The Language of Job Advertisements as Part of Employer Branding

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Abstract

The article offers the analysis of job advertisements as part of employer branding from a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective. It gives the insight into how the companies attract prospective employees by creating a positive image of the company, which appeals to the target audience. The authors study online job advertisements with the intention of specifying which linguistic and visual means help create the brand of the company at the stage of recruitment. As part of CDA method, a wide range of social, economic and psychological contexts are taken into account when carrying out the analysis. The coding process of the analysis is performed at the descriptive and interpretative levels. The authors explore the structure of a typical online job post highlighting the unique characteristics of each element. The article focuses on the strategies and tactics employers use in Employer Description section in order to target the best candidates who share the same values, win acclaim for the company, and form its distinct image. Particular emphasis is placed on the outlining the primary components of successful employer branding and their linguistic expression. Extra consideration is given to the impact of prevailing social values on the choice of strategies implemented in the job advertisements. The authors consider the specifics of COVID-19 pandemic context and its reflection on recruitment.

Keywords: job advertisements, employer, COVID-19, online job, job seeking

1. Introduction

The problem of job hunting has become more relevant in the COVID-19 pandemic era due to the global shift on the job market. The lockdowns, immunity passports, cases of firing unvaccinated employees have led to the renewed stress on the career paths during the global pandemic. On the one hand, the employees have suffered worldwide, but, on the other, employers also feel lack of the workforce. These challenges have led to the realisation that making the job advertisement sound appealing is crucial more than ever before. The perception of the employer starts with the job advertising, thus creating the image of the employer and leading to the ultimate formation of the employer brand. The subject of employer branding belongs to the sphere of marketing, advertising and economic sciences in their broader sense. The issue of employer branding has been widely studied by a number of researchers. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), initiating the scholarly study of the subject, look at the correlation between employer branding and the career management within the organisation. Michael T. Ewing et al. (2015) stress the shift from customers' attraction to talent attraction. The scholars claim that companies are turning to offering an enticing vocational proposition that is both compelling and differentiated.

The language the employers use in their job ads reflects their striving to create the brand that will attract the potential applicant, appeal to their image of an ideal employer, place of work and working environment. A wide use of positive evaluative adjectives, superlative adjectives, cohesive devices, metaphors, antonymy demonstrates that employer branding starts with the wording used in the job advertisement. The abundance of job advertisements on the Internet enables the research of linguistic means employed by the copywriters to make the ads sound attractive, thus creating the desired image for the employer brand. The article investigates linguistic devices in the job advertisements by the most popular job-hunting websites chosen by analysing the suggestions for applicants in both specialised publications (Mallon, 2018; Bartlett, 2019) and websites suggesting online resources for job search (glassdoor.com, theladders.com, getwork.com, ziprecruiter.com, simplyhired.com, job.com, indeed.com) with the latter being more informative and usable for research inasmuch as potential job applicants are much more likely to search for job ads using freely available online resources. The analysis conducted within the framework of the article is based on the most popular online resources for placing job advertisements which have been chosen on the ground of advisory websites listed above. The text of job

advertisements is seen from a linguistic perspective which involves not only lingual units as such, but also extra lingual elements, including context, current economic situation and employer branding.

The aim of the research is to analyse job advertisements as part of employer brand imaging, which send out a positive and attractive message to a perspective job seeker by using various means to achieve the desired effect. Thus, the objectives of the research are

− to look at the linguistic units employed by the employers to appeal to the applicants;

− to analyse the scope of extra lingual factors adding to the creation of the positive image of a company taking into account the context of their sphere of application;

− to identify the algorithms of the formation of job advertisements that the copywriters apply within the attraction strategy.

2. Literature Review

Job seeking is a multidisciplinary topic which is viewed from different perspectives. Employer branding effectively unites the multifaceted nature of a specific company as a place seen as desirable by the employees. The term employer branding was originally created by Ambler and Barrow (1996) seeing it as "The package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". The scholars note that employer brand is more than just a marketing approach, it gives the company additional equity acquiring "Market share, a premium price, high awareness and loyalty and positive attitudes" (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Thus, employer brand is a valuable asset perceived by the current and potential employees, which can even be measured. Following Ambler and Barrow, Sullivan (2004) adds to the definition, stating that employer branding is "A targeted, long-term strategy to manage the awareness and perceptions of employees, potential employees, and related stakeholders with regards to a particular firm". Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) aimed at initiating scholarly study of employer branding by conceptualising and researching the issue. They arrived at a conclusion that employer branding is a relatively new comprehensive strategy to recruit and retain talent (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). By implementing a range of activities companies, and human resource departments in particular, successfully manage personnel.

More recently, the focus has shifted to employer branding in the digital age (Mihalcea, 2017; Srapyan et al., 2020). In an open talent economy, it is impossible to ignore the new challenges, and the employer has to adjust to the demands of a new era. Employee engagement is key in attracting and engaging staff into the company's operations. Job seekers look beyond formal requirements and benefits offered by the companies (Ryskaliyev et al., 2019). According to a survey conducted by PwC (2011), in the digital era millennials are attracted by work/life balance more than a financial reward, career opportunities and overseas perspectives. CSR (Certificate signing request) is cited one of the factors that attracts young high-minded professionals seeking for employment. Puncheva-Michelotti, Hudson and Jin (2018) claim that companies often fail to use their active adherence to CRS practices, from which their recruitment advertising could benefit. They suggest that the employers optimise the structure of online job advertisements by presenting information about the company's CSR involvement and adopt a strategic approach to it (Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018; Berkimbaev et al., 2013).

