in the United States revealed that companies' reputations associated with their human resources practices might play a relevant role in catching the attention of these candidates. More specifically, the study revealed that college students seem to be very attentive to a company's reputation regarding compensation. Hence companies with a reputation of paying low wages and not offering other attractive benefits may be discarded as potential employers right at the beginning of the job search. Companies well-known for family support and socially diverse environment are considered more attractive, even though these aspects are not as important as the compensation. All these elements associated with a company's reputation serve as signals that college students seem to interpret as indications that the company is a supportive and prestigious employer. Therefore, investments in these human resource practices might improve the recruitment process's effectiveness (Wayne & Casper, 2012). Interestingly, amongst the main reasons for hotel management undergraduate students to lose interest in working in the hotel industry are the low salaries and heavy workload, which often affects the employees' personal lives (Kilson, 2021). Hence, these aspects serve as good indicators of what employers should consider in their human resources practices.

Wayne and Casper (2012) also note that companies' rankings about the best family-friendly or best social diversity companies might send relevant signals to potential candidates that the company is a good employer option. Regarding the benefits companies might reap from having third-party certifications for being considered a great place to work, Dineen and Allen (2016) conducted a study to evaluate if the investment in these certifications is worthy. According to their results, third-party certifications represent a credible external signal. In general, it seems that obtaining these certifications might generate positive outcomes, such as reducing employee turnover rates. It might be because these certifications help increase employees' level of identification with the organization. At the same time, these certifications highlight the positive aspects of working for a specific company and allow employees to compare their current employer to other potential employers, potentially decreasing their interest in leaving the company. These certifications also serve as a relevant source of information for potential candidates that do not have direct access to a company to evaluate how positive it is to work for it.

Moreover, when there are few job opportunities on the market, these certifications may increase the quality of the applicant pool (Dineen & Allen, 2016).

Lastly, a recent study found that highly ingenious employees feel more attracted to companies that externally promote a highly innovative culture and product portfolio than employees with low innovativeness self-perceptions. It brings crucial implications in terms of employer branding since highly creative employees might play an essential role in developing innovative solutions for their company. Therefore, companies capable of attracting and retaining these professionals can generate a competitive advantage, for example, by developing new products. The study also reinforced other traditional aspects, such as the company's location attractiveness, popularity and size, that might affect its attractiveness as an employer. These three aspects were positively related to an employer brand attractiveness (Sommer, Heidenreich, & Handrich, 2017).

Therefore, to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of their online recruiting activities, to allow potential candidates to assess if they match the company (Elving *et al.*, 2013), a company needs to offer truthful and helpful information about itself and its job opportunities (Allen *et al.*, 2007; De Cooman *et al.*, 2009; Elving *et al.*, 2013). It should include the job characteristics (e.g., level of qualification and experience required), organization attributes (e.g., organization's culture, size and growth opportunities) (Ganesan *et al.*, 2020), and company values.

In summary, managers must invest in their websites to create a space where potential candidates feel welcomed and find relevant and positive information about the company in a truthful manner, such as company culture, internal environment and values (Cascio & Graham, 2016). At the same time, they also must invest time in creating attractive job advertisements that differentiate the company, as an employer, from its competitors (Ewing *et al.*, 2002), presenting relevant information not only about the job but also about the company and its positioning as an employer (Elving *et al.*, 2013). Employers capable of conveying an attractive image as an employer on the labour market have higher chances to attract candidates with high potential, hence contributing to building a prosperous future for the company (Schlager *et al.*, 2011).



### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Purpose and Type of Study

This study was conducted to generate applicable and relevant contributions to organisational reality, following a pragmatic philosophy. The methodological design chosen was qualitative with a descriptive-exploratory purpose (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

A researcher often opts between following a deductive or an inductive approach to reasoning. If the first is elected, the aim is to test a pre-established theory, while an inductive approach adoption leads to a building theory process. While a quantitative study's primary goal is to present the likelihood frequencies of a phenomenon to occur, the qualitative study's objective is to expand and generalise theories. Therefore, quantitative studies often adopt a deductive approach, while qualitative studies frequently follow an inductive approach, even though qualitative studies may join both perspectives (Hyde, 2000).

This study follows an abductive approach like the one described by Dubois and Gadde (2002), which is different from a simple mixture of deductive and inductive approaches. By adopting an abductive approach, a researcher aims to generate new concepts to develop pre-existing theories. Instead of purely testing a pre-existing one or building a new one, a researcher refines a pre-existing theoretical framework by incorporating unanticipated empirical findings and insights during the conduction of the study. The objective of studies adopting an abductive approach is to develop a theory (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

Qualitative research allows researchers to understand the meaning individuals attribute to their experiences while interacting with organisations. Qualitative studies usually collect a large volume of textual data, which they retrieve from various sources, including organisational documents and other types of material available online (King & Brooks, 2017). Documents may represent a rich information source about several companies' activities, like events, meetings, policies and procedures (Lee, 2012; Ventresca & Mohr, 2002). Through a qualitative analysis of these documents, it is possible, for example, to identify and evaluate the positioning of companies concerning their organisational policy (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

The collection and analysis of these secondary data can be the basis to carry studies in the management area (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). However, it is vital to check if the

available documents offer enough data volume and if this data is authentic, reliable and appropriate to answer the research questions before conducting researches based on them (Lee, 2012).

Currently, several companies' documents are available online, on their websites and social media profiles, which means that a researcher can directly access this data on the primary source, assuring documents authenticity and reliability.

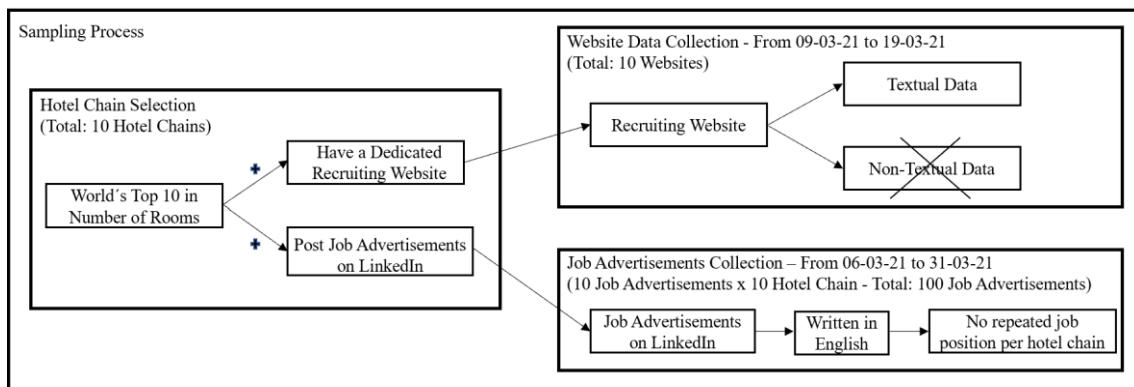
Considering the above, the methodological strategy selected for this study is archival research (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Archival research, also known as the archival method, is the research conducted based on documents, including books, journals (APA, n.d.), or digital texts such as emails or websites created by or about an organisation (Ventresca & Mohr, 2002). Its non-intrusive nature is especially adequate for situations where the researcher intends to study the phenomenon of interest in its natural context; otherwise, it would be hardly achievable (APA, n.d.).

### 3.2. Sampling and Data Collection Methods

Due to its international component, the tourism companies compete internationally for employees as they compete for guests from all around the world. Therefore, this study adopted an international perspective to select the hotel chains.

The sampling technique chosen for this study was purposive sampling. Here, the sample elements' selection occurred according to their ability to answer the research questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Figure I summarizes the whole sampling process adopted during the data collection.

Figure I - Sampling Process



Source: The author.

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

The sampling process was conducted in three steps. The first step was to select hotel companies with a dedicated recruiting website to present their employment positioning and use LinkedIn to post job advertisements.

Qualitative projects usually use small samples but, it allows the researcher to have an in-depth perspective of the context and has the opportunity to understand what and how something happens (Ruyter & Scholl, 1998). Due to the vast quantity of hotel chains in the world and the large volume of data often generated by qualitative studies, for practical reasons, only ten of the largest hotel chains, considering the number of rooms according to the Hotels 325 ranking (Hotelsmag, 2020), were selected for this study.

These hotel chains offer an opportunity to have a worldwide perspective, encompassing many different social-economic contexts. Hence, the selection of ten out of the biggest hotel chains in the world contributes to increasing the study's results transferability to other hotels. Transferability "refers to the extent to which a new theory's constructs and if-then propositions are valid in contexts not included in the data used to develop the theory" (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2019, p. 43). It might be enhanced by incorporating participants from different contexts, such as their geographical location. In this sense, transferability is the qualitative research equivalent to the external validity of quantitative studies (Zeithaml *et al.*, 2019).

Table II shows all the hotel chains considered in this study.

**Table II - List of Hotel Chains**

Rank	Company	Rooms	Hotels
1 <sup>st</sup>	Marriott International	1,348,532	7,163
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jin Jiang International Holdings Co. Ltd. <sup>a</sup>	1,081,230	10,020
3 <sup>rd</sup>	OYO Rooms	1,054,000	45,600
4 <sup>th</sup>	Hilton Worldwide Holdings	971,780	6,110
5 <sup>th</sup>	IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group)	883,563	5,903
6 <sup>th</sup>	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	831,025	9,280
7 <sup>th</sup>	Accor	739,537	5,036
8 <sup>th</sup>	Choice Hotels International	590,897	7,153
14 <sup>th</sup>	Hyatt Hotels Corp.	223,111	913
15 <sup>th</sup>	Aimbridge Hospitality	179,136	1,266

Source: Adapted from "Hotels 325," by Hotelsmag, 2020, Retrieved October 28, 2020, from [http://www.marketingandtechnology.com/repository/webFeatures/HOTELS/H2007\\_SpecialReport325.pdf](http://www.marketingandtechnology.com/repository/webFeatures/HOTELS/H2007_SpecialReport325.pdf)

<sup>a</sup> As this is a holding company that manages large international hotel chains, the Radisson Hotel Group chain was considered in the study.

The textual data of companies recruiting websites were manually collected during the second step. For each hotel chain's website, the data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached, that is, until very few or no new insights could be

found (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). This process lasted from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of March, 2021. Only textual data were collected, since the analysis of image, video and audio would involve the description and interpretation of the colour, shape, texture, illumination, movement, facial expression, background sound, voice tone, amongst other elements by itself and as a whole (Saldaña, 2016). Because of the complexity associated with this analysis, which would require a vast amount of time beyond the scope of the present study, this content was disregarded.

In the third step, following similar reasoning for selecting only ten hotel chains, ten job advertisements were manually gathered from each hotel chains' official LinkedIn profiles. This way, a total of 100 job advertisements were collected. The reason why LinkedIn was chosen as the job advertisements source is based on the fact that companies tend to prefer advertising their job opportunities in LinkedIn when they are focused on attracting qualified professionals (Mičík & Mičudová, 2018). Furthermore, LinkedIn is a professional social networking platform that hosts more than 770 million professional profiles spread over more than 200 countries (LinkedIn, n.d.), allowing the collection of job advertisements from many different locations worldwide easily and rapidly.

To ensure the study included the highest variability of job positions, only one job advertisement per job position in each hotel chain was considered. For example, if a job advertisement for a receptionist from the hotel chain "A" was selected, no other job advertisement for a receptionist from the hotel chain "A" was taken. This third data collection phase lasted from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 2021. The list of job advertisements collected for this study is presented in Table VII (Appendix 8.3. List of Job Advertisements).

### **3.3. Data Analysis Method**

The data obtained in this study were analysed using the software for qualitative data analysis MAXQDA, and the method applied was Template Analysis. This study took this path because it is suitable for studies adopting a pragmatic philosophy and using textual data as the material to be analysed. Furthermore, it is a flexible method that allows the analysis to be carried out through an abductive perspective (King & Brooks, 2017). This flexibility is adequate to the analysis proposed in this study. It followed some pre-established guidelines in the literature while adopting an open perspective to the insights that may emerge during the analysis. The codification guide is available in Table VIII (Appendix 8.4. Codification Guide).

The analysis was conducted following the steps described by King and Brooks (2017). First, all the data collected were organised into individual files according to their origin and theme. For example, all the data from a hotel chain's recruiting website were organised in a single file. Each file was divided into sections according to the nature of data, such as "company values" or "benefits". Meanwhile, each job advertisement's data were not split, keeping their original formatting. Then, all data files were imported to MAXQDA, where it was possible to establish a single database. Later, aiming to develop a data familiarisation, all the files were read several times.

After being familiar with the data, the researcher started a preliminary coding process on MAXQDA. In this initial coding process, every extract from the text that seemed potentially relevant was codified using codes defined *a priori* on the codification guide, together with codes defined *a posteriori* that emerged from the data. In this initial coding process, the first themes started to emerge.

Later, a preliminary code grouping took place. The initial list of codes and themes was reanalysed, and code adjustments and merging were performed. It was also established an initial themes schema presenting the relationships between the codes and themes in a hierarchical order. An initial template was developed based on this code list and themes' schema alterations. This initial template was applied on fresh material, which had not been codified before, to test its appropriateness in capturing the main insights emerging from the data. Again, adjustments regarding the number of codes, their meaning, and their relationship in the themes schema were necessary.

Finally, a final template version, including the complete list of codes and themes schema, was defined, and all the data was reanalysed to ensure that no relevant insights were missed. Likewise, relevant original database extracts were selected to represent the main themes in the results chapter. More than contributing to illustrating the themes, these extracts allow readers to check the themes' background.

During the whole data analysis process, including the initial reading process, memos containing reflections about the data were written to organise any insight and record all the steps taken. These memos were individually written for each hotel chain data set and the whole data set.

#### 4. RESULTS

Aiming to demonstrate how these hotel chains use online communication for recruitment purposes means to present their positioning as employers. The present chapter describes the collected data from the hotel chains’ websites and LinkedIn profiles. The data presentation is divided into two main parts. First, a description related to the data found on the websites is made. Then, the data found on the job advertisements are displayed.

Data organisation stands on six themes and respective subthemes that emerged during the analysis process applying the template analysis technique. Table III presents all the themes, subthemes, and how they relate to each other.

**Table III - List of Themes and Subthemes**

Group	Themes	Subthemes
Websites	Company’s Initial Presentation	Company’s Values
		Company’s Culture
	Social Responsibility Initiatives	Social Diversity
		Best Employer Awards
		Social and Environmental Initiatives
		Professional Development Opportunities
Career Opportunities	List of Hotel Brands	
	Benefits Offered to Employees	
Job Advertisements	Non-standardised advertisements	-
	Company’s Relevance in the Industry	-
	Job Description	Job Tasks
		Job Requirements
		Team/Schedule
		Job Benefits

Source: The author.

After comparing the websites, there was a great diversity in terms of volume and type of data displayed. The information presented is usually divided into sections that compose different layers about companies’ employment positioning. Because each website displays data differently and this study does not consider this organisation, the data were grouped following its main topic in the Results chapter to ameliorate its comprehension. Thus, the related data sets from each website were grouped to form themes and subthemes. For example, all the data related to benefits offered to employees presented on the websites were clustered under the subtheme named “Benefits Offered to Employees”. Next, the first theme associated with the data found on the hotel chains’ websites is presented.

## 4.1. Websites

### 4.1.1. Company's Initial Presentation

A common aspect found in all hotel chains websites was an initial presentation about their positioning in the international hotel industry, their core values and culture and, sometimes, a short reference to their history.

Most companies describe themselves as being one of the leading companies worldwide. Citations containing the number of hotels, number of countries in which they operate, or the total number of employees are frequent. For example:

*“As the #1 leader in hospitality worldwide, Marriott International has 7,500+ hotel properties and 30 top hotel brands. We’re in 132 countries and territories, and we’re still growing. Unmatched opportunities await you! The next step in your career could lead to your greatest adventure”.* (Marriot, n.d.).

*“OYO Hotels & Homes is India and South Asia’s largest, China’s second largest, world’s third largest and fastest growing chain of leased and franchised hotels, homes, managed living and workspaces”.* (OYO, n.d.).

*“Over the last century, Hilton has welcomed more than 3 billion guests through its doors – curating exceptional experiences, extraordinary stays and memories to last a lifetime”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

*“IHG Hotels & Resorts has more than 5,800 leased, managed or owned hotels. You’ll find us in more than 100 countries. Our 16 brands help guests create amazing memories with the help of an incredible team. Opportunities of all kinds are born at IHG”.* (IHG, n.d.).

*“Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH) is one of the world’s largest lodging companies. With more than 7,100 hotels franchised in more than 40 countries and territories, Choice represents more than 600,000 rooms around the globe”.* (Choice, n.d.).

Besides, some companies highlight the positive aspects regarding the employment experience. Among other aspects, companies refer to career possibilities and the positive environment where employees may feel welcomed and part of something bigger.

*“We aim at creating exceptional experiences that will turn both guests and employees into raving fans, because our own well-being in our jobs is just as important as our guest fulfillment. Like all good stories, everything is related. We are driven by our shared values”.* (Accor, n.d.).

*“Be a part of something bigger. Enjoy life every day. Make a difference in the lives of those around you. Love where you work. Join a company that values respect, integrity, humility, empathy, creativity, and fun. With careers spanning the globe, your perfect opportunity awaits. Discover why Hyatt is consistently ranked one of the world’s best places to work”.* (Hyatt, n.d.).

*“Our 60,000 associates around the globe are passionate about serving our guests and driving exceptional results, and thrive in a culture where everyone is inspired to be the best. Join a world of possibility with Aimbridge Hospitality”.* (Aimbridge, n.d.).