Working from home opportunity is another driver that lies behind an appealing job advertisement. Bloom et al. (2014) maintains that an experiment proves that significant improvement in performance can be achieved by giving the staff an opportunity to work from home. In his more recent article, the researcher develops the idea, given the new reality of COVID-related restrictions (Bloom, 2020; Khairullayeva et al., 2022). The future of job market in the post-COVID era is seen as WFH (Work from Home) with few firms denying how well it has worked. Employer branding, CSR, WFH are the concepts that are of interest for analysis since their skilful representation by linguistic means enhances the effectiveness of a job advertisement. The research offered in the article takes into account both linguistic means and cultural and social economic context, thus making critical discourse analysis the basis for the study. CDA (Critical discourse analysis) looks at the language as the means of expressing one's thought in a purposeful way.

CDA rests on the notion that the way using language is purposeful, it is used as a tool of power and influence exertion when applied as part of social practices. CDA research movement is composed of multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of language (Johnson & McLean, 2020). CDA is primarily associated with the research of Norman Fairclough (2015), Ruth Wodak (2013), and Teun Van Dijk (2001a). CDA research commonly begins with a research topic or problem, rather than with fixed theoretical or methodological positions. The approach to the research process is stipulated by extensive contextual understanding of the peculiarities of particular topics or problems (in this case authors shall be concerned with the employer branding discourse seen from the angle of job advertisements), which are intended to shape specific research design choices in terms of theory, methodology, and methods. Consequently, "CDA's research design and methodological processes can be somewhat flexible, iterative, and adaptive according to the specifics of a project" (Johnson & McLean, 2020).

CDA is considered to have significant potential to be used as a tool for research of marketing-related issues. As Fitchett and Caruana (2015) claim, a discursive lens offers original ways of understanding marketing as a subject/discipline as well as how marketing academics conceive and investigate objects of marketing inquiry. In general, discourse-based approaches have been gaining popularity throughout the last decades, which has been taking place within a much broader trend in the social sciences and humanities, in particular. The main idea is that language and text are in the centre of social research that have experienced a shift towards a more anthropocentric paradigm. This tendency provided the core rationale for a much broader spectrum of materials, contexts and methods to be applied in consumer research than before that lead to the raising importance and significance of culture and cultural practices in marketing and consumer research (Fitchett & Caruana, 2015; Baikushikova, 2021). It ultimately puts CDA as a primary means of analysing market related issues in terms of the language used.

Textual methods are widely used to analyse the discourse of marketing and advertising (Stern, 1996; Goddart, 1998; & Cook, 2001). More recent works are discussing the connection between economics and linguistics on a broader scale (Vigouroux & Mufwene, 2020). Thus, CDA approach presupposes "Multidisciplinary, and an account of intricate relationships between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture". Van Dijk (2001b) maintains that CDA focuses on social power and the notion of control is key. Modern power is rather cognitive, applied by the means of persuasion, dissimulation and manipulation. The dominance could be achieved by the use of language, in the form of text and talk. However, the addressee isn't always aware of the mind management techniques, as the latter could be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms that will appear natural an acceptable (Van Dijk, 2001b). Attitudes of the public, as the form of social cognition, are formed by widely accepted opinions members of the society share, which Van Dijk (2006) calls "evaluative beliefs" (Li et al., 2022). These evaluative beliefs may lead to the appearance of more complex and abstract ideologies, reflecting the values of the group. They are perceived as the fundamental cognitive programs or operating systems that organise and monitor the more specific social attitudes of groups and their members. Prospective recruits are likely to be guided by their evaluative beliefs when choosing a job. The language used in the advertisement will activate the cognitive programs, making the job and the employer sound appealing, satisfying the aspirations of the potential employee.

The approaches CDA employs typically involve micro-, meso-, and macroscale social phenomena. According to Fairclough (2015), discourse is organised on different levels: text, interaction and context. The scholar conceptualised them as a three-dimensional model which consists of discursive events (micro-level), discursive practices (meso-level), and social structures (macro-level). CDA research is to take into account not just a text taken separately, or the process of production and interpretation of the text, but the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions, which could be seen from the close-range point of view, like the situational context, or from a more remote vantage point, like institutional and social structures. Thus, Fairclough suggests three stages of CDA: description stage, when the text itself is analysed, interpretation stage, when text is seen as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the interpretation process, and explanation stage, when the relationship between interaction and social context is revealed. It is worth noting that the scholar considers texts not only as purely verbal units, but in combination with visual elements, whose significance is rather obvious in the written form.

However, there is a number of other approaches to critical discourse analysis, whose commonalities are summarised by Wodak and Meyer (2009) as a list of seven dimensions of discourse studies. They stress the importance of studying 'naturally occurring' language use rather than abstract language systems, with new basic units of analysis (text, discourse, conversation, speech act, communicative event) due to a shift in the focus to larger units rather than isolated words and sentences. Another point is the shift from sentence grammar towards action and interaction analysis. Non-verbal elements are an important part of the analysis, thus semiotic, multimodal and visual aspects of communication are to be studied along with verbal elements. CDA approaches also address dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies, studying social, cultural, situative and cognitive functions of contexts of language use. Finally, a number of text and discourse features are taken into account, among which are coherence, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, politeness, argumentation, mental models, etc. (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology for the analysis was offered by Johnson and McLean (2020), who generalised and synthesised some of the methodological approaches for conducting discourse analysis suggested by Rose (2001) (with the focus on visual methodologies) and Waitt (2005) (who largely applied Foucauldian approach). The advantage of their methodology is that they are intended to be applicable for any type of discourse analysis with the stress on the process of performing discursive analysis, rather than on developing research designs specific to discursive analytical work (Johnson & McClean, 2020). The first step is the selection of source material. Authors are going to investigate and analyse online job advertisements placed on the best-known Internet resources for job hunting. The choice of the resources is based on specialised publications (Bartlett, 2019; Mallon, 2018) as well as online advisory web-pages, the latter being considerably

more useful inasmuch as job seekers are likely to use regular search engines' suggestions rather than scholarly research. Online recruitment is considered to be one of the most effective ways to attract job seekers (Faliagka et al., 2012; Baum & Kabst, 2014; Simón & Esteves, 2016; Puncheva-Michelotti et al., 2018). Online job posts have a number of economic and communication advantages, e.g., a wide reach to the target audience, since online advertising has no geographic boundaries. In the pandemic era, with the increasing popularity of online working among the recruits, it is an indisputable advantage. The employer benefits from a larger pool of candidates to choose from, whereas the employee has a wider choice of offers to consider. Perhaps, the most important advantage for research is that online advertising enables the employer to include any relevant information about the position as well as the company without the space limitations. Detailed information is provided at no extra cost, which is a cost-effective option for the company (Zaheera et al., 2015). It gives us an opportunity to analyse the points the company wants to emphasise, since the layout of the text, its size and subject matter is not limited by the medium of communication. Posting jobs on employment-oriented platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Indeed) is an effective way to reach the target audience and improve visibility. The online resources, which are represented in the article, comprise such sites as glassdoor.com, theladders.com, getwork.com, ziprecruiter.com, simplyhired.com, job.com, indeed.com.

The next step is to understand the social context as it gives the grounds to making appropriate analytical connections between discourse and society (Omarova et al., 2017). This stage is important since discourse, by definition, takes place within specific historical, material, social, and spatial contexts, and power relations are usually involved as well. At this point the questions to be answered are related to the text's authorship, its target audience and specific features of the given piece of the material, which have to do with the uniqueness of the text. This article takes into consideration various contextual aspects of job advertisements connected primarily with economic background, management issues, social context at the given moment, as well as psychological peculiarities of the text production and perception. The linguistic units will be seen through the prism of the abovementioned contextual features, which will give us the possibility to look at the texts in question from a comprehensive vantage point. Thus, the analysis includes current social and economic situation in general and more specific issues, such as the notion of employer branding, CSR, working from home and staff shortage in particular.

The research was conducted on the basis of 420 job advertisements placed at the most popular job-hunting online resources: glassdoor.com, theladders.com, getwork.com, ziprecruiter.com, simplyhired.com, job.com, indeed.com. Job adds were localised to the United States, which has one of the largest labour markets in the world. Offers of remote work were also considered due to the social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has made location a less important factor in the field of employment (Miethlich et al., 2022). The data of research comprise job advertisements for the position of a manager. The choice of the job position is due to the variety of job titles available in the management field. At the descriptive level of analysis, it is important to outline the structure of a typical online job post as it allows to see the coherence between its elements, to capture the general message it is intended to send and to comprehend the advertisement in its integrity. It should be noted that some of the job advertisement elements may be predefined by the website itself as in glassdoor.com, which has created certain categories that should be filled in with information by the companies posting job ads, though, as the analysis has proved, it is not obligatory for the companies to cover all the categories. Although the conducted analysis has shown there are no rigid rules for the structure of a job advertisement, it is still possible to outline the sections which the majority of the job posts contain.

The coding stage will be performed in two phases, the descriptive and interpretative. At the descriptive level authors are going to analyse the content, subjects, structure and organisation, grammar, vocabulary, and intertextuality, as well as rhetorical or literary devices. The interpretative analysis requires a higher level of abstraction and is aimed at understanding and construing the implications of discursive patterns and relations. The research at this stage will involve the analysis of the underlying ideas that will help us to shed light onto the intentions of the addresser that are not clearly visible at first sight. Thus, the given methodology aims at revealing the peculiarities of how the linguistic units and visual means create the image of favourable working environment, which means to appeal to the addressee, the potential employee. A broad spectrum of contextual issues involved in the analysis gives the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive study of the issue.