In this initial presentation, it is also possible to see some brief mentions of companies' culture and values. However, by further exploring the website, it was possible to find other explicit references regarding some of the companies' core values and what these values mean for them.

### ***Company's Values***

The way each company presents its values and what they mean is very particular. In this sense, the unique features of each company, as an employer, start to emerge. However, as the following extracts demonstrate, it is still possible to find some transversal values to the hotel industry, such as a strong sense of customer orientation, fun at work, and respect for social diversity. OYO and Choice present aspects regarding employees' behaviour that contribute to their performance as part of their values, like customer orientation.

*“[...] Execute Fast and Good. Always Learn, Never Lecture. [...] We Make our Lives Difficult to Make our Customer's and Partner's Lives Easy. [...] Don't Limit Yourself to What You are Asked to Do”.* (OYO, n.d.).

*“Be Bold: Take calculated risks to advance our business. Be Quick: Act with a sense of thoughtful urgency. Listen: Value diverse perspectives and input that differ from your own. Be Curious: Never stop learning or growing by asking questions and challenging ideas. Show Integrity: Do what's right—even when it's not easy”.* (Choice, n.d.).

Another pattern identified is the focus on the customer and the importance of providing fun moments for the employees. In this sense, Radisson Hotel Group seems to foster their values mainly oriented to service excellence, emphasizing the importance of delivering a memorable experience to guests while promoting a positive working environment for its employees.

*“We help to ensure our success by aligning our 95,000 global team members around our core beliefs: We deliver memorable moments every day, everywhere, every time; We enjoy serving with our “Yes I Can!” spirit; We are many minds, with one mindset; We value open and direct interactions to build trust; We believe anything is possible; We have fun in all that we do”.* (Radisson, n.d.).



Accor seems to go even further on its focus on the guests' experiences, making it clear that the guests are the centre of everything. They also reinforce the importance of having fun while working.

*“Guest Passion: We obsess over our customers. Our guests are the driver of our decisions and our actions. We put them first, we care for them. We go the extra mile for them. We enjoy doing it. [...] Spirit of Conquest: Our guests are globetrotters, and so are we. We want to be where they want to be. We explore, we initiate, and we develop. We are ambitious for our guests. We make the impossible possible, we have fun doing it”.* (Accor, n.d.).

Connecting the guest focus with fun while working, Windham states on its values that:

*“Fun is an energizing force. When we have fun doing what we love, our guests love their experiences with us”.* (Wyndham, n.d.).

In line with the international context faced by these companies that operate in dozens of countries with different cultural contexts, another value that seems to permeate all the companies is the celebration and respect for social diversity. Even though not all the companies explicitly mention social diversity as part of their core values, all of them discuss on their websites the importance of having a diverse workforce for company performance and to turn the world into a better place.

*“We believe in doing our part for the world and treating others well. That’s why we celebrate difference in our business and strive to help people progress. Everyone’s able to thrive and make a difference. Join us and see for yourself”.* (IHG, n.d.).

*“Respect: We are connected with the world, and to others. We enjoy the mix of cultures. We are proud of our differences. We put you first and we value you, whoever you are”.* (Accor, n.d.).

*“Respecting and valuing diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives”.* (Hyatt, n.d.).

This social diversity openness is discussed in-depth in the “Social Responsibility Initiatives” section. Following the presentation of their values, some companies also describe their culture and identity as an organization.

### ***Company’s Culture***

Very similar to the way companies present their values, their descriptions regarding organisational culture vary significantly in terms of how deeply and with how much detail they explain it. For example, while some hotel chains explicitly describe how the employees should behave, others do not even directly mention their organisational

culture. Again, there are some patterns across all chains. For example, Wyndham and Aimbridge have short descriptions about their cultures, and both companies seem to have a culture permeated by a service mindset.

*“At Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, a set of values underpins our distinctive culture, drives our growth, nurtures innovation, and inspires the great experiences we create for team members and the people we serve. [...] Our signature “Count on me” service culture encourages each team member to be responsive, be respectful, and deliver great experiences to our guests, partners and communities”.* (Wyndham, n.d.).

*“We seek out passionate and service-minded people who desire opportunities to directly contribute to the overall success of the company. We have high expectations for results and performance. Thousands of our employees nationwide are promoted each year and we are proud”.* (Aimbridge, n.d.).

Meanwhile, some other companies present a culture that embraces guests, employees, and the local communities. IHG and Radisson promote on their websites a culture of inclusivity and diversity. They reinforce the importance of guaranteeing that guests and employees feel welcome and comfortable being who they are.

*“One of our core cultural beliefs, “We are Many Minds with One Mindset” is based on our respect for individual differences, life experiences and diverse world views working together to help make memorable experiences for all who walk through our doors. To enable that to happen, we are dedicated to building a global team of employees that reflect the communities where we work and live, and the diversity of the customers we serve. [...] Our guests and our talent deserve an environment where they are valued for who they are”.* (Radisson, n.d.).

*“We do more than give guests an amazing experience. We believe in doing good and welcoming all to our business. That’s why you’ll find a culture of Diversity & Inclusion and exciting Corporate Responsibility projects. Here, you’ll have room to belong and make a difference”.* (IHG, n.d.).

Interestingly, some hotel chains distinctly display justifications why it is relevant to promote a culture of wellbeing for their employees. According to Hilton, Accor, and Hyatt, a key factor to achieve a positive company performance and satisfied guests is happy employees.

*“Like many, we are in a business of people serving people. We lead with culture and are fiercely committed to creating the world’s best work environment. We know that when we invest in our Team Members, our guests and communities benefit. It is why we are committed to providing industry-leading benefits that empower Team Members to be their best selves, in and outside of work, and creating meaningful personal and professional growth opportunities for all”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

*“We aim at creating exceptional experiences that will turn both guests and employees into raving fans, because our own well-being in our jobs is just as*

*important as our guest fulfillment. Like all good stories, everything is related”.* (Accor, n.d.).

*“At Hyatt, we care for people so they can be their best. [...] We achieve our greatest success when all colleagues feel comfortable and confident bringing their whole selves to work each day – fueling innovation and creativity through our diverse backgrounds. These different points of view are a source of strength, connecting us more closely to those we serve, including guests, customers, our communities, vendors and owners”.* (Hyatt, n.d.).

Finally, another pattern found about the companies’ culture was the influence of their founders. Marriott and OYO seem to incentivize their employees to open their paths by being like their founders who, through entrepreneurship, created their legacy.

*“At Marriott International, we celebrate the dreamers who make their own mark, and with good reason. [...] Our founders, J.W. and Alice Marriott, started with a small idea: a root beer stand. From there, it grew into a small hotel business, and then another, bigger one. Together they created something that changed their future—and maybe yours. A great career is about seizing new opportunities, building meaningful relationships and being a force of good in the world”.* (Marriott, n.d.).

*“No other hotel company is using technology or empowering small hotels to deliver value like OYO does. All of this is being driven by passionate YOpreneurs who are the custodians of our amazing company culture. They are empowered to run OYO like they would run their own companies, and we respect and celebrate their entrepreneurial spirit”.* (OYO, n.d.)

Despite mentioning their worries about assuring a welcoming culture that embraces and values social diversity, the hotel chains went a step further to prove that it is not just in their speech. In the following section, the theme “Social Responsibility Initiatives” presents some initiatives and awards won by the hotel chains for supporting a more inclusive working environment.

#### **4.1.2. Social Responsibility Initiatives**

Analysing the corporate social responsibility section of the hotel chains’ websites made it possible to identify numerous references to initiatives aiming to make their working spaces more accessible. There were statements concerning openness to social diversity on all the hotel chains' websites. These mentions vary from short statements found on OYO’s website to more elaborated ones on Hilton and Accor’s websites.

*“Diversity is Powerful. Diversity is Fun”.* (OYO, n.d.)

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

*“We are diverse by nature and inclusive by choice, and believe that any and every Team Member can make a difference. As we say, ‘Diversity is part of our future, past of our legacy and fundamental to our success’”. (Hilton, n.d.).*

*“By adding your voice to 120 cultures and counting. Our culture of inclusion welcomes everyone, regardless of race, gender, background, or... anything really!”. (Accor, n.d.).*

They also present other initiatives such as groups for the employees to meet and share their experiences, charity campaigns, and activities to reduce their negative impact on the local communities and the environment. In this sense, the present theme splits into different subthemes that individually approach each type of social initiative. The next subtheme discusses how the hotel chains promote their visions about a diverse world, internally and externally.

### *Social Diversity*

Amongst the many social initiatives, some hotel chains promote programs targeting women. The main objective of these programs seems to help women achieve their professional aspirations, such as occupying a leadership position in the company and other professional development aspects like developing their professional networking. Beyond professional development, these programs also aim to offer spaces where women can share their experiences.

*“To connect Choice women with one another socially and professionally, to promote the growth and development of women, to afford women leaders a forum to give back, and to act as a sounding board for women’s issues in the workplace”. (Choice, n.d.).*

*“WLEAD, which stands for Women’s Leadership Empowerment And Development is designed to help women at Aimbridge achieve their professional career goals, network within the industry, engage in community service opportunities, and gain access to inspirational speakers, education, and programming”. (Aimbridge, n.d.).*

An often-mentioned topic is openness and support for the people who identify themselves as part of the LGBTQ+ community. Most hotel chains declare themselves supportive and open for employees regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Hilton, for example, has a specific post on its blog to discuss its vision and support for the LGBTQ+ community. Choice develops internal activities to educate its employees about this community, while Radisson also supports external events, including Pride parades.

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

*“The RHG Pride group focuses on initiatives to educate RHG Americas employees about the LGBTQ community, become an LGBTQ welcoming hotel of choice (TAG Approved), and partner with LGBTQ non-profit groups in the community. This group is heavily involved with local Pride parades and LGBTQ events and is seeking ways to create a physically safe space for the LGBTQ community in our offices and hotels”. (Radisson, n.d.).*

*“Out & Open is for colleagues identifying as LGBTQ+ (or allies supporting LGBTQ+). The group addresses LGBTQ+ - focused matters, organises activities and supports the local LGBTQ+ community”. (IHG, n.d.).*

*“PRIDE is a resource group for LGBTQ+ and ally associates that provides educational opportunities to raise awareness and gain full acceptance from the general associate population”. (Choice, n.d.).*

In addition to the initiatives targeting women and LGBTQ+ community members, some hotel chains present some figures about their diverse workforce with people of different races, generations, and professionals with disabilities.

*“The 95,000 team members working under the Radisson Hotel Group come from 160 different countries”. (Radisson, n.d.).*

*“57% Global Team Members are Millennials. 114 Countries & Territories. 40+ Languages Spoken. 5 Generations of Team Members. 8 Team Member Resource Groups”. (Hilton, n.d.)*

*“54% of our employees are under 35 years of age. 35% of hotel General Managers will be women by end of 2020”. (Accor, n.d.).*

IHG and Choice also have internal groups targeting these employees with disabilities and from different generations and races, allowing them to share their experiences and support each other from their initial adaptation to forming a family.

*“The Black Employee Resource Group (BERG) brings together professionals who support and empower one another. The group champions the interests and development of black colleagues. [...] Hospitality Professionals Exchange (Hype) is dedicated to employees currently in the first decade of their careers. It aims to provide guidance and development opportunities to new colleagues”. (IHG, n.d.).*

*“Choice Working Parents (CWP). Mission: CONNECT working parents across Choice and provide networking opportunities. DEVELOP & ENHANCE working parents’ professional growth opportunities and resources. CREATE a communication channel with and EDUCATE Choice’s Senior Executives and People Managers. SUPPORT HR initiatives and policies that impact working parents. [...] ENABLE. Mission: We enable success for all abilities through Awareness, Access, Advantages, and Advocacy. Our organization will raise awareness and champion the benefits of a diverse workplace to create a safe environment where people of all abilities can thrive. We will unleash the unique*

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

*contributions of people with different abilities and begin to change perceptions of disabilities being barriers to success”.* (Choice, n.d.).

Also comprising the professional background in their social diversity set of initiatives, some hotel chains promote openness for professionals with different careers paths. Thus, Wyndham and OYO explicitly state that they welcome experienced professionals from varied sectors and professional journeys.

*“We welcome professionals from different industries, walks of life and at various stages in their professional journeys to join us and contribute to our mission”.* (OYO, n.d.).

Similarly, due to the widespread tradition of military service in the United States, Marriott and Hilton also discuss their recruiting program targeting former militaries, offering them new professional careers.

*“As you transition into civilian life, continue your career journey with Marriott International, where we embrace a spirit to serve. As the leading hospitality company worldwide, we offer great opportunities and support for you to grow”.* (Marriott, n.d.).

*“Hilton has hired over 30,000 veterans, spouses and dependents in the last 6 years. With shared values like leadership, integrity and teamwork, veterans, spouses, caregivers and dependents are a natural fit with Hilton. Search for your hospitality career now to put your amazing skills and experience to work on our teams. [...] We equip veterans, spouses and transitioning service members with the resources to confidently move toward putting your talents to work as a Hilton Team Member”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

In the end, some hotel chains explain that more than just being open for social diversity, welcoming people as they are, represents a strategic decision. Operating in many different countries, with different cultures, having a diversified workforce seem to be a relevant resource to assure the companies capabilities to meet their diverse guests' needs.

*“I joined Radisson RED because of its FLOW and the fact that we can express ourselves. It's very difficult these days to find a workplace where you can really be yourself, where you can have as many tattoos or weird haircuts as you want. I feel that here is my home and my colleagues are my family – and this makes me the real host to our guests. ' Roypim, Creative at Radisson RED, Brussels”.* (Radisson, n.d.).

*“As a global hospitality provider, we believe diversity enriches our organization. As a result, we proudly embrace a culture of diversity and inclusion that supports team members of all backgrounds and experiences. [...] We view the diversity of our team as a competitive advantage”.* (Wyndham, n.d.).

*“Promoting diversity & inclusion is one of our key drivers of performance and innovation [...]”.* (Accor, n.d.).

In the battle for the best talents on the market, to prove they are great places to work, some hotels chains not only claim they are attractive employers, but they explicitly present the awards won for their human resources best practices.

### ***Best Employer Awards***

On their websites, some hotels chains proudly present the awards they recently won and their mention in ranking lists of the best employers made by Forbes or Fortune magazines, or websites like Glassdoor, for example. These mentions state how great the place is to work, from a general perspective to more specific aspects such as being an innovative company, the best CEO for women, or workforce diversity.

*“We’ve always been committed to making Marriott a great place to work. But in case you don’t believe us, here’s what others have said. [...] FORTUNE 100 Best Companies to Work For® 2019. The World’s Most Innovative Companies 2018. Forbes The Best Employers for Diversity 2019”.* (Marriott, n.d.).

*“Over the past few years, Hilton was named Best Place to Work, Best Multinational Workplace and other honors that reflect the company’s commitment to its Team Members and workplace”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

Due to the broad international presence of the hotel chains, some of them also present local awards they won in certain countries. Moreover, some of their awards seem to specifically target young employees, as is the case of Accor.

*“Our brands are continuously recognized as a top employer and we love to show it off! [...] Recently recognized by Forbes Canada’s Best Employers 2021. Canada’s Top Employers for Young People (2020). Great Place to Work – Mexico”.* (Accor, n.d.).

Hyatt also exposes its award for being one of the best companies for Latin women, recent graduates, and LGBTQ+ community members. Meanwhile, Choice demonstrates its CEO as being positively perceived by its female employees.

*“President and CEO Pat Pacious has been named one of 2020’s Best CEOs For Women of large companies by Comparably, a workplace culture and compensation monitoring website. Comparably determined this year’s Best CEOs For Women through ratings anonymously provided by employees. We strive to have all associates feel welcome, wanted & respected and we’re proud that our female associates strongly believe that Choice is a great place for women to work!”.* (Choice, n.d.).

*“We are proud to be recognized for our inclusion & diversity efforts. Some of our most recent honors include: Best Places to Work for LGBT Equality—Human Rights Campaign. 50 Best Companies for Latinas to Work for in the U.S.—Latina Style. Best Employers for New Grads – 2018 FORBES”.* (Hyatt, n.d.).

In the end, this great diversity of awards presented on the hotel chains’ websites seem to be purposely selected to attract different professional segments. In addition to their internal initiatives aiming to improve the employment experience, most hotel chains also discuss how they contribute to turning the rest of the world into a better place.

### ***Social and Environmental Initiatives***

Many hotel chains present their initiatives to reduce the impacts of their operations on the local communities and the environment through “green” practices, supporting charity campaigns, or incentivizing their employees to donate part of their time to a social cause. For Hilton and Radisson, one of the main reasons behind their initiatives directed to guaranteeing a sustainable future for their operations worldwide is the development of the local communities and the preservation of the environment. Meanwhile, Marriott and OYO describe their initiatives as part of their culture.

*“Part of our mission is to support the local communities and environment we call home. We practice sustainable business and encourage innovative and environmentally conscious initiatives in all aspects of our culture”.* (Marriott, n.d.).

*“Our sustainability actions support preservation of natural resources and destinations while contributing to the bottom line and enhancing our ability to deliver the value our customers expect”.* (Radisson, n.d.).

*“The world believes in us because we believe in us. The way of life at OYO – and our approach to things – is guided by 17 core principles or Culture Tenets, as we call them. [...] Before we Make a Business Decision, we Calculate Long Term Net Social Benefit”.* (OYO, n.d.).