4. Results and Discussion

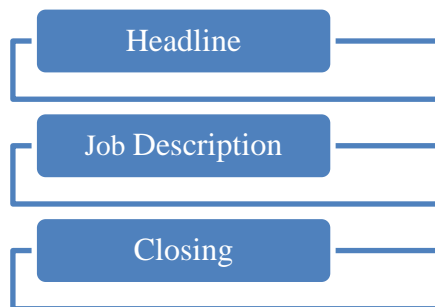A job post usually contains 3 main sections (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Main Sections of a Job Post

Speaking about the headline of a job post, it is possible to define the following structure (Figure 2).
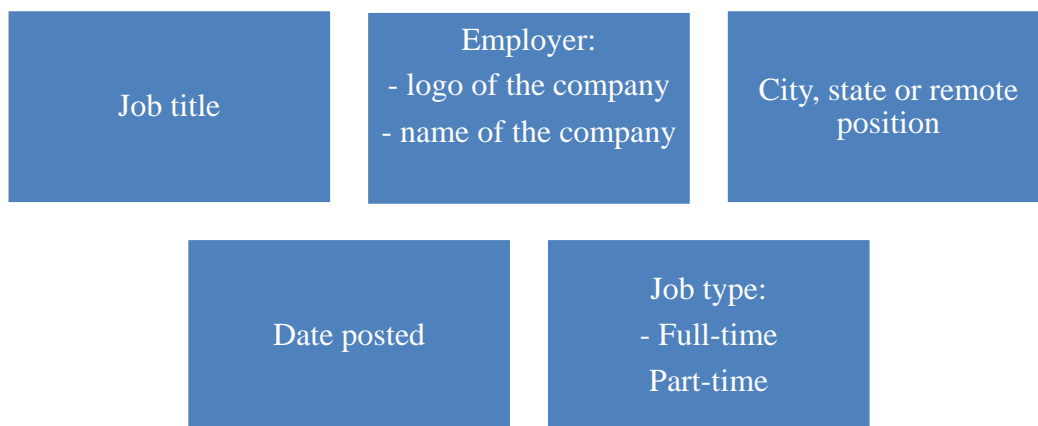

Figure 2. Structure of the Headline

The Headline can be analysed from the standpoint of its graphic design and its structure. All the analysed job ads contained a job title as a headline. It is always written in bold. The elements will draw greater attention if some of the content is printed in bigger or bold fonts. Consequently, they will be processed with additional memory or time resources, resulting in more thorough processing as well as higher reproduction and recollection (Van Dijk, 2006). The headline is expressed by a noun or a noun phrase in singular with no articles. This structure is so common in advertising English that it has become one of its most identifying features (Rush, 1998): manager, agency manager, assistant manager, product management manager, leasing manager, product manager, transaction manager, HR relationship manager, program manager, tax manager, project manager, community manager, field manager, Covid-19 test site manager etc.

As it is obvious from the conducted analysis the job posting websites also struggle for the audience, therefore, they try to stand out by being different from other websites, e.g., glassdoor.com and ziprecruiter.com mention employer provided salary. Salary is job seekers' primary goal and priority when seeking employment (Khan et al., 2013). The majority of employers do not explicitly publish salary information due to the fact that for high-quality jobs salary concealment is as a strategy used by employers to communicate ex post negotiation when match-specific criteria are essential, explicit/implicit salary posting tactics are also aimed at narrowing the candidate pool and raising the bar of their appropriateness (Banfi & Villena-Roldan, 2019). Salary posting is less frequent for positions requiring higher skills, it is indicative of the fact that when publishing a salary offer employers consider a trade-off (Brenčič, 2012). In case the employer does not include this information, glassdoor.com calculates an estimated salary. The website simplyhired.com also includes such information, however, not in the headline but in job details. These are the strategies job posting websites use in order to attract the applicant to use their resource. Online resources glassdoor.com and indeed.com also have ratings of the employers which are shown in the headline. Besides, glassdoor.com has rating highlights for the following categories: Compensation & Benefits, Culture & Values, Career Opportunities, Work/Life Balance.

The second section of a job post – Job Description – is the largest one. Basically, it is the core of a job post. It is the most informative part for linguistic analysis. It usually contains several subsections each of which has specific features of a job. Notwithstanding the fact that logical structure is observed here there are many variations which allow considering this part as having no rigid template (Ayshath Zaheera et al., 2015). The analysis has shown that the majority of job posts tend to have standard subsections explaining the basics of a job advertised. Headings of the subsections are usually written in bold as it is more convenient for a potential employee to scan the ad and to take in the core message of the section. Below

are the most popular standard subsections.

Table 1. Standard Subsections of Job Description Section

Employer Description	Job Overview	Candidate Identification	Perks & Benefits	COVID-19 Considerations
About the company	Job Summary	Major duties and responsibilities	Benefits	Vaccine requirement
About us	Description	Primary responsibilities	Our policies and benefits	Covid-19
Our mission	Position overview	Essential functions	Salary and benefits	Covid-19 hiring update
Company description	Position summary	Job requirements	Perks	
The company	About this job	Qualifications	Benefits	
Our story	Working conditions	Preferred qualifications	Compensation and benefits	
Mission statement	Work location	Key qualifications	Company perks	
	What you'll do	Required education & experience	Anticipated Salary and Benefits Summary	
	The role	Professional experience		
	Job details	Competencies & attributes		
	The daily	Competency		
		Additional requirements		
		Knowledge, skills and abilities		
		Skills that will help you in the role		
		Skills being sought		
		Required experience and attributes		
		The essentials		
		What you bring to the role		
		What will you be doing		

It is possible to notice that the subsection of Vaccine Requirement has appeared due to the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. The research has shown that some job posts have more creative structure and are meant to stand out from the rest. The results of the research can be demonstrated in the following diagram (Figure 3).
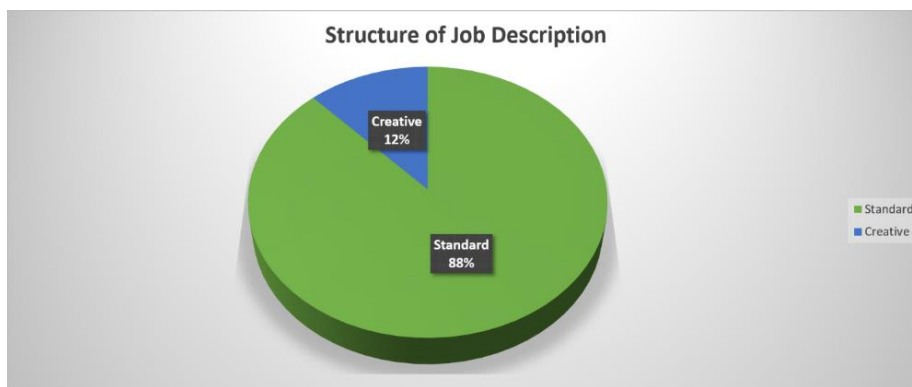

Figure 3. Structure of Job Description

In the majority of cases even job offers with standard subsections have a non-standard, creative introduction in order to

attract job seekers' attention.

Grammatically, subsections in the second section are expressed in several ways:

− noun in singular or plural: *description, competency, qualifications, benefits etc.;*

− noun phrase in singular or plural:

1) noun + noun: *job summary, job overview, job requirements, position overview, work;*

2) *location, vaccine requirement etc.;*

3) adjective + noun: *professional experience, essential functions, primary responsibilities;*

4) *additional requirements etc.;*

5) participle + noun: *preferred qualifications, required experience etc.;*

6) preposition + noun: *about the company, about this job etc.;*

7) noun + -ing phrase: *skills set being sought;*

8) noun + relative clause: *skills that will help you in the role;*

− wh-question: *what will you be doing? where will you be working? etc.;*

− dependent clause: *what we offer, what we are looking for, what you'll do etc.;*

− subject + verb: *you are, you will etc.*

Speaking about non-standard job offers, it is possible to distinguish a trend of using questions as headlines of subsections. But in contrast to standard ones, these questions are more detailed and more personal: *Planning a new route to develop your career?, Do you love helping others?, What will you work on?, How will you create impact?*, *Are you looking to start a sales career or break into the insurance industry?*. Sometimes additional statement may be made: *Why should you apply? We invest in you!* The reason for choosing a different form of structuring is the employers' desire to find the best candidate for a job. If a job post is average, it will attract an average candidate, not the best one. The most distinctive feature of the subsection headings in job ads with creative approach is that they are you-oriented. You-oriented approach allows employers to create such a job post that will fulfil several functions:

1) to focus on job seekers' interests and abilities: *How you'll make an impact, This opportunity is for you if, To Be Successful You Will Need, What You'll Do, What You can Expect;*

2) to explain why the choice of a specific job will be beneficial for the job seekers: *Why You'll Love Joining Our Team, Your rise starts here, In year one you will be, Here's what's in it for you, Your Starting Point for Constant Growth;*

3) to create an impression of direct conversation between an employer and a job seeker. Such use of the second person pronoun can be seen as a manipulation strategy of group identification (Dmytruk 2018; Customer Support Lead, 2021): *About You, You're a Great Fit for This Role If You, Can you, Think about it, Let's Talk About You.*

A common technique for such job posts is to give job seekers an opportunity to envision themselves in the advertised position with the help of the following technique: *A Day in the Life of a* + job position, *What you will do in this role (day-to-day).* Employers also use the technique of creating an impression for job seekers of being a member of the team, we-oriented approach, which may be seen as group identification strategy of mind manipulation, where inclusiveness tactics is utilised: *What we'll accomplish together.* Some employers try to stand out by avoiding clichés and applying another approach. They appeal to positive mindset of a jobseeker: *Responsibilities: I Want To and Can Do That! Requirements: I've already done that or have that!*

Many employees have long-term goals and are not looking for the first available position that would cover their current needs. They are aimed at career development. Thus, employers while creating a job post take it into account and describe a job position from this perspective: *In year one you will be.* Appeal to ambitions is a manipulation tactics which is peculiar to interpersonal communication, but in the case of job advertisements it proves the idea that non-standard creative approaches used by the employer aim at mimicking the dialogue between the employer and the applicant. All the above-mentioned techniques contribute to employer branding because non-standard approach in job ads raises employer's credibility in the minds of job seekers. A job post is in fact their initial point of contact with the company. The more the employers distinguish themselves with the help of a job ad, the stronger employer branding they will obtain.

The structure of the closing of a job post could vary as well. It may contain a disclaimer, a section or statement regarding equal employment opportunity, diversity & inclusion and a call for action. They can be extended, i.e., have a whole paragraph under each heading, or there might be just a short statement. One or all of these components may be omitted. The disclaimer mostly contains information regarding the general nature and level of work. The section of an equal

employment opportunity contains statement about non-discriminative policy of the company. Some employees for this subsection prefer the heading similar to *We believe our differences make us better*.