*“As the first global hotel company, Hilton has impacted billions of lives and thousands of communities around the world – bringing people and cultures together while expanding horizons and opportunities. [...] Hilton is committed to creating a better world travel. We are focused on ensuring the destinations where our guests live, work and travel are vibrant and resilient for generations to come. Through our Travel with Purpose 2030 targets, we pledge to cut our environment footprint in half, and double our social impact investment by 2030”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

Following a similar approach to presenting its awards related to its human resource practices, Choice also mentions its certifications associated with its environmental responsibility.



*“When it comes to being green, we don’t just talk the talk, we walk the walk. Our worldwide headquarters is Platinum LEED Certified (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) and our technology center is LEED Certified”.* (Choice, n.d.).

Additionally, some hotel chains refer their support to some charity campaigns and organizations. Besides directly supporting those charities, hotel chains, like Accor and Choice, incentivize their employees to participate in those initiatives.

*“Our Accor Solidarity endowment fund supports the Group’s employees and its partners with their solidarity initiatives. It helps combat the economic and social exclusion of vulnerable people through training and vocational integration”.* (Accor, n.d.).

*“To move the needle on our community investment nationwide, we are also proud to partner with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, giving over a quarter of a million dollars each year to support their mission to enable young people to reach their full potential. And we don’t just write a check—we participate. Every year, our executives and associates spend at least one paid work day a year volunteering at a local branch, often revitalizing the club building and spending time with the kids”.* (Choice, n.d.).

*“Aimbridge participates annually in fundraising on behalf of JDRF. JDRF’s sole purpose and mission is to find a cure for diabetes through the support of research. One of Aimbridge’s key events is the local ‘Walk to Cure Diabetes’ and we have raised over \$500,000 with each year setting records for both associate participation and funds raised”.* (Aimbridge, n.d.).

By further exploring the websites, it was possible to identify a typical section in all the websites: their careers offerings. Hotel chains display the details and options of careers with a significant variation. Some of them present their career opportunities in a broader perspective, while others describe in detail their job positions. The following theme discusses how the hotel chains use their websites to present their careers opportunities, give some professional advice to potential candidates, and how these companies are actively trying to attract highly qualified professionals to the hotel industry.

### **4.1.3. Career Opportunities**

There are significant differences in the hotel chains’ approach for career opportunities presentation. On one side, some hotel chains have websites with a large content volume. For example, Marriott, Hilton, IHG, and Accor show on their websites a large amount of information about themselves, including career opportunities. These companies describe their many job positions openings and the tasks associated with each

job. Besides, there are also mentions about how the company's values should permeate the job activities. They also divide their careers into two main groups, corporate's and hotels'.

*“Corporate Jobs. Our corporate associates help define the company's path and direct the business and operations to ensure we remain the world's leading hospitality company. [...] Join the thousands of associates that make up our corporate headquarters and regional offices. From entry-level employees to our most senior leaders, our corporate associates support our business regionally and globally”.* (Marriott, n.d.).

*“Food and Beverage Experts. Be part of the Team that creates exciting and memorable meals that cater to the sophisticated palates of our guests around the world. We look for experienced culinary professionals who are well-practiced in culturally specific cooking techniques, flavor preferences and dining traditions”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

*“IT and Project Management. [...] IT is where some of our most exciting innovation is born. We've already introduced some industry firsts and we're determined to dream up more. Here, you could be involved in simplifying everyday tasks, creating tools to lower costs or keeping vital systems safe, secure and available. The challenges grow all the time – along with the range of opportunities”.* (IHG, n.d.).

*“Engineering & Maintenance. Sustainable solutions, immaculate and attractive spaces and efficient operational systems all combine to making our properties not just buildings but destinations. You achieve exceptional standards, develop preventative maintenance and resource management programs that ensure a safe and welcoming destination for our guests, employees and visitors”.* (Accor, n.d.).

On the other side, some hotel chains have websites with a smaller volume of information in general, including references to their career opportunities. For instance, on OYO and Wyndham's websites, there are very few statements about career options. Like all the other, both companies allow potential candidates to look for job openings, but they do not provide extra information about the jobs and career possibilities. It reinforces the perception that each company seems to have its way to manage its employer branding practices online.

*“Technology Enthusiasts. If you believe in driving impact through technology, then OYO is where you must be now! Our Technology team creates platforms that enable our services to be innovative, cutting-edge, first in the industry and efficient”.* (OYO, n.d.).

*“At Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, we are committed to providing a nurturing environment where all of our team members can explore personal and professional development opportunities throughout their tenure with us. Regardless of where a career begins, we encourage each team member to regularly discuss career goals with his/her manager to ensure the right opportunities for Experience, Exposure, and Education are continually provided”.* (Wyndham, n.d.).

Unlike all other hotel chains, OYO and Choice seem to use their websites exclusively to recruit professionals to work in their offices. Both companies appear to have an employer positioning that focuses on attracting professionals for managerial positions, especially in the IT area.

*“We are at an exciting intersection of the travel, hospitality, and franchising sectors, fueled by the power of technology. As such, Choice is a great place to kick-start your career, offering a wide range of corporate and technological career areas, accompanied by robust development offerings to help you forge your career path and Make it your Choice. Are you a software engineer looking for cutting-edge IT opportunities? A hard worker and an innovator with an interest in the hospitality sector? A creative type looking for the chance to make an impact?”. (Choice, n.d.).*

To assure candidates understand how the recruiting process works and increase their success, Marriott mentions its YouTube channel where candidates can find some tips. At the same time, Hilton discusses the types of interviews that might happen and what they will take into consideration, stating that in the end, they want to ensure there is a match between the company and the new employee.

*“We believe talent thrives when informed and inspired. So we want to provide you with a better understanding of what we look for in our best candidates and where you can look for us to take you in your career. [...] Applying for a new job or career path can be daunting. What is the employer looking for? Is your resume ready? How can you prepare for your interview? We get that, and that’s why we’ve put together these videos to help you in your job search”. (Marriott, n.d.).*

*“Depending on the position, our interviews may be over the phone, by video or in-person. If you are selected for an interview, the best advice we can give you is to be yourself! We are looking for candidates who demonstrate a passion for delivering exceptional experiences and a proven track record of integrity, collaboration, and achieving results – which are all in line with Hilton values. Through the interview process, we want to ensure candidates are a great fit for Hilton, and that Hilton is a great fit for you!”. (Hilton, n.d.).*

Besides their job openings and discussion about recruitment, most hotel chains also developed sections exclusively dedicated to attracting undergraduate students or recent graduates to start their professional journey with them.

### ***Professional Development Opportunities***

Many hotel chains developed international internship and trainee programs promoted on their websites to attract highly qualified professionals. Similar to the general career opportunities descriptions, the volume of information about these programs varies significantly. Marriott, Hilton, IHG, Accor, and Choice seem to provide more information

about their programs. Choice, for example, besides presenting its programs, also stresses its recognition for being a suitable company for new graduates. Accor also tries to stand out from the competition for the best talents by promoting its internal challenge, inviting students worldwide to propose innovative solutions for its operations.

*“Since 2011, our Group organizes the Take Off! International Student Challenge to challenge teams of 3 on issues topics related to Accor’s activities. The 2019 theme, which generated over 1,500 participants, was to imagine how Artificial Intelligence (AI) will enhance the guest experience in hotels”.* (Accor, n.d.).

*“Forbes: The Best Employers for New Grads. Forbes teamed up with research company Statista to identify the companies most liked by new workforce entrants. They surveyed 10,000 Americans with less than 10 years of professional experience, working for businesses with at least 1,000 employees. Choice is an attractive option for many young professionals building their careers—whether they come to us through our internships, college recruitment touch-points, TRAC program, employee referrals or diverse hiring practices”.* (Choice, n.d.).

Also intending to highlight its internship programs, Marriot once again describes the history of its founders and the fact that it is the largest hotel chain in the world. IHG focuses on the impact of its programs on participants’ resumes.

*“When our founders, J.W. and Alice Marriott, opened their small root beer stand in 1927, they had no idea it would evolve into an international travel company. With 30 renowned brands and 7,000+ properties in over 131 countries, Marriott has no intention of slowing down. Let this be your humble beginning to a career of endless opportunity. Start your own adventure today”.* (Mariott, n.d.).

*“The IHG Academy Work Experience programme gives you the chance to spend time working in one of our hotels or corporate offices and see for yourself what goes on behind the scenes. You’ll leave with a better understanding of the hospitality industry, and your potential career options. You’ll also gain valuable work-place skills that will set you apart from other candidates, no matter what career path you choose to follow”.* (IHG, n.d.).

Following a similar pattern to their career opportunities descriptions, OYO and Wyndham only briefly discuss their internship and trainee programs without providing details about the experiences or what the candidates may get from them.

*“Join the growing OYO universe and get a chance to create history by redefining the hospitality landscape across the globe. [...] We offer a variety of options to freshers and students alike, which are aimed at helping you chart your career growth”.* (OYO, n.d.).

Contrarily to other hotel chains, Aimbridge and Radisson websites did not mention any internship or trainee programs.

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

As international hotel chains operating in many distinct market segments, these companies have plenty of brands with their unique positionings, targeting different customers and offering different employment experiences. This variety of brands may bring some difficulties for potential candidates to know if they fit the company. In this sense, some hotel chains do more than simply list their brand names on their websites. They also provide some details about each brand's employer positioning.

### *List of Hotel Brands*

Despite presenting their general employer positioning as a corporation, every brand from these hotel chains has its unique features, culture, and working conditions. With some of these hotel chains operating in more than 100 countries, thousands of hotel units, dozens of brands targeting different customer segments, it might be challenging for potential candidates to evaluate which hotel brand better meets their professional expectations. Some hotel chains have a specific section presenting their brands, probably aware of this situation. Again, some chains provide more details than others. For example, despite mentioning its more than 50 brands, Accor does not describe them.

*“We're so much more than hotels—we're creating innovative lifestyle experiences, whether you live, work or play. Blaze your own trail from 50+ hotel brands, restaurants, nightclubs, spas, co-working spaces, and tech start-ups”.* (Accor, n.d.).

*“Our unmatched collection of iconic hotel brands delivers the experiences everyday travelers want however they choose to travel”.* (Wyndham, n.d.).

OYO and Choice do not mention any brand, which might happen because both companies only hire professionals to work in their headquarters. As Aimbridge operates third-party brands, it briefly describes its hotels' features and segments.

*“Explore new opportunities with Aimbridge Hospitality. As the global leader in third-party hotel management, our growing portfolio represents 1,550 hotels in 49 states and 21 countries, from top international lodging brands to luxury hotels, destination resorts and lifestyle hotels. Our 60,000 associates around the globe are passionate about serving our guests and driving exceptional results, and thrive in a culture where everyone is inspired to be the best. Join a world of possibility with Aimbridge Hospitality”.* (Aimbridge, n.d.).

Marriott, Radisson, Hilton, and Hyatt present short descriptions of each brand on their websites. These descriptions discuss aspects like the hotel category and the service style. Hilton also reinforces candidates should read each brand description to find which better fits them.

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

*“W Hotels. WORK OUTSIDE THE BOX. Show the world what you’ve got by joining W Hotels. Bring your style and your spirit, we’ll bring a work culture where you can shine. We work hard, we play hard, and we want to help you to grow. W Talent helps our guests live life to the fullest while you live your dream”.* (Marriot, n.d.).

*“The Radisson Collection™ is a premium lifestyle collection of exceptional hotels located in unique locations. The character of each Radisson Collection hotel feels authentic to its location and offer the ultimate template for contemporary living – united by modern design and exceptional experiences across dining, fitness, wellness and sustainability. Designed for guests and locals alike, each Radisson Collection hotel is defined by guests who visit them. All hotels are situated in prestigious locations, close to prime leisure attractions”.* (Radisson, n.d.).

*“Did you know the Hilton umbrella encompasses 17 exciting individual brands? From the elegantly luxurious to comfortably casual, each of our brands has its own unique personality. But what they all have in common is a place for Team Members who are dedicated to our mission, vision and values. The first step into a career you feel great about is getting to know each of our 17 brands below—and finding your perfect fit”.* (Hilton, n.d.).

*“Each of the unique 18 brands within the Hyatt portfolio offers a distinct interpretation of our foundational purpose: to deliver personalized care and unforgettable experiences. [...] Alila means “Surprise” in Sanskrit, which suitably describes the refreshing character of our properties and the reaction of our guests when they stay with us. The hallmark of Alila is the combination of innovative design and crafted luxury in unique locations, set apart by an unprecedented level of personalised hospitality, private spaces and bespoke journeys”.* (Hyatt, n.d.).

In the following example, it is possible to see how IHG gives potential candidates a broader perspective of what it looks like to work in each of its brands. Besides describing aspects like the category and service style, IHG also mentions many other details, such as the culture of each brand.

*“Hotel Indigo®. Discover an IHG brand with a modern design and a genuine boutique feel: Hotel Indigo® – where knowledgeable staff welcome guests into unique and vibrant worlds. Making travel inspiring. Joining a big name with a boutique feel. Hotel Indigo is a genuine boutique brand with a cosmopolitan edge. Each hotel is unique: a true reflection of the local neighbourhood, often located in an arty part of town. As a member of IHG’s family of brands, Hotel Indigo offers a vibrant, individual flavour, but also peace of mind. Guests can expect local character, modern design and warm, professional service. It’s a blend that’s proving highly popular: Hotel Indigo is set to double in size to 100 properties within the next five years. Culture: Where local colour meets cool design. We look for people who are going to inspire our visitors. The kind who know what’s happening locally and love to share it with guests. Warm, friendly and, above all, courteous, Hotel Indigo staff are approachable and always happy to help”.* (IHG, n.d.).

An essential aspect that potential candidates might want to know is what they will get in exchange for their work beyond what the possible career paths are and how it looks to work for certain companies.

### ***Benefits Offered to Employees***

Throughout the hotel chains' websites, it is possible to identify indirect references to potential benefits, including the career opportunities, the company culture, and the opportunity to contribute to a better world by supporting social and environmental causes, as mentioned above. Besides these indirect statements, most chains also explicitly present some of the benefits offered to their employees. Only Hyatt and Aimbridge did not discuss the benefits given to their employees on their websites. In Hyatt's case, it is possible to see some indications about the benefits through employee testimonials. Other hotel chains, such as Marriott and IHG, also present some of their benefits through employee testimonials.

*“Whether it’s creating a memorable experience for our guests, or supporting a team member and seeing their next career move, it gives me great satisfaction”.* (Marriott, n.d.).

*“Another reason why I consider myself to be incredibly lucky is the inspiration I’ve taken from the General Managers I’ve worked with, and that includes my current managers. They challenge me to keep on getting better at what I do”.* (IHG, n.d.).

*“The CMT program was exactly what I needed when I graduated with my hospitality degree. My college classes were great, but the CMT program was almost like a “master’s program in all things hotel” as it gave me intensive and focused interactions with all the different functional areas of the hotel. Not only was it extremely educational, it also helped me figure out the best fit for me in my hospitality career.’ [...] ‘I chose Hyatt in 1986 because I viewed the comp days as work/life balance. I am proud that 33 years later, that is still a compelling reason to work for Hyatt”.* (Hyatt, n.d.).

By checking the list of benefits described on the websites, it is possible to notice some relevant differences between companies. Radisson, OYO, and Wyndham focus on economic benefits, such as salary, health insurance, and retirement programs.

*“We know financial security is a top priority for our employees, which is why we offer benefits like competitive pay, life insurance, and 401(k) retirement savings plans. Benefits include: [...] Employee assistance program; Employee discounts [...] Your physical well-being is important to us, which is why we offer benefits ranging from vision and dental insurance to paid maternity leave and prescription drug coverage. Benefits include: Accident insurance; Critical illness insurance [...] Life happens—that’s why we offer a variety of benefits to provide support when you most need it, such as bereavement leave, home insurance, and legal services.*

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

*Benefits include: Adoption assistance; Auto/home/renters insurance; Bereavement leave [...]*". (Radisson, n.d.).

*"The perks of being an OYOpreneur are aplenty! We offer a range of employee benefits that support you and your family, and enable you to have an ideal work-life integration. Competitive Market Compensation. Financial Security. Healthcare. Time Off. Childcare. Employee Stock Options"*. (OYO, n.d.).

*"Wyndham Hotels & Resorts is committed to attracting, motivating, and retaining talented team members who align with our company's core values. We are proud to reward our team members with comprehensive benefit programs and resources which include: Health insurance with HSA and FSA options; Dental insurance; Vision insurance; Life/AD&D insurance; Short- and Long-Term Disability coverage; 401(k) with generous company match; Paid Time Off (PTO); Paid Holidays"*. (Wyndham, n.d.).

With a more diversified approach, Marriot, Hilton, IHG, Accor, and Choice present a more detailed description of what they offer to their employees, including many different types of values. Again, data suggests these companies adopt very distinct employer positionings. IHG, for example, mentions benefits like professional development, employee efforts recognition, and work/life balance.

*"We believe whole-heartedly that our people deserve the best. So, we offer great rewards and every chance to learn and broaden your experience. You'll grow through training that suits your learning style and enjoy a range of benefits. It's all designed to help you thrive – your wellbeing is our priority. We're here to help you go as far as you want. With our Learning & Development programmes, you get a full induction, access to hundreds of online courses and the chance to learn from the best. Every day, you'll gain experience on the job, working with skilled professionals. [...] Working for us means more than competitive pay and benefits. You can also expect recognition for your hard work, a healthy working environment and the right work-life balance"*. (IHG, n.d.).

Hilton discusses many reasons why their employees love to work for it. Amongst these reasons, it mentions the prestige associated with its brand and a job in which employees may contribute to a better world.

*"Each year, we ask our Team Members what excites them most about working at Hilton so we can build on the positive aspects of their experiences at work. Here's what they have said: The people I work with; Opportunities to grow my career; Pride in the Hilton brand; Connection with guests/customers; Meaningful and fun work; [...] Make A Difference In The World-Live A Dream, Give A Dream. With Hilton's Thrive Sabbatical Program, you will see what it's like to give a dream to benefit others or live a dream by exploring a personal goal. Four weeks. \$5,000. A chance to recharge, grow and make a meaningful difference. [...] Inspiring Environments at Work. Team Member areas in the back of house are designed with vibrant colors, attractive finishes and eye-catching images to make every aspect of the hotel work environment inviting and lively"*. (Hilton, n.d.).



## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

In addition to “cutting edge” technologies and certified offices for their sustainable practices, Choice also offers professional and personal development opportunities. Choice also reinforces its focus on work/life balance by presenting some employees’ testimonials.

*“We are at an exciting intersection of the hospitality and franchising sectors—fueled by the power of technology. At Choice, we welcome and respect your voice and foster a culture that empowers you to learn, grow, and make an impact. [...]we offer a robust menu of rewards to help them grow, succeed, and be well—both professionally and personally. [...] Inclusive Culture & Choice Resource Groups. Boys & Girls Clubs of America Partnership. Paid Volunteer Leave. Charitable Gift Matching. LEED Certified Workspace. [...] ‘My quality of life has improved so much since I joined Choice. They’re flexible with hours, so I can still pick up my kids. It’s a great feeling to be part of an organization that’s so driven by values and principles. I would encourage anyone to be part of it. It’s not just a career opportunity—it’s a learning opportunity...to become a better businessperson. And even beyond that, to be a better person and to learn from the smart people around you”*. (Choice, n.d.).

Meanwhile, Marriot states that its employees may contribute to connecting different cultures and helping develop local communities in which the company operates.

*“The foundation for our success depends on your wellbeing. So we made a commitment to make our workplace an environment where your emotional, physical and financial needs matter. An environment where each one of us feels like a valued member of a team. A place where we’re motivated to make a difference in our communities. We call it TakeCare. Contribute to a more compassionate, hopeful world by making a positive and sustainable impact with hundreds of thousands of Marriott teammates all wearing the Marriott badge. Be a force of good, bridge cultures around the world, and help others live their best life”*. (Marriott, n.d.).

In addition to hundreds of career paths, Accor also invites its employees to create tomorrow’s hospitality by offering several different training programs and empowering them to be autonomous.

*“At Accor, more than 200 types of jobs are the richness of the Group. Receptionist, Chef, Server, Housekeeping Attendant, Customer Relationship Manager, IT Developer or Revenue Manager... Whatever your background or experience, dare to bring your talent and passion to Accor! Together, we will design the hospitality of tomorrow and make the world a more welcoming place. [...] ‘I love my team! At Accor, we collaborate and share the same vision: work-life balance, a great degree of control and freedom. As a Hotel Manager, what I appreciate most is to allow everyone to be autonomous, so that they can be innovative and challenge existing process”*. (Accor, n.d.).

## **The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels**

The first part of the Results section provided an overview of the different hotel chain's recruitment websites. Tables IV summarize some aspects of the hotel chains' employer positioning related to the data collected on their recruiting websites. However, the websites only represent part of the information sources used by job seekers. In this sense, the next part of this chapter presents the patterns found in the hotel chains' job advertisements.

## The Use of Digital Media for the Employer Brand Management in Hotels

**Table IV - Websites Highlights**

<b>Hotel Chains' Employer Positioning Highlights – Websites</b>	
<b>Marriott</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company's values are based on the founders' history. Great emphasis on its position as the world's biggest hotel chain.</li> <li>• Presents hotel brands and a brief description of their positioning and offers numerous hotel and corporate career paths.</li> <li>• Offers candidates detailed tips on applying for a job, including some videos posted on its youtube channel.</li> </ul>
<b>Radisson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlights its relevance to the international hotel industry.</li> <li>• Emphasises the relevance of employees' authenticity, wellbeing, and social diversity to reach the company's objectives.</li> <li>• Presents hotel brands and a brief description of their positioning, including hotels' location and brand values.</li> <li>• Have different social diversity initiatives.</li> </ul>
<b>OYO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Small" website, with very little information about career opportunities or work environment.</li> <li>• Company's values are based on the founder's values, including a strong orientation for entrepreneurship, professional ambition, pro-activity.</li> <li>• Few benefits to employees are presented.</li> </ul>
<b>Hilton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises its centenary history, highlighting achievements such as the three billion guests received.</li> <li>• Great focus on employees' wellbeing, offering, for example, financial support for employees who just became parents.</li> <li>• Presents hotel brands, a brief description of their positioning, and detailed career-paths' descriptions, including a list of job tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>IHG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises the desire to offer employees job opportunities with a bigger purpose, such as contributing to making the world better.</li> <li>• Training programs are one of the main benefits to employees and offer many employees' networking, supporting social diversity.</li> <li>• Presents each hotel brand and its positioning in great detail, including each brands' culture.</li> </ul>
<b>Wyndham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Small" website with little information about the hotel brands or career opportunities.</li> <li>• Emphasises its values, including fun, integrity, and inclusivity of different people and ideas.</li> <li>• See social diversity workforce as an essential source of competitive advantage.</li> </ul>
<b>Accor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises its focus on customers and employees' experience to stand out from the competition.</li> <li>• Great emphasis on social diversity, indicating they have employees from more than 120 countries.</li> <li>• Accor's "Take Off!" competition offers undergraduate students an opportunity to develop innovative solutions for the industry.</li> </ul>
<b>Choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises its focus on "cutting edge" information technologies and eco-friendly headquarters.</li> <li>• Presents a diversified list of its awards as best employers in many different categories, including best employer for undergraduates.</li> <li>• Explicitly describes many benefits offered to employees, including a socially diverse work environment.</li> </ul>
<b>Hyatt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasises its focus on promoting social diversity and social responsibility amongst its employees.</li> <li>• Presents its hotel brands and their positionings, highlighting their unique luxury aspects.</li> <li>• Emphasises that more than a job, they offer their employees career opportunities in 65 countries.</li> </ul>
<b>Aimbridge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Small" website, presenting brief descriptions of the company's size, culture, values, and career opportunities.</li> <li>• The company values emphasise a significant focus on customer service, social diversity, cooperation, and constant learning.</li> <li>• Highlights its positioning as the global leader of third-party hotel management companies, operating more than 1500 hotels.</li> </ul>

Source: The author.

## 4.2. Job Advertisements

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, ten different job advertisements for each hotel chain were collected. Interestingly, there are significant differences in the way companies communicate with potential candidates on their job advertisements compared to their websites. For example, while some hotel chains have very detailed websites, with plenty of information organized in different sections, their job advertisements tend to be short and only present basic information about the job.

Like website presentations, the data presentation follows a linear flow, starting with the data found at the top of a job advertisement. Thus, the first theme presented relates to the inconsistency amongst the job advertisements from the same company.

### 4.2.1. Non-standardised advertisements

There is a significant inconsistency between job advertisements from the same hotel chain. Some are more detailed and have, for example, an initial presentation of the company. Others are short and only describe a few aspects of the job, sometimes not mentioning some job characteristics, such as benefits, working schedule, job tasks, and work location, as it was possible to observe in some of Marriott's job advertisements. There are job advertisements with only three lines, while others describe the job tasks and the hotel brand in great detail.

*“First and foremost I need someone dependable. I need people that know how to clean good and at a fast pace. I need team players with good attitudes. I need people that not only respect themselves, as well as other's!!!”*. (Marriott, Job Ad N° 7, Housekeeper - Texarkana, Texas, The United States) (Marriott, 2021).

*“At Westin, we are committed to empowering the well-being of our guests by providing a refreshing environment, thoughtful amenities, and revitalizing programming to help ensure that they leave feeling better than when they arrived. We recognize that travel can be disruptive to our guests' well-being, and we're energized to assist as partners in helping them maintain control and soaring above it all while on the road. Everything we do is designed to help guests be at their best, and they appreciate our supportive attitude, anticipatory service and extensive knowledge on how to best assist them throughout their stay. We are looking for dynamic people who are excited to join the team and ready to jump into any situation to give a helping hand. If you're someone who has is positive, adaptable and intuitive, and has a genuine interest in the well-being of others around you, we invite you to discover how at Westin, together we can rise”*. (Marriott, Job Ad N° 6, Guest Relations Internship - Saint Julian's, Malta) (Marriott, 2021).

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

Radisson briefly describes hotel facilities and location surroundings in some of its job advertisements, while others do not contain this type of information.

*“Our vibrant Peterborough hotel offers comfort in the city centre with 115 comfortable and spacious guest rooms, dining in our colourful restaurant and bar, car parking and versatile meeting spaces which can accommodate board meetings or grand social events”.* (Radisson, Job Ad N° 1, Front of House Assistant - Peterborough, England, United Kingdom) (Radisson, 2021).

Similarly, only a few Hilton’s job advertisements explicitly discuss job positions’ benefits.

*“In exceptional destinations around the globe, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts reflect the culture and history of their extraordinary locations, as well as fresh, modern expressions of Waldorf Astoria’s rich legacy. Waldorf Astoria provides guests the exceptional environment and the personalized attention of true Waldorf service that creates a singular experience. [...] Your benefits will include a competitive starting salary and holiday entitlement. As an employee you will become a member of the The Hilton Club which provides reduced hotel room rates in our hotels worldwide, plus discounts on products and services offered by Hilton Worldwide and its partners”.* (Hilton, Job Ad N° 4, Bartender - Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates) (Hilton, 2021).

Beyond these inconsistencies related to the type of information and the level of details between the job advertisements from the same hotel chain, it was possible to identify some other patterns presented below.

### 4.2.2. Company’s Relevance in the Industry

Except for Hyatt, all the hotel chains display an initial description of themselves, at least in one of their job advertisements, reinforcing their relevance in the international hotel industry. Through these initial presentations, it is possible to perceive some differences in how each company positions itself. Besides, it is possible to see connections with what they say on their websites, as some IHG, Choice and Aimbridge’s job advertisements demonstrate. On some of IHG’s job advertisements, there are references to its openness to social diversity and its relevance to the international hotel industry for being one of the largest hotel chains in the world.

*“IHG is one of the world’s leading hotel companies, promising to provide True Hospitality for everyone; making you feel welcome and cared for, recognised and respected, wherever you are in the world. Strong future plans and recent successes, especially across the luxury space is what has made us stand out from the crowd. Join us and not only can you benefit from the world of variety and opportunity. You*

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

*can also look forward to being part of a company that will appreciate you for simply being you. At IHG we celebrate our differences and we believe everyone has something unique to bring to each team". (IHG, Job Ad N° 2, Communications Executive Europe - Denham, England, United Kingdom) (IHG, 2021).*

Making its positioning in the market very clear, Choice reinforces its focus on investing in IT technology, offering its employees an opportunity to work in an innovative environment.

*"Choice Hotels International is an award-winning cutting-edge software development company that develops software to manage, reserve and book hotel rooms in its portfolio of hotels. Choice provides innovative enterprise SOA solutions based on Open Source and AWS technologies". (Choice, Job Ad N° 7, Software Engineer - Phoenix, Arizona, The United States) (Choice, 2021).*

Aimbridge, on the other side, highlights its portfolio composed of top brands and luxury hotels and its focus on providing excellent services for its guests.

*"Company Overview: Explore new opportunities with Aimbridge Hospitality. As the global leader in third-party hotel management, our growing portfolio represents 1,400 hotels in 49 states and 20 countries, from top international lodging brands to luxury hotels, destination resorts and lifestyle hotels. Our 60,000 associates around the globe are passionate about serving our guests and driving exceptional results, and thrive in a culture where everyone is inspired to be the best. Join a world of possibility with Aimbridge Hospitality". (Aimbridge, Job Ad N° 3, Server, Restaurant - San Diego, California, The United States) (Aimbridge, 2021).*

Through these initial presentations about their positioning in the industry, it seems these companies are trying to convey the message that more than a job, they are offering an opportunity to be part of a company that stands out; A company that might do what no other can do.

Job advertisements also show other elements that influence potential candidate perceptions regarding each company's employer positioning apart from the already named opening descriptions. In this sense, the following theme explores some of the main aspects of job advertisements.

### 4.2.3. Job Description

Further exploration of the job advertisements revealed some interesting aspects of how they describe the job characteristics. For example, in some job advertisements, the description of the job's tasks addresses the technical aspects and how the employees should behave while performing them. Moreover, most job advertisements also discuss

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

the requirements for the job, which might send some relevant signals about the hotel chain's employer positioning.

### *Job Tasks*

In some job advertisements, the hotel chains also mention how the employees should incorporate their values while describing their future tasks instead of only referring to its values. How the hotel chains describe the job tasks and their company values vary from generic and indirect to explicit statements. In one of Wyndham's job advertisements, it is possible to identify a more generic statement of how employees must incorporate the company's values while performing their job tasks, with no mention of any specific company values or examples of how the employee should behave.

*"[...] To set in place benchmarking and monitoring mechanisms at the hotel that will permit the constant tracking of financial results through the course of the year, and proactively permit the identification of need and opportunity areas. [...] Maintaining a business environment based on the Code of Conduct, Company Mission and Values. Maintain and enhance the open door policy to all associates. Inspiring a positive work environment, being a true Wyndham Hotel & Resorts and Dolce Ambassador". (Wyndham, Job Ad N° 2, Revenue Manager - Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal) (Wyndham, 2021).*

Meanwhile, some job advertisements from OYO, Hilton, and Hyatt, have explicit references about how employees should perform their tasks following the company's values. The job descriptions name each value they expect employees to incorporate. For example, there is a clear focus on proactivity and efficiency in the OYO case.

*"As a Workforce Management Specialist, you have an analytical, yet hands-on mentality. You are decisive and proactive and like to get to the bottom of things. Thanks to these qualities, you are able to positively impact the daily operations of about 140 employees. You will work closely with Operations Management to optimize the WFM Cycle and recommend the most efficient use of resources both from a tactical as well as a strategic point of view, based on the data available to you". (OYO, Job Ad N° 2, Workforce Manager & Reporting Specialist - Eindhoven, North Brabant, Netherlands) (OYO, 2021).*

*"Problem solver, who can resolve issues effectively and creatively while maintaining exceptional flexibility, collaboration and integrity. Ability to balance multiple projects simultaneously with little supervision. Self-starter, well-organized and willing to take ownership of responsibilities and possess a high level of positive energy and drive". (Hilton, Job Ad N° 2, Corporate Virtual Internship - McLean, Virginia, The United States) (Hilton, 2021).*

*"Responsibilities and job functions include but are not limited to the following: Act with integrity, honesty and knowledge that promote the culture, values and philosophy of Hyatt Place. Displays dignity and respect of others at all times".*

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

(Hyatt, Job Ad N° 1, Front Desk Staff - Poughkeepsie, New York, The United States) (Hyatt, 2021).

Finally, the job advertisement from Mama Shelter, a brand held by Accor, offers a detailed verbal description complemented by emojis. In this example, it is possible to find different references specifically about the brand values and how employees should do each job task. The written style is also noticeably different from most job advertisements by using very casual communication. From Accor's and the other hotel chains' job advertisements, Mama Shelter's were the only ones with emojis.

*“MADE FOR YOU? ONLY IF...Your leadership is natural & effective; everyone knows that when Mama is not there, the children will play, but Mama can count on you 🍷! You can handle the pressure, and we're not talking about the cooker. You know how to identify talents and develop them; red chair and buzzer: it's your turn! 🍷👉 [...] Excellent management 📊 you've mastered cost control, analysis of figures & productivity optimization. You know how to sell, without turning into the Wolf of Wall Street 🐺. You know your results and are not afraid to show it; your PowerPoint presentations and your Excel tables make everyone jealous! You are good at delivering the Mama experience to suppliers and service providers; you have great relationships and they love you! You want to be at the heart of the action with your team and not always alone at your office 🖥️. You get your hands dirty and think that leading by example is the key to success. YOUR LITTLE EXTRAS: You are the Harry to all the Ron's & Hermiones! 🧙 With a pronounced taste for cooking, your culinary knowledge goes far beyond microwavable meals. You are a true leader of people!”.* (Accor, Job Ad N° 10, Food & Beverage Director - Rome, Latium, Italy) (Accor, 2021).

These examples describing how the employees should behave while working provide clues about job requirements, especially soft skills. However, the technical knowledge, hard skills, and previous experiences the ideal candidates should have are often mentioned. These minimum requirements might influence the way potential candidates perceive the attractiveness level of the job opportunities offered by this industry.

### ***Job Requirements***

When it comes to career opportunities, the hotel industry offers many possibilities. Varying from job positionings like a front desk or chef to revenue manager or IT manager, it is expectable that each position will demand a different set of requirements. In this sense, some patterns emerged in the analysis of job requirements. For example, most job advertisements collected do not require a specific qualification besides a high school



## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

degree. Similarly, many job advertisements do not mention previous experience in the industry as a prerequisite. One of Hyatt's job advertisements demonstrates that.

*“We are looking for a dedicated, talented individual for the the position of ‘Guest services officer’ at Park Hyatt Maldives Hadahaa. If your ready for the new challenge please send your CV to [e-mail] XXXX”. (Hyatt, Job Ad N° 8, Guest Services Officer - Gaafu Alifu, Maldives) (Hyatt, 2021).*

Some other job advertisements require specific knowledge and state a preference for professionals with some experience. Others reinforce the requirement for good physical resistance to perform the daily tasks.