Nowadays this part is crucial for a good employer brand as workplace equality is crucial to the organisation's success (Sposato et al., 2015). The current emphasis on diversity and inclusion has been affected by a number of workplace developments such as globalisation, the switch from manufacturing to service work, the electronic technology revolution, team-based rather than individual-based work organisation, more dependence on contingent employees (Hays-Thomas, 2016; Shevchenko & Markova, 2019; Bakhtibaeva et al., 2016). Thus, by implementing diversity and inclusion strategy and underlining this feature in job ads employers give job seekers an idea about company's values and company culture in general, which further influences positively an employer brand.

The main focus of research was on the content of the second section of job postings, i.e., job description and a call-to-action subsection of the closing section, as these are the components which mostly form an employer's image, give insight into companies' corporate culture and reveal the intentions of the addresser. In the course of analysis, it became obvious that the most revealing part in the framework of CDA was the subsection with Employer Description. This is an important part of a job post, as it introduces the company to a job seeker and is directly related to the creation of the employer's brand. It is usually the first paragraph of a job post. Many job seekers do not know about the mission or corporate culture of a specific company so it is vital for an employer to create a positive image of it. At this part of a job ad employers can make their company stand out from the rest by pointing at its unique features, present values of the company and explain why a job seeker will enjoy working there. This is where employers actually 'advertise' their company and this is the reason why in this part of a job advertisement most literary devices and figures of speech are used, and even job posts with a standard approach try to distinguish themselves here.

At this point of research, authors are moving towards the interpretative stage of the analysis where the data obtained at the descriptive level helps to decode the underlying ideas. Employer Description subsection doesn't have any particular format and more than other subsections reminds an advertisement that sells a product or service. The following features of Employer Description subsection which help build an effective employer brand were defined:

1) Mission statement: TestOut Corporation: *Our mission is to make a difference in a person's life through education using breakthrough technology* (Customer Success Manager, 2021). *At Slack, our mission is to make people's working lives simpler, more pleasant and more productive* (Salesforce, 2021).

Mission statement is an indispensable part of an employer brand building because it provides detailed information regarding its fundamentals, its strategy and goals. Essentially it gives an applicant an answer to the question 'Why does the company exist?'

2) Presenting values: *We demonstrate our core beliefs every day in our interactions, attitude and performance.* People at the heart of everything we do: *We listen to our clients, and colleagues, and use our expertise to anticipate and address their needs.* Create space to innovate: *We challenge assumptions and seek out fresh perspectives and new ways of thinking to fuel our productivity.* Right promise. Right delivery: *We set clear goals and priorities, and execute with speed and agility to deliver better results.* Share information. Build trust: *We engage in open and honest communications that reflect inclusiveness, fairness and respect for each other.* Teams and partnerships work. Boundaries don't: *We collaborate to maximize the value we bring to NYU because our best ideas come from working together.* Insist on excellence: *We take pride in what we do, strive to improve constantly and hold ourselves accountable for the results* (New York University, 2021).

Company values is another vital component of employer branding. They present company's core concepts, its fundamental principles and demonstrate what distinguishes the company from the rest. These statements help to find people who share the same values and are ready to serve the same mission.

3) We-concept: *we at Mynd believe, we're on a mission, we remove the time, communication, and geographic barriers, we are strongly committed to, we want, we provide, we pride ourselves, we value, we are looking for, we pursue, we are known for, our culture, our values, we are, we enable, we've seen, we service, we demonstrate our core beliefs every day in our interactions, attitude and performance, people at the heart of everything we do: we listen to our clients, and colleagues, and use our expertise to anticipate and address their needs, we challenge, we set goals, we embrace our team, we continue to challenge ourselves.*

We-concept, as the group identification strategy in mind manipulation, helps each employee to feel as a part of a team, as a necessary element of a company. It creates personal atmosphere about the company, forms an image of a family within the company. Furthermore, it entrenches the idea of unanimous values shared by all the employees of a company in applicants' minds and proves fulfilling company's mission by all the staff.

4) Usage of numbers and figures: *a) IPM has led more than* 5,000 projects *for over* 500 clients *in the United States and across continents,* with 10,000 + employees *have educated more than* 250,000 individuals *across* 80 countries (Associate Project Manager, 2021). *b) Dover went through Y Combinator in* 2019*, and today* 100+ companies *use our product to run a better hiring process. We've raised* $23M *from top VCs and are currently profitable. We're a remote team of* 40 *with hubs in San Francisco and NYC and a presence in Boston, LA, and DC* (Dover, 2021). *c) Air Charter Service was established in 1990 in the basement of our chairman's home and today employs over* 500 people *globally, across* 27 offices on six continents (Office Manager, 2021).

The use of numbers and figures contributes to company's weight and prestige as well as its serious and respectful position in the market which is of benefit for employer branding and its attractiveness for job seekers (Miethlich, 2022). The numbers in this case are used as part of mind manipulation tactic of hyperonization, it is not about the exact numbers, it is about granting extra weight to the addresser. Listing of awards:

a) IPM is also a certified "Great Place to Work" company and has been named to the Great Place to Work list of "Best Workplaces in Consulting & Professional Services" (Associate Project Manager, 2021).

b) Mynd was named the #1 fastest-growing private company in the Bay Area by the San Francisco Business Times in 2020 (Field Services Manager, 2021).

c) For seven years running, TestOut has been voted "Best Company to Work For" by Utah Business Magazine through employee surveys (Customer Success Manager, 2021).

Gaining awards for the best workplace serves as evidence of a company's truly favourable working environment and, thus, helps to tilt the scales in a particular company's favour.

5) Positive evaluative adjectives: *successful, exceptional, unique, high-quality, top-tier, disruptive, efficient, talented, passionate, exciting, best-in-class, top, world-leading, high-value, outstanding, smart, fun, unprecedented, extreme-value, incredible, captivating, enormous, amazing, fast-paced, high-flying.*

6) Superlative adjectives: *the largest, the fastest-growing, the most ambitious, the world's most delicious, the most accomplished, the most popular, the most talented.*

Positive evaluative adjectives and adjectives in superlative degree serve as a tool for creating a positive atmosphere around the company and improves employer brand. This is where the employer appeals to job seekers' emotions the same way as a successful advertisement of any product or service appeals to the emotions of potential customers.

7) Building team spirit: *At AIR MILES, we know that in coming together we are at our strongest – and that together we can help shape the future for our clients, their shoppers and our communities. We are a company filled with people who are passionate about our product and seek to deliver the best experience for our customers* (Loyalty Group Management, 2021). *At Splunk, we're committed to our work, customers, having fun and most importantly to each other's success* (Splunk, 2021).

Building team spirit in a job advertisement performs two functions. On the one hand, it targets job seekers' feelings, their desire to feel a part of the team, utilising group identification strategy of mind manipulation. On the other hand, it gives an applicant an idea about company's values.

8) Forming positive image through cohesion and coherence:

a) *We're* not just the largest *charter brokerage in the world, but also* the largest charter family, holding those same values *that started this business* at the core of everything we do…*We are a charter provider that goes* the extra mile to ensure each and every one of our customers *experiences* services beyond expectation. Whether *you're talking to one of our brokers in New York, Mumbai or Beijing, you'll find the* exemplary service never ends (Office Manager, 2021).

b) *We're on a mission to create* happy homes and healthy investments *by offering* best-in-class *property management services and making SFRs as* accessible and effortless *as other types of investments"* (Field Services Manager, 2021).

c) *Want to work in a place where you feel* welcome *and you know* you belong? *Looking for a* supportive workplace *that prioritizes* safety *and* has your back? *Want a career where you* can be yourself, become your best, *and* drive the success *of a* popular *neighborhood bakery-cafe? Panera is for you* (Team Manager, 2021; Director of Revenue Management, 2021).

d) *Wonder is a fast-growing food-tech startup that's* raising the bar *on the role food plays in peoples' lives. We're creating an on-demand dining experience where customers can receive* high-quality *meals* perfectly prepared and served to their doorsteps within minutes. *We partner with* the best *restaurants and chefs across* a diverse range *of cuisines to offer access to the world's* most delicious *food −* anytime**,** anywhere**.** *Wonder is led by a team of* experienced *entrepreneurs including*

some of the most accomplished *leaders and operators in the technology, culinary, and logistics industries. Backed by* top-tier *venture capitalists,* we're moving quickly to pioneer *the future of food* (Wonder, 2021).

Here psychological peculiarities of text perception play their role as job seekers' positive feelings are evoked, a positive image of the company is formed and the desire to work in a perfect company is aroused. Employer branding is the perception of an employer in the minds of people. By using cohesive devices and creating coherence in employer description part employers' 'plant' the idea of their reputation into job seekers' mind.

9) Career perspectives: *A career with Charleston Place, A Belmond Hotel is a step beyond the ordinary… Plus, the potential for personal and career growth are endless. Consider this your personal invitation to a career of detailed experiences and enthusiastic discovery* (Belmond, 2021).

Mentioning career perspectives enables potential employees envision their opportunities for growth within the company. It targets ambitious applicants, helps to find the best candidates aimed at doing their best.

10) Employee appreciation:

a) *Project Management Consultants are our full-time employees. They are our most important asset and the competitive advantage that sets us apart from the rest* (Associate Project Manager, 2021).

b) *We have created a casual business environment with company employee events as well as company family events. Our CEO cares about each employee and shows it through competitive compensation and great benefits* (Customer Success Manager, 2021).

Every person wants to feel appreciated. By referring to this feeling employer's trigger applicants' emotions and create the image of favourable working environment, which significantly improves employer branding.

11) Usage of metaphors, antonymy and other literary devices:

a) *NBC Universal − Welcome to Peacock, the dynamic new streaming service from NBC Universal. Here you'll find more than a job. You'll find a fast-paced,* high-flying team for unique birds *that want to be at the epicenter of technology, sports, news, tv, movies and more. Our flock works hard to connect people to what they love, each other and the world around them by creating shared experiences through culture-defining entertainment… Here you can* fly to new heights!" (Technical Project Manager, 2021).

b) *At* Baked by Melissa, *we share love and happiness,* one bite at a time. *We deliver a fun, ever changing assortments of bite-size treats and consider our customers and team members in everything we do. At Baked by Melissa, our* desserts may be small, *but our* plans *for the company and the brand are* GRAND! *This is where you come in as our Project Manager!* (Project Manager, 2021).

Undoubtedly, elaborate style of an advertisement attracts attention, intrigues the reader and appeals to creative applicants who think outside the box.