*“Read and visually verify information in a variety of formats (e.g., small print). Stand, sit, or walk for an extended period of time or for an entire work shift. Move, lift, carry, push, pull, and place objects weighing less than or equal to 50 pounds without assistance. Grasp, turn, and manipulate objects of varying size and weight, requiring fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Move over sloping, uneven, or slippery surfaces as well as up and down stairs and/or service ramps. Reach overhead and below the knees, including bending, twisting, pulling, and stooping. Perform other reasonable job duties as requested by Supervisors”. (Marriott, Job Ad N° 4, Attendant-Food & Beverage - Seoul, Seoul, South Korea) (Marriott, 2021).*

*“Previous experience in a generalist Human Resources role preferred”. (Accor, Job Ad N° 6, Talent & Culture Coordinator - Perth, Western Australia, Australia) (Accor, 2021).*

*“Typically requires a high school diploma and 0 to 2 years of experience. Good knowledge about machinery and equipments used in groundskeeper job. Ability to spot problems and diseases in plants and take up preventive measures. Must be strong and healthy since the work is of a physical nature and involves lifting weights and working in sun and cold. A good knowledge about gardening methods and foliage. Must be able to spend long hours outdoors [...]”. (Aimbridge, Job Ad N° 9, Engineer-Grounds - Sedona, Arizona, The United States) (Aimbridge, 2021).*

Job positions for direct contact with guests might not require a specific qualification but mention requirements related to knowledge of foreign languages and attention to personal presentation.

*“Receptionists serving Hilton brands are always working on behalf of our Guests and working with other Team Members. Previous experience in a customer-focused industry. Completed high school certificate or equivalent. Positive attitude and good communication skills. Commitment to delivering a high level of customer service. Excellent grooming standards. Ability to work on your own and as part of a team. Competent level of IT proficiency. Proficient user of 2 foreign languages”. (Hilton, Job Ad N° 5, Receptionist - Rijeka, Croatia) (Hilton, 2021).*

## The se of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

Companies look for professionals with at least some years of professional experience and often demand a specific higher education degree for management positions.

*“Bachelor’s degree in Hotel Management, Business, Finance, Economics, Statistics or relevant field of work or an equivalent combination of education and work-related experience. [...] Revenue Management Certification (CHRM or CRME) is required of all Choice Revenue Management team members. [...] Minimum 1-3 years of experience as a Revenue Manager, or Business or Consulting experience focused on financial analysis or revenue analytics. [...] Collaborative and works effectively as part of a team. [...]”*. (Choice, Job Ad N° 10, Revenue Manager - Field, British Columbia, Canada) (Choice, 2021).

*“College degree preferred. Minimum of 3 years sales experience required, preferably in a hotel capacity Previous experience in a hotel or restaurant customer service role preferred. Strong organization and presentation skills. Must be able to work independently and simultaneously manage multiple tasks. Must be outgoing and a proven self-starter. Weekends and Holidays may be required as business needs warrant”*. (Hyatt, Job Ad N° 8, Sales Director - Tempe, Arizona, The United States) (Hyatt, 2021).

Some job advertisements mention that potential candidates must prepare themselves to work alone and as a part of a team. In practical terms, these different professionals might need to keep constant direct contact with customers and colleagues, sometimes during variable working schedules.

### ***Work Team/Schedule***

A few job advertisements from each hotel chain mention the candidate's future team but these references are unspecific. In these job advertisements, there are short descriptions about what teams or company’s departments the employee will have to interact with, but there are no mentions about who these colleagues will be or how many they are. Following a similar pattern to other job advertisements elements, these descriptions vary in how detailed they are. For instance, job advertisements from Radisson and IHG give only a broad notion about what team potential candidates will be part of or with which other departments they will have to interact.

*“As a member of the hotel leadership team, you will handle complex processes and be in an integral position to ensure hotel performance and profitability in a rapidly changing environment”*. (Radisson, Job Ad N° 2, Hotel Business Controller - Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands).

*“Collaborate cross functionally across business teams, with global HQ teams, and inter-company with agencies and other vendor partners”*. (IHG, Job Ad N° 9, Digital Product Manager - Shanghai, China).

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

On the contrary, some job advertisements from OYO, Hilton, Wyndham, and Choice specify the team and department where potential candidates will work.


*“You will work closely with Operations Management to optimize the WFM Cycle and recommend the most efficient use of resources both from a tactical as well as a strategic point of view, based on the data available to you”.* (OYO, Job Ad N° 2, Workforce Manager & Reporting Specialist - Eindhoven, North Brabant, Netherlands) (OYO, 2021).

*“Coordinate with Housekeeping on room statuses frequently during the day, transmitting check out rooms to Housekeeping and receiving ready rooms from Housekeeping”.* (Hilton, Job Ad N° 3, Front Desk Agent - Nashville, Tennessee, The United States) (Hilton, 2021).

*“The Revenue Manager (in conjunction with the Reservations Team) will lead the day to day Revenue Operations”.* (Wyndham, Job Ad N° 2, Revenue Manager - Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal) (Wyndham, 2021).

*“As a steward of the Choice Hotels’ digital experiences, you will manage numerous eCommerce-focused initiatives that drive and support guest-facing reservation and guest experience efforts, working closely with technology, loyalty, shared services, brand management, and franchise services teams”.* (Choice, Job Ad N° 4, Product Manager - eCommerce - Phoenix, Arizona, The United States) (Choice, 2021).

As a rare exception, one of Accor' job advertisements also mentions an approximate number of how many colleagues the potential candidate will have.

*“You participate in the creation of the menu in collaboration with management and the Group Executive Chef . You recruit, lead and develop a kitchen team of around 30 people”.* (Accor, Job Ad N° 1, Chef - Rome, Latium, Italy) (Accor, 2021).

Work schedule is one of the other relevant aspects of the work experience. Most hotels operate 24 hours a day, seven days per week, 365 days every year, demanding that employees work in flexible, sometimes unpredictable, schedules during weekends and holidays, which might affect the potential candidates’ interest to apply for such a job. Yet, only a few job advertisements give details about the working schedule, other than mentioning if it is a part or full-time job.

*“May be required to work nights, weekends, and/or holidays”.* (IHG, Job Ad N° 1, Executive Housekeeper - New York, New York, The United States) (IHG, 2021).

*“Available to work a flexible schedule, including workdays, evenings, weekends, and/or holidays as needed”.* (Wyndham, Job Ad N° 3, Server - Napa, California, The United States) (Wyndham, 2021).

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

*“Be available to work a varied schedule of hours worked and days off”*. (Wyndham, Job Ad N° 10, Assistant Housekeeping Supervisor - Scottsdale, Arizona, The United States) (Wyndham, 2021).

*“Weekends and Holidays may be required as business needs warrant”*. (Hyatt, Job Ad N° 6, Sales Director - Tempe, Arizona, The United States) (Hyatt, 2021).

*“Must be willing and have the ability to work a varied schedule that may include evenings nights weekends and holidays”*. (Aimbridge, Job Ad N° 5, Complimentary AM Attendant - Albuquerque, New Mexico, The United States) (Aimbridge, 2021).

In some rare cases, there are also statements about the requirement to travel, as the following job advertisements from Accor and Choice demonstrate.

*“A minimum of 50% travel is to be expected for meetings with clients, site visits, conferences etc.”*. (Accor, Job Ad N° 7, Vice President, Development - The United States) (Accor, 2021).

*“Ability to travel up to 10% of the time”*. (Choice, Job Ad N° 10, Revenue Manager - Field, British Columbia, Canada) (Choice, 2021).

Only very few job advertisements specifically describing the working schedule could be found. Two of them mention the weekly workload, and one provides a precise description.

*“Working 40 hours a week on a rotating shift basis; 10:45 pm - 7:15 am over 5 days”*. (Radisson, Job Ad N° 7, Night Porter - Durham, England, United Kingdom) (Radisson, 2021).

*“Contract position/par-time role (20-26 hours per week)”*. (OYO, Job Ad N° 6, SEO Specialist - Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands) (OYO, 2021).

*“The virtual internship will begin August 2 and end December 10. Interns will work part-time 20 hours per week during the 20-week program”*. (Hilton, Job Ad N° 2, Corporate Virtual Internship - McLean, Virginia, The United States) (Hilton, 2021).

The following section presents some examples of benefits found in the job advertisements.

### ***Job Benefits***

Sometimes indirectly mentioned, the benefits are present in the different parts of job advertisements. They range from functional benefits, such as salary or health insurance, to symbolic aspects, such as the opportunity to create a unique guest experience. The descriptions often mix different types of benefits, referring, for example, opportunities for employees to share what they think and training opportunities.

*“No matter what level you are in our organisation, we will encourage your creativity. If you have an idea about how we can improve things, we want to hear*

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

*it. And if it is a bright idea, we will make it happen. In the fast-moving and competitive world of hospitality, this is how we have stayed ahead. We are ready to invest in you and your future. We offer competitive fringe benefits, award-winning training, a supportive team environment and real opportunities to learn, grow and develop a rewarding career. If you want to find out more about us, please visit [www.pphe.com](http://www.pphe.com). To apply, please click the Apply Now button". (Radisson, Job Ad N° 2, Hotel Business Controller - Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands) (Radisson, 2021).*

On one of Choice's job advertisements, the company reinforces its positioning as a high-tech company and mentions the opportunity for potential candidates to share what they know while working with the latest technologies. Furthermore, it is also possible to identify references to a positive work environment that incentivizes its employees to work as a team.

*"Choice is a tightknit team where you can enhance your skills in an environment that emphasizes creativity, sharing, teamwork, professionalism, and outstanding quality software. You will work alongside some of the most talented and dynamic professionals as they work to provide exceptional solutions to the many challenges our business and franchises face. If you are bright, driven, enjoy working with the latest technologies and have the right blend of business acumen, technically savvy and customer-facing skills then this opportunity is for you". (Choice, Job Ad N° 7, Software Engineer - Phoenix, Arizona, The United States) (Choice, 2021).*

In one of its job advertisements, Hyatt offers potential candidates an opportunity to have fun while providing great experiences for selective guests.

*"We believe in hiring the smile and training and developing talent to create genuine and caring teams who come to work to have fun. If you have an inner drive to love what you do – and do it well - and you strive to provide the best purposeful hotel experience for the most selective of smart self-reliant business travellers, then please read on as you're somebody we want within our Hyatt Place team". (Hyatt, Job Ad N° 3, Head Chef - London, England, United Kingdom) (Hyatt, 2021).*

Another example worthy of mention is one of Aimbridge's job advertisements, in which the company provides a detailed description of one of its hotel's surroundings and facilities. Despite not being necessarily directed to its employees, this description demonstrates a positive perspective about the hotel as a place to work, highlighting its luxurious features and prestigious location. In this example, it is possible to see a combination of more tangible benefits like the hotel's location and a symbolic mention of one of the most famous universities in the world being close to the hotel. Moreover, the job advertisement also refers to the membership proudly held by the hotel, related to a group composed of luxurious hotels worldwide. Adopting a similar approach, one of

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

Radisson's job advertisements mention the hotel's facilities, including apartments with a differentiated decoration and sea view.

*“Welcome to the Radisson Blu Waterfront Hotel in Jersey is set on the gorgeous coastline of the largest Channel Island, known for its craggy cliffs, sandy beaches and lush countryside. Nestled beside Elizabeth Marina on St. Aubin's Bay, you can walk out the hotel door right onto the promenade and take in the outstanding views of the bay and historic Elizabeth Castle”.* (Radisson, Job Ad N° 4, Room Attendant - Saint Helier, England, United Kingdom) (Radisson, 2021).

*“The Charles Hotel experience reflects the eclecticism that is Cambridge. An urban oasis, The Charles offers something for everyone who is visiting the Boston area. Guests can soak in their academic surrounding by attending a lecture at Harvard, relax with a stroll along the Charles River, explore downtown Boston or dine at some of the Boston and Cambridge area's finest restaurants, including The Charles' own Henrietta's Table. The Charles is an independent property, offering luxurious accommodations and all the comforts of home. Guest rooms combine New England décor with the latest technology. 18,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor banquet space merge to offer an array of options for anyone's next event. Located just minutes from downtown Boston and a variety of world-class attractions, The Charles is a AAA Four Diamond Hotel and a proud member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts”.* (Aimbridge, Job Ad N° 1, Front Desk Agent - Bedford Park, Illinois, The United States) (Aimbridge, 2021).

IHG mentions in its job advertisements its openness for authenticity. IHG also reinforces its openness for a socially diverse workforce and lists some economic benefits offered to its employees.

*“We like to believe we offer a unique culture, where there's inclusivity yet room to be yourself. When hard work pays off, it's positive to know you're appreciated. Alongside our great working environment (currently virtual/remote working environment), we'll offer you a strong package firstly including an industry competitive salary, an annual bonus, healthcare and incredible worldwide hotel discounts. As an equal opportunity employer, IHG is committed to providing a working culture that values diversity and inclusion and is committed to making reasonable adjustments to provide a barrier-free recruitment process”.* (IHG, Job Ad N° 5, Head of Digital Procurement - Denham, England, United Kingdom) (IHG, 2021).

In their job advertisements, most hotel chains refer to benefits related to economic value. Amongst the most mentioned economic value benefits are competitive salaries, different insurance plans, retirement plans, and discounts on products/services for employees. Similar to the other categories of benefits, these benefits often appear in conjunction with other types. A relevant observation about the economic value offered by the hotel chains is that they seem to be similar to each other. One of the most cited benefits, other than economic benefits, is training opportunities. There are constant

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

mentions about training programs that allow employees to improve their professional potential.

*“A full time job at a fast growing, international company that strives to be the #1 vacation rental company in Europe. A market conform salary. An employee benefit program consisting of amongst others discounts for Belvilla products. 24 days of leave per year. An inspiring office environment with highly motivated colleagues in the middle of Eindhoven town center (10 minutes from Railway Station). An NS-Business card for commuting or car allowance”.* (OYO, Job Ad N° 2, Workforce Manager & Reporting Specialist - Eindhoven, North Brabant, Netherlands) (OYO, 2021).

*“Why join the Hilton family at Hilton London Heathrow Airport as OXBO Mixologist? It’s your world” – Your next role could be as a Food and Beverage Team Leader or Supervisor, or why not move into a different department like Front Office, Accounts or Human Resources in over 100 different countries. Personal Development programmes tailored to you. Worldwide travel perks - up to 30 nights at discounted rates and 50% F&B discounts. Industry leading benefits including contributory pension scheme, discounted dental and health cover, and high street discounts. 28 days holidays including bank holidays (increasing yearly). Complimentary meals on duty and uniforms provided. Service charge and tips”.* (Hilton, Job Ad N° 10, Mixologist - London Heathrow Airport, England, United Kingdom) (Hilton, 2021).

*“We’ll reward all your hard work with a great salary and benefits – including great room discount and superb training”.* (IHG, Job Ad N° 10, Senior Project IT Manager - Alpharetta, Georgia, The United States) (IHG, 2021).

*“What is in it for you: Employee Discount Travel Program; Employee Assistance Program (EAP); Extended healthcare plan coverage; Opportunity to develop your talent and grown within the Company and across the globe!; Ability to make a difference through our Corporate Social Responsibility activities such as Planet 21”.* (Accor, Job Ad N° 7, Vice President, Development - The United States) (Accor, 2021).

*“After an initial waiting period, those hired into full time positions are eligible for a competitive benefits package that includes the following: Medical, Dental, and Vision Coverage; Short-Term and Long-Term Disability Income; Term Life and AD&D Insurance; Paid Time Off; Employee Assistance Program; 401k Retirement Plan”.* (Aimbridge, Job Ad N° 1, Front Desk Agent - Cambridge, Massachusetts, The United States) (Aimbridge, 2021).

In the end, there are a great variety of benefits presented in the job advertisements. The way each company discusses its benefits package is unique and gives some clues about the employer positioning of each company.

Table V summarize some aspects of the hotel chains’ employer positioning related to the data collected on their job advertisements.

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

**Table V - Job Advertisements: Highlights**

<b>Hotel Chains' Employer Positioning Highlights – Job Advertisements</b>	
<b>Marriott</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most job advertisements are short and only briefly describe the company, its values, and the job tasks.</li> <li>• Except for the trainee/internship, the advertisements do not require any specific professional qualification.</li> <li>• There are only a few mentions of how the company's values should be incorporated into the job tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Radisson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some job advertisements describe the hotel's surroundings and infrastructure.</li> <li>• Most job advertisements seem to follow a standard structure, and all of them present the company's values.</li> <li>• Some job advertisements describe in detail the job tasks and how the company's values should be incorporated into these tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>OYO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured and detailed job advertisements, always presenting a description of the company's relevance in the industry.</li> <li>• Job advertisements often explicitly present some of the benefits offered to employees, including a supportive work environment.</li> <li>• All the jobs offered are for management or are associated with information technology positions.</li> </ul>
<b>Hilton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job advertisements do not follow a standardised structure.</li> <li>• Job advertisements provide detailed descriptions of the job tasks, constantly mentioning the company's values.</li> <li>• Some job advertisements present positive aspects of Hilton, including its culture of fun and its relevance in the industry.</li> </ul>
<b>IHG</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job advertisements often follow a standardised structure, following a specific order of data presentation, starting with a company's general presentation and its values.</li> <li>• The job descriptions are detailed and often mention a focus on customer experience and hospitality.</li> <li>• Some job advertisements explicitly mention employee benefits, including competitive salaries and training.</li> </ul>
<b>Wyndham</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job advertisements are often long, detailed and standardised.</li> <li>• The job advertisements often describe, although vaguely, the working schedule mentioning the need to work in variable hours.</li> <li>• The job advertisements often mention the company's values and how they should be incorporated into the job tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Accor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every Accor's brand seems to have its own job advertisement style, with significant differences, including the writing style.</li> <li>• Only a few job advertisements explicitly mention the benefits offered to employees.</li> <li>• The job advertisements present in detail the job tasks and how the company's values should be incorporated into them.</li> </ul>
<b>Choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job advertisements usually start by reinforcing the importance of people in the company's success.</li> <li>• The job advertisements are standardised, all ending with a message reinforcing the company's values.</li> <li>• All job advertisements are related to managerial positions and require a university degree.</li> </ul>
<b>Hyatt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some job advertisements barely mention the company's values and its employer positioning.</li> <li>• There is significant variability in how the job advertisements are written, including the level of detail related to job tasks and the company's values.</li> <li>• The company's values are usually indirectly presented.</li> </ul>
<b>Aimbridge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some job advertisements describe the hotels' surroundings and infrastructures.</li> <li>• All the job advertisements have a standardised structure and mention the benefits offered to employees.</li> <li>• Despite presenting in detail the job tasks, there are few mentions about the company's values on the job advertisements.</li> </ul>

Source: The Author.



## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

In this chapter, through the presentation of the data collected from hotel chains' recruiting websites and job advertisements posted on their LinkedIn profiles, it was possible to have a broad picture of how some of the biggest hotel chains in the world present their employer positioning online. In the next chapter, a discussion about these findings takes place. The similarities and differences between the websites and job advertisements are analysed and compared to the pre-existing literature.

### 5. DISCUSSION

This study's objective is to describe how hotel chains use online communication to present their employer positioning. The analyses process started with the recruitment websites. At this point, it was possible to obtain a broader perspective of how and in which depth of detail they present their employer positioning. As Behrend *et al.* (2009) indicate, it is possible to find a great variety of information on the companies' websites. Companies include information regarding what they intend to offer their employees regarding the employment experience. The information was often divided into specific sections, allowing a potential candidate to explore the different layers of their employer positioning. However, not all websites have the same information volume and provide the same level of detail. The websites from OYO and Wyndham present less information and detail about their employer positioning when compared to Marriot, Hilton and IHG's websites, demonstrating that they approach their online employer brand management from different perspectives.

Many statements highlighted the most attractive aspects of the companies as employers, directed to different professional segments, such as undergraduate students, women, LGBTQ+ community members, and professionals from different cultural backgrounds, indicating that these hotel chains have a deliberate employer brand strategy. This segmentation process is a strategic step of employer branding since distinct professionals expect distinguished benefits from their employers (Moroko & Uncles, 2009). For example, LGBTQ+ professionals often face more challenges in their working environment than others, making it crucial that companies provide extra information and take actions to help the LGBTQ+ professionals to feel comfortable by being who they are (Glassdoor, 2021). Undergraduate students will also demand a different approach, especially in their first professional experience. Companies need to demonstrate that these students will have differentiated social support (Kim & Park, 2013).

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

Another indication that reinforces the idea that these hotel chains are deliberately managing their employer positioning online is the references to their brands and how each brand differentiates from the other in terms of values, service type, customer segment, and working experience. The statements on job advertisements related to how employees should perform their tasks following the brand values also corroborate this perspective. Thus, it is possible to argue that Marriott, Radisson, OYO, Hilton, IHG, Wyndham, Accor, Choice, Hyatt and Aimbridge are committed to hiring employees to match their brand values (Russell & Brannan, 2016; Sirianni *et al.*, 2013). These efforts represent a clear demonstration of unified efforts from human resources and marketing areas aiming to assure high levels of service quality (Buil *et al.*, 2016).

The deliberate actions to help potential candidates evaluate if they align with what the company is and what it expects from its employees helps these companies to hire employees who perceive a P-O fit (Kristof, 1996). By clarifying their employer positioning, these companies can increase their recruiting and selection process efficiency (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2012; Ganesan *et al.*, 2020). This way, these companies can provide what their employees expect and need. By achieving the above, they reduce the employees' intention to leave (Yao *et al.*, 2019), improve their service quality and customer experience (Schlager *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, although most hotel chains display specific programs targeting undergraduate students and recent graduates on their websites, it seems the hotel industry still has a long path until this industry overcomes its reputation of low qualification jobs. By analysing the minimum professional requirements of most job advertisements collected for this study, it becomes clear that the great majority of the job vacancies do not demand any specific course or experience.

Based on the Signalling Theory (Connelly *et al.*, 2011; Spence, 1973), it is possible to argue that job advertisements send signals about the employer positioning and the profile of employees they want to attract. Job advertisements reach undergraduate hotel management students and their relatives and friends. They might interpret these signals as "this is an industry that anyone can work in". These possible interpretations about the hotel industry employer positioning can influence future highly qualified employees' perspectives about following a career in this industry, potentially reducing their interest in working there (Kilson, 2021).

Another important consideration is the poor reputation as an employer the hotel industry has worldwide (Baum, 2015, Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Janta *et al.*, 2011). The

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

results of this study suggest that, from a strategic perspective, these hotel chains are deliberately rebranding it. They are committed to turning the industry's reputation into an attractive industry with plenty of job opportunities and a great variety of benefits. Most of these companies seem to invest significant resources in developing their websites. Beyond textual descriptions, they display several pictures, videos and employees' testimonials showing the positive aspects of the work in their hotels.

Furthermore, it transpires that these companies carefully designed some of the job advertisements collected for this study to instigate potential candidates to give the hotel industry a chance. They describe the work environment positively and highlight some of the many benefits employees might get, including prestige for working in renowned properties and the possibility to create fantastic experiences for the guests. It demonstrates that each of these companies is trying to enhance its employer brand equity by highlighting its unique aspects to convince its current and potential employees that they are the best employers in the industry (Ewing *et al.*, 2002).

However, the hotel industry is composed of units managed by these international hotel chains and many independent-owned hotels and small local hotel chains. Many of these small companies still lack financial and knowledge resources to provide better working conditions to their employees (Janta *et al.*, 2011). In practical terms, it means the hotel industry still has a long path until it overcomes its history of a poor employer.

Results show a relevant inconsistency throughout job advertisements from the same hotel chains. For instance, while some job advertisements describe the company's employer positioning, others do not even display basic information about the job itself nor the company or its values. These findings reinforce what Elving *et al.* (2013) stated that many companies still fail to design job advertisements that allow potential candidates to evaluate if they fit in the company before applying for the job.

Companies operating in different geographical contexts often face challenges implementing a seamless employer branding strategy (Martin *et al.*, 2011; Mölk & Auer, 2018). Then, a possible explanation for these inconsistencies in the job advertisements is that most of these hotels are franchises. In this sense, it is likely that the recruiting activities, including the job advertisements creation, might be locally managed by each hotel unit. Besides, some of these hotel chains operate in more than 100 countries, with different cultural aspects and legislations. Then, it is possible that due to local restrictions or characteristics, many of these hotels have their unique way of designing their job advertisements to attract potential local candidates.

## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

Furthermore, due to the high seasonality, which demands many temporary employees to work during short periods, many managers probably do not think it is necessary to spend a vast amount of time planning their recruiting activities. In line with it, another possible explanation for this significant variability is that not all hotel units have a clear employer branding strategy. Hence, local managers are not aware of the relevance of investing in detailed job advertisements.

Considering the above, these hotel chains must have well-designed websites that offer potential candidates, complementary information about their employer positioning. By doing so, these companies assure that no matter which job advertisement these potential candidates are reading, they will always have a source of detailed and reliable information.

The following subsection discusses each of the EVP dimensions identified during the analysis.

### **5.1. The Employee Value Proposition Dimensions**

Interestingly, it was possible to find benefits on the hotel chains' websites and job advertisements associated with all the eight dimensions presented in table I. There were just a few citations of authenticity (possibility to express yourself through your appearance) (Reis *et al.*, 2017), and management value (supportive managers), and slightly more of work/life balance (flexibility to adapt the work schedule to meet personal and professional needs) (Dabirian *et al.*, 2017). The most mentioned benefit types were related to application value (focus on guest experience quality), economic value (different insurance types and discounts on products), and development value (training opportunities) (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017).

Most of the time, these values are described in conjunction; for example, benefits associated with the economic and development values are often presented together. Each EVP dimension will be presented separately, in the following subsections, to facilitate the discussion.

#### **5.1.1. Application Value**

There were several references on the hotel chains' recruitment websites and job advertisements regarding application value, which includes a customer-oriented

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

environment, opportunities for employees to demonstrate what they know and share their knowledge with their colleagues (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017).

From Accor's recruitment website, an example of customer orientation is: "*Guest Passion: We obsess over our customers. Our guests are the driver of our decisions and our actions. We put them first, we care for them. We go the extra mile for them. We enjoy doing it*". (Accor, n.d.).

Wyndham's recruiting website has an indirect mention of the application value. In it, it is possible to see how the company is trying to signal that it stands out from its competitors with its unique hotel brands. "*Our unmatched collection of iconic hotel brands delivers the experiences everyday travelers want however they choose to travel*". (Wyndham, n.d.).

Similarly, it was possible to find other comments about the search for customer-oriented employees on the companies' job advertisements. Not presented as just a potential benefit, many job advertisements stated that a focus on the customer is an essential requirement for the job: "*If you have an inner drive to love what you do – and do it well - and you strive to provide the best purposeful hotel experience for the most selective of smart self-reliant business travellers, then please read on as you're somebody we want within our Hyatt Place team*". (Hyatt, Job Ad N° 3, Head Chef - London, England, United Kingdom) (Hyatt, 2021).

On one of Radisson's job advertisements, there is a direct mention of the incentives to employees to share what they think, regardless of their position in the company. "*No matter what level you are in our organisation, we will encourage your creativity. If you have an idea about how we can improve things, we want to hear it. And if it is a bright idea, we will make it happen. In the fast-moving and competitive world of hospitality, this is how we have stayed ahead*". (Radisson, Job Ad N° 2, Hotel Business Controller - Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands) (Radisson, 2021).

All of the hotel chains were, directly and indirectly, sending signals about customer orientation and their hotel brands' unique characteristics as ways of attracting potential candidates, which have some important implications for a company's performance. Employees who appreciate constant and close interactions with customers are essential to developing positive interactions with customers (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Frye *et al.*, 2020; Poulston, 2008; Yao, Qiu & Wei, 2019). Without employees who genuinely embrace the company's values and are motivated to do their best to provide guests with the best experience possible, a hotel might face difficulties delivering outstanding

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

experiences to guests (Buil *et al.*, 2016; Sirianni *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, allowing employees to apply and share what they know increases employees' well-being perceptions, consequently reducing their intentions to leave the job (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021).

### 5.1.2. Authenticity

Reis *et al.* (2017) proposed the authenticity value, which refers to working environments that allow employees to behave authentically, respecting their own beliefs and convictions. This value could be identified on an extract from Radisson recruiting website and a job advertisement from IHG: "*Our guests and our talent deserve an environment where they are valued for who they are*". (Radisson, n.d.). "*We like to believe we offer a unique culture, where there's inclusivity yet room to be yourself*". (IHG, Job Ad N° 5, Head of Digital Procurement - Denham, England, United Kingdom) (IHG, 2021). Additionally, it was possible to identify an explicit reference to the relevance of allowing employees to be who they are on the Radisson website: "*It's very difficult these days to find a workplace where you can really be yourself, where you can have as many tattoos or weird haircuts as you want*". (Radisson, n.d.).

Despite being identified as a relevant value, especially valued by long-term employees, women and professionals in high positions and considered as important as the economic and development values (Reis *et al.*, 2017), the present study only found a few mentions to employees' authenticity. A possible explanation for that is that as international chains, these hotel companies are probably focused on keeping their brand standards in every hotel unit, consequently limiting employees' options regarding their appearance, behaviour, and way of speaking. Although it may bring some challenges to the hotels' operations, employee authenticity signals might help hotels increase their attractiveness as employers.

### 5.1.3. Development Value

Development value encompasses benefits such as employees' efforts recognition, opportunities for professional development and future employment (Berthon *et al.* 2005; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017))

As part of the ten world's biggest hotel chains, these companies often mention promotion opportunities and international mobility as part of their development value benefits. They provide employees with many possibilities to assume positions in different

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

hotel business areas and locations worldwide: “*With 30 renowned brands and 7,000+ properties in over 131 countries, Marriott has no intention of slowing down. Let this be your humble beginning to a career of endless opportunity. Start your own adventure today*”. (Marriott, n.d.).

There were also many references about different training programs to develop employees skills and knowledge and inform them about career opportunities: “*Regardless of where a career begins, we encourage each team member to regularly discuss career goals with his/her manager to ensure the right opportunities for Experience, Exposure, and Education are continually provided*”. (Wyndham, n.d.).

Statements incentivising employees’ curiosity and professional ambition could also be found. “*Be Bold: Take calculated risks to advance our business. Be Quick: Act with a sense of thoughtful urgency. [...] Be Curious: Never stop learning or growing by asking questions and challenging ideas*”. (Choice, n.d.). As some authors point out, the hotel industry needs to invest more in career progression (Bharwani & Butt, 2012) and training opportunities (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Frye *et al.*, 2020; Poulston, 2008) to increase employee attraction and retention. Hospitality and tourism undergraduate students’ career growth expectations are often not met after starting to work in the hotel industry, leading many of them to lose their interest in working in this industry (Kim & Park, 2013; Le *et al.*, 2018).

Furthermore, according to Poulston (2008), the lack of adequate training for employees is associated with many hotel issues, including theft, poor food hygiene and sexual harassment, which help to increase employees’ turnover intentions. Besides preventing severe problems, training is an essential ingredient to ensure employees understand their role in representing the brand while interacting with customers, ensuring a desirable performance (Buil *et al.*, 2016; Sirianni *et al.*, 2013).

These messages regarding development value benefits found on the hotel chains’ recruitment websites and their job advertisements serve as positive signals to potential candidates that these companies want to invest in their employees in the long term. In the end, as demonstrated by Cober *et al.* (2003), positive perceptions about development opportunities enhance an employer’s attractiveness.

### 5.1.4. Economic Value

Amongst others, above-average salaries, job security, health insurance, pension contribution are some of the benefits that constitute the economic value (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017).

Low salaries are amongst the most mentioned issues related to the hotel industry and often a reason for many employees to leave their jobs (Baum, 2015; Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Janta *et al.*, 2011; Kilson, 2021; Yao *et al.*, 2019). Not surprisingly, economic value benefits were constantly mentioned on all hotel chains recruitment websites and job advertisements. The economic benefits tend to be very similar throughout all the hotel chains. Amongst the most common benefits are hotel rooms discounts, health/life insurance, retirement plans and, paid time off: “*We know financial security is a top priority for our employees, which is why we offer benefits like competitive pay, life insurance, and 401(k) retirement savings plans. Benefits include: [...] Employee assistance program; Employee discounts*”. (Radisson, n.d.).

Economic benefits are an important initial source of employer attractiveness (Behrend *et al.*, 2009; Cober *et al.*, 2003; Wayne & Casper, 2012). Even being considered as important as authenticity value for some employees (Reis *et al.* 2017), economic benefits might not contribute to retaining employees in the long term (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021; Kashyap & Verma, 2018). Meanwhile, the lack of attractive economic benefits, such as low salaries, might motivate many highly qualified employees to lose their interest in working in the hotel industry (Brown *et al.*, 2015; Kilson, 2021; Kim & Park, 2013). Then, it is relevant that employers are aware they need to demonstrate to potential candidates that they have an attractive economic benefits package and other types of benefits if they aim to build long-term professional relationships with these candidates.

### 5.1.5. Interest Value

Workplaces that are stimulating, where novelty work practices are adopted and have innovative employees to develop innovative and high-quality customer value propositions are all components of interest value (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017). There was a great diversity of interest value benefits throughout the hotel chains’ websites and job advertisements.



## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

On Hilton's website, it was possible to find an invitation for those who are looking for a job in the food and beverage area that provides exciting opportunities: *"Be part of the Team that creates exciting and memorable meals that cater to the sophisticated palates of our guests around the world."* (Hilton, n.d.). Meanwhile, Accor invites future employees to shape the hotel industry future: *"Whatever your background or experience, dare to bring your talent and passion to Accor! Together, we will design the hospitality of tomorrow and make the world a more welcoming place"*. Moreover, Accor also presents its international program, which invites students worldwide to participate in a competition to develop novelty solutions: *"Since 2011, our Group organises the Take Off! International Student Challenge to challenge teams of 3 on issues topics related to Accor's activities. The 2019 theme, which generated over 1,500 participants, was to imagine how Artificial Intelligence (AI) will enhance the guest experience in hotels"*. (Accor, n.d.).

Demonstrating a different form of interest value, Hyatt highlights their innovative hotel designs: *"Each of the unique 18 brands within the Hyatt portfolio offers a distinct interpretation of our foundational purpose: to deliver personalised care and unforgettable experiences. [...] The hallmark of Alila is the combination of innovative design and crafted luxury in unique locations, set apart by an unprecedented level of personalised hospitality, private spaces and bespoke journeys"*. (Hyatt, n.d.).

The most common remarks about interest value were related to innovative information technology and innovative professionals: *"IT is where some of our most exciting innovation is born. We've already introduced some industry firsts and we're determined to dream up more. Here, you could be involved in simplifying everyday tasks, creating tools to lower costs or keeping vital systems safe, secure and available. The challenges grow all the time – along with the range of opportunities"*. (IHG, n.d.).