12) Conformity with social context – here social context as a link between discourse and society, which is part of the methodology used in the research, is analysed to show that a successful employer brand cannot be created without implementing strategies which take into account society's dominant social values. It can be analysed with regard to:

− diversity and inclusion:

a) *This person should have a strong ability to lead others and share our values of embracing a diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce* (Frontline Operations Manager, 2021).

b) *Nielsen is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce* (Nielsen, 2021).

c) *We strive to foster a diverse and inclusive culture where our employees feel supported, embraced and heard. We believe that our workforce should represent the communities we live in, so that together, we can continue to create and deliver content that reflects the current and ever-changing face of the world* (Technical Project Manager, 2021).

d) *Being respectful, inclusive and embracing diversity makes others feel valued* (Creative project manager, 2021).

e) *We strive to cultivate an inclusive and accessible workplace where all people feel comfortable being themselves* (Product *Manager*, 2021).

It has been mentioned above that equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion are the values that have to be found in the workplace culture of a good employer brand. Diversity and inclusion implementation in the workplace gives employers the advantage over their competitors.

−CSR:

a) In this role, you will have the exciting opportunity to develop and partner with cross-functional teams and our global markets to bring to life Starbucks' global Sustainable Packaging strategy to achieve our enterprise 2030 Planet Positive goals (Starbucks, 2021).

b) Our commitment to the planet, to our Maisons, and to our employees is what we believe in and makes us different (Creative *Project* Manager, 2021).

As stated above, CSR is an essential component of a company's image. Modern society attributes sustainability to fundamental social values. Hence, the company that adopts such strategy undoubtedly contributes to its image. Implementing CSR practices and stating it in a job post advertisement make the job position in the company more appealing for a potential employee. Moreover, by this, an employer targets applicants who share the same position and have the same standards regarding green policy. Undoubtedly, a company which has good employer branding keeps pace with the times, shares society's social values and meets its needs. Stating this in Employment Description part demonstrates an employer's position regarding serious social aspects and targets those job seekers who are of the same view. An important feature of recent job offers is conformity with COVID-19 pandemic era. It is reflected in several ways. Some of the job positions appeared due to the pandemic, e.g., position of a COVID-19 Test Site Manager or because of the consequences the pandemic has: *You'll be joining an important strategic project at Indeed, working on Virtual Interviews. The project began in March of 2020 as a response to COVID-19 and the grinding halt of in-person interviews worldwide. Over the last year, the team has moved quickly to build and validate a browser-based virtual interviewing solution, complete with virtual lobbies, virtual interview rooms, and video/audio/chat functionality. Now we need your help to continue scaling efforts and innovate around the relatively untouched space of virtual interviewing* (Product Manager, 2021).

WFH has become a considerable advantage for both employers and employees in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Some companies even include such option in the list of benefits and perks placing it first: COVID-19 Work-from-Home safety response. Therefore, it is beneficial to mention the following information in a job post: *Our COVID-19 Response − The well-being of our Associates is our top priority. Since March 2020, we made the decision to ask all Associates to work from home until further notice. Everyone is set up with the tools and resources required to stay connected and make work-from-home routines more comfortable. We continue to follow the guidance of the provinces, municipalities & public health agencies that we operate in as well as consider the safety, health and interests of our Associates, as we make decisions about reopening our office locations* (Loyalty Group Management, 2021*)*.

Applying WFH policy employers are ahead of their competitors for several reasons: 1) they are able to recruit the best employees as they are not limited anymore to a geographical region or to a rigid office schedule; 2) they are perceived as socially responsible employers who care about the safety of their employees; 3) WFH type of work gives opportunity for flexibility which nowadays is seen as one of the main benefits in the working environment.

Another reflection of COVID-19 pandemic era is the requirement to be vaccinated against COVID-19: *Where legally permitted, indeed requires all individuals attending or working out of Indeed offices or visiting Indeed clients to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. For positions that can only be performed at an Indeed office, candidates must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and present acceptable proof of vaccination by the date of hire as a condition of employment. For positions that require some in-office work or in-person client meetings, exceptions to these in-office or in-person job requirements may be made at the discretion of the business through June 2022, at which point full vaccination will be required. Indeed, will consider requests for reasonable accommodation as required under applicable law. To qualify as being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 there should have been a two-week period after receiving the second dose (or any government recommended booster shot) in a 2-dose COVID-19 vaccine series, or a two-week period after receiving a single-dose (or any government recommended booster shot) in a single dose COVID-19 vaccine* (Product Manager, 2021).

5. Conclusions

The findings of the research provide substantial insight into the ways of successful employer branding and tactics for targeting prospective applicants within specific social, economic and cultural context. It has proved that job advertisements are an integral part of employer branding inasmuch as they add value to the image of the employer, help differentiate them in the market and create their distinct identity.

Building successful employer branding in job advertisements gives companies a competitive edge as the first interaction between employers and potential employees inherently occurs through job ads. Thus, the impression of employer's reputation and image is formed based on them. That is the reason for using a variety of means in order to create a positive impact on job seekers through job offers and form the idea of favourable working environment. The main components of successful employer branding include mission statement, presenting the company's values, forming positive image via a reference to company's awards, impressive data and numbers concerning the company's activity and tactics for triggering

job seekers psychologically by virtue of appealing to their positive emotions. Equally efficient is the implementation of company's policies within specific social and economic context, e.g., CSR involvement, diversity and inclusion strategies, WFH options. These are the main factors that can influence job seekers' preferences in the labour market.

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