As an example of interest value on a job advertisement, Choice describes its working environment emphasising its innovative nature: *"Choice is a tightknit team where you can enhance your skills in an environment that emphasises creativity, sharing, teamwork, professionalism, and outstanding quality software. You will work alongside some of the most talented and dynamic professionals as they work to provide exceptional solutions to the many challenges our business and franchises face"*. (Choice, Job Ad N° 7, Software Engineer - Phoenix, Arizona, The United States) (Choice, 2021).

The examples mentioned above present clearly how these hotel chains send signals about exciting job opportunities. Innovative employees tend to be more attracted to

## The se of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

companies that promote a culture open to new ideas and motivate their employees to share their knowledge (Sommer *et al.*, 2017). Allowing employees to express their creativity and try different solutions for their daily tasks might increase job satisfaction and improve the organisation's performance (Frye *et al.*, 2020).

With continuous investment in the online employer brand and the dissemination of programs targeting creative professionals, the hotel industry might go through a profound transformation, adopting modern management practices and innovative solutions. Consequently, over time, the hotel industry might significantly improve its reputation as an employer and become an attractive industry; one where more employees will want to work.

### 5.1.6. Management Value

Proposed by Dabirian *et al.* (2017), management value relates to good relationships between managers and employees. References to supportive managers varied from employees' testimonials to the best CEO award won by Choice's CEO in 2020.

IHG and Marriot present some employees' testimonials about supportive managers from managers and employees' perspectives. *"Another reason why I consider myself to be incredibly lucky is the inspiration I've taken from the General Managers I've worked with, and that includes my current managers. They challenge me to keep on getting better at what I do"*. (IHG, n.d.). *"Whether it's creating a memorable experience for our guests, or supporting a team member and seeing their next career move, it gives me great satisfaction"*. (Marriott, n.d.)

Choice presents its recently won award for best CEO on its website, signalling third-party institutions recognise its commitment to offering a supportive environment to its employees. *"President and CEO Pat Pacious has been named one of 2020's Best CEOs For Women of large companies by Comparably, a workplace culture and compensation monitoring site"*. (Choice, n.d.).

Signals of a supportive environment are essential to attract and retain undergraduate hotel management students. Undergraduate students first employment experiences might be heavily influenced by their social interactions with supervisors. Positive social experiences with supervisors and co-workers can enhance students excitement and interest in developing a career in the hotel industry. At the same time, the contrary situation might negatively affect their interest in this industry (Kim & Park, 2013). Moreover, third-party certifications, like the one presented by Choice, contribute to

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

enhancing the message of credibility regarding their supportive managers (Dineen & Allen, 2016).

The hotel industry usually requires employees to work long hours, constantly relying on colleagues support. Then, it is relevant that hotel chains promote a supportive environment to improve employees' perceptions regarding their person-group fit and person-supervisor fit, consequently reducing the employee turnover rate (Choi *et al.*, 2017).

### 5.1.7. Social Value

The social value essence is a working environment that promotes a people-based culture and aims to create a positive work atmosphere with happy and fun co-workers who work as a team and share similar values (Berthon *et al.*, 2005; Dabirian *et al.*, 2017).

Having fun at work and a positive work atmosphere are amongst the most cited social value benefits. These statements could be found in different sections of hotel chains' websites, including the company's initial presentation and value sections. For example, in Accor's initial presentation, the company states that employees' well-being is as important as guests' fulfilment: *"We aim at creating exceptional experiences that will turn both guests and employees into raving fans, because our own well-being in our jobs is just as important as our guest fulfillment. Like all good stories, everything is related. We are driven by our shared values"*. (Accor, n.d.). Likewise, Accor also states that it aims to promote a positive environment for its employees and to conquer their hearts: *"Be a part of something bigger. Enjoy life every day. Make a difference in the lives of those around you. Love where you work. Join a company that values respect, integrity, humility, empathy, creativity, and fun. With careers spanning the globe, your perfect opportunity awaits. Discover why Hyatt is consistently ranked one of the world's best places to work"*. (Hyatt, n.d.).

Marriott recognises that its success depends on employees' well-being: *"The foundation for our success depends on your well-being. So we made a commitment to make our workplace an environment where your emotional, physical and financial needs matter"*. (Marriott, n.d.). Wyndham states that employees' happiness reflects on customers: *"Fun is an energising force. When we have fun doing what we love, our guests love their experiences with us"*. (Wyndham, n.d.).

As recent studies demonstrate, social value benefits are associated with reduced employee turnover rates (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021; Kashyap & Verma, 2018).

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

Thus, promoting a cooperative, fun and happy environment might significantly increase a hotel's attractiveness as an employer. Besides, satisfied employees who share common values with the company tend to present favourable attitudes while serving customers, positively influencing customers' perceptions about the brand experience (Schlager *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, employers must check if their recruitment messages are clear about their values to ensure potential candidates can evaluate if they match the company's values (Elving *et al.*, 2013).

### 5.1.8. Work/life Balance

Work/life balance represents a job's benefits that allow employees to have time to their personal life beyond work (Dabirian *et al.*, 2017). In conjunction with economic value and development value benefits, work/life balance is one of the most critical human resources challenges hotel managers face (Bharwani & Butt, 2012; Janta *et al.*, 2011; Kilson, 2021).

Considering the relevance of work/life balance, some companies present employees' testimonials about their work/life balance perceptions. This is the case of Hyatt and Choice: “ *I chose Hyatt in 1986 because I viewed the comp days as work/life balance. I am proud that 33 years later, that is still a compelling reason to work for Hyatt* ”. (Hyatt, n.d.). “ *My quality of life has improved so much since I joined Choice. They're flexible with hours, so I can still pick up my kids* ”. (Choice, n.d.).

Hilton mentions the opportunity to participate in their sabbatical program of four weeks: “ *With Hilton's Thrive Sabbatical Program, you will see what it's like to give a dream to benefit others or live a dream by exploring a personal goal. Four weeks. \$5,000. A chance to recharge, grow and make a meaningful difference* ”. (Hilton, n.d.).

Unrealistic expectations regarding work/life balance represent a common problem faced by hospitality and tourism undergraduate students and recently graduated professionals, which lead to a decrease in their interest in working in the hotel industry (Brown *et al.*, 2015; Kilson, 2021; Kim & Park, 2013). A lack of work/life balance may also affect the hotel industry's capacity to attract millennials (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2012).

Despite presenting information about work/life balance on their websites, these companies also mention in some of their job advertisements that employees must be available to work on flexible schedules, including working at night shifts and holidays. The fact that hotels constantly operate 24 hours a day and 365 days per year makes it hard

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

for managers and employees to achieve the desired work/life balance. In this sense, employers must be realistic about the workload when presenting job opportunities, allowing potential candidates to evaluate if they feel comfortable with that.

### 5.1.9. Social Diversity

During the data analysis process, a theme regarding social diversity emerged from the data. More than just part of the hotel chains' corporate social responsibility programs, all the companies promote openness for a socially diverse workforce on their websites. It was possible to find many different extracts celebrating social diversity as part of these companies core values and as a source of competitive advantage.

As examples of social diversity celebration, IHG and Accor state their appreciation for it: *"We believe in doing our part for the world and treating others well. That's why we celebrate difference in our business and strive to help people progress. Everyone's able to thrive and make a difference. Join us and see for yourself"*. (IHG, n.d.). *"Respect: We are connected with the world, and to others. We enjoy the mix of cultures. We are proud of our differences. We put you first and we value you, whoever you are"*. (Accor, n.d.).

Moreover, some companies present some numbers about their social diversity orientation, quantifying, for example, the number of countries where their employees come from: *"By adding your voice to 120 cultures and counting. Our culture of inclusion welcomes everyone, regardless of race, gender, background, or... anything really!"*. (Accor, n.d.). *"The 95,000 team members working under the Radisson Hotel Group come from 160 different countries"*. (Radisson, n.d.). *"114 Countries & Territories. 40+ Languages Spoken. 5 Generations of Team Members."*. (Hilton, n.d.)

As mentioned before, some companies state that part of their success is due to their social diversity openness. Hyatt explains that to become closer to their customers, they need a diversified workforce: *"At Hyatt, we care for people so they can be their best. [...] We achieve our greatest success when all colleagues feel comfortable and confident bringing their whole selves to work each day – fueling innovation and creativity through our diverse backgrounds. These different points of view are a source of strength, connecting us more closely to those we serve, including guests, customers, our communities, vendors and owners"*. (Hyatt, n.d.).

Radisson reinforces this perspective, stating that to meet their diverse customers' needs, they require employees who understand these needs: *"One of our core cultural*

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

beliefs, *“We are Many Minds with One Mindset” is based on our respect for individual differences, life experiences and diverse world views working together to help make memorable experiences for all who walk through our doors. To enable that to happen, we are dedicated to building a global team of employees that reflect the communities where we work and live, and the diversity of the customers we serve*”. (Radisson, n.d.).

Hilton and Wyndham also recognise social diversity as a relevant source of competitive advantage: *“We are diverse by nature and inclusive by choice, and believe that any and every Team Member can make a difference. As we say, ‘Diversity is part of our future, past of our legacy and fundamental to our success’*”. (Hilton, n.d.). *“As a global hospitality provider, we believe diversity enriches our organisation. As a result, we proudly embrace a culture of diversity and inclusion that supports team members of all backgrounds and experiences. [...] We view the diversity of our team as a competitive advantage”*. (Wyndham, n.d.).

Before the pandemic, migrant workers represented a significant part of the workforce in many developed countries. In the European Union, around 16% of the tourism workers were migrants, while in the United States, this number was around 20% (International Monetary Fund, 2021). This way, a crucial aspect of the hotel industry’s sustainability is its capacity to attract and retain professionals from different cultural backgrounds (Choi *et al.*, 2017), making them feel welcome by meeting their needs (Huang & Rundle-Thiele, 2014).

Beyond the results of this study, the literature already discussed the importance of social diversity as a relevant aspect of employer attractiveness (Wayne & Casper, 2012). Moreover, previous studies regarding highly qualified professionals working in the hotel industry found that these professionals are partly attracted to work in hotels due to the possibility of having multicultural experiences (Brown *et al.*, 2015; Kilson, 2021).

In this regard, more than just being part of the corporate social responsibility program of the hotel chains, social diversity must be seen and promoted as a potential benefit to the employees, as the hotel chains selected for this study are already doing online. Managers should promote this social diversity as an opportunity for employees to interact with different perspectives, exchange experiences and views, and personal and professional growth. However, it is still necessary to further explore this topic and measure its effects on hotels’ employer branding strategies.

## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

Below are some propositions derived from the present study's results that provide some pathways for further research endeavours regarding social diversity as an EVP dimension for the hotel industry.

P.1 Hotel chains that promote social diversity openness by presenting a culturally diverse workforce might be perceived by hotel management undergraduate students as more attractive as employers, due to symbolic benefits associated with opportunities for cultural exchange and the development of their soft skills.

P.2 Hotel chains with a diverse workforce might be perceived by professionals from social minority groups as more attractive as employers, since it may lead those potential candidates to feel safer and more comfortable joining these companies where professionals with similar characteristics have been accepted.

P.3 Hotels that promote social diversity openness would benefit from the possibility of choosing the best-suited employees from a more extensive candidates' pool because they might be considered more attractive as employers, by many different professional segments..

P.4 Hotels that openly discuss and inform their potential candidates about their values and perspectives regarding social diversity may increase the probability of hiring employees who appreciate working in an environment with social diverse customers and employees, consequently increasing the chance of a match between the company and the employee.

P.5 Hotels that demonstrate flexible norms regarding the employees' dress code might be perceived as more attractive as employers, by potential candidates that identify themselves as non-binary gender or that feel uncomfortable following "traditional" dress code norms.

P.6 Hotels that have employees from different generations might be perceived as more attractive as employers, by younger candidates by offering the opportunity for these candidates to develop their professional skills and knowledge by working closely with senior professionals.

P.7 Hotels with women in higher management positions and openly sharing this information might be perceived as more attractive as employers, by female

## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

candidates because they may feel they will have the same career growth opportunities as men.

P8. Hotels that have employees from different generations might be perceived as more attractive as employers, by senior candidates, since these candidates may feel they will not be discriminated against due to their age, before and after being hired.

The last discussion subsection briefly discusses the relevance of hotel managers investing in their employer branding during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **5.2. Employer Branding and the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the global travel and tourism sector has been massively affected by lockdowns and international borders closing, causing 62 million job losses and a drastic reduction in travel and tourism global revenue of 4.5 trillion US dollars in 2020 (WTTC, 2021).

Due to the massive negative worldwide impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to many significant changes in the job market that are still uncertain, it is relevant that hotel managers keep investing in their employer branding strategies. Beyond the usual job market segmentation (Moroko & Uncles, 2009), to attract and retain employees, managers must adapt their employer branding practices to this new reality by identifying what to offer to their current and potential employees. As the WTTC (2021) report presents, the millions of jobs lost during the pandemic could be recovered before the end of 2022, considering a scenario in which international mobility is re-established in June of 2021. This forecast demonstrates that great opportunities might arise for those employers who learn how to creatively and efficiently improve their employer positioning. Since many professionals are unemployed, employers can hire from a larger pool of candidates, best-suited employees for their company before their competitors.

This perspective was reinforced by a survey conducted in Canada in 2020 with 5055 participants. The study's results suggest that perceptions of the tourism activity as an employer deteriorated compared to the first edition of the study in 2017. While in 2017, 62% of the respondents would recommend a career in tourism to family friends, only 46% would do so in 2020. Moreover, 39% of the respondents indicated that their tourism activity perceptions as an employer were more negative after the pandemic (Tourism HR Canada, 2020). Therefore, hotel managers should not overlook investments in employer



## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

branding because of the pandemic. Maybe, more than before the pandemic, the hotel industry reputation as an employer needs a revitalisation. Hotel managers should send signals to potential candidates about the many benefits this industry might offer its employees, like the ones pointed in subsection 5.1. At the same time, hotel managers should reinforce their ties with their current employees, caring about their well-being and professional goals to retain them.

The following chapter presents the theoretical and managerial implications of the present study. The chapter discusses the study's limitations and offers some suggestions for future research.

### **6. CONCLUSION**

The present study explored how ten of the biggest hotel chains in the world present their employment positioning online. Data were gathered from their recruitment websites and job advertisements to achieve this goal. On their recruitment websites, it was possible to assess what and how these companies refer to their values and culture and what they might offer to their employees in terms of career opportunities, training programs, personal development, social initiatives, amongst other benefits. However, not all of these companies seem to invest the same amount of time in their websites or to have the same capacity to communicate their employer positioning. OYO and Wyndham, for example, have much simpler websites than Marriott, Hilton or IHG. While OYO and Wyndham barely discuss their career opportunities, Marriott, Hilton and IHG offer potential candidates detailed perspectives of what to expect.

In addition to the data collected on their websites, data was collected from ten job advertisements from each company, totalling 100 job advertisements analysed. The primary purpose behind the analyses of the job advertisements was to understand how these companies transmit their values to potential candidates and what types of benefits they offer. Moreover, by comparing job advertisements from the same company, it was possible to note a significant variation in their length and style. In some cases, the job advertisements were short; barely describing the company. Others were detailed and even described the workplace and its surroundings.

In the end, a broader perspective that included these companies' websites and their job advertisements reinforced the idea that these two information sources are complementary. Websites allow employers to present themselves lengthily with detailed

data, while job advertisements provide specific information about job requirements, job characteristics and the workplace.

### **6.1. Theoretical Contributions**

Following Dabirian *et al.*'s (2017) suggestion, this study contributed by specifically exploring what are, according to an employer's perspective, some of the benefits that seem to be crucial to attract and retain employees in the hotel industry. From the analyses of the data obtained on these hotel chains' websites and job advertisements, a hotel company's openness to social diversity emerged as a relevant aspect.

Therefore, it is beneficial for employers to incorporate social diversity not only associated with the formal practices of their corporate social responsibility but also as part of their employer branding strategy. In other words, hotels must adopt an authentic openness to social diversity and promote it as a potential benefit to their current and potential employees. Employers should highlight that their employees can benefit by accessing different social perspectives, including different cultures and ideas, contributing to their professional and personal growth.

Besides identifying social diversity as a potential new EVP dimension, the present study proposed eight propositions regarding social diversity as a benefit that may serve as pathways to further exploring this topic associated with the hotel industry. For example, quantitative studies could measure the potential effects of signalling an openness to social diversity on the hotel employer brand attractiveness. Meanwhile, qualitative studies could explore other benefits of incorporating social diversity in a hotel employer positioning.

Additionally, the present study demonstrated that the EVP proposition dimensions identified in the literature are relevant and explicitly discussed by these companies on their websites and job advertisements. In this sense, managers should see these different types of benefits as complementary. For example, an attractive salary represents a relevant aspect when attracting employees; however, a good salary will not be enough to retain them. It is essential to offer a diversified set of benefits that satisfy the employees' needs and differentiate the company as an employer on the job market. Many different examples of benefits types are presented in the discussion chapter.

Finally, the present study also contributed by empirically demonstrating that these companies are deliberately managing their employer positioning, trying to portray, at

## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

least from an online perspective, a positive image about the hotel industry and themselves as employers. These efforts made by these hotel chains might contribute to improving their reputation as employers and employer brand equity, consequently increasing their capability to attract and retain employees, including undergraduate students, who represent an essential resource for this industry future

In addition to theoretical contributions, this study also presents some managerial implications that can be very useful to hotel managers who intend to improve the attractiveness of their companies as employers.

### **6.2. Managerial Implications**

As this study suggests, there is no “one size fits all” for developing a successful employer branding strategy. Each of the companies analysed in this study adopted a unique path to create and present its employer positioning. It is reasonable to assume they have done a “good job” since they represent part of the biggest hotel chains in the world. However, there are also some common elements that managers should consider while planning their employer branding. Here are listed some suggestions to boost a company’s employer positioning identified in this study.

When designing a website, managers should remember that it represents an extension of their company. How they present their company might strongly influence potential candidates’ perceptions about their employer positioning. Potential candidates are like potential guests. They want to know why a hotel is the right one for them. Therefore, the reasoning usually applied in websites promoting hotels with potential guests should be adopted in recruitment websites. In this sense, it is relevant to provide enough information about the company, including its values, culture, potential benefits like career opportunities, work/life balance, or openness to social diversity. Candidates need to know if they fit in the company. From the candidates’ perspective, it helps them avoid applying for a job where they would feel uncomfortable. While from an employer’s perspective, it may positively contribute to the company’s ability to attract the “right” employee for the job and save money and time during the recruitment process.

In addition, the job advertisements should be precise about the job description. It should include information about the tasks the employee will do and how company values should permeate them, the working schedule, the team the employee will integrate, the job location, the hard and soft skills required. Besides, job advertisements should

## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

highlight some of the main positive aspects about the company and the job, such as the company's reputation, organizational culture, the infrastructure, or the hotels' surroundings. Before publishing job advertisements, managers should check for some aspects. For example, they should confirm that one can clearly understand what the job is about, its requirements, and can evaluate if "I fit in this company and this job". Moreover, they should check if the advertisements differentiate the company and its EVP offer from their competitors.

Lastly, managers need to remember that in the same way there are thousands of hotels competing to attract the same guests, there are also thousands of employers, from and out of the hotel industry, competing to attract and retain their existing and potential employees. It is worth mentioning that other employers also target the current employees from a company. Convincing employees to join a company does not guarantee they will stay. This is why companies should consider employer branding as an ongoing activity. What is attractive today may not be tomorrow, and what represents a source of competitive advantage in the present might be copied by other employers in the future. Thus, managers must evaluate continuously if their EVP meets their current and potential employees' expectations and make sure other companies have not adopted it. Furthermore, managers must keep in mind that it is as relevant how their EVP communication occurs as what composes it. Then, managers must know and control what signals they send and how their current and potential employees interpret them.

In conclusion, it is relevant to remember that each company is in a specific context, composed of a unique set of employees and other employers, which in practical terms mean that a "one size fits all" strategy will not work. Research and adaptation are two keywords for building and maintaining a strong employer brand.

### **6.3. Limitations and Future Researches**

This study did not consider audio, image, or video while collecting the data from the websites. This type of material represents a rich information source that might offer interesting insights that may complement the results obtained in this study. For example, by analysing the hotel chain's website pictures, an employee will have a better perspective regarding the social diversity practices if they show persons of different genders and social backgrounds. Furthermore, by analysing the videos, one could see how employees behave, dress, and interact with each other or with guests, which provides valuable

## **The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels**

information about company employer positioning. Thus, a suggestion for future studies is to incorporate these other data formats in the analysis.

Another limitation of the present study is that it only used secondary data. Because of it, some aspects of employer branding practices of hotel chains are not fully comprehended. For example, it was not possible to investigate if the differences between job advertisements from the same hotel chain are due to the decentralisation of employer branding and recruitment activities or to other reasons. Job advertisements may be managed at the local level in some hotel chains, explaining why some advertisements are shorter or present less information. Future research could directly enquire the managers who control these tasks to understand how they manage these processes. A company's employer positioning influences the type of people it attracts, which affects the service offered to guests. Then, future studies could describe and explore the specific challenges associated with managing an employer brand in a hotel chain that operates in several countries and with a vast number of business units.

This study did not explore the content of communications not directly targeting employees, which could also influence current and potential employees' perceptions about a hotel chain as an employer. Therefore, an interesting possible avenue for future research would be to compare the communications targeting the potential employees with the advertising directed to consumers and evaluate if these communication types match. That is, if what the company promises to customers is aligned with its employment positioning. It could also be interesting to compare the level of detail presented and the words utilized to describe each type of communication's – consumer vs employment experience. This recommendation is partly based on the findings presented by Rosengren and Bondesson (2014) that found that consumer advertisements influence the attractiveness level of an employer brand. Studies comparing these two types of communication may increase the comprehension of how professionals perceive the hotel industry as an employer and how managers may enhance this perception.

Finally, another limitation of the present study is the sampling technique adopted. The hotel chain selection was grounded on the number of rooms. Distinct criteria such as revenue, number of room nights sold, and number of employees could have provided a different list of hotel chains, possibly generating different results. Moreover, the job advertisements were selected based on a non-probabilistic sampling, which means these results cannot be generalized to the whole company. Besides, as LinkedIn was the only

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source used to collect the job advertisings, it possibly restricted the types of job advertisements selected.

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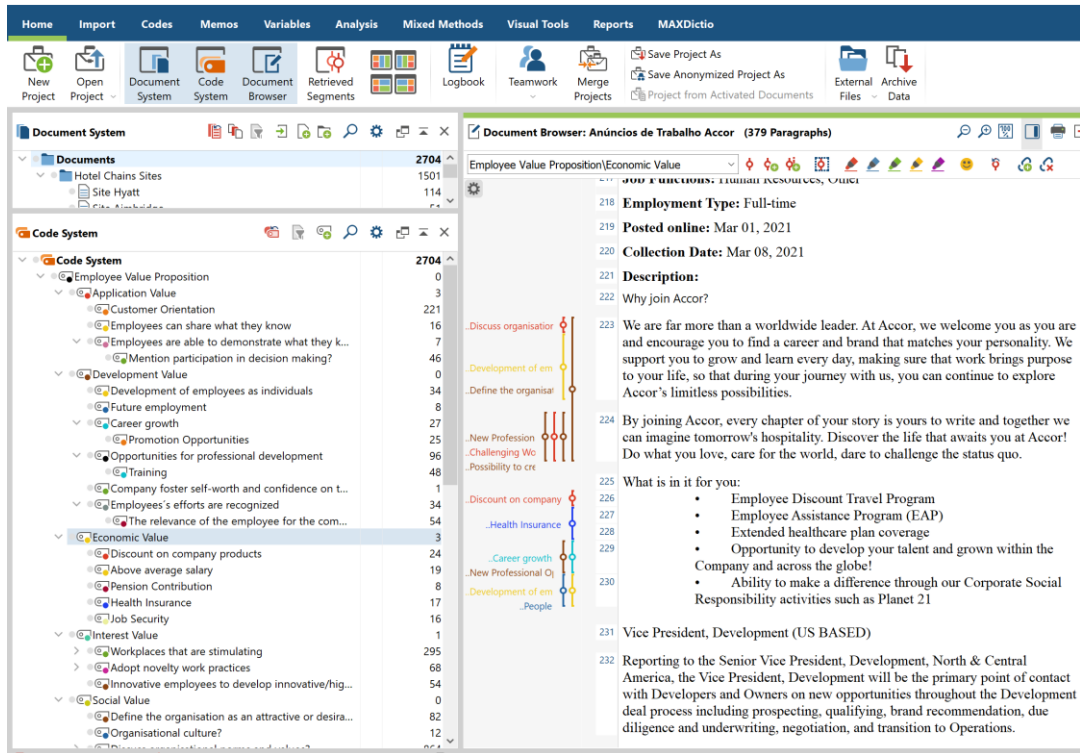
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## 8. APPENDIX

### 8.1. Codification Process with MAXQDA

Figure II - MAXQDA Screen



Source: The author.

## 8.2. List of Categories and Codes

Table VI - List of Categories and Codes

Category	Sub Category	Code	Sub Code	
Employee Value Proposition	Application Value	Customer Orientation		
		Employees can share what they know	-	
		Employees can demonstrate what they know	Mention participation in decision making	
		Development of employees as individuals	-	
	Development Value	Future Employment		
		Career Growth	Promotion Opportunities	
		Opportunities for professional development	Training	
		Company fosters self-worth and confidence in their employees	-	
		Employees' efforts are recognized	The relevance of the employee for the company success	
	Economic Value	Discount on company products		
		Above-average salary		
		Pension Contribution	-	
		Health Insurance		
		Job Security		
	Interest Value	Workplaces that are stimulating	Meaningful Job	
			Discuss organisation position to other org. in the sector	
			New Professional Opportunities	
Challenging Work				
		Great/Prestigious Location		
		Great Work Infrastructure		
		Interaction with differentiated customers		
		Interaction with differentiated customers		
Adopt novelty work practices	Possibility to create something Unique/Differentiated			
Innovative employees to develop innovative/high-quality products	-			

Source: The author.

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

**Table IV – List of Categories and Codes (Continued)**

Category	Sub Category	Code	Sub Code
<b>Employee Value Proposition</b>	Social Value	Define the organisation as an attractive or desirable employer	-
		Organisational culture	-
		Trustfulness	
		Creativity	
		Ethical	
		Openminded	
		Collaboration	
		Strategic Orientation	
		Proactivity	
		Commitment	
		Ambitious	
		Professionalism	
		Friendly/Hospitableness	
		Respect	
		Dignity	
		Integrity	
		Honesty	
		Productivity	
		Social Diversity	
		Fun on the work	
		Positive Work Atmosphere	Supportive environment for employees
	Management Value	Mentions the team the applicant will be part of?	
		Mentions support by a (senior) co-worker?	-
		Good Relationship Between Managers/Employees	
	Work/Life Balance	Mention the number of working hours?	Flexible Schedule
			Weekends (included)
			Specify the schedule
			Full-time
			Part-time
	Authenticity	-	-
	Social Diversity	Disability	
		Culture	
		Age	
		Sexual Orientation	
		Professional Background	
		Birthplace	
		Race	
	Gender		
<b>Necessary Qualification</b>	High School		
	University Degree	-	-
	Previous Experience		
<b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b>	Environment		
	Profit	-	-
	People		

Source: The author.

### 8.3. List of Job Advertisements

Table VII - List of Job Advertisements

Hotel Chain	Job Number	Job Position	Location
Marriott	1	Human Resources Intern	São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
	2	Admin Assistant	Shanghai, Shanghai, China
	3	Host/Hostess	Sintra, Lisboa, Portugal
	4	Attendant-Food & Beverage	Seoul, Seoul, South Korea
	5	Events Specialist	Miami, Florida, The United States
	6	Guest Relations Internship	Saint Julian's, Malta
	7	Housekeeper	Texarkana, Texas, The United States
	8	Night Auditor & Breakfast Setup	Goodlettsville, Tennessee, The United States
	9	Concierge	Hefei, Anhui, China
	10	Rooms Management Trainee	Bodrum, Muğla, Turkey
Radisson	1	Front of House Assistant	Peterborough, England, United Kingdom
	2	Hotel Business Controller	Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands
	3	Steward	Riyadh, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
	4	Room Attendant	Saint Helier, England, United Kingdom
	5	Food & Beverage Assistant	Saint Helier, England, United Kingdom
	6	Receptionist	Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
	7	Night Porter	Durham, England, United Kingdom
	8	Club Lounge Supervisor	Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria
	9	Bellboy	Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
	10	Server/Waiter/Waitress	Ajman, Ajman, United Arab Emirates
OYO	1	Brand and Content Associate	Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands
	2	Workforce Manager & Reporting Specialist	Eindhoven, North Brabant, Netherlands
	3	Compensation & Benefits HR Specialist	Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands
	4	Regional Sales Manager	Bremen, Bremen, Germany
	5	Senior Data Scientist, Machine Learning	Copenhagen, Capital Region, Denmark
	6	SEO Specialist	Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands
	7	Taxation Manager	Dallas, Texas, The United States
	8	Senior Engineering Manager/Engineering Manager	Gurugram, Haryana, India
	9	Team Lead Product Supply	Bremen, Bremen, Germany
	10	Business Development Manager	Memphis, Tennessee, The United States
Hilton	1	Associate	Hood River, Oregon, The United States
	2	Corporate Virtual Internship	McLean, Virginia, The United States
	3	Front Desk Agent	Nashville, Tennessee, The United States
	4	Bartender	Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
	5	Receptionist	Rijeka, Croatia
	6	Kids Club Attendant	Ras al Khaimah, Ras al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
	7	Sales Executive	São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
	8	Support Services Agent (Staff Accommodation)	Manama, Capital Governorate, Bahrain
	9	Commis I	Doha, Doha, Qatar
	10	Mixologist	London Heathrow Airport, England, United Kingdom
IHG	1	Executive Housekeeper	New York, New York, The United States
	2	Communications Executive Europe	Denham, England, United Kingdom
	3	HR Coordinator	Shanghai, China
	4	General Manager	Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR
	5	Head of Digital Procurement	Denham, England, United Kingdom
	6	Manager, Group Financial Planning & Analysis	Denham, England, United Kingdom
	7	Subregional Director, Revenue Management	Beijing, China
	8	Subregional Director, Revenue Management	Shanghai, China
	9	Digital Product Manager	Shanghai, China
	10	Senior Project IT Manager	Alpharetta, Georgia, The United States

Source: The author.

## The use of digital media for the employer brand management in hotels

**Table V – List of Job Advertisings (Continued)**

Hotel Chain	Job Number	Job Position	Location
Wyndham	1	Food runner	Río Grande, Puerto Rico
	2	Revenue Manager	Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal
	3	Server	Napa, California, The United States
	4	Hostess	Napa, California, The United States
	5	Guest Services Agent	Bohemia, New York, The United States
	6	Reservations Agent	Orlando, Florida, The United States
	7	Barista	Indianapolis, Indianapolis, The United States
	8	Front Office Receptionist	Dubai, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
	9	Administrative Assistant I	Río Grande, Puerto Rico
	10	Assistant Housekeeping Supervisor	Scottsdale, Arizona, The United States
Accor	1	Chef	Rome, Latium, Italy
	2	Property Manager	Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
	3	Operational Cost Controller	Rome, Latium, Italy
	4	Room Attendant	Khamis Mushayt, 'Asir, Saudi Arabia
	5	Junior Business Development Executive	Los Angeles County, California, The United States
	6	Talent & Culture Coordinator	Perth, Western Australia, Australia
	7	Vice President, Development	The United States
	8	Director of Interior Design	Shanghai, China
	9	Director of Project Management	Shanghai, China
	10	Food & Beverage Director	Rome, Latium, Italy
Choice	1	Local Market Sales Manager	Field, British Columbia, Canada
	2	Public Relations Coordinator	Rockville, Maryland, The United States
	3	Comfort Brand Manager	Rockville, Maryland, The United States
	4	Product Manager - eCommerce	Phoenix, Arizona, The United States
	5	Senior Manager, International Financial Planning & Analysis and Strategic Finance	Rockville, Maryland, The United States
	6	Manager, SEO	Phoenix, Arizona, The United States
	7	Software Engineer	Phoenix, Arizona, The United States
	8	Head of Franchise Development	Amsterdam, North Holland, Netherlands
	9	Systems Architect Principal (Digital Experience Platforms)	Field, British Columbia, Canada
	10	Revenue Manager	Field, British Columbia, Canada
Hyatt	1	Front Desk Staff	Poughkeepsie, New York, The United States
	2	Digital Marketing Specialist	Tokyo, Japan
	3	Head Chef	London, England, United Kingdom
	4	Director Of Operations	New York, New York, The United States
	5	Manager, Data Science - Forecasting	Chicago, Illinois, The United States
	6	Sales Director	Tempe, Arizona, The United States
	7	Assistant Manager Housekeeping	Chandigarh, India
	8	Guest Services Officer	Gaafu Alifu, Maldives
	9	Director of Food And Beverage	Chapel Hill, North Carolina, The United States
	10	Chef De Partie	Lenox, Massachusetts, The United States
Aimbridge	1	Front Desk Agent	Cambridge, Massachusetts, The United States
	2	House Person-Banquets	Sarasota, Florida, The United States
	3	Server - Restaurant	San Diego, California, The United States
	4	Driver	Killeen, Texas, The United States
	5	Complimentary AM Attendant	Albuquerque, New Mexico, The United States
	6	Sales Manager OEM	South Padre Island, Texas, The United States
	7	Housekeeper	El Paso, Texas, The United States
	8	Accounting Clerk	South Lake Tahoe, California, The United States
	9	Engineer-Grounds	Sedona, Arizona, The United States
	10	Operations Supervisor	Bedford Park, Illinois, The United States

Source: The author.



## 8.4. Codification Guide

Table VIII - Codification Guide

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Does the job ad ...
... mention support by a (senior) co-worker?
... mention the team the applicant will be part of?
... mention participation in decision making?
... mention the number of working hours?
... mention secondary terms of employment?
... discuss how the organisation is posited with regard to other organisations in the sector of industry?
... discuss corporate history?
... discuss corporate social responsibility (people/planet/profit)?
... define the organisation as innovative or progressive?
... discuss organisational norms and values?
... discuss the organisational culture?
... discuss the organisation's vision, ambition or mentality?
... mention if there are possibilities for career development within this organisation?
... mention if the organisation contributes to the development of its employees as individuals?
... mention if the organisation is customer oriented?
... mention if the organisation provides exciting work?
... discuss if the organisation provides a supportive environment for its employees?
... mention if the organisation values the balance between work and private life?
... define the organisation as an attractive or desirable employer?
... discuss specific advantages of working for the organisation?
Is salary mentioned in the job ad?
Is the importance of the employee for the organisation discussed in the job ad?

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Source: Adapted from "The war for talent the relevance of employer branding in job advertisements for becoming an employer of choice," by W. J. L. Elving, J. J. C. Westhoff, K. Meeusen, and J. W. Schoonderbeek, 2013, *Journal of Brand Management*, 20(5), p. 362.